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# **Micro-Soccer U4-U8 U9-U11 Small sided games**

**The Nature of Micro-Soccer**

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## The Nature of Soccer:

- ❖ **What Micro-Soccer Isn't:** Micro-Soccer is to Soccer what T-Ball is to Baseball. Micro-Soccer does not have the skill, team work, passing, work rate, etc. of the adult version of the game (did anyone watch the World Cup this summer?). Can you imagine what 22 5 year olds would like trying to play on a full size adult field? One of the first things we need to do as adults is get in touch with the fact that young children are not playing the adult game.
- ❖ **What Micro-Soccer Is:** **Micro-Soccer is a simplified version of the adult game, simplified to make the joy of playing more accessible to young children.** As we will see later in more detail, children are very different than adults, so the game they play needs to be developmentally appropriate. At these age groups the children are not really “playing soccer”, but are playing while “at” soccer or “around” soccer. Since children are not miniature adults, we need to change the game to meet their developmental needs. Children this age are very much individually oriented, “I”, “me”, “my”, “mine”. There is no real concept of what “team” is. Children play with each other “side by side” rather than together.
- ❖ How can we make the game of soccer work for the needs of young children?
  1. The number of players on the field should be adjusted so that players are always involved in the play.
  2. The field size should be appropriate for the size and number of the players.
  3. Adjust the size of the ball and the goals to an appropriate size.
  4. Adjust the duration of the game.
  5. Micro-Soccer gives each player more touches on the ball in a given amount of time, this leads to more enjoyment and better development.
  6. Micro-Soccer creates realistic challenges that accommodate the age and ability of the players.
  7. Makes for easier decision making.
  8. Games are not really 3v3 or 4v4, but 1v5 or 1v7; there is no real concept of “team” yet. This is developmentally appropriate.
- ❖ We will talk more about what is developmentally appropriate when we discuss developmental characteristics and teaching objectives.

# The Philosophy of Coaching Young Players

- ❖ USYS recommends that coaches adopt a **child centered** approach to coaching young players. What does this mean to you? They talk about bringing out the game that lives within each child.
- ❖ Children come to play, not to work, listen to coaches talk, or discuss the game. They come to play and play = fun. **We need to let them play while they are at soccer.** The game can be the teacher, children learn best in an environment where they are playing the game and free to try new things without fear of “getting yelled at”.

## Developing a Philosophy:

- ❖ Fire FC has defined objectives and coaching methodology. The philosophy is based on Player Development, and our methodology is Positive Coaching.

**“The objective of the Developmental Program is to allow individual players to grow and develop in an environment free from the pressure of having to win.”**

- ❖ Players do not develop or have fun if they are not playing. It is the policy of Fire FC's Developmental Program that all players play at least 50% of each game. As a coach you have some latitude here as spelled out in the policies and procedures (you will find these in your Coaching Supplement).
- ❖ Positive Coaching has three major elements. A Positive Coach:
  1. Redefines (**expands the definition of**) “Winner” – defines being a “winner” through mastery rather than results.
  2. Fills Players’ Emotional Tanks – refuses to motivate through fear or intimidation.
  3. Honors the Game – demonstrates respect for rules, people, and traditions of the game.
- ❖ It is important that you follow through with this philosophy, that your actions on the field match this philosophy. Your true philosophy will be reflected in how you present yourself to players and parents. **How you teach is as important as what you teach.**
- ❖ How do we measure success? We do not measure success in terms of wins and losses, if we do then at some point in time everyone will be a loser. What is the difference between success for adults and success for children?

Success for Adults: is defined by results alone; second place is no place.

Success for Children:

1. Does not depend on results
2. **Success is measured by effort and by not giving up**
3. Every child can be successful because they are all capable of doing their best
4. Repeated continued effort develops a child more than the experience of winning. Effort enhances ability, not winning.
5. How much the kids are developing as players.
6. How they are developing as people (positive character traits).
7. How much fun they are having playing soccer.
8. How much enthusiasm they develop and show for the game.

- ❖ Success is never final. “Success is a journey, not a destination” – Winston Churchill. Just because a team is not winning does not mean the players are not succeeding. We can use the teaching objectives as a checklist for player development.
- ❖ The Club has determined the teaching objectives for these age groups, and we will discuss them later in the course. They will be included in your Coaching Supplements that are in your coaches’ packets.

## **Responsibilities of the Coach**

### **Positive Role Model:**

- ❖ We do not have a choice of whether to be a role model or not. We are role models. The choice we have is whether we are going to be good role models or bad role models. We must take this seriously. Kids are sharp and very aware of what adults say and do.
- ❖ The best way to be a good role model is to lead by example. The coach should be professional. Be knowledgeable, informed, organized, respectful, and look like a coach (dress appropriately).

