



U10 Soccer Coaching Fundamentals

Fall 2014

Introduction

- ▶ Many U10 coaches are parents/volunteers that may or may not have experience playing or coaching soccer. This presentation is specifically intended to provide a baseline understanding for U10 coaches that will ensure the players and the coaches have a fun season.
- ▶ Most U10 players have some experience playing organized soccer before, though there will still be some that are fairly new. It is important to assess each player and focus on their individual growth.
- ▶ It is important we coach our U10 players based on their mental and physical capabilities. Players will achieve their maximum potential and sense of accomplishment if we provide them the best opportunity possible to grow as soccer players.



Before the Season Starts

'Football is a simple game made complicated by people who should know better.'

*~ Bill Shankley,
Liverpool Mgr,
1968*

Getting Your Season Started

- ▶ Contact all players via email or phone to welcome them to the team, leaving your contact information and acceptable ways to contact you throughout the season. Make sure everyone is contacted, may need to email and then follow up with phone calls. Ask everyone to RSVP so you know they are aware of the schedule.
- ▶ Send out a team introduction email with a list of your expectations for the players, parents and spectators. Some of the items to mention in your email are:
 - ▶ Philosophy and Objectives
 - ▶ Uniforms
 - ▶ Schedule
 - ▶ Equipment (Cleats, Shin Pads, Bug Spray, etc)
 - ▶ Expected Behavior and Code of Conduct – include link to BYSA Rules
(<http://bridgewateryouthsoccer.com/bysa/downloads/BYSA%20Rules%20Regs%200909.pdf>)
 - ▶ Medical Conditions
 - ▶ Where and when to meet for the first time



Getting Your Season Started

- ▶ Look for an assistant coach. Paying attention to everyone's needs during the practice and game is a multi-person job!
- ▶ Assistant coaches can handle the sideline players while you focus on coaching.
- ▶ You can also split the substitution duties between the two of you (you handle offense/midfielder subs, they handle defense subs).
- ▶ All coaches and assistant coaches need to fill out a CORI.
- ▶ When emailing your parents for the first time, be sure to say, 'I will do my best to ensure equal playing time for all players throughout the **SEASON**'.



Coaching U10 Players

*Kids don't care how
much you know,
until they know
how much you care.
- Unknown*



Characteristics of U10

- Attention span lengthens from U8 and they start to show the ability to sequence thoughts and actions.
- They start to think ahead and think “If this, then that”.
- More inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play.
- Demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their complete responsibility.

- They start to recognize fundamental tactical concepts.
- Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure.
- Players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach—“I play for the Tigers” or “I play for coach Amy’s team”.

- Players at this age are extremely rule bound—remember each rule you create is the equivalent of a bar in the prison in which you would like them to live.
- There is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams.
- This is still a crucial age for technical skill development.

Technical Development of U10 Players

- ▶ We must still stress technical development at these ages. In particular, players need to be able to perform ball skills when under pressure. This pressure may come in the form of speed of play or in the form of a defender. Below are recommended guidelines of skill priorities for you to follow in your work with these young players.

- ▶ The skill priorities of U10 players are:

Field Players

Dribbling focus from U8

Passing with inside and outside of both feet

Shooting with both feet

Receiving the ball with all parts of body

Proper 1 vs 1 and 2 vs 1 attacking and defending

Intro to 2 vs 2

Goalkeepers

Basic catching technique

Basic throwing technique

Diving to both sides



Field Players

- ▶ Players at the U10 levels should be learning to combine with teammates around them, using short ground passes and wall passes (give and go) to move the ball forward.
- ▶ Players should understand how to support teammates with the ball and be learning to recognize where defenders are not (and hence where to attack).
- ▶ It is fair to say that children exiting the U10 age group should know attacking and defending responsibilities of 1 v 1 and 2 v 1 play. In addition, they should have a decent understanding of 2 v 2.
- ▶ Expect to see a wide range of understanding of the defensive responsibilities of a second defender amongst your players. This is quite typical and highlights the fact that players are all maturing at different rates.
- ▶ Some children may understand the idea of a second defender and some will not. Do not stress about this, as it is expected.



Goalkeeping

- ▶ Goalkeepers at the U10 level should have a basic understanding of their positioning in the goal.
- ▶ Being on their “ball line” (imaginary line drawn from wherever the ball is on the field to the center of their goal) is important for the players to learn. Also, not standing on the goal line is expected.
- ▶ More advanced goalkeepers should further understand this important concept as well as test their limits on how far off their goal line they can come out.
- ▶ Their decision making of when to come out for breakaways, cutting down angles on shots, and tipping balls over the crossbar will come with plenty of repetition.



