



COACH'S MANUAL

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Port City Soccer offers a developmental league for children ages 3-13 (Under 4 - Under 14 age groups) in the fall and the spring of each year. Games are played at the Ogden Park/Eaton Fields off Gordon Road and at the Kiwanis Park Fields in Hampstead. Children practice 1-2 times per week (practice days and times decided by each team's coach).

Our league is truly unique. The family atmosphere that we create fosters our continued focus on the development of young soccer players. The feel and excitement of our club is something that is hard to match! Each season the number of participants will be limited to ensure that each child is offered the best experience possible. We are not out to be the largest soccer club – we actually enjoy being the smaller, specialized club! ***Our primary mission is simple....to teach sportsmanship, character, soccer skills, and a passion for playing the game to our local youth.***



Port City Soccer's coaching philosophy and curriculums are designed by our professional coaching staff for all age groups. Coaches are provided a manual and training opportunities before the season begins. Children who participate in Port City Soccer are a part of more than a soccer league: **they are a part of a FUN, EXCITING, AND CHALLENGING SOCCER EXPERIENCE!**

Coaching Philosophy of Port City Soccer

Children will be immersed in a fun, positive, and challenging learning environment no matter how old they are. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT is our educational tool of choice. We are firm believers that children learn faster if we can "catch them doing something good" rather than point out every little mistake they make.

Teaching essential soccer techniques is a vital element of our coaching philosophy. Even as early as age 3, we attempt to reinforce soccer skills, which will foster their enjoyment of the game as they grow older. The challenge and responsibility of every Port City Soccer coach is to provide age appropriate games and activities. We encourage our participants to be as creative as possible while learning new skills. As children grow older, their enjoyment of the game will grow as they become more comfortable with the game and as they become better players.

Respect for the game, teammates, opponents, referees, and coaches are of utmost importance. Our coaches will encourage and foster mutually respectful friendships that will often last a lifetime.

A definite benefit of playing for Port City Soccer is the low coach-to-player ratio per team. Anyone who has previously coached younger players (ages 12 and younger) will surely understand that lowering the coach-to-player ratio makes the practice and game environment more manageable and creates an accelerated learning environment for the kids. A smaller number of players at practices and at games means players get more playing time: they get to touch the ball more often and benefit from increased opportunities to make game-like decisions. It also allows parents on the sidelines to actually see the ball without a swarm of kids around it! After all, the kids don't sign up to watch... they want TO PLAY!!!

Parents / Coaches Code of Conduct

Coaches please share this with your parents.

All parents must abide by the policies and decisions of Port City Soccer.

I therefore agree:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for our youth, not for adults.
3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
4. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
5. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, referees, Port City Soccer officials, and spectators at every game and practice.
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct (directed toward any referee, coach, player, Port City Soccer official or other parent) such as booing, taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language or gestures.
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the participants.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
9. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, referees, Port City Soccer officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
10. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
11. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
12. I will never ridicule or yell at my child, or any other player, for making a mistake or losing a competition.
13. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the participants ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
14. I will respect the referees and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront them.
15. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use both before and during all practices and games.
16. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.

I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or a disciplinary agent of Port City Soccer
- Written warning from the club
- Parental game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by Port City Soccer and the appropriate governing Association
- Parental season suspension

DID YOU KNOW?

75% of all children will drop out of organized sports before the age of 14!!!

Common Reasons that Boys and Girls Participate in Soccer:

- To have FUN!
- To stay in shape
- For the excitement of competition
- To improve skills
- To go to a higher level of competition
- To do something I am good at
- To play as a part of a team
- For the spirit of the team
- To meet new friends

Common Reasons that Boys and Girls Drop out of Soccer:

- I was no longer interested
- It was no longer FUN
- I was tired of playing and practicing
- I wanted to participate in other activities
- Practices and games were boring
- My coach was a poor teacher
- Sport required too much time
- Coach only played his/her favorites
- I did not like the coach
- Too much emphasis on winning
- I never felt like I belonged to the team

You, the COACH, have the ability to make a child's experience with soccer an enjoyable one!!! Remember... this is recreational soccer. Winning isn't everything – having fun is!!! Children perceive winning and losing by how we, the coaches and parents, react to it!

Keys to an Enjoyable Season:

- Pre-season Parent-Coach Meeting:
 1. Discuss philosophy.
 2. Discuss the importance of attending all team practices and games.
 3. Discuss parental expectations (transportation, communication, behavior at practices and games).
- Always have your medical info and a cell phone with you.
- Develop an Emergency Action Plan:
 1. Are there multiple cell phones available at practices?
 2. Do you know the direct phone number to the nearest medical emergency center?
 3. Can an ambulance reach the field?
 4. What happens if something happens to the coach at practice?
- Equipment needs:
 1. Do you have balls, pinnies, cones, air pump, and a first aid kit?
- Ensure the practice/game area is safe:
 1. Is there debris (glass, metal, rocks) on the field?
 2. Are there holes or divots in the field that could cause injury?
 3. Are the goals liable to tip over injuring a player?
 4. Is the surface so wet that players could easily slip and fall into each other?