### **Know Who You Are Coaching:**

- ❖ Remember that children are not miniature adults. There are differences and we must be aware of them. Review developmental characteristics of U6 and U8 players (see extra sheets).
- ❖ Children are not defined by chronological age only. Just because two children are the same chronological age, it does not mean that they are equal in terms of physical and cognitive development. We need to be patient and remember that these are developing human beings. Children in these age groups can be vulnerable and can be bruised easily psychologically. The same goes for physical development; just because one child is more physically developed at a particular age does not mean another player is less of a player or less talented. Remember that success is a journey.
- ❖ Treat all children the same in that you treat them as individuals. Learn all their names, find out what interests them and what motivates them personally, and how they learn best.
- ❖ **Children do not all participate for the same reasons. Why do children play soccer?**
  1. Mom and Dad signed them up.
  2. They want to be with friends.
  3. They have older siblings who play.
  4. To learn and have fun.
  5. Improve skills.
  6. Gain self-esteem through success.
  7. Excitement about competition.
  8. Develop a healthy mind and body.
- ❖ **Why do kids drop out of soccer?**
  1. Not having fun – adults took the fun out of it.
  2. Not being with friends.
  3. Failure to learn new skills.
  4. Lack of excitement and creative opportunities.

5. Consistent failure.
6. Found something else that interests them more.
7. School sports.

❖ To prevent drop out what can we do?

1. Design practices where an environment is created where kids want to be there and learn. Practices should be meaningful, fun, challenging, and exciting.
2. Give deserved praise and encouragement.
3. Teach the game as a developing, growing, living thing – make it grow in the players eyes.
4. Help players develop fitness.
5. Provide competitive challenges that define success, but not in comparison to each other (beat your own record).

## **The Coach as a Facilitator:**

❖ What do we mean by this?

1. Set up conditions and an environment that is conducive to learning; standards and expectations should be set (the three rules of training – have fun, no whining, make an effort to learn and improve every day).
2. Remove obstacles to learning – use appropriate activities (geared towards players’ success), remove fear of failure , avoid over-coaching (do not coach everything you see), teach techniques correctly (players want to be good, not inadequate; safety), parent expectations (they need to be realistic), and make sure players are enjoying themselves.
3. Give positive feedback to players.
4. The coach should be enthusiastic (good role model).
5. Let the game be the teacher (what does this mean to you?). It has to be more than just rolling a ball out and saying “play”. What it means is creating an environment where players are responsible for their own decisions. Teaching within the context of the game (do we teach swimming by lying on a bench and practicing strokes?).

## **The Coach as a Teacher:**

- ❖ What is the learning process for young players? Children learn best in a relaxed atmosphere where they get to experience things on their own terms (remember bring out the game within each child). Take tonight’s course for example. We are learning in a relaxed atmosphere; imagine if I said there was going to be a test later, would that change the learning environment? Children are not jars, you cannot unscrew their heads and pour knowledge into their bodies.
- ❖ Social Learning Theory: basically the theory that people learn by watching and imitating others in a common environment. Humans have a natural tendency to seek out praise and avoid criticism. If you compliment one player for something they do, others will imitate that behavior or action.
- ❖ What types of activities should we use? They should be developmentally appropriate, not too difficult. Activities should include the ball, movement, chasing, scoring, stories, decision making. Activities should be simple and have implications for the game. No lines, no laps, no lectures.
- ❖
- ❖ If players are having fun, then the activity is probably developmentally appropriate.

**Remember, they come to PLAY!**



## **Positive Coaching Alliance**

### **The Positive Coach Mental Model**

Mental models have power. They affect how people see, think, and behave. If one were to characterize the current mental model for coaching, it might be called “win-at-all-cost.”

As part of Positive Coaching Alliance’s strategy to transform youth sports, we have developed the Positive Coach Mental Model and will promote it until it becomes the industry standard for youth sports. Extensive academic research constitutes the foundation for the Positive Coach Mental Model.

The Positive Coach Mental Model is consistent with the National Standards for Athletic Coaches developed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), but PCA does not aspire to be a certification organization. Our goal is to win the minds and hearts of youth coaches, so they will willingly choose to incorporate Positive Coaching into their coaching life.

### **The Double-Goal Coach**

A win-at-all-cost coach has only one goal: to win. He or she is concerned primarily with teaching skills and developing strategy designed to win games. A positive Coach is a “Double –Goal-Coach” who also wants to win but has a second goal: to help players develop positive character traits, so they can be successful in life. Winning is important, but the second goal, helping players learn “life lessons,” is more important. A Positive Coach puts players first.

### **Positive Coach Mental Model**

There are three major elements to the “job description” of a Positive Coach. A Positive Coach:

- 1) Redefines “Winner”
- 2) Fills Player’s Emotional Tanks
- 3) Honors the Game

#### **1) Redefines “Winner”**

A Positive Coach helps players redefine what it means to be a winner through mastery, rather than a scoreboard, orientation. He sees victory as a by-product of the pursuit of excellence. He focuses on effort rather than outcome and on learning rather than comparison to others. He recognizes that mistakes are an important and inevitable part of learning and fosters an environment in which players don’t fear making mistakes. While not ignoring the teaching opportunities that mistakes present, he teaches players that a key to success is how one responds to mistakes. He sets standards of continuous improvement for self and players. He encourages his players, whatever their level of ability, to strive to become the best players, and people, they can be. He teaches players that a winner is someone who makes maximum effort, continues to learn and improve, and doesn’t let mistakes (or fear of mistakes) stop them.

## **2) Fills Players' Emotional Tanks**

A Positive Coach is a positive motivator who refuses to motivate through fear, intimidation, or shame. He recognizes that every player has an "Emotional Tank" like the gas tank of a car. Just as a car with an empty gas tank can't go very far, a player with an empty emotional tank doesn't have the energy to do their best.