Challenging Situations

▶ Aggression

- ▶ Needs to be addressed so safety of others is protected.
- ▶ Provide 1-3 'Strikes' before disciplining the player (sit out practice)
- ▶ Return to removed player after 1 minute and ask what they did to be removed. If not compliant, give more time for player to cool down.
- ▶ Communicate with parents and BYSA if chronic or serious problem.

▶ Social Cliques

- ▶ Ages more dominated by social cliques, we need to make every effort to form a team and not a collaboration of cliques.
 - ▶ Watch your team during water breaks, during selection of partners (which we do not recommend) and before and after practices and games to recognize the cliques easily.
 - ▶ By always selecting pairs or groups of players, and by purposely breaking up the cliques with your selection, you can build the team environment.
 - ▶ You may need to choose activities that players have to work together to accomplish a task.
-



Gender Differences

- ▶ Girls tend to mature more quickly than boys both emotionally and physically. Girls may enter puberty as young as 8, while boys do not typically enter puberty until age 11 or older. This simple fact warrants our attention and sensitivity.
 - ▶ As coaches, we need to be supportive of the players at all times and be aware of safety issues during our practices. We can do a lot to help these players by choosing our groups carefully and pairing up players of similar physical strength and size.
 - ▶ Boys tend to be more individualistic than girls and are typically quite willing to accept individual feedback in front of peers. Girls are much more aware socially and tend to be more sensitive of being singled out even when we are making a positive point when singling out.
 - ▶ Boys may need encouragement to sort out problems as a team, where as girls are more likely to need encouragement to stand out on their own and “be a star”.
-



Running a Successful Practice/Game

The Bottom Line

*Prepare -
Prepare -
Prepare!*



Practices

HAVE A PRACTICE PLAN!!! Come to practice with an idea of the activities and points you want to stress. Always have 1-2 favorites in your back pocket in case an activity is not working out. Don't be afraid to stop an activity if it isn't going well.

A good format for preparing your practices is:

1. Warm Up

Technical warm up complementing the practice theme

2. Small Sided Activity

1 v 1 or 2 v 2 activity

Does not have to be directional (keep away)

3. Expanded Small Sided Activity

3 v 3 or 4 v 4

Should be directional (with goals, target, end lines)

Keepers are optional

4. Scrimmage

Always end with full field, full numbers scrimmage

Include keepers



Practices

- ▶ Each team is expected to have one practice each week anywhere from 60-75 minutes.
- ▶ Activities should last approximately 10-12 minutes each.
- ▶ Give water breaks every 15-20 minutes.
- ▶ Always position yourself so that you can see all players.
- ▶ The best teacher is the game. Coaches who create a game-like environment foster success.
- ▶ No Lines, No Lectures, No Laps!!!
- ▶ If you see players not understanding or enjoying a game, be flexible and change it
- ▶ Coaching at these ages is best described as guiding discovery
- ▶ Encourage creativity



Practices

- ▶ Keep your instructions to a minimum. Do not talk for more than 30 seconds at a time.
- ▶ Position next activity while the last one ends or during a water break. Down time allows loss of attention for the players.
- ▶ Keep all players involved as much as possible.
- ▶ Do not provide all the answers for the players. Allow them to solve problems and they will remember their solutions much more than your direction
- ▶ In early season practices, teach a few fundamental things that they can use in games right away.
 - ▶ Turn the ball around
 - ▶ Dribbling and passing with both feet or all sides of your feet
 - ▶ Proper shooting and passing technique

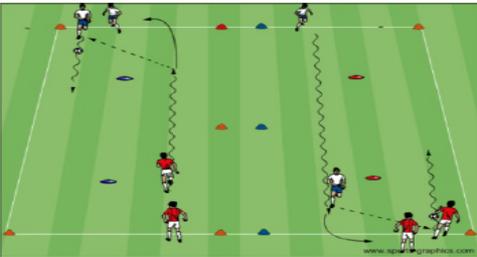
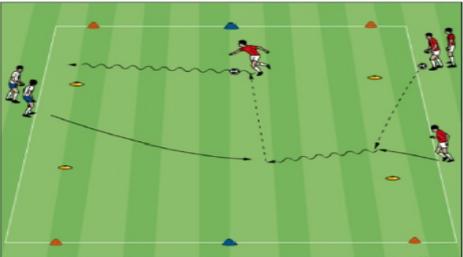


