

Perkiomen Valley S.C.



Recreational Procedures and Coaches Handbook

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Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to guide the administration of the league, set forth current league rules and inform the conduct of Coaches, Players and Parents participating in the Recreation Soccer Program of Perkiomen Valley Soccer Club. It is also designed to be a manual for the youth coach, containing such items as ideas for running effective practices, team administration ideas and guidelines. As such, this manual will be updated regularly with feedback from the coaches and teams. The most current version of this manual will always be posted on the club's website. It is the product of the collaboration of the recreation committee which is made up of the Age Commissioners for each division. This manual is broken into two sections, Recreational League Rules and Regulations, and the Coaching Guide.

Mission

The PVSC Recreational Program's mission is to:

- Provide an environment where our children develop a love of soccer in a positive environment.
- The child's development of such life skills as physical fitness, the ability to work well as a member of a team, to think for themselves and to accept both success and failure with grace are enhanced.
- Provide an instructional environment to teach the basics of soccer and to promote continual improvement and advancement of skill and ability in the game
- As an instructional program the child's development and enjoyment take precedence over any desire to win, and that the players should have fun while developing a knowledge of the game are of prime importance.
- Parental coach's examples of PVSC's beliefs and have the player's and player's families best interests in mind
- Promote loyalty and support across all age groups and genders in the club to develop a core group of players by age group which have a desire and the necessary skill level to play for Perkiomen Valley High School.

First Day of Practice

The following is a general guideline of activities, which should be performed on the first day of practice. The first day should be considered more of a team meeting with the understanding that the children want to play. Efforts should be made on your part to have an assistant who can take the players while you meet with the parents.

- Introduce yourself to all Parents and Players
- Establish practice times
- Establish rainy day procedures, phone chain, etc.
- Advise Parents about Uniforms and Picture Day
- Remind Parents and Players to bring water bottle and ball to ALL practices. All players must wear shin-guards to every practice and game. Every player should have his or her own ball.
- Request Volunteers for field lining and flag setup/removal through the season
- Request Volunteers for Field Maintenance Day
- If you don't already have one assigned, get a Team "MOM or "Dad" to handle administrative jobs such as:
 - ❑ Game Day oranges list
 - ❑ Phone chain
 - ❑ Picture coordination
 - ❑ Uniform issues
 - ❑ Coordinating the volunteers for things like field day
 - ❑ After season party
- Request information on special Player medical needs.

General Coaching Reminders

The following guidelines should be followed on both game days and practice days:

- Each team is responsible for trash pick-up after each game and practice.
- Never leave the field until all your Players have been picked-up.
- Bring ice (and a small First-Aid Kit if owned) to each practice. A First-Aid Kit is located in the Snack Bar and Barn for Club use.
- Bleeding Players must step off the field and be substituted until the bleeding is stopped.
- Treat the facility as your own, and impress this upon your Parents and Players.
- Please report any vandalism and/or field misuse to a Board Member.
- Do not allow the Players to hang on the nets or goals. Goals will be weighted with sand bags, but will come down if played on. Serious injuries have occurred from falling goals which we must avoid.
- Referees are assigned to as many games as possible, but games without Referees are imminent. If a Referee does not show, discuss having a Parent or Coach from each team to referee each half of the game.
- Referees and Coaches are volunteers and deserve your respect and patience. Just like you, they take valuable time and patience out of their day to make a fair playing field for all. If you feel a Coach or Referee deserves comment, please discuss with a Commissioner/Board Member after the game, not during.
- A Referee may remove a Coach from the sideline for the conduct of the Coach or one of the Team's Parents.
- Pay close attention to Players with special medical needs and physical limitations.
- Strive for **FUN**, fairness, and enjoying the game, not sweating toward the win.
- The reason we all do this is to make it **FUN** and beneficial for the **Children**, not to win. Teach your Players to win and lose gracefully, and to treat the Referees, Coaches, and their fellow Players with respect. Training should be focused on development of ball touch, pace, control and vision – not winning a u8 game.

Coaching Philosophy

We at PVSC feel that Coaching Philosophy is of tremendous importance. Please read the following information with the knowledge that you are not only coaching soccer; but, more importantly, directly effecting a young life and attempting to teach a positive attitude. Yes, coaching children can be strenuous and time consuming. But, it can also be an extremely worthwhile and rewarding effort. We thank you and applaud your efforts for making the season an event, which is positive and leaves children begging for more! Once again. We Thank You!

The Coach as a Teacher

The challenge of teaching is to recognize potential talent and then develop that potential to its full realization. Effective coaching and learning requires establishing correct attitudes, habits, and behaviors, regardless of the game.