A Positive Coach understands that compliments, praise, and positive recognition fill Emotional Tanks. He understands the importance of giving truthful and specific feedback and resists the temptation to give praise that is not warranted. When correction is necessary, a Positive Coach communicates criticism to players in ways that don't undermine their sense of self-worth. A Positive Coach strives to achieve a 5:1 "Plus/Minus Ratio" of praise to correction, recognizing that this allows players to better hear criticisms.

A Positive Coach establishes order and maintains discipline in a positive manner. He listens to players and involves them in decisions that affect the team. He works to remain positive even when things aren't going well. He recognizes that it is often when things go wrong that a coach can have the most lasting impact and teach the most important lessons. Even in adversity, he refuses to demean himself, his players, or the environment. He always treats athletes with respect regardless of how well they perform.

## **3) Honors the Game**

A Positive Coach feels an obligation to his sport. He understands that Honoring the Game means getting to the ROOTT of the matter, where ROOTT stands for respect for:

- Rules
- Opponent
- Officials
- Teammates, and
- Tradition of the game

A Positive Coach teaches his players to Honor the Game. He loves his sport and upholds the spirit, as well as the letter, of its rules. He respects opponents, recognizing that a worthy opponent will push his athletes to do their best. He understands the important role that officials play and shows them respect even when he disagrees with their calls. He encourages players to make a commitment to each other, and to encourage one another on and off the field. He values the rich tradition of his sport and feels privileged to participate. A Positive Coach demonstrates integrity and would rather lose than win by dishonoring the game.

## ***Positive Coaching Alliance***

Transforming youth sports so sports can transform youth

[www.positivecoach.org](http://www.positivecoach.org)

# Coaching Your Own Son or Daughter

- ❖ The two main reasons parents get involved in coaching are getting to spend some time with their child and no one else would step up to coach so they become the coach out of necessity.
- ❖ You should treat every child, including your own, as you would like your child to be treated if you were not the coach. **Coaching is an extension of parenting.**
- ❖ The two most common approaches parents take to coaching their own child:
  1. To be extra hard on them so there is no perceived favoritism by other members of the team. You hold your child to a higher standard than the other players. You may feel that your child should lead by example.
  2. To treat them as special; they get to play more than others and get the “preferred” positions. Other parents will not be happy that their child is not being treated as an equal player on the team.

Neither way is very effective or enjoyable for either you or your child.

- ❖ The most effective way to coach your own child is to treat them as you would treat all the members of the team, which is fairly. The coach should make each child feel special and important. You should concentrate on every player’s emotional and soccer development, providing opportunities for each child to find success on the field.
- ❖ You may think that you give your child enough attention at home and shouldn’t have to at practices and games. This is usually a mistake.
- ❖ There is one caveat to treating your child fairly as you treat the other players; children have a difficult time differentiating the roles of parent and coach. There will be times when your child will expect you to act as a parent during games and practices. If your child is injured or upset, they will expect you to react as you would as if it happened at home, and you should. Your child will appreciate you most as mom or dad, not the coach.
- ❖ Be careful of being over-critical of your child after practices and games; what they need most is your love and support. Avoid player/coach conversations on the drive home. If you are having fun, your child will feel you are fun to be with; if you are serious and disapproving, you will be the last person they want to be around.
- ❖ Your child may at times “act out” when they are not getting what they perceive to be the appropriate amount of attention.
- ❖ Remember that life is long – childhood is short.

# Parents' Role in Youth Sports

- ❖ Parents need to keep in mind why children participate in sports. Studies have shown that the most popular reason for playing sports was “to have fun”. The next most popular reasons were to learn new skills, to be with friends, and to experience competition. Although children do identify winning as a reason for playing sport, it is not one of the most popular reasons. Many parents and adults mistakenly believe that winning is the number one reason children want to play sports. Adults who become preoccupied with winning and losing place an unreasonable amount of pressure on children and risk turning them off to sports (remember the objective of the Developmental Program).
- ❖ Effective parents should understand that their primary role is to provide support for their child. At young ages parents need to provide encouragement and help the child understand the lessons that soccer can teach. Use the story of the U10 player whose mother told him “but you lost”. Parents should:
  1. Listen to their children’s views about playing soccer.
  2. Provide unconditional love during successes and failures.
  3. Help children understand that the definition of a good performance is giving one’s best effort.
  4. Encourage non-sport interests.
  5. Provide encouragement and optimism when needed.
  6. Emphasize enjoyment above all else.
- ❖ Parents can help by encouraging their child to try new things and give them positive reinforcement while they are learning. Parents will often yell out to kids what to do during games and freak out when things don’t go “right”. Most parents have forgotten what it was like to be 5 or 6 years old and that they can only attend to one task at a time. It can take every bit of a player’s attention to just try and control the ball; if they hear what parents are saying then they will not be able to control the ball, and if they are focusing on the ball they will not really hear the parents. Certainly if they do become distracted they will neither play nor listen well.
- ❖ If parents really want to help the kids play their best, they should sit back, cheer on all the players, and let the children play.

