

Vision Soccer Academy

U7's – U8's Coach and Parent Quick Reference Guide

1. Quick Facts for the U7 and U8 soccer player

- a. Characteristics of the U7/U8 player
 - i. "Body and Mind" under construction
 1. Constant movement is normal (twitching and scratching)
 2. Boys and girls are physically and mentally very similar
 3. Player will run until they drop
 4. Body temperature increases quickly and cooling down takes longer
 - a. Be sure to take many water breaks!
 5. Limited ability to multi-task
 - a. Too many tasks leave little or no capacity for decision making

2. Training Sessions – Homework

- a. The player's needs
 - i. A ball should be included in all activities
 1. Ball mastery (activity that promote foot skills)
 2. Fundamentals (dribbling and shooting)
- b. Young players need frequent touches (one ball per player)
- c. Demonstrate if possible
- d. Introduce partner activities along with individual activities
- e. Involve all children in activity
 - i. If uneven numbers, then coach should participate in activity
- f. Players need continuous, consistent positive encouragement
- g. End with small-sided games: either 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4, with two goals and no goalkeepers

3. (U7's - U8's) – SAMPLE PRACTICE SESSION OUTLINE

- 5:00 – 5:05pm Warm-up Activity (5 min)
- 5:05 – 5:07pm Quick demonstration of main topic (2 min)
- 5:07 – 5:15pm 1st Activity (related to main topic) (9 min)
- 5:15 – 5:25pm 2nd Activity (related to main topic) (10 min)
- 5:25 – 5:28pm Water Break (2 min)
- 5:28 – 5:35pm 3rd Activity (related to main topic) (7 min)
- 5:35 – 5:43pm 4th Activity (related to main topic) (8 min)
- 5:43 – 5:45pm Water Break (2 min)
- 5:45 – 6:57pm Scrimmage #1 (4 v 4 no GK) (12 min)
- 5:57 – 6:00pm Water Break / re-organize the teams (3 min)
- 6:00 – 6:12pm Scrimmage #2 (4 v 4 no GK) (12 min)
- 6:12 – 6:15pm (Practice Review) (3 min)

4. Principles of Youth Coaching

- a. Developmentally Appropriate
 - i. How will the topic be received
- b. Clear – Concise – Correct Information
 - i. Make it clear and brief
- c. Simple to Complex
 - i. Coach by starting small and progressing
- d. Safe and appropriate training area
 - i. Survey the practice and game area before play
- e. Decision Making
 - i. **Does the activity allow for decision making by the player?**
- f. Implications for the game
 - i. Is the activity game-related?

5. General Information

- a. Practice should not exceed one hour and 15 minutes
- b. No lines, No lectures and No laps – Games, Games, Games and did we mention Games!
- c. Small-sided games: 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2 and 3 vs. 3

6. Injury Prevention

- a. Proper use of equipment (shin guards) with socks pulled over the shin guards
- b. Check field for problem areas (rocks, holes and glass)
- c. Field-appropriate footwear (soccer cleats)
- d. Adequate water supply and breaks
- e. Avoid training during peak heat hours
- f. Follow-up call to parents if a serious injury occurs

7. Game Day

- a. Arrive 15-20 minutes prior to starting time so players can get a feel for the atmosphere
- b. Survey the field
 - i. Are there any safety issues? Look for rocks, holes and glass on the field
- c. Rotate positions of players; do not lock in a player into one spot
- d. Encourage goal scoring
- e. Discourage players from staying back as a sweeper or goalkeeper

8. Review of Game Day Rules

- a. **The Field** – Rectangular in shape, approx. 25 by 30 yards; a center circle with four yard radius, a halfway line, goal line and sidelines.
- b. **The Ball** – size 3
- c. **Number of Players** – the game is played 4 vs. 4. Each team shall have no more than four players on the field. Each roster will not exceed eight players.
- d. **Player's Equipment** – Tennis shoe or soft cleat shoes, shin guards, socks that cover the shin guards and team uniform are mandatory
- e. **Referee** – A parent or coach shall act as the referee. Usually, the coaches of the teams will tag-team the match, each refereeing one-half of the game.
- f. **Duration of the match** – The match shall consist of four quarters, each twelve minutes long, with a two-minute break between each quarter and a five minute halftime.
- g. **Start of Play** – The ball must be played by the team in possession before it can be touched by an opponent.
- h. **Ball in and out of Play** – The ball must completely cross the end line or touchline
- i. **Free Kicks** – All free kicks will be indirect free kicks; the ball, after being played by the team awarded the kick, must touch another player before a goal may be scored.
- j. Do-over's are allowed for an incorrectly taken kickoff, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in
- k. Substitutions are allowed during goal kick, own throw-in, goal scored and start of each quarter.
- l. A goal cannot be scored off a kickoff
- m. No offside's, No penalty kicks, No side tackles, No GOALKEEPER'S

9. Coaches / Equipment

- a. A basic first aid kit
 - i. You should always carry the players medical information and contact information
- b. Age-appropriate balls (Size 3)
- c. Cones and practice vests
- d. Well thought-out plan for each practice
 - i. Including a game day player rotation
- e. Plenty of patience
- f. Post-game treats and drink – the most important thing to the young players on game day!

10. Resources

- a. The Club
 - i. Director of Recreational – Ginger Parson-McGill (515)419-9836 or gingermvpm@gmail.com
 - ii. Director of Coaching – Chris McGill (515)419-5112 or chriscbm@yahoo.com
 - iii. Club Website – www.visionsocceracademy.com
- b. Iowa Soccer Association – www.iowasoccer.org
- c. US Youth Soccer – www.usyouthsoccer.org
- d. Two excellent books that can be found at Barnes and Noble
 - i. The Baffled Parent's Guide to Great Soccer Drills by Fleck and Quinn
 - ii. The Baffled Soccer Parent's Guide to Coaching Youth Soccer by Bobby Clark
- e. Some great soccer websites:
 - i. <http://www.strongsoccer.com/Kingdrills/clipspractice.htm>
 - ii. <http://www.eteamz.com/soccer/pills/jpill.htm>
 - iii. <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dgraham/manual/>
 - iv. http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/index_E.html