



HSA Player Curriculum

These are general recommendations for age appropriate coaching. Please also look at the resources located at the end of the curriculum and use them to explore a variety of exercises.

GUIDE PLAYERS TO DISCOVER THE GAME

We encourage you to think of team practices as an environment in which players come to understand soccer through experimentation and guided discovery. Our experience teaches us that when players HEAR, they tend to forget, and when they SEE they begin to remember, and when they DO they come to understand. The youngest ages may need a bit more guidance in coming to understand basic concepts but as the players get older we can help them develop their abilities to explore and come to the game through guided discovery.

MODELING CORRECT PERFORMANCE

The single best thing you can do for your team is to ensure that they see the desired outcome (skill or strategy) demonstrated correctly. If you cannot demonstrate correctly consider using someone who can (an accomplished player, or an assistant coach who you recruit that has competent skills).

Another idea for most age groups is to find an appropriate video – you could assign this as homework for your players. Once the appropriate video is located the coach could send the link to the team and then have them respond to questions at the next practice. This is a great way to frame the practice and get the “real game demonstration” to players. There are many soccer clips posted on USYouthSoccer.org and on YouTube.

PLAYERS ENJOY THE GAME MORE WHEN THEY CAN PERFORM BASIC SKILLS & STRATEGIES

When you emphasize skill mastery within an environment that includes fun, skill building exercises, encourage players to set and obtain goals and help them understand that the skills take time and application to master. Encouragement, acknowledgement and small but meaningful rewards (ribbons, healthy snack, name on team chart with checklist of accomplishments) are the best motivation for players. Allowing a player to demonstrate their achievements in front of teammates is a good reward for the player and can serve as motivation for others. An equally effective reward for players who are slower to show improvement is to praise effort and small improvements. The ideal cycle for players is to help them get through the concentration and effort required to make the first level of improvements so that the improvements will motivate them to keep working.

KEEP IT FUN!

Players will keep coming back if they enjoy themselves. Tune in to what is the most fun for your players and use that as a reward for good effort and application in their other practice endeavors.

U6 – U8 Discovery through fun, skill-building games

By the end of the season players can demonstrate correct side foot passing technique and simple dribbling techniques to maneuver the ball away from pressure into open space.

If you have never coached before there are great videos that show a coach in action with young players at the following link:

http://www.indianayouthsoccer.org/Left_Nav/Education/coachinghome/playdevvideo.htm

The practice should flow something like this:

1. Lay out field for first exercise prior to players arriving (5 minutes prior to start time)
2. Greet players and state learning objectives for the session (1 minute)
3. Explain and DEMONSTRATE the desired skill(s) to be performed using the Whole-part-whole method. i.e. show the skill as it is used in a game, then break it down into its components and set up practice exercises that allow repetition and variation., and then move on to a game-like exercise that puts the skill into game use. At this age group this usually involves fun games invoking characters and fun activities that include the desired skill. 30 minutes of varied exercises that are variations of similar concepts (body awareness, balance, coordination and then more specific soccer skills). See below for recommended exercises.
4. Small sided game (up to 3 vs 3) 25 minutes
5. Recap the practice. You can also finish with a fun individual or group challenge.

The following exercises are located on the link listed below and are recommendations for your practices.

http://www.indianayouthsoccer.org/Left_Nav/Education/coachinghome/coachlessons.htm

The practice plans on the website are great for your teams.

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Practice plan title</u> |
|-------------|---|
| One | Balance and Coordination on Day 1 and U-6 Dribbling on Day 2 |
| Two | U6 – U8 Change of Direction on Day 1 and U6-U8 Passing Day 2 |
| Three | U6 – U8 Dribbling with Head up on Day 1 and U6-U8 Passing #2 on Day 2 |
| Four | U8 Dribbling on Day 1 and U8 Ball Possession on Day 2 |

Additional resources: You can find some good skills illustrated on video at

<http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/players/SkillzSchoolVideos.asp> and on www.youtube.com by typing in soccer drills. And at the following link. <http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/index.htm> as well as by typing in soccer drills on your search engine.