## U5/U6 Developmental Characteristics

### Physical:

- ❖ Girls may be about 1 year ahead of boys in terms of physiological development.
- ❖ The larger muscle groups are better developed than the small muscle groups.
- ❖ Eye hand coordination is not yet fully developed.
- ❖ They tire easily and need plenty of rest.
- ❖ They have no sense of pace; they go flat out until they drop.
- ❖ They are constantly in motion.
- ❖ They love to run, jump, and roll around.

### Cognitive:

- ❖ Their attention span is short.
- ❖ They are individually oriented.
- ❖ They are easily bruised psychologically and need positive praise often.
- ❖ They can attend to only one problem at a time.
- ❖ They are in the Pre-Operational Stage of development; they are beginning to carry out actions by thinking them through instead of actually performing them. Instructions should be brief and include actions and visual aids (demonstration). Provide a wide range of experiences in order to build a foundation for conceptual learning.
- ❖ Children will often not see the world from someone else's point of view.

### Social/Emotional:

- ❖ Their interests are largely self-centered; they want lots of positive praise as individuals and not as a group.
- ❖ They get along best in small groups.
- ❖ They like to be first at whatever they do.
- ❖ They want to please and do what is expected.
- ❖ They are beginning to sense right from wrong in terms of a specific situation.

## U7/U8 Developmental Characteristics

### Physical:

- ❖ Large muscle activity predominates in interest and value.
- ❖ Improving eye-hand coordination.
- ❖ Tire easily and show fatigue in the afternoon.
- ❖ Has slow reaction time.
- ❖ The cardiovascular system is less efficient than an adult's. The heart and lungs are smallest in proportion to body size; a child's heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover to full resting rate. The capacity for endurance is low.
- ❖ The temperature regulation system is less efficient than an adult's. Children elevate their core body temperature more quickly with activity and take longer to cool down than adults.
- ❖ There is a perceivable improvement in pace and coordination from U6 to U8, however the immaturity of a U8's physical ability is obvious.

## **Cognitive:**

- ❖ Children are entering the Concrete Operational Stage of development, where their thinking is tied to concrete objects. Children have a limited ability to attend to more than one task at a time. The simple task of controlling the ball demands most if not all of their attention capacity, thereby leaving little or no capacity for making additional decisions.
- ❖ The concept of the relationship between time and space is just beginning to develop and will be limited by their capacity to attend to multiple tasks.
- ❖ Limited experience with personal evaluation. Effort is synonymous with performance, “if I try hard then I performed well”, regardless of actual performance.
- ❖ Attention span is short and retention is often poor, but the children do not object to repetition.

## **Social/Emotional:**

- ❖ Want recognition for individual achievements.
- ❖ Beginning to get greater enjoyment from group play.
- ❖ Show greater signs of cooperative efforts.
- ❖ Great need for approval from adults such as parents, teachers, and coaches.
- ❖ Have difficulty taking criticism from adults.
- ❖ Do not like to be treated like a child.
- ❖ Can be overanxious to reach goals set by parents and coaches.
- ❖ Likes variety.
- ❖ Beginning to have a desire to become a member of a team.
- ❖ Has a marked sense of humor.
- ❖ First impulse is to blame others when things go wrong.

# **U9/U10 DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS**

## **PHYSICAL:**

- Large and small motor skills becoming more refined.
- Boys and girls beginning to develop separately; girls gain in growth maturity up to two years over boys.
- More prone to overheating than adults are.
- Greater diversity in playing ability and physical maturity; physically mature individuals demonstrate stronger motor skills.

## **COGNITIVE:**

- Some children are moving from the concrete operational stage to formal operational stage of development. Some children are beginning to be able to do abstract thinking without concrete objects. They can think ahead (anticipate) and plan the solution to a problem.
- Because some children can think ahead, a sense of being able to pace themselves is developing.
- Starting to be able to recognize fundamental tactical concepts such as changing the direction of the ball, but not always sure why.
- Can handle repetitive technical training, but it must be dynamic, not static.

## **SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL:**

- Continued positive reinforcement is needed.

- Explanations must still be brief, concise, and indicate purpose.
- Peer pressure is becoming a factor; children are beginning to spend more time with friends than with parents.
- Adults outside the family (teachers and coaches) take on added significance in children's lives.
- Increasing interest in activities involving challenge.
- Relatively easy to appeal to their sense of reason.
- Respond best to adults who treat them as individuals.
- They like recognition for what they have done and they respond well to deserved praise.

## **U11/U12 DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS**

### **PHYSICAL:**

- ❖ Girls developing earlier than boys.
- ❖ Boys more active and rougher than girls in play.
- ❖ Eye-hand coordination becoming developed.
- ❖ Body growth more rapid than heart growth, lungs not fully developed. Resting heart rate between 80 and 90 beats per minute.
- ❖ Becoming more skillful in the use of small muscles. Can sustain complex, coordinated skill sequences.

### **COGNITIVE:**

- ❖ More children in formal operational stage; they are becoming capable of abstract thinking.
- ❖ Increased attention span and ability to concentrate.
- ❖ Better ability to understand fundamental tactical concepts and why.