Keys to a Successful & Safe Practice:

- Are the activities appropriate for your age group?
- Are your rules simple to understand?
- Do you have a plan of what you are going to do at practice?
- Are the players dynamic (moving)?
- Are the players making decisions?
- Are the players standing in lines??? **They shouldn't be!** 😊
- Does the practice flow from simple activities to complex activities? (Start with no pressure from any defenders to progressing to game-like pressure... starting with a warm-up and ending with a game).
- **Do not allow the players to play on any un-anchored goals.**

Age Group	Gender	# of Players on the Field	Field Dimensions	# of Players on a	Game Length
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				Team	
U5	Co-ed	3v3/4v4 no goalkeepers	80' x 60'	6-7	7 minute quarters
U6	Co-ed	4v4 no goalkeepers	80' x 60'	7-8	8 minute quarters
U7	Co-ed	4v4 no goalkeepers	80' x 60'	7-8	8 minute quarters
U8-U10	Co-ed	7v7 w/ goalkeepers	150' x 100'	10-11	20 minute halves
U11 - U14	Co-ed	9v9 w/ goalkeepers	220' x 150'	13-14	25 minute halves

Practice / Game Cancellation Policy

Cancellations by the club: In case of dangerous field conditions due to weather, Port City Soccer will cancel practices, clinics and games. You can check the status of practices and games by *checking the TWITTER feed or field status online at portcitysoccer.org*. We try to update by 4:00 for practices and 7:30 am for games.

Cancellations by the coach: In the case that a coach needs to cancel practice for any reason, it is up to that coach to make sure their team knows about it. A phone call to each family on the team is required and an e-mail sent to everyone is recommended, but optional.

*** PLEASE ALWAYS TRY TO START YOUR GAME ON-TIME AND ABIDE BY THE GAME TIME LENGTH, AS THIS AFFECTS THE OTHER GAMES AND THE PARKING LOT TRANSITION!**

Characteristics of U5-U6 Players

- Must gradually become comfortable with the team environment (a coach that is not a parent, other new faces, rules, etc...). Parents must be hands-on.
- Differences between boys and girls are minimal.
- Easily fatigued...yet recovery is rapid (use many activities...short in duration).
- They need to explore qualities of rolling and bouncing balls.
- Play consists of a high degree of imagination and pretend activities (ex: "The ball is a race car and you are driving it").
- Use symbols to represent objects in the environment (ex: cones can be called trees or bushes).
- Can only understand small bits of information at a time (use simple game/activity rules and add on as they get the hang of it...maybe allow them to first perform an activity without the balls).
- Very egocentric...everything is "me, me, me!"...concept of other players around them is limited. They do not understand why they should pass. This is why we play small sided games (1v1, 2v2, 3v3).
- Most influential person in their life is a parent.

Characteristics of U7 and older Players

- Limited ability to attend to more than one task at a time.
- Egos are easily bruised by negative comments.
- Like to play soccer because it is fun.
- Can operate in small groups...groups of 2 or 3.
- Playmates emerge during practices and games.
- Most influential person is still a parent.
- There is a great need for approval from adults.

Coaching Objectives

U4 – SuperTots

Ball Mastery / Dribbling: This will be a slow introduction to the soccer ball. Many kids are going to want to pick up the ball and run with it everywhere they go. That is natural and sometimes encouraged (see Coordination/Agility). Because the kids are only interested in their own ball, use this as an advantage in teaching the skills of dribbling. Coaches should encourage the use of both feet. The goal of the season is for players to have the ability to dribble with the inside of the foot, outside of the foot, top of the foot (their laces) and to be able to change directions and stop the ball on the coach's command. Players should be familiar with the ball touching all of the "receiving" surfaces of the body (feet, thighs, chest, and head).

Coordination / Agility: A fair amount of practice time should be spent improving their agility and coordination on every level. This includes hand-eye coordination, foot-eye coordination, motor movements, jumping, changing directions, running and so on. Use as many games and activities as possible to encourage their development as athletes. This may even include catching or running with a ball in their hands.

Striking a Ball: The ball is quite a bit bigger than their feet. They also possess relatively poor foot-eye coordination. This is of minor concern for the players right now. However, they need to be exposed to the motor movement of striking a ball with their laces.

Rules of the Game: This age group won't understand every rule. The important rules are how to score a goal, which direction they need to be going, and where and what to do when the ball is out of bounds. Make sure these rules are used and explained in practice so it won't be such a shock on Saturdays.

Tactical Situations: Primarily try to get the players to understand what to do, and where to safely stand, on restarts (kick-offs, goal kicks, free kicks and kick-ins).

U5

Ball Mastery / Dribbling: Players should have the ability to maneuver a ball going forward, backward, and sideways. Players should be able to stop the ball with the bottom of the foot on the coach's command. Their motor skills and foot-eye coordination should be improving and thus their dribbling ability should increase. The next progression is being able to change speed while they are dribbling and turning with the ball. This will enable them to run past a defender with the ball still at their feet. Get your players to recognize traffic ahead and turn into the opposite direction to find open space. Encourage them to dribble with their heads up to see other players and open space. By the end of the season, players should be able to dribble forward with speed. This is accomplished by pointing your toe downward and using your laces to touch the ball forward as you run.