U-10 Curriculum

If your players are new to soccer you can use exercises from the U6-U8 curriculum for the first few weeks and then tap into these.

By the end of the season players can demonstrate correct technique in the skills of side foot passing and receiving, dribbling techniques to maneuver the ball and effectively change direction and speed away from pressure into open space. They will be able to demonstrate the early phases of instep kicking. Players in their second season that have the foundation listed in the U6-U8 curriculum will begin to demonstrate basic 1 v 1 concepts such as shielding the ball, finding space (head up) and having the courage to go 1 v 1 on offense and then the basic defending stance and tackling mechanics on defense

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The practice should flow something like this:

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4. Small sided game (25 minutes)
5. Recap the practice. You can also finish with a fun individual or group challenge.

The following exercises are located on the link listed below and are recommendations for your practices.

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| <u>Week</u> | <u>Practice plan title</u> |
|-------------|--|
| One | U-10 Dribbling on day 1 and Passing – Training Thoughts on day 2 |
| Two | U-10 Improving individual possession on day 1 and U-8 Striking the Ball on day 2 |
| Three | U-10 Finding Space on day 1 and U-10 Passing on day 2 |
| Four | U-10 – U-14 Whole Part Whole Dribbling to beat an opponent |

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U-12 Curriculum

This is a very important age for skill development and the introduction of the basic principles of play. The use of individual and small group strategies should be incorporated into practices so that they are taught in the context of their game application.

The effect of the role model is very important at this stage of development. Hero worship, identification with successful professional/national teams and players and a hunger for imaginative skills typify the mentality of this age.

For players in their 3rd season that have the background of exercises listed in the curricula for the younger teams we desire the following outcomes:

- Demonstrate through practice and game play the basic principles of 1 v 1 attacking and defending
- Attacking: Taking risks by developing moves to beat an opponent and to keep possession (shielding, spin turns, change of speed and direction). Ability to complete the next action (passing or shooting) when dribbling moves open up lanes.
- Defending: Proper closing down of space to establish tackling stance, push opponent to weak foot and demonstrate proper tackling stance and timing.
- Receiving: First touch controls ball quickly and places ball into best position for the next action. Inside foot, outside foot, sole of the foot, laces are used to control the ball.
- Passing: Correct technique for short range (5-10 yards) passing with inside and outside of foot. Correct technique for longer range passes (11-30 yards).
- Finishing (Shooting): Correct technique from short range (6-12 yards) and medium range (13-18 yards) with side foot and instep.
- Demonstrate tactical awareness and correct actions in attacking or defending up to 3 v 3.
- Defense: Role of 1st, 2nd and 3rd defenders; Pressure, cover and balance.
- Attacking: Role of 1st and 2nd attacker; Unbalance defense, support 1st attacker.

If your players are new to soccer you can use exercises from the U10 curriculum for the first few weeks and then tap into these. The following exercises are located on the link listed below and are recommendations for your practices.

The practice plans on the website are great for your teams and are listed on the following page http://www.indianayouthsoccer.org/Left_Nav/Education/coachinghome/coachlessons.htm

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Practice plan title</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| One | U10-U14 Training their thoughts on day 1 and U12 Shooting to score on day 2 |
| Two | Whole part whole U10-U14 Combination play on day 1 and District Training-Dribbling with the head up (U10-U13) on day 2 |
| Three | District Training – Passing for Possession on day 1 and U10-U14 Vision |
| Four | Whole part whole U10-U14 Dribbling – Beating an Opponent on day 1 and U10-U14 Improving Individual Possession on day 2 |

Additional resources: You can find some good skills illustrated on video at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/players/SkillzSchoolVideos.asp> and on www.youtube.com by typing in soccer drills. And at the following link <http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/index.htm> as well as by typing in soccer drills on your search engine.

U-14 Curriculum

FORMAL PHASE: THE COMMITMENT (U-14)

Development of individual skills - individual and small group tactics:

Adult standards and formal rules become applicable. The pace of development quickens at this time due to the acceleration of physical and mental maturation. The demands of skill training as well as training loads should increase, thus provoking improvement with mental toughness, concentration and diligence. Awareness of tactics within the game becomes an important facet of the learning process. Players tend to be self-critical and rebellious, but have a strong commitment to the team.