### **SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL:**

- ❖ Obsessed by standards of peers, and anxious for social approval of adults.
- ❖ Pressure is being placed on the individual at this level to begin to assume adult responsibilities.
- ❖ If unskilled in group games and game skills, they may tend to withdraw.
- ❖ Moods change quickly.
- ❖ Need approval to feel secure.
- ❖ Easily hurt when criticized. Show them what can be done instead of telling them what not to do.
- ❖ Though mainly still involved because it is fun, they are becoming more competitive.
- ❖ Look towards role models and heroes in order to know how to act.

## **U5-U6 Teaching Objectives**

### **Introduce:**

- ❖ **FUN!!!**
- ❖ Introduce basic motor skills such as running, stopping, twisting, turning, jumping, leaping bending, stretching, dodging, feinting, throwing, and catching. Body control for agility, balance, and coordination.
- ❖ Become aware of themselves in relation to the ball while stationary and while moving.

- ❖ Introduce the four basic surfaces of the foot that can be used for dribbling and controlling the ball (inside, instep, outside, and sole).
- ❖ Introduce kicking the ball with the instep of both feet for shooting and passing.
- ❖ Introduce the laws of the game:
  - No use of the hands on the field of play
  - Goal Kick
  - Corner Kick
  - Kick off
  - Throw in
  - Ball in and out of play
- ❖ Introduce the basic strategy when in possession of the ball – to score a goal.
- ❖ Introduce the basic strategy when the opponent has the ball – prevent them from scoring.
- ❖ **FUN!!!**

## **U7 -U8 Teaching Objectives**

- ❖ **FUN!!!**
- ❖ Reinforce basic motor skills such as running, stopping, twisting, turning, jumping, leaping, bending, stretching, dodging, feinting, throwing, and catching. Develop body control for agility, balance, and coordination.
- ❖ Reinforce their awareness of themselves in relation to the ball while stationary and while moving.
- ❖ Reinforce the use of the four basic surfaces of the foot used for dribbling and for controlling the ball (inside, instep, outside, and sole).
- ❖ Reinforce kicking the ball with the instep of both feet.
- ❖ Reinforce the basic strategy when in possession of the ball – to score a goal.
- ❖ Reinforce the basic strategy when the opponent is in possession of the ball – prevent them from scoring.
- ❖ Reinforce the players' knowledge of the laws of the game:
  - No use of hands by players while on the field of play
  - Goal Kick
  - Corner Kick
  - Kick off
  - Throw in
  - Ball in and out of play

### **Introduce:**

- ❖ Introduce ball juggling
- ❖ **FUN!!!**

# U9/U10 TEACHING OBJECTIVES

## REVIEW AND INTRODUCE:

- **ENJOYMENT!**
- Have players perform the basic technical skills while moving.
- Introduce basic 2v1 attacking skills and principles (combination play):
  - Wall Pass
  - Overlap
  - Take-over
- Introduce basic 2v1 defending skills and principles:
  - Pressure
  - Delay
  - Make play predictable
  - Positioning
- Introduce attacking and defending set plays.
- Introduce the players to the positions on the field and their roles and responsibilities; goalkeeper, backs, midfielders, forwards.
- Introduce the team shape of a 2-3-1 (U9, 7v7) 3-3-2 (U10/11, 9v9) Defenders/Midfielders/Forwards
- Expand on the basic strategy when own team is in possession of the ball:
  - Penetration (look to go to forwards to goal)
  - Find/create space (depth, width, mobility)
  - Pass the ball with teammates to create scoring chances
  - Verbal Communication
- Expand on the basic strategy when the opponent is in possession of the ball:
  - Pressure the player with the ball
  - Cover players without the ball
  - Shrink the space the opponents can play in (concentration, balance)
  - Winning the ball (intercepting, tackling)
  - Verbal communication
- Introduce the role and basic skills of the goalkeeper: (U9)
  - Where they can use their hands
  - How to catch the ball in front of the body with the palms of the hands facing the ball
  - Body position relative to the ball and the goal
  - Kicking and throwing the ball to safe areas or to teammates, and to maintain possession of the ball
- Expand on the role of the goalkeeper: (U10/U11)
  - Stopping shots (positioning and catching)
  - Starting attacks by hand and foot (distribution)
  - Patience in starting attacks
  - Coming out of the penalty area to clear balls
  - Taking own goal kicks
- **EMPHASIS IS ON INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE GAME!**

## U11/U12 TEACHING OBJECTIVES

### REINFORCE U10 TEACHING OBJECTIVES

#### REVIEW AND ENHANCE:

- **ENJOYMENT!**
- Have players perform the basic technical skills while moving.
- Introduce basic 2v1 attacking skills and principles (combination play):
  - Wall Pass
  - Overlap
  - Take-over
- Introduce basic 2v1 defending skills and principles:
  - Pressure
  - Delay
  - Make play predictable
  - Positioning
- Introduce attacking and defending set plays.
- Introduce the players to the positions on the field and their roles and responsibilities; goalkeeper, backs, midfielders, forwards.
- Introduce the team shape of a 3-3-2 (U10/11, 9v9) Defenders/Midfielders/Forwards
- Expand on the basic strategy when own team is in possession of the ball:
  - Penetration (look to go to forwards to goal)
  - Find/create space (depth, width, mobility)
  - Pass the ball with teammates to create scoring chances
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  - Stopping shots (positioning and catching)
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  - Patience in starting attacks
  - Coming out of the penalty area to clear balls
  - Taking own goal kicks
- **EMPHASIS IS ON INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE GAME!**