Coordination / Agility: All areas in coordination and agility should be increasing, but all aspects can now improve with the ball at their feet. For new movements or games, introduce without using a ball. This will give the players time to learn muscle memory with success, and once learned you add a ball at their feet. Keep on working on hand-eye coordination, as well. Stretching activities, although not very useful at this age, can help to improve balance and to start good habits.

Striking a Ball: More emphasis on striking a ball (shooting) is needed. Make sure they have their toe pointing down while striking the ball with their laces for the most power and accuracy. A player may kick the ball farther with their toe now, but the success rate will only last for a little while longer if the proper technique of striking with the laces is not taught. Encourage the use of both feet. Laces, Laces, Laces!!

Rules of the Game: Once the major rules of the game are understood, players should understand how goal kicks, corner kicks, kick-ins and free kicks are taken and what causes them. During the end of practice scrimmage, make sure they are playing by regular 3v3 game rules.

Tactical Situations: Players still do not understand when or why they should pass the ball. They should begin to have an understanding of transition from offense to defense. "As soon as you lose the ball, try to win it back!"

U6

Ball Mastery / Dribbling: Players should now be able to change speed, stop, and turn with the ball under control, with all surfaces of the feet. 180 degree "chopping" of the ball with the inside and outside of the feet should be introduced and attempted throughout the season.

Coordination / Agility: Players will still need to be exposed to many of the same exciting activities as the younger kids. However, as they grow older, coaches can make the playing areas smaller to limit the space and time that players have to move around. This will help to further develop their reflexes and agility.

Striking a Ball: All players should have the ability to strike the ball with their laces and with both feet. An introduction to the "push pass" as a ball striking method is now needed. While the players may not actually use the "push pass" in a

game, their muscles need to start being trained what it feels like to “open the hip up” and pass the ball with the inside of the foot. Striking a bouncing ball with the laces should also be attempted.

Rules of the Game: All rules should be known, including all the different fouls that can be committed.

Tactical Situations: 2v1 situations should be experienced as often as possible. Players should begin to understand how two players can work together to get past a defender (i.e. a pass!). Players are slowly starting to understand how to work with a partner.

U7/U8

Ball Mastery / Dribbling: Players should be able to add specific moves like the “lunge step”, “scissor”, “fake shot” and “fake stop” to their dribbling repertoires. Players should now be able to receive a bouncing, or flighted ball, with all surfaces of the body, and control it to the ground in less than three touches.

Coordination / Agility: The ability to change directions and change speeds should be addressed in every practice. This can be done with the ball in almost all cases, but doesn’t have to be.

Striking a Ball: Players need to be able to strike a ball with both feet and should be able to get it off the ground. To help with this, practice by rolling a ball back to them so they can strike underneath the ball. You might also allow them to place the ball on a small cone and strike underneath it to get it into the air. They need to feel what it is like to strike underneath the ball with their laces. Ankle flexibility is the major speed bump in accomplishing this. In order to get the ball into the air by using the laces, players need to approach the ball at a 45 degree angle rather than from straight behind the ball. Players should be able to strike a ball out of the air, of varying height and direction, with the laces and the insides of the feet.

Rules of the Game: The rules should be second nature and advanced players should now be looking to bend the rules in their favor. Examples would be kicking the ball off a defender to gain a corner, or saving a ball that is going out of bounds by kicking it out for a kick-in, rather than a goal kick.

Tactical Situations: Players should have a through understanding of, and should be able to score in, 2v1 situations. A great amount of time should be spent on “getting wide”, or spreading out. It should be automatic that when your team has the ball, that all players form a diamond shape. Players should understand the concept of “goal side”. Strict positional play is still discouraged (i.e. one player sitting in front of the goal all the time). Every field player should defend & attack. Goalkeepers (U8) should understand how to distribute the ball to open "safe spaces" after catching it.

U9 - U14

Ball Mastery / Dribbling: Players should be able to perform such dribbling moves as the “lunge step”, “scissor”, “fake shot” and “fake stop” in matches...not just training. Players should now be able to receive a bouncing, or flighted ball, with all surfaces of the body, and control it to the ground in less than two touches.

Coordination / Agility: The ability to change directions and change speeds should be addressed in every practice. This can be done with the ball in almost all cases, but doesn’t have to be.

Striking a Ball: Players need to be able to strike a ball with both feet and should be able to get it off the ground. To help with this, practice by rolling a ball back to them so they can strike underneath the ball. You may still allow them to place the ball on a small cone, on a limited basis, and strike underneath it to get it into the air. They need to feel what it is like to strike underneath the ball with their laces. Ankle flexibility is still a limiting factor in accomplishing this. In order to get the ball into the air by using the laces, players need to approach the ball at a 45 degree angle rather than from straight behind the ball. The heel of the striking foot should be near the ground with the shoe laces pointing towards the desired target. Players should be able to strike a ball out of the air, of varying height and direction, with the laces and with the insides of the feet.

