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# COACHES HANDBOOK



## Developmentally Appropriate Coaching

Choosing activities for soccer players with knowledge of children and their capabilities.

To create a positive learning environment on the soccer field, it is important to take into consideration where players are developmentally including ***Psychomotor*** (physical), ***Cognitive*** (learning) and ***Psychosocial*** (emotional) stages.

It is imperative to understand that children do not learn in the same way as adults. We must not treat 6 year old players the same way as 13 year old players. Expecting a younger player to comprehend game tactics or other inappropriate topics when they developmentally are not able to, will only create frustration for everyone involved.

Keep in mind that chronological age is not the same as developmental maturity. Children progress through these stages at different rates. An effective coach is able to “meet players where they are” and create realistic expectations.

# U6

	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Easily fatigued, but recover rapidly.	Allow rest breaks. Plan activities that are short in duration, no more than 10 minutes.
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Minimal differences between boys and girls	Co-ed groups recommended
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Development is focused on fundamental movement skills like running, leaping, jumping and hopping.	Get them moving in a variety of ways.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Egocentric—me, my, mine	1 ball for 1 player, they will play in the same space but not share their 'toy'
<b>Cognitive</b>	Beginning to use symbols to represent objects.	Be creative and imaginative. The ball can be a 'treasure' the player a 'pirate'.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Able to tend to only one task at a time. Process only small bits of information.	Keep activities and rules simple. Avoid lengthy instructions; (1 min max) get them playing as soon as possible.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Immature understanding to space and time	Expect players to swarm like bees. This is OK. They cannot understand positions so spend very little time trying to fix this.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Short attention span	Plan activities that are short in duration, no more than 10 minutes.
<b>Cognitive</b>	No sense of pace. They like to be constantly in motion	No need to focus on fitness or endurance, they will give total effort when they can.
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Egocentric—they see the world only from their own perspective.	Let every player have a ball
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Psychologically easily bruised	Provide encouragement and frequent positive feedback.
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Little or no concern for team activities	Keep games and scrimmages small-sided. Ideally 3 v 3 at the most, so they can be involved and have lots of touches on the ball.

# U8

	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Skeletal systems are still growing; growth plates are near the joints	Injuries to joint areas merit special consideration
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Cardiovascular systems are less efficient than adults	Fitness training not appropriate; let them play and allow rest breaks
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Improving coordination and physical confidence but immature physical abilities still obvious	Give them lots of opportunity to run, jump, hop, roll, ... this is how they explore and learn
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Boys and girls still quite similar	Co-ed grouping can be effective
<b>Cognitive</b>	Limited ability to attend to more than one task. No capacity for tactics / decision making.	Emphasis should be on skill development. Teaching positions will be ineffective.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Effort is synonymous with performance	Recognize and reward effort rather than outcome.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Introduction of competitive and cooperative activity	Provide some activities that allow players to solve problems in pairs-1 ball for 2 players
<b>Cognitive</b>	Less egocentric, strong sense of rules and code of conduct especially in cooperation with others	Provide clear and simple instructions. They will expect you to enforce rules and keep score if applicable
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Self-concept and body image are beginning to develop, but are very fragile	Great need for approval from adults. Let them show off their individual skills.
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Desire for social acceptance. Still very sensitive and dislike failure in front of their peers	Be a positive coach. "Catch them being good" rather than point out mistakes.
<b>Psychosocial</b>	More into imitation of the 'big guys'. Sports heroes become important.	Expose them to some 'Soccer Stars' to look up to
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Still lack a sense of pace, will go flat out and chase the ball until they drop	Sessions should not exceed 45 min to 1 hour.
<b>Psychosocial</b>	An inclination toward pair activities.	Provide a mix of individual and partner activities. Add some maze-type games and target games.

# U10

	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Boy and girls develop separately	Consider coed versus gender specific programs
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Ability to stay physically active is increased. But more prone to heat injury than adults.	Practice time can be longer (60-75 min).
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Gross and motor skills are more refined.	Repetitive technique is very important, but make it DYNAMIC!
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Greater diversity in playing ability among the players	Provide coaching to ALL players. Avoid favoring the physically more mature player.
<b>Psychomotor</b>	Rapid gains in learning and function at increasingly sophisticated level in the performance of movement skills	Give them 'homework', challenge them to learn new skills
<b>Cognitive</b>	Sense of pace is becoming developed. They are starting to think ahead.	They will recognize fundamental tactics and positioning. Introduce Small Group Activities (3-6 players). Add more directional games.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Demonstrate increased responsibility	Use them to help—carry their own stuff, ball, water, tuck in shirt, pull up socks...
<b>Cognitive</b>	Intrinsically motivated to play	Becoming more serious about their 'play'.
<b>Psychosocial</b>	May initiate play on their own	Provide opportunities for free play, street soccer....
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Peer pressure is significant	Are your players a positive influence on each other? Look out for 'bullies' on your team
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Adults outside the family may take on added significance	Be a role model. Continue to provide positive reinforcement.