# Laws of the Game

## ❖ Law 1: The Field of Play.

❖ U4 - 60'X35' 3v3

❖ U5 - 80'X60' 3v3

❖ U6/U7 - 90'x75' 3v3(U7 plays 4v4 starting in fall 2017)

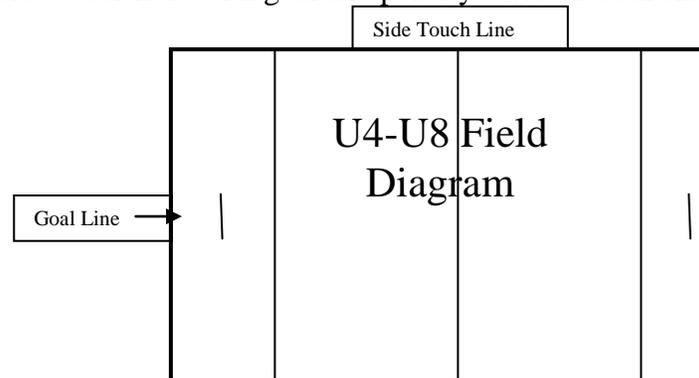
❖ U8 - 120'x105' 4v4

❖ U9 - 200'x130' 7v7 w/goalkeepers

❖ U10/11 - 220'x155' w/goalkeepers and offside

❖ U4-U8 fields will be marked with two goal lines and two touch lines. There will be a midfield line as well as two lines 6 yards from and parallel to the goal lines that will define the goal areas. There will also be two short lines 2 yards from the goal lines to be used to place the ball for goal kicks (U4-U8). The lines are part of the field of play. The goals are 4' high x 6' wide

U9/U11 fields will look like a miniature soccer field with goal and penalty box's on each end .



❖ **Law 2: The Ball.** The ball shall be a size 3 (U4/U8). U9/12 ball size is 4.

❖ **Law 3: Number of Players.** At U4-U7 there shall be 3 players from each team on the field of play (six play max. unless special circumstance). At U8 there will be 4 players from each team on the field of play (eight player max unless special circumstance), At U9 there shall be 7 players on the field of play from each team (11 players max unless special circumstance) one of whom must be designated the goalkeeper. At U10/11 there shall be 9 players on the field of play from each team 13 players max unless special circumstance) one of whom must be designated the goalkeeper. Please refer to Rules Matrix for Substitutions. Players should receive at least 50% playing time in each game as dictated by Fire FC policy.

❖ **Law 4: Player's Equipment.** Players should have the following equipment:

1. Reversible jersey (Blue for home team, White for visiting team)
2. Shorts
3. Shin guards
4. Socks to cover shin guards
5. Shoes/cleats – no toe cleats allowed

No jewelry or watches allowed; medic alert tags OK; casts must be padded and present no danger.

❖ **Law 5: The Referee.** There is two referee's per field, one from each team. Talk to your parents and get them to help you. Be nice but firm! The referee is on the field of play and close to the ball but not in the way. The referee has an important role as a teacher of the laws of the game.

❖ **Law 6: Linesman.** There are no linesmen in Micro-Soccer.

❖ **Law 7: The Duration of Play.** Games are divided into quarters for U4/7; please refer to Rules Matrix for length of time. U8 and above play half's, please refer to Rules Matrix for length of time

- ❖ **Law 8: Start of Play.** The ball is placed at midfield, and the defending team must be inside their own goal area until the ball is played(U4/8). U9 and above the defending team must be in their defensive side of the field. The ball must move forward, and the player that kicks it off may not touch the ball again until a second player has touched the ball.
- ❖ **Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play.** The ball is out of play when the whole of the ball has crossed the whole line whether it is on the ground or in the air, or play has been stopped by the referee. The ball is in play at all other times including rebounds off the goal posts and rebounds off the referee when on the field of play. Draw pictures to illustrate the ball in and out of play.
- ❖ **Law 10: Method of Scoring.** A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the laws of the game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal. At the U8 age, a goal can only be scored from the offensive side of the field.
- ❖ **Law 11: Offside.** There is no offside in Micro-Soccer. Offside begins at U10/11
- ❖ **Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct.** All fouls will result in an indirect free kick. A goal cannot be scored directly from an indirect free kick. (See Law 13). You will not see many fouls or player misconduct in Micro-Soccer.
- ❖ **Law 13: Free Kicks.** All Free Kicks shall be indirect except for U9 and above. This means that a goal may not be scored until the ball has touched another player other than the kicker before going into the goal. The kick is taken from the point of infraction unless the infraction happened in the goal area, in which case the kick will be taken from outside the goal area. The defending team shall give a distance of 5 yards on free kicks. Play may also be restarted with a Drop Ball. This may happen after an injury, interference by an outside agent, the ball deflating, or simultaneous touches before the ball goes out of play. There are no drop balls in the goal area. Ball must touch ground before players can play the ball.
- ❖ **Law 14: Penalty Kicks.** There are no penalty kicks in Micro-Soccer. U9 and above have penalty kicks
- ❖ **Law 15: The Throw In.** When the entire ball crosses the entire touch line, not the goal line either on the ground or in the air, it shall be thrown in from the point where it crossed the line in any direction by a player of the team opposite to that of the player who last touched it. The player must face the field of play, both feet must be on or behind the touch line, and use both hands to throw the ball from behind and over the head. Players may not throw the ball in to themselves. In Micro-Soccer players will be allowed in the first couple of games to re-throw the ball if they have made a mistake; after that, the ball will go to the opponent.
- ❖ **Law 16: The Goal Kick.** A goal kick is awarded when the entire ball crosses the entire goal line and a goal was not scored and the ball was last touched by a member of the attacking team. The kick is taken from the goal kick line which is 2 yards from the goal line. At U5 and U6 the opposing team must be beyond the midfield line (in their own half of the field) until the ball leaves the goal area. At U7 the opposing team must be beyond the goal area (6 yard line) while members of the kicking team may be either inside or outside the goal area. The kick is re-taken if it does not clear the goal area, or the ball is touched by another player in the goal area.
- ❖ **Law 17: The Corner Kick.** A corner kick is awarded when the entire ball crosses the entire goal line and a goal was not scored and the ball was last touched by a member of the defending team. The ball is placed in the corner of the field. A goal cannot be scored directly from a corner kick in Micro-Soccer. Opponents must be 5 yards away from the ball on corner kicks.