Heading: U11 players and younger are not allowed to head the ball a per US Club mandates. U12 & U13 players are allowed to head, however, they must be limited to 30 minutes of heading training per week, with no more than 15-20 headers per player, per week

Passing: Players should be able to pass with the inside of their feet over distances of 5-15 yards with accuracy. When passing with the inside of the foot, the toe should be pointed as upward as possible with the ankle locked. The non-kicking foot should be beside the ball with the toe pointed towards the target. The ball should be struck with the inside of the foot, closer to the ankle rather than the toe. Players should concentrate on striking the middle of the ball so that it stays on the ground and rolls with topspin.

Rules of the Game: The rules should be second nature and advanced players should now be looking to bend the rules in their favor. Examples would be kicking the ball off a defender to gain a corner, or saving a ball that is going out of bounds by kicking it out for a throw-in, rather than a goal kick. Players that excel will not only recognize fouls quickly, but be able to quickly restart after an infraction before the other team is ready to defend it.

Tactical Situations: Players should have a thorough understanding of, and should be able to score in, 2v1 situations. Players should start to understand how to attack and defend in 2v2 situations. Players should have a sound understanding of a wall pass and a double pass in 2v1 and 2v2 situations. A great amount of time should be spent on “creating width, height and depth”.... generally speaking... “spreading out”. It should be automatic that when your team has the ball, that players without the ball should get wide, high, and into deep supporting positions (i.e. “diamond shape”). Players should understand the concept of “goal side”. Players should understand the Offside rule (U11/U14). Strict positional play is still discouraged (i.e. one player sitting in front of the goal all the time) however, players should start to understand the general attacking and defending roles of the three different lines (defenders, midfielders, and forwards). Every player should defend and attack - however, players should start to understand, “if we all go forward that leaves the goal wide-open so maybe one of us should stay back for now...”

The Basic Practice Concept

The basic premise of a soccer practice should be to start with a fundamental topic and finish under “match conditions”. Select a topic. Then take that topic and add a slight degree of technical difficulty or pressure from an opponent. To finish off the practice, have a scrimmage or game that incorporates the topic.

An example:

DRIBBLING:

1. Place a row of target cones 10-15 yards away.
2. Simply have the players run around their cone and back – without the ball – a few times.
3. Now with the ball, dribble around the cone and back.
4. Next, add a few more cones in-between and have the players weave through them and back.
5. Take away the inner cones, back to only the one target cone again. Now use a teammate as a defender of the “target” cone, playing 1v1 to the target cone. Switch players accordingly.
6. Play a regular game going to goal – attacking and defending the target.

* *The transition is made from teaching a fundamental topic to using that skill in an actual game.*

For a basic younger age group, a practice with games from this manual could be:

First Activity (warm-up): “Try this! Follow me!” (5 minutes)

Second Activity: “Red light, Green light!” (5 minutes)

Water Break (3 minutes)

Fourth Activity: “Sharks and Minnows” (5 minutes)

Fifth Activity: “New Ball!” (10 minutes)

Water Break (3 minutes)

Final Activity: an actual game setting, playing either 3v3 or 4v4 (15 minutes)

PLEASE VISIT THE COACHING SECTION OF OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE IDEAS!

U4-U8 Activities and Games

"I can do this....can you?"(motor movements): Coach demonstrates various motor movements without the ball (ex: skipping, hopping on one leg, jumping in place and doing a 360 degree turn, balancing on leg with hands out).

Variations: Allow the kids to invent something to do.

"Try this.....(receiving, ball control)": Coach demonstrates various exercises with the ball (ex: tossing ball into the air and catching it, tossing ball into the air and clapping before catching it, tossing the ball into the air and touching it with the foot before it touches the ground, or various footwork on the ball like "rapid toe touches").

Variations: Allow the kids to invent something to do.

Pendulums (ball control): Tap the ball from the inside of one foot to the inside of the other foot.

Variations: How fast can the players tap the ball from foot to foot? How far apart can their feet go and still tap the ball between their feet? Can they move forward, or backward, while tapping the ball between their feet?

Snake Dribbling (dribbling): In small groups of two to three, players follow the leader while dribbling. Switch the leader so every child gets a turn to lead.

Variations: Coach is the leader. Try it first without dribbling the balls.

The Sprinkler (warm-up, dribbling, passing, teamwork): Every player with a ball. On coach's command, players hand balls to coach and coach tosses their balls in various directions. Players must bring their ball back to the coach as quickly as possible by dribbling with their feet.

Variations: Players bring their ball back while bouncing and catching their ball with their hands. Players bring their ball back while touching it to their heads. Players bring their ball back with their elbows. Allow U6 and older players to work in pairs bringing the ball back with a certain number of passes. Players may only touch their ball with certain body parts while bringing it back. Players may be limited to a certain number of touches on the ball while bringing it back. Vary how far you toss the balls. Coach may also move around the area constantly so players have to keep their heads up when bringing their ball back to the coach.

Red Light!...Green Light! (dribbling): Every player has a ball at the starting line. Designate a finish line approximately 15-25 yards away. Players attempt to be the first to drive their car (dribble their ball) over the finish line. On the coach's command of "green light!" players dribble towards the finish line. On the coach's command of "red light!" players must "hit the brakes" (stop their ball immediately with the bottom of their foot). Any player that cannot stop their ball immediately must go back even with the last person.

Variations: Vary the surfaces of the foot that the player must dribble or stop the ball with. Vary the body surface that the players stop the ball with (ex: elbow, knee, head, etc...). Try it first without the ball.