## Coaching Expectations

- **Professionalism**
  - Be prepared--arrive early with all necessary equipment, have a practice planned in advance, get your field set-up before players are there.
  - Look the part of an athlete/coach—coaches must wear soccer shoes and a Hamilton Girls Soccer Shirt. Tuck in your shirt, tie your shoes, take off your sunglasses- eye contact is an important part of coaching.
  
- **Safety**
  - Ensure the physical and emotional safety of all players.
  - A medical kit should be onsite for minor first aid situations. Every team is required to have two on-site adult representatives so one can assist the injured the player and the other can stay with the rest of the players.
  - If serious injury occurs, call 911 for assistance. Contact the participant's parents/emergency contact. Complete an Injury Report.
  - Players should never be left alone. If they need to leave the playing area (use the restroom, get medical attention...) send 2 players together. Or if you accompany players to the restroom, do not go in with them alone; wait outside where you can be seen.
  
- **During your Session**
  - Learn the names of the players in your group.
  - Have Fun! Be enthusiastic and energetic, it will be contagious.
  - Be Positive. At least 3 positives for 1 negative.
  - Give Feedback. Let the players know what they are doing right, they will be more likely to do it again.
  - Understand the individual needs and personalities of the players.
  - Assign leaders during activities. It assists organization and responsibility.
  
- **Departure**
  - Pick up your equipment. Make sure the playing area is cleaned up; all water bottles, trash...
  - At the end of the day never leave a player alone—2 adults must remain while waiting for player to be picked up.

## Training Tips

- Always encourage good sportsmanship. Never let players hassle one another.
- Be sensitive to signs and situations where others are teasing a slow learner.
- Come Prepared—don't make up the practice as you go along.
- Don't mess with success—if you find a popular game, use it but don't overdo it!
- If kids are whining, take a water break then start a new activity.
- Be consistent and stay on schedule.

## Coaching the Beginner

### • Recognize

- Coaching the beginner is really about facilitating play and guiding learning.
- The first problem the beginner encounters is the ball, and that's a pretty big problem.
- Make every practice like a birthday party—lots of games and contests.
- Don't take yourself too seriously when working with this group—have fun and join in.
- Expect the unexpected!

### • Tips

- Avoid the 3 L's—Line, Laps and Lectures.
- Make sure the appropriate size ball is used.
- Talk to the kids in a language they will understand—avoid coaching terms.
- Use games of inclusion versus games of exclusion.
- Use show and tell methods—“watch me” and then “can you do it”.
- Eye contact is important—bend down to talk to a small child, ask questions.

### • What to Expect

- No concept of soccer—more interest in just playing.
- Success is measured in participation and effort—not results.
- Ball is the center of all action—especially in the game.
- Cognitive ability of their age limits understanding of simple game concepts.
- Attention span limited—run out of steam and stop—don't talk too long.

### • Building Sound Foundation

- Introduce simple rules—pay attention, respect others, fair play, cooperation.
- Dribbling is their game—don't discourage dribbling for the sake of kicking the ball away.
- Passion for the game comes from enjoyment—evolution of fun to pleasure.
- When emphasis is only on the result the learning process suffers—make sure you recognize the effort on contributions of each player.

## Handling Disruptions

- In the environment of soccer training there are few situations that require the handling of a disruptive participant. Most of the time, players will do as they are told and with the rare exception, a quiet word from the coach will straighten out the misunderstanding. It is important that we understand our role as coach and teacher in regard to situations involving disruptive children. If a situation arises, use common sense and resolve the problem in a positive manner.
  - Speak to the individual in a non-threatening tone.
  - Do not become angry or agitated with the player. It may be a matter of a misunderstanding rather than non-compliance.
  - Speak quietly to them and explain what it is they need to stop doing or what it is that you expect from them.
  - When talking with a younger player, crouch down so that you are talking to them at their eye level.
  - If the player doesn't respond positively after the first discussion, speak with them again-calmly. Tell them the behavior needs to stop or change in order for them to continue to participate.
  - Finally, if the participant fails to stop or change their behavior, remove them from participation for a defined period of time (time out).
  - During a time out, the player should sit no more than 15 yards away from the coach/group and should be visible at all times.
  - **Never** deal with disruption in the following ways:
    - Use physical activity to discipline
    - Embarrass or humiliate the participant
    - Resort to physical punishment



## **Code of Conduct**

The mission of the Hamilton Girls Soccer Club is to provide a safe, fun, and sportsmanlike atmosphere for young girls of Hamilton Township and its surrounding communities to learn and participate in the game of soccer.

Our organization is comprised of the players, their parents, volunteer coaches, referees, division directors and an Executive Board. The success of our program depends on the collective efforts of, and cooperation among ALL participants. To ensure the continued success of our program, we have identified the responsibilities of each participant.