Qualities of a Good Coach:

- Enthusiasm and Self Motivation
- Integrity
- Persistence
- Patience
- Good Standards
- An Open Inquiring Mind
- Logical, Analytical Mind
- Knowing How Players Learn
- Ability to Inspire

Perhaps the hardest aspect of being a coach is recognizing what the children cannot achieve. For instance, it is wrong to expect 7 year olds to be able to play in positions because their educational development does not allow such abstract notions as space and time to be understood. At this stage, the Coach has two Options: Teach the Players to kick and rush, or continue to teach correct dribbling and passing techniques and patiently wait (sometimes years) for them to progress. The first Option will obviously bring short term results, but how important are they compared to the future of your Players? Remember, the future of your Players is infinitely more important than the result of any Game. Touch, pace, control and field vision are learned skills which will carry forward through high play.

Fitness Related to Age

Soccer is a Game of constant movement, movements that can be long, energy sapping runs the length of the field, or short, sharp, lung bursting sprints. It becomes obvious that a Soccer Player needs to be in good physical condition, or Fit.

However, Fitness needs to be placed in the right context according to age level. Players under 12 should not be subjected to a strict Fitness regime. They have natural Fitness and a willingness to run. When Players reach age 13 or 14, more time must be devoted to Fitness.

Running is the most important aspect in a Soccer Player's Fitness program. As we know, soccer is a game of stops and starts, with explosive bursts followed by a few seconds recovery. To train for this, we must introduce short sprints - forwards, backwards, and sideways - and other movements designed to improve stamina and reduce recovery time.

As previously stated, it is of no benefit, and could be emotionally detrimental, to subject younger Players to fitness regimes. The practice time should be used to improve their skill and technique through fun and instructional games and drills. The time to introduce fitness programs is when players reach their teens.

Also remember that although fitness is important, time to develop skill and technique should always take precedent. A Player who is capable of placing the ball at any chosen spot on the field uses the ball to cover that distance, not their legs!

Attitude Towards Other Coaches and Referees

Other Coaches and Referees are all volunteers. Just like you, they take valuable time and patience out of their day to make a fair playing field for all, and to make sure the children enjoy this sport and want to play again. Also just like you, they deserve to be paid for what they do, but a thank you must suffice. Although a few of you will disagree, and hopefully its very few of you. Referees sometimes have the hardest job of all. A mistake made by a Referee is sometimes viewed as something done personally to a team or coach. Believe me, we are all learning, and we all make mistakes. The point is that these people give their time no matter what, and 5 minutes after the game is over, the children are only wondering what is for lunch and who's coming over. Yes, there are cases of Coaching and Refereeing that deserve comment, but that comment should be taken up with a Commissioner/Board Member after the game, not during. The point is that the majority of controversial situations result from honest mistakes. So, please remember to take a healthy and open outlook to the games, and keep the age and competition level of the players in mind at all times. We thank you for helping to make good examples of us all for the children and for keeping your sideline excitement both positive and non-directive.

Rules and Regulations

Registration Process

Each player shall be registered and paid for each season, before they can be placed on a team. No player shall be placed on a team unless downloaded from the club's registration program. No coach is authorized to accept a player based upon a parent's statement. All player placements or trades must be authorized by the division's age commissioner and league registrar. While we all want to do this for the kids – the kids need to be registered to be insured.

Special Requests

Team are put together depending on the registration. If possible th children will be grouped by school. This typically reduces many of the special requests. Understanding that there are legitimate car pooling issues, the club will attempt to honor ONE (1) request to play with ONE (1) friend per registered child, but this request must be a matching request. e.g. Johnny can request to be placed on a team with Jimmy, but Jimmy must request to play with Johnny as well. Non-matching requests will not be honored.

We will try to no longer be in a position to honor requests for a specific coach. Playing on the same team as a sibling will not be considered to be a special request - those requests will be honored. We will still attempt to use school classifications to set up teams, and players can still expect to be on a team with at least a few children from their school. Our goal is to bring together **all** of the members of the Perkiomen Valley community to play soccer together.

Game procedures

All normal FIFA rules are in effect , except where noted below. The referee is the final arbiter of all rules on game days.