# Recreation Training Program

## Recreation Team Training Program

### Program Overview:

The Recreational Training program, ran by Fire FC professional staff coach Karl Biddison, is designed to train not only the players involved, but is designed to pass on information to each team's coach so that they can accurately and effectively train their teams away from this program. The more that the Fire FC can inform and educate parent coaches within the recreation program, the higher the quality of player will be produced from the recreation program.

This is an eight week program that will involve one training per week for each specific age group. The age groups are: U4/5 and U6/7/8. Each training session will follow closely the [Fire FC Recreational Development Model](#).

### Program Philosophy:

This program is designed to promote and instill the love of the sport of soccer in an enthusiastic and safe manner, where not only players benefit from learning individual and team skills, but the parent coaches benefit from learning how to properly be involved and coach their teams. Coaches will be asked to run activities during the season after learning from Karl the first couple weeks. Karl will be there to watch how the coaches teach specific lessons and how coaches interact with players.

u4/5 - Mondays - 5:00 - 5:45pm on Maverick South Field

u6/7 - Mondays - 6:00 - 7:00pm on Maverick South Field

Starting Monday 3/11, will be every Monday until 5/6.

This program starts Monday March 11th 2019 and goes to Monday May 6th 2019.

**To sign up for the Recreational Training Program, please email Karl Biddison at (970) 237-2279 or [karl.biddison@comcast.net](mailto:karl.biddison@comcast.net) with you team name and age group.**

## Individual Age Breakdown & Curriculum

The practices are designed to get the players familiar with the basic and complex movements in soccer, while giving them plenty of opportunities to gain confidence whilst dribbling the soccer ball. A very heavy importance of confident dribblers will be the main premise of the course. All activities will be designed to promote these facets of learning soccer in a safe, organized, and fun way.

### U4 & U5

For ages 4 and 5 this program is intended to promote constant movement with and without a soccer ball, also this age is promoted by incorporating some ball skill included within a variety of games to keep the players constantly moving and getting touches on the ball.

Training's will typically include:

- Brief directions; repeated when necessary
- Lots of varied movement with and without ball
- Many Activities of short duration
- Lots of Water Breaks
- About 45 minute sessions
- Emphasis on familiarity and confidence with a soccer ball

### U6 & U7

Ages 6 and 7 will focus on soccer-nastics (movements in every direction) and promotion of continued confidence with a soccer ball. This will be done through techniques such as "individual discovery" and "guided discovery". At this age the focal points of trainings will be ball mastery.

Trainings will typically include:

- Brief direction, and brief player discovery
- A mixture of maze and target style games and activities
- Sessions running for about an hour
- Emphasizing ball mastery and individual discovery

### U8

At the ages of 8 and 9 players begin to start showing improved locomotive skills, so a less emphasis of "soccer-nastics" however; movement will still

be a point of recognition. Also at these ages players have basic technical skills and cognitive recognition for the game. Focal points for ages 8 and 9 will include ball mastery as well as improved understanding of team skills. A large focus of individual discovery will be set for a higher level of cognitive ability from the players.

Trainings will typically include -

- Slightly more complex activities
- Mixture of individual and partner/team activities
- Sessions which run about an hour
- Emphasis on ball mastery and improved team skills

For more information on this program or to sign your team up, please contact Information: Karl Biddison at (970) 237-2279 or [karl.biddison@comcast.net](mailto:karl.biddison@comcast.net)

## Planning and Running Your Practice

One thing to keep in mind when working with young players is that the younger they are, the more organized you need to be. Since you are coaching some of the youngest players in the program, you will need to be very organized. It cannot be stressed enough that you need to plan ahead what you will do at practice. Being able to move quickly from one activity to the next will help the players keep their focus and keep them on task. If players are not actively engaged in training, that is when their minds wander and we lose their attention, and they stop having fun. Practices for these age groups should last about 45-55 minutes. Remember that U4 players will only give you a certain amount so don't plan on a 55 minute practice when they can only give you 30 minutes on any given day. These young players have a short attention span and need lots of variety in a practice; let's look at how to put a practice together.