### **The Coach**

1. Provides well-planned fun, appropriate, challenging practices in a safe practice environment.
2. Creates an atmosphere of fairness, trust, and encouragement.
3. Maintains discipline at all times.
4. Inspects fields to ensure that it is safe and playable.
5. Provides well-planned game plan that includes player assignments and probable substitutions.
6. Ensure fair playing time to all players.
7. Develops, by example, good sportsmanship in players.
8. Maintains control of players and fans during games.
9. Makes no comment to officials during the game. Thanks the officials after the game.
10. Treats players, opponents, and officials with respect and courtesy.

### **The Player:**

1. Play for the fun of it.
2. Arrives at practices and games at designated times, properly equipped and ready to play.
3. Listens to the coach and diligently tries to follow his/her instructions.
4. Demonstrates enthusiasm by working as hard as possible at all times.
5. Treats teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials with respect and courtesy.
6. Plays the position assigned with enthusiasm.
7. Makes no comments to the officials during the game. Thanks the officials after the game.
8. Demonstrates good sportsmanship, win or lose.

## **The Parents**

1. Ensure player's arrival at the games and practices, on time and properly equipped and ready to play.
2. Arrive on time to pick up players after practices and games, and arrive early in the event of bad weather or premature darkness.
3. Provide assistance to the coach as needed.
4. Encourage the players, cheer and applaud outstanding plays for both teams.
5. Do not give instruction.
6. Do not criticize the coach.
7. Make no comments to the officials during the game. Thank the officials after the game.
8. Treat players, coaches, opponents, and officials with respect and courtesy.

**HAMILTON GIRLS SOCCER  
INJURY REPORT FORM**

Person Completing Form \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Injury \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time of Injury \_\_\_\_\_  
Field and/or Location where the Injury Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_  
Was this a: Game\_\_\_ Practice \_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Injured Person \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship of Injured person to Hamilton Girls Soccer:  
player\_\_\_ coach\_\_\_ parent\_\_\_ spectator\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (if under 18 years old): \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Injured body part: \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe how the injury occurred:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On-site First Aid Provided:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Medical Follow-up Received:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If injured person is under 18 y/o was a parent or guardian notified? \_\_\_\_\_  
How? In person \_\_\_ phone \_\_\_  
Name and phone # of witness(es) at time of accident.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Injury Report form is to be completed by your team coach or another Hamilton Girls Soccer Representative. Please submit this form to your Division Director.**



# ORGANIZING A GOOD SOCCER PRACTICE

## Recommended Equipment

- **A Ball for Every Player**—ask them to bring their own, but good to have an extra in case someone forgets
- **Shin guards and Water for Every Player**—ask them to bring their own
- **Cones or Disc Cones to mark playing space, field or goals**
- **A Stopwatch or Timer**—helpful if you have one to time activities and games
- **Scrimmage Vests (Pinnies)**—to help split players into teams
- **First Aid Kit**—includes some band aids, instant cold packs... for minor injuries

## Typical Practice Format

- **Greet Every Player by Name**—make them feel important
- **Warm-up**—both physical and mental preparation
- **Teach a Skill**—make sure it is age appropriate
- **Use the skill in a fun game**—include lots of opportunity to practice the skill
- **Use the skill in another fun game**—consider adding opponents to the skill
- **Have another fun game planned in case one of the first 2 do not go the way you envisioned**
- **Scrimmage**
- **Cool-Down, Announcements**

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# Game Day Coaching

## Remember Why Children Play

**FUN      Skills      Fitness      Competition      “LOVE OF THE GAME”**

## Parent Communication

- Game information – time, place, field, uniform...
- Training Topic, Team emphasis
- Sideline Behaviour—cheering, positive
- Referees are OFF-LIMITS

## Pre-Game

- Greet each player by Name
- Set the right tone
- Reinforce the training topic or other emphasis from the week
- Set a relevant goal (other than the score)

## In-Game Coaching

- **If more than one coach, discuss roles**
  - Substitutions--have a plan
  - Bench Coach—player safety, water, refocus
- **‘Catch Them Being Good’**
- **Individual Feedback and Corrections**
  - **Simple and Specific**
  - **Find the right moment**
  - **Positive Language**  
“Hit the target” vs “don’t miss”

## Half-Time

- **Player Safety**
- **Keep Emotions in Check**
- **Team Feedback**
  - Prioritize—3 points (may be positive or corrective)
  - Provide Solutions
  - KISS—Keep It Simple Stupid

## Post-Game

- Emphasise trying hard and having fun, not winning
- Talk about the game, not the result



## SOCCER MOVES AND FAKES

- Ball Taps
- Soul Roll
- Stop and Hop or Stop Turn
- U-Turn or Pull Back
- Inside-Outside
- Outside Cut
- Inside Cut
- Step-Over
- Pull-Push
- Drag Push
- Feint of Shoulder Drop
- Fake Shot or Hesitation
- Scissor

<http://www.redbullsacademy.com/training/skills.aspx>