PeeWees U-5

Duration:	30 Minute Practice/Training Period 5-10 Minute Snack break/field change 30 Minute Game/play period (15 minute halves) *Coaches are to initiate the game session with the team they are scheduled against
Training:	Constant touches on the ball are most important
Games:	Split the team into the more-aggressive and less-aggressive; Each side will play the same side from the opposing team on the schedule.
Players:	5v5 or 4v4, depending on the amount of kids present (No Goalkeepers)
Ball:	Size 3
On Field Coaching:	Coaching on the field is required. Parent involvement is highly encouraged.
Referees:	There are no referees; Coaches should regulate the game, not necessarily calling

	every foul/infracton in order to keep the game flowing.
Goal Kicks:	Anywhere within the goal box, opposing team must be outside of the penalty area.
Corner Kicks:	On the field corner
Throw-ins:	As best they can
Off-Sides:	NO OFFSIDES
Practice:	PeeWee only plays on Sundays; They have no weekday practices.

U-8

Duration:	10 minute quarters (2 minute break between quarters and 5 minute break at half-time)
Players:	6 versus 6 (including goalkeepers)
Ball:	Size 3
On Field Coaching:	Ages 5-6 only: One coach from each team may be on field during games during the first two weeks; thereafter, coaches must remain on the sidelines. Ages 7 and up: Coaches must remain on the sidelines.
Referees:	Referees are assigned to all games by the league. Remember, many of the referees are young adults who have committed their time to making the recreational program operate effectively.
Substitutions:	In order to have players substitute into the game, they must be ready to enter the game at the half field line prior to the stoppage of play. Teams may make substitutions on either team's goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick.
Goal Kicks:	Anywhere within the goal box, opposing team must be outside of the penalty area.
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	No off-sides
Practices:	Between 1-2 practices per week. Practices should last no more than an hour and a half. The Club will provide guidance on practice field locations. Refer to the practice drills for more coaching tips, drills and games.

U-12

Duration:	10 minute quarters (2 minute break between quarters and 5 minute break at half-time)
Players:	6 versus 6 (including goalkeepers)
Ball:	Size 4
On Field Coaching:	Ages 5-6 only: One coach from each team may be on field during games during the first two weeks; thereafter, coaches must remain on the sidelines. Ages 7 and up: Coaches must remain on the sidelines.

Referees:	Referees are assigned to all games by the league. Remember, many of the referees are young adults who have committed their time to making the recreational program operate effectively.
Substitutions:	In order to have players substitute into the game, they must be ready to enter the game at the half field line prior to the stoppage of play. Teams may make substitutions on either team's goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick.
Goal Kicks:	Anywhere within the goal box, opposing team must be outside of the penalty area.
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	No off-sides
Practices:	Between 1-2 practices per week. Practices should last no more than an hour and a half. The Club will provide guidance on practice field locations. Refer to the practice drills for more coaching tips, drills and games.

Mercy Rule

Coaches should do their best not to embarrass another team by outscoring them by a wide margin. Once a team reaches a 4 goal differential, coaches **MUST** employ some or all of the following tactics

- a. Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
- b. Try someone new in goal & at fullback
- c. Very quietly, pull a player off the field & play short. If it is still a mismatch, pull off another player.
- d. Very quietly, tell your players they must complete 5 (or more) consecutive passes before shooting.
- e. Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box (i.e., practice chip shots, lofted shots at the top of the goal mouth or power shots).
- f. Tell them that **ONLY** a certain player will be allowed to shoot on goal.

Age commissioners will monitor reported scores and coaches will be contacted for explanations if an extremely lop sided score is recorded.

Minimum Player Count

If another team shows up with less than the required number of players to start a match, it is considered good sportsmanship for the team with more players to 'play down' a player or two. If need be players may be borrowed from other teams. But they **MUST** be registered and paid with the club for the current season and of the current age group. If playing a team with no substitutes, the team with substitutes may sub on any possession, not to impede the flow of the game.

Expectations of parents

It is expected of parents and supporters to cheer positively and say things like ‘good job’ ‘great going’ and ‘good play’. Parents are reminded that they should never tell a player on the field to ‘get in there’, or ‘move over to the left’ or to offer any type of positioning or coaching encouragement. The coach has worked with the players in practice and should be given all opportunity to effect his or her game plan. Parents should be sent out of the field area if they address any comments to the referee (even a seemingly innocuous ‘come on Ref’) . Perkiomen Valley Soccer Club has a zero tolerance policy for referee abuse.

Sideline Behavior

Referee Respect

Simply stated, sideline behavior starts with the coaches. If a coach(s) shows disrespect to the referee, assistant referee(s) and/or a flag person(s), his/her team and supporters will feed off this act. Disrespect includes verbal and physical abuse of the officials. The Coach(s) must not voice an opinion on a rule interpretation or a particular play in the game in a loud and/or obnoxious manner. If a coach has a question on a rule or a particular play in the game, the proper and respectful response should be to quietly approach the referee in between periods or at the end of the game. **At no such time shall team supporters or players approach the officials.** Referees have been instructed to eject a coach or team supporter from the field area if the referee feels the level of disrespect warrants it. A player must receive either two yellow cards or one red card in a game before the referee can eject the player from the field area.