Body Part Dribbling (dribbling, flexibility): In a designated grid, players dribble and, on the coach's command, they stop the ball with the body part called out by the coach. Players must keep their heads and eyes looking up so they don't run into anyone.

Heads Up! (dribbling): In a designated area, players dribble their balls. Coach holds out a certain number of fingers on his hand at waist level (ex: two fingers). Players must shout out, without stopping their dribble, the number of fingers the coach is holding out.

Variation: Coach moves about the area so players really have to concentrate on dribbling with their heads up.

Sharks and Minnows (dribbling): Every player with a ball lines up on the goal line of a designated grid. These are the "Minnows". One player, without a ball, starts in the middle of the grid as the designated "Shark". Grid should be long and narrow. On the coach's command, players attempt to dribble their balls ("swim") across the "ocean" (open space) to "safe land" (the other goal line). If a player is tagged by the shark, they also become a shark next round. Continue having players cross the ocean until there is only one minnow left. Let the last minnow remaining start the next game as the shark.

Variations: Try the game without balls first. Try requiring the Shark having to kick a minnow's ball out of the grid before making them a shark for the next round.

Crazy Cones (dribbling, passing): In a designated area, set up numerous cones (or big plastic cups). On the coach's command, players attempt to knock over all the cones by passing their ball against them. Player who knocks over the most cones wins.

Variations: Divide into two teams and have a competition. Vary the surface of the foot they are allowed to touch the ball with. Designate a player that tries to stand the cones up as they are knocked over (if the rest of the team can knock over all the cones at once they win!)

"New Ball!": 3v3 game with two small goals. Every time the ball goes out of play, coach immediately introduces a new ball to play. After all the balls are gone, players gather them up and bring them back to the coach.

Race Car Driver (dribbling): In a designated area, set up 6-8 small "tunnels" (two cones approx. 5-6 feet apart). On the coach's command, players attempt to drive their cars (dribble their balls), through as many tunnels as possible in a designated time period. If a player crashes their car (ball or player runs into a cone, another person, or another ball), they must go to the garage (coach) and get the car fixed (ex: perform a ball skill) before re-entering the area. Player who drives through the most tunnels in a specified time wins!

Variation: Vary the width of the tunnels.

Math Dribble (dribbling): Every player with a ball dribbling in a designated area. Coach calls out 1, 2, or 3. Players dribble their balls into groups of the number called out by coach (ex: a group of two or a group of three).

Variation: Coach calls out "3-1" or "1+1".

Tag (dribbling): All players with a ball in a designated area. One player without a ball designated as the "tagger". On the coach's command, players dribble and avoid being touched by the tagger. If tagged, player has to perform a ball skill (ex: 3 headers) before entering play again. Switch tagger after a short interval.

Variations: Make tagger dribble a ball also. Have tagged player give his ball to tagger and then become the tagger. Play the game without using balls.

Knee Tag (dribbling): Every player with a ball in a designated grid. On coach's command, players dribble and attempt to tag any other player on the knee. Players count how many knees they tag in a certain time period.

Variations: Play without balls to begin with. Play with two teams. Players may only tag someone on the other team.

Behind the Back Tag (dribbling): Every player has a ball in a designated grid. Each player must keep one hand behind their back at all times. On coach's command, all players dribble and attempt to tag any player on the hand held behind the back. Players count how many hands they tag in a specified time period.

Variation: Play with two teams. Players may only tag someone on the other team.

Stuck in the Mud (dribbling, passing): Every player with a ball. One player designated as a "tagger". On coach's command, all players dribble and avoid the tagger. If tagged, players are "stuck in the mud" (frozen). Players that are stuck in the mud must hold their balls above their heads, spread their legs, and yell "Help! Help! I'm stuck in the mud!" Players can get out of the mud if another player passes a ball between a "stuck" player's legs. Tagger attempts get every player "stuck in the mud". Switch tagger after a short interval.

Variation: Divide group into two teams. Team that avoids getting every player stuck in the mud wins. Play without balls and have "free" players crawl through "stuck" players' legs to free them.

Squares (dribbling with their head's up): Split kids into 2 groups, with 1 group dribbling in each square. On coach's command each player leaves their ball and runs to the other square to find a new one and begin dribbling.

Variations: Try it without a ball. Try dribbling the ball over to the other square.

Keep Your Yard Clean (Dribbling, Passing, Receiving, Striking the Ball): Divide your area into three zones. Put half the players, each with a ball, in each of the end zones. An "empty lot"(empty zone) separates the two teams. Keep your yard clean by kicking the trash (passing the ball) over the empty lot and into the other team's yard. Play for a designated time period. Team with the cleanest yard (least amount of balls in their zone) wins. Empty lot needs to be big enough to protect the players from getting struck in the head/face with the ball.

Variations: Try to pass through the other team's yard and into their "house" (space behind the yard). Throw the trash into the neighbor's yard (throw-ins). Make players "inspect the trash" (stop it with the inside of the foot) before kicking into the other team's yard. This will keep balls from flying everywhere! Dribble the trash into the opponent's yard.