Coach must be: A strong personality with some soccer knowledge. The coach should be enthusiastic and patient but demanding.

Areas of emphasis depend on the abilities and experiences of players. For beginning level players use the concepts and guidelines for U12 age group, or even some U-10 exercises until they acquire some basic skills and understanding. Otherwise the assumption is that U-14 players have been exposed to the curriculum in previous years and that this builds on that.

Technique:

- Build on the base.
- Emphasize the development of individual skills under the pressure of time, space, and an opponent.
- Continue to increase technical speed.

Dribbling:

- Encourage the players to take opponents on 1 v. 1. Teach feints/moves, how to keep possession, how to shield and spin turns.

Receiving:

- Emphasize a quality first touch. Have players take balls out of the air and work on turning. Players should use all surfaces and learn to receive the ball on the run.

Shooting:

- Work on shooting on the run, on the turn, from all angles, from crosses and from volleys.

Passing:

- Work on short, long, bent, crossed, driven and chipped using all surfaces. All should be learned on the run.

Heading:

- Work on going to goal (shoot/glance), to pass and to clear.

Tackling:

- Emphasize the proper techniques.

Tactics:

- Increase tactical speed (decision making under pressure).

Individual:

- Work on 1 v. 1, in attack and defense.
- In attack: teach players to keep possession but encourage risk taking and taking players on in the proper areas of the field.[^]
- In defense: teach how to apply proper pressure (in front and behind), how to channel players when to use immediate chase and how to use angles of pressure.

Small Group:

- Continue with 2 v. 1, 2 v. 2, 3 v. 2, 3 v. 3, 4 v. 2 and 4 v. 4.
- In attack: Teach to keep possession, support, combination play (including the wall pass, takeover, overlap, the double pass). Introduce the concepts of width, depth and penetration. Begin work on crossing with proper runs in the box. Start to demonstrate simple set plays.
- In defense: Players should be introduced to angle and distance of cover, defensive balance, delay and pressing as a group.

Team:

- **In the attack:** Teach players how to keep possession and how to play the ball away from pressure. They should know how to maintain balance in the chosen system. Introduce interchange of positions during the run of play. Encourage attackers to take defenders on in the final third. The keeper becomes an integral part of the attack (play balls back to the keeper). Players should still play a variety of positions.
- **4- In defense:** Players should learn to maintain good "shape." Zonal concepts should be introduced and should include knowing when to "delay" or "step." Clear decision on where the "line of confrontation" should be is important at this level. Coaches should teach how to maintain good pressure and cover in all three thirds of the field.

Note: *There should be a great deal of coaching/teaching in 4 v. 4 and 7 v. 7 games.*

Physical:

- All fitness work should be done with the ball
- Flexibility - static stretching and dynamic flexibility
- Agility - Coordination with and without the ball
- Speed
- Strength — non-weight bearing, core strength and stability
- Endurance
- Balance

Psychological:

- The game should remain fun and enjoyable. Players should have a passion for the game
- Imagination/creativity
- Increase demands
- Establish training targets
- Maintain discipline
- Encourage players/teams to watch professional and National Team games on television

The following exercises are located on the link listed below and are recommendations for your practices.
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The practice plans on the website are great for your teams.

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Practice plan title</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| One | U14 2 v 1 for day 1 and U10-U14 Improving Individual Possession on day 2 |
| Two | U-14 Passing for Possession on day 1 and Whole Part Whole Dribbling-Beating an Opponent on day 2 |
| Three | Whole Part Whole U10-U14 Combination Play on day 1 and Transition from Attack-Defense on day 2 |
| Four | Speed of play on day 1 and repeat U14 2 v 1 on day 2 |

Additional resources: You can find some good skills illustrated on video at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/players/SkillzSchoolVideos.asp> and on www.youtube.com by typing in soccer drills. And at the following link <http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/index.htm> as well as by typing in soccer drills on your search engine.