Sample Practice Plan

NAME: Instructor

TOPIC: Dribbling – Running with the Ball

Objective: To improve the player's ability to run with the ball at his/her feet

<p>Technical Warm up</p> 	<p>Organization</p> <p><u>Man Utd. Running with the Ball:</u> Make a grid 10 yds. x 30 yds. long. Divide the grids in two 5 yd. lanes. Place at least two players of different teams at the end of the lanes to the right of the grid. The activity starts by one of the players running with the ball. When the player in possession of the ball runs by the second cone he/she can pass the ball to the next runner.</p>	<p>Coaching Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an aggressive first touch forward into space • Push the ball forward with the instep (Laces and outside of the foot) • Each touch of the ball should push it a few steps ahead of the dribbler • Keep a natural running stride • In between touches, the head is up and the eyes scan the field <p><i>Time: 10 minutes</i></p>
<p>Small Sided Activity</p> 	<p>Organization</p> <p><u>2v1 to End Zones:</u> In a defined area place two attackers behind the end zone and the defenders behind the opposite end zone. The attacker will score by dribbling (running) the ball into the end zone. If the defender gets the ball he/she can also run with the ball into the end zone. The activity starts when the player with the ball passes to his/her partner. The Dribblino receives the ball and runs with the ball. If the defender confronts the dribblino, he/she has the option to pass to his/her partners to run the ball into the end zone and score.</p>	<p>Coaching Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the ball out of the feet – good first touch • Run quickly with the ball • Minimum number of touches • Use the front of the foot – laces, to push the ball in front • Use an unbroken stride and head up • When confronted with defenders take them on by changing direction of the ball and take a big touch <p><i>Time: 12 minutes</i></p>
<p>Exp. Small Sided Activity</p> 	<p>Organization</p> <p><u>3v3 to End Zones:</u> Two teams play in a defined space with each team attacking an end-zone defended by the opponent. Teams score points when a player dribbles into the End-Zone. Coach: Encourage players to recognize opportunities to burst and run with the ball into space under control.</p>	<p>Coaching Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the ball out of the feet • Use the front of the foot – laces, to push the ball in front • Use an unbroken stride and head up • When confronted with defenders take them on by changing direction of the ball and take a big touch • Work together to score • Use support players to make attacking decisions <p><i>Time: 12 minutes</i></p>
<p>Free Scrimmage 5v5 – 6v6</p> <p>5v5 – 6v6</p>	<p>Organization</p> <p>Play with Goalkeepers and encourage him/her to communicate with teammates</p>	<p>Coaching Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching in the game <p><i>Time: 12 minutes</i></p>
<p>Cool Down</p>	<p>Activities to reduce heart rate, static stretching & review session.</p> <p><i>Time: 5 minutes</i></p>	

Mosston's Slanty Line Theory

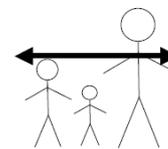
Not every player will have the same skill, maturity and ability. The goal is to run a practice that will challenge each player at a level that befits their ability.

Everyone has the chance to improve, no matter their position on the slant line they are at in ability.

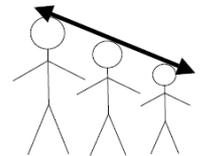
Put more skilled players at more challenging positions and weaker players in less challenging positions, without drawing attention to the changes. Examples would be:

- 3 v 1 for four most skilled players
- 3 v 2 for five less skilled players
- Most skilled player is extra in 3 v 3 +

STRAIGHT LINE



SLANTY LINE



Games, Playing Time and Positions

- ▶ Before every game, introduce yourself to the other coach and the referee.
- ▶ Playing time must be equal – no exceptions
- ▶ Positions in U10 are two offensive players (forwards), one midfielder (center), two defensive players (defense) and one goalie.
- ▶ Explain to players the main responsibility of Offense (to score goals) and Defense (to keep the ball out of your net), though all players are responsible for all aspects of the game. Midfielders assume responsibility of both offense and defense.
- ▶ Your stronger players are usually your midfielder, as it is a very taxing position.
- ▶ Each player should try every position at least once. At this age, players should not be relegated to one position, even if they ask. Players need to learn the skills needed at each position.
- ▶ Wins and losses mean absolutely nothing. While you should be mindful of the score to encourage a competitive game, do not stress it with players.