3v3 Game: Two teams (maximum of 3 players per team) play against each other with goals. Regular rules apply.

Moving Goal (dribbling, receiving, passing): Every player with a ball dribbling in a designated grid. Two coaches form a goal by standing as far apart from one another as possible while holding a shirt (or ball bag or whatever you have useful), with one hand each, between them at head level. The "coach goal" should move rapidly around the grid and players attempt to dribble their ball through the moving goal as many times as possible.

Variations: More than one moving goal (solicit parents to help). Have the players pass in pairs through the goal for a point.

Steal the Bacon (dribbling, passing, shooting, defending, small group play): Divide players into two equal teams. Give each player on each team an identifying number ("...you are player 1, you are player 2, ...). Make sure you use the same identifying numbers for each team. Teams are then placed behind the goal lines on opposite ends of the field. Coach tosses a ball into the field and calls out one of the identifying numbers given to the players (ex: "2's!"). The player from each team that was given that number then runs onto the field and attempts to score on the opponent's goal.

Variation: Coach calls out two or three numbers and teams play 2v2 or 3v3 against each other (ex: "1's and 3's!").

Many goals (dribbling, passing): In a designated area, set up numerous (5-7) cone goals ranging from 3-6 feet in width. Every player has a ball and on the coach's command they attempt to dribble through as many goals as possible in a time period.

Variations: Cannot dribble through the same goal twice in a row. Players work in pairs and must pass through the goals. Players must play a "one touch" pass through the goals. Two teams compete by adding total points scored.

Knockout (Dribbling and Shielding): All players in a designated area with a ball. On the coach's command, players try to knock other players' balls out of the grid, without losing possession of their own ball. If a player's ball is knocked out, they must perform a ball skill (ex: pendulums) before re-entering play. If a player can retrieve their ball before it leaves the grid, they can keep playing.

Variations: Play with two teams attempting to knock the opponent's balls out. Make the grid very small to encourage shielding.

U5-U14 Rules of the Game

Upon recommendation of US Soccer Federation, Port City Soccer has modified the FIFA Laws of the Game, when needed, to accommodate the development of young players.

Law I - The Field:

The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline (sideline) must be greater than the goal line (goal line).

A. Dimensions:

- U5-U7: The field of play shall be 80 ft. long X 60 ft. wide.
- U8-U10: The field of play shall be 150 ft. long X 100 ft. wide.
- U11-U14: The field of play shall be 220 ft. long X 150 ft. wide.

B. Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than 5 inches wide. The field of play is divided into halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle (center circle), with a radius varying by age group, is marked around it.

- U5-U7: The center circle shall have a four 12 ft. radius.
- U8-U10: The center circle shall have a six 18 ft. radius.
- U11-U14: The center circle shall have an eight 24 ft. radius.

C. The Goal Area:

- U4-U7: None
- U8-U10: Defined at the end of each field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 5 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 5 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.
- U11-U14: Defined at the end of each field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 6 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 6 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

D. The Penalty Area:

- U5-U7: None.
- U8-U10: Defined at the end of each field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 10 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 10 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area.
- U11-U14: Defined at the end of each field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 14 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 14 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made 10 yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of 8 yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area and is known as the penalty arc.

E. Flag Posts:

- U5-U7: None
- U8-U14: A flag post, not less than 5 feet high, with a non-pointed top and a flag is placed at each corner of the field.

F. The Corner Arc:

U5-U7: None

U8-U14: A quarter circle with a radius of 1 yard from each corner of the field is drawn inside the field of play.

G. Goals:

U5-U7: One goal, measuring 4 feet high and 6 feet wide, is placed on the center of each goal line.

U8-U10: One goal, measuring 6-7 feet high and 12 feet wide, is placed on the center of each goal line.

U11-U14: One goal, measuring 7 feet high and 21 feet wide, is placed on the center of each goal line.

Law II - The Ball:

U5-U7: Size 3.

U8-U11: Size 4.

U13-U14: Size 5.

Law III - Number of Players:

A. Number of players on the field:

U5: Maximum number of players on the field, for each team, at any one time is 3.

U6-U7: Maximum number of players on the field, for each team, at any one time is 4.

U8-U10: Maximum number of players on the field, for each team, at any one time is 7, including goalkeeper.

U11-U14: Maximum number of players on the field, for each team, at any one time is 9, including goalkeeper.

B. Maximum number of players on the roster will vary depending upon age group.

C. There are **NO** Goalkeepers in the U5-U7 groups. **Coaches should NOT position a player in front of their goal as a defender/goalkeeper. They should instead encourage all players to actively engage in play.**

D. Substitutions: The number of substitutions is unlimited. Upon the consent of the referee, substitutions may be made during either team's kick-off, either team's goal kick, and the possessing team's throw-in. If the possessing team is substituting on their throw-in, then the non-possessing team may also substitute players.

E. Playing time: Each player **SHALL** play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time.

F. Teams and games may be co-ed.

Law IV - Players Equipment:

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry).