There are a few methods of organizing a practice, but for simplicity's sake we will focus on just one. When organizing a practice using this method there are three main phases:

### 1. Warm Up:

The purpose of the warm up is to get the players excited about being at practice and to get their bodies warmed up for physical activity. One or two activities should suffice here. This is a perfect place to use activities that develop the players' basic motor skills. These activities can be done with or without a ball, but I would recommend using a ball more often than not. This phase should last approximately 10 minutes.

### 2. Teaching Phase:

This is the main part of the session where we introduce the players to the surfaces of the foot that are used in soccer to control or kick the ball. Two or three activities in which the players are dribbling or kicking the ball will form this phase of the practice (**one player, one ball**). This is where the coach can give positive corrective feedback to the players, which at these age groups consists of giving positive encouragement and friendly reminders of which parts of the foot to use. This phase should last between 15-20 minutes.

### 3. The Game:

You should end each practice with a game of Micro-Soccer so that the players experience the game and learn the laws of the game. This is where the players learn the basic strategies of the game; to score a goal for their team and to prevent the other team from scoring a goal. This phase should last 15-20 minutes.

If you plan your practice as outlined above, not only will you be organized and helping your players

maintain their focus, but you will be well on your way to making sure you are achieving the teaching objectives for these age groups. For ideas of the types of activities to use, see the sample activities included in the Coaching Supplement.

**Sample Practices** can be found at [gjsoccer.org/Rec](http://gjsoccer.org/Rec) tab/Rec coaching resources.

## TEAM MANAGEMENT:

- ❖ After this meeting you can hold your first practices. For U4-U7, you are allowed one practice per week. U8 and above can practice twice a week. You are responsible to find your own practice area. If you plan on practicing at **Canyon View, you can only practice on the north fields which are to the east of the pavilion. The south fields are reserved for advanced teams.** Please remember that we have our U4/5's that play on Thursdays so fields space is limited on that day . Fields are on a first come first served. Pomona and Sherwood Park are first come first served as well.
- ❖ Hold a Parent Orientation Meeting to discuss the following:
  - >Introduce yourself, the assistant coach, referee, etc.
  - >Discuss the philosophy of the club and your own.
  - >Risk management.
  - >Training days, time, location.
  - >Player/Parent responsibilities.
  - >Fill all volunteer positions.
  - >Miscellaneous information.
  - >Q & A
  - >Keep the lines of communication open!
- ❖ Spread volunteer work out within the team; the coach and their spouse should not do all the work. We recommend that each team have two referees.
- ❖ Players should bring a ball and shin guards to every practice and game. Have them write their name and phone number on their ball.
- ❖ Give each player equal playing time over the course of the game and the season. All games are at Chatfield Soccer Complex.
- ❖ After games and practices, give reminders about next practice or game. Who will set up or takes down the goals, etc.
- ❖ If you cannot make practice or a game, please have your assistant cover for you, and make sure that at least two adults are present. If you cannot meet these criteria, please cancel practice. We understand that you have lives outside of soccer; this is just a reminder that being a coach has responsibilities.

## Qualities of Effective Training Activities For

## **Micro-Soccer**

The following list of characteristics can be used as a checklist to determine if the activities you have chosen for your practice will be effective in creating a fun and enjoyable practice environment. Each activity you choose should have as many of these qualities as possible.

- ❖ Activities that include lots of ball contact for each player – 1 ball for each player.
- ❖ Activities that are simple and can be taught in about 60 seconds or less. There should be more demonstration than explanation.
- ❖ Activities in which every player is active.
- ❖ Activities that have a story line to capture the imagination of the players.
- ❖ Activities that are related to the game, not just drills.
- ❖ Activities that are competitive, such as beating your own previous score in an activity or the team with the most points wins.
- ❖ Activities that include scoring goals.
- ❖ Activities that ask players to think; give them a problem to solve.

**Please avoid having the players run laps, stand in lines, or have to listen to lectures; players will not find this fun.**

## **Risk Management & Care and Prevention of Injuries**

- ❖ Attending the required coaching courses is the first step in risk management. Here it is possible to get the coaches on the same page in terms of our philosophy and how we would like you to work with the kids. It is also an opportunity to share with you what we would like you to teach. Please feel free to attend the field portion of the Entry Level Course for a better understanding of the techniques of the game and how to teach them.
- ❖ The prevention of injuries should always be our first concern.
- ❖ Always keep the players under supervision.
- ❖ Check the playing area for any dangerous objects.
- ❖ Warm the players up and introduce stretching.
- ❖ Make sure all equipment is safe and in good condition.

- ❖ Give players adequate water breaks.
- ❖ Teach techniques and the game in the proper and safe manner.
- ❖ Take a First Aid Class.
- ❖ If a player is injured, notify the parents.
- ❖ If a player is injured, always err on the side of caution. If they need to see a physician for the injury, please request a note from the physician before allowing the player to resume play for example.
- ❖ Use R.I.C.E. Rest, ice, compression, elevation.
- ❖ If there is an injury, avoid panic.
- ❖ Always make sure you have the yellow medical release forms with you.
- ❖ Carry a cell phone or know where the closest phone is in case of emergency.
- ❖ Always use Common Sense!