Mismatched Games

- ▶ You will play teams much weaker and stronger than you. All games are opportunities for players to learn, we just need to make appropriate adjustments.
- ▶ Rule of thumb – 5 goal lead is time to make adjustments to your team.
 - ▶ Play with a sweeper and only one forward
 - ▶ Defense and midfielder can't pass half field
 - ▶ 5 passes before shooting
- ▶ When losing by large deficit, continue to motivate your players to compete. Also, use the other teams tactics and skill as an example for players on the bench. Try to find positives to take out of the game:
 - ▶ We lost the first half 6-0, but tied the second half 1-1, huge improvement...
 - ▶ You kept fighting all the way to the end, be proud of yourself
 - ▶ Every player has games they lose, what is important is that you give 100% and learn from every game



Injuries

- ▶ Stop play and ask all players to take a knee.
- ▶ Determine if the injury is real or just needs a little attention.
- ▶ Medical kits are located at half field.
- ▶ If the injury requires attention, you may want to call the players parent over to assist and make decisions on how to treat.
- ▶ Follow up with parent after the game if needed.
- ▶ Report the injury to the BYSA if needed.



Parents and Spectators

- ▶ As parents and players are often new to the game and world of soccer, it is extremely important to communicate with parents.
 - ▶ Setting expectations before the season is vital to prevent confusion and stunt potential problems. Sending out an introductory email or handout at the first game with team expectations insures that your words are not being misconstrued. Also, if there is a problem down the line, you can reference that document. In this document, you should cover:
 - ▶ Team Goals – Have fun...
 - ▶ Style of Play – Try new things and be creative
 - ▶ Attendance – Let me know if you can't make it
 - ▶ Discipline – Policy for handling bad behavior
 - ▶ Communication – Phone numbers, email, text or in person meeting if needed
 - ▶ Sideline Behavior – Be mindful of your comments on the sideline about your own child and other parents children.
-



Coaches Code of Conduct

The Bottom Line

*You, your
assistant coach,
your players and
the parents on
your team all
represent
Bridgewater
Youth Soccer -
act accordingly*



MA Youth Soccer Code of Conduct

- ▶ Before, during and after the game, be an example of dignity, patience and positive spirit.
- ▶ Before a game, introduce yourself to the opposing coach and to the referee.
- ▶ During the game, you are responsible for the sportsmanship of your players. If one of your players is disrespectful, irresponsible or overly aggressive, take the player out of the game at least long enough for him/her to calm down.
- ▶ During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players.
- ▶ It is imperative to explain acceptable player and parent behavior in a preseason meeting.
- ▶ Encourage them to applaud and cheer for good plays by either team. Discourage them and you may need to be forceful and direct from yelling at players and the referee.



MA Youth Soccer Code of Conduct

- ▶ During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of spectators rooting for your team.
- ▶ During the game, do not address the referee at all. If you have a small issue, discuss it with the referee calmly and patiently after the game.
- ▶ If you have a major complaint, or if you think the referee was unfair, biased, unfit or incompetent, report your opinion to your League. Your reactions will be taken seriously if they are presented objectively and formally.
- ▶ After the game, thank the referee and ask your players to do the same.



Final Thought

- ▶ Your example is powerful, for better or worse.
- ▶ If you insist on fair play, if you concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long term development, and if you support the referee, your players and their parents will notice.
- ▶ If you encourage (or allow) your players to play outside the rules, if you're overly concerned about results, and if you criticize the referee harshly, your players and their parents will also notice.



Useful Web Sites

The following sites offer a host of drills and skill sessions to make practice planning and execution simple and easy.



Useful Web Sites

- ▶ www.mayouthsoccer.org/coach's_corner.aspx
- ▶ www.weplay.com/youth-soccer/drills
- ▶ www.soccerxpert.com
- ▶ www.footy4kids.co.uk
- ▶ www.sportsessionplanner.com (go to “Sessions”)
- ▶ www.soccer-training-guide.com/soccer-drills.html
- ▶ www.freeyouthsoccerdrills.com
- ▶ www.soccer-for-parents.com/free-soccer-drills.html
- ▶ www.soccerhelp.com/soccer_drills.shtml
- ▶ football.isport.com/football-guides/
- ▶ www.responsiblesports.com/resource_center.aspx
- ▶ www.coaching-youth-soccer-for-success.com/free-soccer-drills.html
- ▶ www.bettersoccercoaching.com
- ▶ www.youthtoprosoccer.com
- ▶ www.soccerdrills.net (limited free material)
- ▶ www.soccerpracticebooks.com (pay site)



Sources

- ▶ Massachusetts Youth Soccer Coach Curriculum
 - ▶ G-D level course materials
- ▶ Salmon Creek Soccer Web Site
- ▶ Mass. Premier Soccer Handbooks
- ▶ Twitter
 - ▶ Tony Taylor @Tad690
 - ▶ Coaching Family @coachingfamily
 - ▶ Lee Merricks @cosmosoccerCA
 - ▶ Rob Parker @goaliecoach00