A. Basic required equipment of each player:

1. A jersey, black shorts and socks issued by Port City Soccer. The exceptions are each team's goalkeepers, who must wear colors differing from both teams' jerseys. *** Please note: NO alterations of any kind are allowed on the Port City Soccer uniforms. This includes and is not limited to adding numbers, names, stars, stripes, etc. Altered jerseys cannot be worn during the game. The replacement cost is 25.00 and is the responsibility of the player.
2. Shorts of the same color as the team or black.
3. Socks, of the same color as the team or black, and completely covering the shin guards.
4. Shin guards, made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, or similar substances), and providing a reasonable degree of protection. Please note: no player shall be allowed to play without shin guards.
5. Footwear: Soft-cleated soccer shoes or tennis shoes. .

Law V - The Referee:

Charged with ensuring PLAYER SAFETY, FUN, RESPECT, and GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP. Should strive to keep the playing environment focused on the children. Duties include enforcing the rules (Laws of the Game), keeping time, stopping and restarting play. When stopping play for a foul, or any other reason, should take the time to explain to the players WHY! These are their first experiences with soccer and the best time to educate them on the Laws of the Game.

U4-U7: Not used. Coaches, assistant coaches, or qualified parents will act as Game Officials and “referee” to the best of their abilities.

U8-U14: A Certified Referee or other qualified Game Official will be used.

Law VI - Assistant Referee:

U4-U10: Not used

U11-U14: 2 assistant referees plus head referee used for most games with possibility of using only 2 refs in tandem.

Law VII - Duration of the Game:

1. U4: four **6 minute quarters** with 2 minutes in between.
2. U5: four **7 minute quarters** with 2 minutes in between.
3. U6-U7: four **8 minute quarters** with 2 minutes in between.
4. U8-U10: two **20 minute halves** with a 5 minute half-time interval.
5. U11-U14: two **25 minute halves** with a 5 minute half-time interval.

A referee, or game official, shall be designated as the timekeeper for each game. Once started, the game timer should not stop his/her timepiece until the end of each designated period of play. Do not stop the timing of the game for throw-ins, kick-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks, goals, kick-offs, free kicks and the like. The only allowances for time lost (reasons for stopping the game timer) are as follows:

- Substitution(s)
- Assessment of injury to players
- Removal of injured players from the field of play
- Deliberate wasting of time by either team

Law VIII - The Start and Restart of Play:

When arriving for your game, we require for teams to set up on the opposite side of the field. For U5-U7, coaches are allowed on the field but the goal is to eventually coach from the sidelines. For age groups U8-U14, the teams shall sit on the opposite side of the field from the parents. Coaches shall set their teams up on one half of the other side, and shall stay on that respective half for the entire match: coaches shall not walk the entire length of the field nor be positioned by the goals - solely on their half of the teams' sideline for U8-U14.

The “home” team (the team listed first on the game schedule) decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match. The other team takes the kick-off to start the match. U5-U14 teams switch halves at half-time (and which goal they are attacking) and the home team takes the kick-off to start the second half. U4 teams do not switch halves or goals at half time. After a team scores a goal, the other team takes a kick-off to restart play.

1. U5-U7: A goal may NOT be scored directly from a kick-off. Any ball kicked directly into the opposing team’s goal from a kick-off shall be restarted with a goal kick by the opposing team.
2. U8-U14: A goal MAY be scored directly from a kick-off.

The procedure for taking a kick-off:

- All players are in their own half of the field.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off are outside the center circle (a circle, whose radius will vary by age group) until the ball is in play.
- The ball is stationary on the center mark.
- The referee, or game official, gives a signal to start play.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked. Ball may be kicked backward (new rule as of Jan. 2017)
- The kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

Law IX - Ball in and Out of Play:

The ball is out of play when:

- The entire ball completely crosses a touchline or goal line, either on the ground or in the air.
- Play has been stopped by the referee or game official.

Law X - Method of Scoring:

A goal is scored when the entire ball passes completely over the goal line between the posts and beneath the crossbar, provided that no infringement on the Laws of the Game has been committed on the scoring sequence by the team scoring the goal.

Law XI - Off-Side:

A player is in an offside position if:

- He/she is nearer to his/her opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second to last opponent.

A player is NOT in an offside position if:

- He/she is in his/her own half of the field of play, or
- He/she is level with the second to last opponent, or
- He/she is level with the last two opponents, or
- He/she is level with the ball.

It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position. A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his/her own team, he/she is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play, or
- Interfering with an opponent, or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position.

There is no offside offense if a player receives a ball directly from:

- A goal kick, or
- A throw-in, or
- A corner kick.

U5-U10: No offside will be called.

U11-U14: Will play with the offside rule in effect. All offside offenses will result in an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

Law XII - Fouls and Misconduct:

- A. Fouls and misconduct are penalized with a free kick awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses:
1. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent (direct free kick)
 2. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent (direct free kick)
 3. Jumps at an opponent (direct free kick)
 4. Charges an opponent (direct free kick)
 5. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent (direct free kick)
 6. Pushes an opponent (direct free kick)
 7. Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball (direct free kick)
 8. Holds an opponent (direct free kick)
 9. Spits at an opponent (direct free kick)
 10. Handles the ball deliberately (direct free kick)
 11. Plays in a dangerous manner (indirect free kick)
 12. Impedes the progress of an opponent (indirect free kick)
 13. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands (indirect free kick)
 14. A goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, takes more than 6 seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it from his possession (indirect free kick)
 15. A goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player (indirect free kick)
 16. A goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a teammate (indirect free kick)
 17. A goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, touches the ball with his hands; after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate (indirect free kick)
- B. No cautions or ejections (yellow or red cards) shall be issued to players. A coach, however, should remove any player, by substitution, who is persistently playing in a manner deemed overly aggressive, dangerous or unsportsmanlike. After an explanation, and guidance on fair play, any player so removed may return to the game by substitution.