U16-U18 Curriculum

Development of individual skills - individual, group and team tactics. For players/teams that are new to soccer we recommend that coaches use exercises designed for U12 up to U-14 teams until players have acquired a baseline of skill and understanding. The curriculum recommended below is for teams that have some prior experience and a reasonable level of basic skills and strategies.

This is a critical time in the player's development. Many stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, shortage of playing opportunities, poor leadership or other reasons. Players tend to lack mental toughness and self-confidence. They tend to be self-critical and struggle with their desire to be competitive or need to be more competitive. There is a need for attention and security. A great focus on team spirit, leadership and discipline within the team.

Ideal Coach is knowledgeable, articulate, can establish a healthy balance of discipline and fun, a thoughtful persuader.

Technique:

- Skills should be mastered leading to artistry and improvisation, all under match conditions
- Individual skill covered during the warm-up and/or in competitive situations
- Increase technical speed. *It is important that technique is still highly emphasized at this age.*
- Strike balls cleanly over distance with accuracy under pressure

Tactics:

- Increase tactical speed (decision making)
- **Individual:**
 - Decisions based on thirds of the field.
- **4- In attack:**
 - There must be an application of varied technical abilities in order to increase tactical options. There must be an aggressive attacking mentality in final third. Emphasis should be placed on predicting what the game will need next. Knowing what each player's specific roles and responsibilities are leads to greater understanding of the big picture.
- **In defense:**
 - There should be a clear understanding of how the quality of pressure affects team defending success. There must be an ability to take options away from the attacker.

Small group:

- 4 v. 4, 7 v. 7, 9 v. 9
- **In attack:**
 - Players must understand the balance of needing possession and penetration. Continued work on combination play (wall pass, take over, overlap, double pass, third player running etc.). Playing for penetration and creativity in solving problems becomes important.
 - Mobility - movement without the ball
 - Crossing - picking out a runner rather than putting it in the box
 - Box organization - penetration, width and support for every ball played in the box
 - Attacking as a group. Cover the zones in the box to get on the end of passes/crosses.

- **In defense:**
 - Compactness
 - Cover, delay, dictate and recover
 - Communication (who, what, when, where)
 - Defending as a group of three (forwards, midfielders and defenders)
 - Enjoy winning possession of the ball and dictating the play
 - Set plays

Team: Clearly defined team tactics, how the team decides to play as a group.

- **In attack:**
 - Comfort with direct and indirect styles
 - Sustained possession as a means to break down the opponent's defense
 - Understanding how to counterattack
 - Decisions based on thirds of the field
- **In defense:**
 - Comfort with "high pressure" and "delayed high pressure" styles
 - Understanding of zonal and man-to-man marking play
 - Goalkeeper as the last defender
 - Keeping good team compactness
 - Stopping the counterattack
 - Decisions based on thirds of the field and different systems of play
- **Physical:**
 - Fitness should take place with and without the ball.
 - Flexibility - static stretching after training/matches.
 - Dynamic flexibility - partner stretching
 - Importance of discipline for warm-up and cool-down
 - Agility - with and without the ball
 - Footwork - keeping the feet active when moving/ playing
 - Endurance - Aerobic and anaerobic
 - Strength - Upper and lower body. Core strength and stability
 - Balance
- **Psychological:**
 - Increased concentration
 - Leadership/player responsibilities
 - Discipline
 - Respect for the game
 - Goal setting
 - Vary program - satisfy players' urge for competition
 - Encourage players/teams to watch professional and National Team soccer

The following exercises are located on the link listed below and are recommendations for your practices.
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The practice plans on the website are great for your teams

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Practice plan title</u> |
|--------------------|---|
| One | U-16 Possession on day 1 and Fitness and Technical Session on day 2 |
| Two | Defensive Third on day 1 and U 17 Combining on day 2 |
| Three | Speed of play on day 1 and U17 Finishing on day 2 |
| Four | Smart Pressure on day 1 and Transition from Attack-Defense on day 2 |

Additional resources: You can find some good skills illustrated on video at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/players/SkillzSchoolVideos.asp> and on www.youtube.com by typing in soccer drills. And at the following link <http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/index.htm> as well as by typing in soccer drills on your search engine.