Law XIII - Free Kicks:

- U4-U7: All free kicks, kick-offs, kick-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks and restarts shall be indirect free kicks and opponents must stand at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play. An indirect free kick is one when the ball, after being struck by the initial kicker, MUST subsequently touch another player before it enters the goal. Any goal scored directly from an indirect free kick, kick-off, kick-in, goal kick, corner kick or other restart will not count and play will be restarted as a goal kick for the opposing team.
- U8-U14: Both direct and indirect free kicks will be observed and opponents must stand at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play. The referee, or game official, will instruct the players on whether a free kick is direct or indirect (in accordance with the Laws of the Game). A direct free kick is one when the ball, after being struck by the initial kicker, may enter the goal without subsequently touching another player. Please note that, in the U8-U14 age groups, kick-offs, corner kicks and goal kicks are considered direct free kicks and goals may be scored directly from them.

Law XIV - Penalty Kicks:

Penalty kicks are awarded only for direct free kick fouls committed by a player inside his/her own penalty area.

- U5-U7: There are **NO** Penalty Kicks.
- U8-U10: There are **NO** penalty kicks, but fouls committed by a player inside his/her own penalty area will result in a free kick (direct, or indirect depending upon the type foul) awarded to the opposing team to be taken from a spot along the outside of the penalty area closest to the point of the foul.
- U11-U14: Penalty kicks will be awarded against a team that commits one of the direct free kick fouls (fouls 1 – 10) listed in *Law XII – Fouls and Misconduct*. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick. When a penalty kick is awarded:
- The ball is placed on the penalty mark (the penalty mark will be 10 yards from the center of the goal line).
 - The player taking the penalty kick must be properly identified.
 - The defending goalkeeper must remain on his/her goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.
 - The players, other than the kicker, are located inside the field of play, outside the penalty area, behind the penalty mark, and at least 8 yards from the penalty mark (behind the penalty arc).
 - The referee, or game official, will signal for the penalty kick to be taken when all players have taken up positions in accordance with the Law.
 - The referee, or game official, decides when a penalty kick has been completed.
 - The player taking the penalty kicks the ball forward and may not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
 - The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.

Law XV - Throw-In:

A throw-in is a method of restarting play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in. A throw-in is awarded:

- When the entire ball passes completely over the touchline, either on the ground or in the air.
- From the point where the ball crossed the touchline.
- To the opponents of the player who last touched the ball.

The procedure for executing a proper throw-in requires the thrower, at the moment of delivering the ball:

- To face the field of play.
- Have part of each foot either on the touchline or on the ground outside the touchline.
- Use both hands
- Deliver the ball from behind and over his/her head in a continuous motion.

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. All opponents must stand no less than 2 yards from the point at which the throw-in is taken. The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

U5-U7: Throw-ins are NOT used. They are replaced by kick-ins. Kick-ins are awarded in same manner as throw-ins. The kick-in procedure entails placing the ball on the touchline and executing an indirect free kick with the opponents standing no less than 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.

U8-U14: Throw-ins are used.

Law XVI - Goal Kick:

A goal kick is a method of restarting play. A goal kick is awarded when the entire ball, having last touched a player of the attacking team, completely crosses over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored. The opposing team puts the ball back into play with a goal kick.

U5-U7: The goal kick should be taken either the goal line or within a few yards in front of goal. Opposing players must remain at least 4 yards away from the ball until it is in play. Treat as an indirect free kick.

U8-U14: The procedure is as follows:

Procedure

- The ball must be stationary and is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- Opponents must be outside the penalty area until the ball is in play

Law XVII - Corner Kick:

A corner kick is a method of restarting play. A corner kick is awarded when the entire ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, completely crosses over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air. The procedure for taking a corner kick is as follows:

- The ball is placed inside the corner arc nearest to the corner that the ball crossed over the goal line.
- The ball is kicked by a player of the attacking team.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

U4-U7: A corner kick will be treated as an INDIRECT free kick and all opponents must remain at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.

U8-U14: A corner kick will be treated as a DIRECT free kick and all opponents must remain at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law PCS I - Heading Restrictions:

U10 players and younger are not allowed to head the ball. Violation will result in the opposing team being awarded an indirect free kick.

Law PCS II – Slide-Tackling Restrictions:

Slide tackling is not permitted at Port City Soccer. Violation will result in an indirect free kick for the opposing team.

Law PCS III - Parental Etiquette:

Any coaches, parents or spectators not conducting themselves in a manner that is positive and encouraging to all participants will be asked to leave.

Law PCS IV – No Pets and No smoking:

Pets are not allowed at any soccer fields at any time. No smoking allowed (including e-cigs) at any soccer fields we utilize at any time.