Remember, many of the Club's officials are young adults who have committed their time to making the recreation program operate effectively.

Sideline Separation

Home Team is closest to the parking lot. At no time will anyone be allowed to stand behind the endline.

FIFA Official rules and Regulations

For the official rules of soccer as set forth by FIFA, see <http://www.fifa.com/en/regulations/regulation/0,1584,3,00.html#>

Playoff overtime rules by age

Should an end-of-season tournament game remain tied at the end of regulation, the following procedures are applicable. There is NO overtime during the regular season games.

Division	Overtime Procedures
U5	Not Applicable
U8	Only during tournament, 5 minutes no goalie sudden death – 1 additional players is removed every 5 minutes from each team until there is a score
U12	Only during tournament, 5 minutes no goalie sudden death – 1 additional players is removed every 5 minutes from each team until there is a score

Section 2 – Coaching Guidelines and Ideas

Games

Games will be played once per week, on Sundays. Below U-12 division, coaches should rotate the positions of players and each player should play at least half of the game. .

Practices

PeeWee only play on Sundays. They have no weekday practice.

All other teams will hold practice at least once per week, at the assigned practice field. Practice length should be no more than one hour for U-12 and below. Practice may be limited by field availability. As a coach it is important to arrive promptly and direct the activities for the full practice period. Reference the “Tip Section” or contact your age commissioner if you have any questions regarding soccer practice activities

Team Make-up

Each coach will be given a roster of players and there will be no switching of players between teams without the written permission of the Age Commissioner (email may serve as written confirmation)/registrar. Should a situation occur where a coach is aware that they will not have enough players to field a team, the coach should refer inform their commissioner. If they need to

Player Rotation

You must rotate player positions until age 12. This means that each player will play each position during the season. Prior to age twelve, the players should experience all aspects of soccer and should not be migrated to a particular position.

The exception is the goalie position. You should press but not force the players to play the goalie position.

Report Scores

Scores will only be kept during the end of season tournament.

Organize Game Line Up

This is a key responsibility. You must be very conscience of equal play time for all players. This can take some real planning. Some coaches do this planning in advance of the game and others set the line ups prior to the start of the game based on which players arrive for game time. This is /can be one of the biggest challenges you will face. Be aware that both the players and the parents are sensitive to the amount of play time. It is very important to ensure each player is given their fare share of play time. It is recommended that you enlist the support of your assistant coach in ensuring this is done fairly.

Note: Each player should be given the opportunity to be a team captain for a game. Two players per game should represent the team. The team captains take center field for the coin flip to select direction and kick off selection just prior to the start of the game.

Game Time Coaching Rules

The coach's interaction with the players on the field varies with the age group. Referees are assigned to all age groups above PeeWees. Players going into a game on a substitution should be ready to enter the game at the half line.

Teams and spectators are to set up on opposite sidelines. All players, coaches, parents & supporters must be on the same sideline. No one is allowed behind the goal line. The first team listed on the schedule has the choice of sidelines.

Review Soccer rules

Generally the league adheres to the "FIFA rules of soccer", with certain deviations by age group. Please reference the league rules section of the Recreation manual. Contact your age group commissioner if you have any questions. (Reference: www.fifa.com or <http://www.fifa.com/en/regulations/regulation/0,1584,3,00.html>).

Note: The FIFA rules are well documented and can be a bit overwhelming. Your age group commissioner can help clarify any question you have.

The games are played in quarters or halves based on your age group. This will be explained prior to the start of the season.

Game Linesperson Support

Generally there is one referee assigned to each game. The referee will need support in calling out of bounds on the side lines. Each team should identify a volunteer linesperson. It is recommended that these volunteers discuss their duties with the referee.

The linesperson should not indicate which team's gains possession, only that the ball is out of play. Also, the linesperson should not determine off-sides or assist the referee with calling fouls. Note: ball is out of play when the ENTIRE ball has crossed the sideline or end line.

No Referee

If the referee is not present at the scheduled start time and the game is to still start on time, a volunteer should substitute as the referee. The basic guidelines are, the parents and spectators should be solicited first, then the away team coaching staff and lastly the home team coaching staff. The coaches must agree on the volunteer selected.

Parent Involvement

There will be a number of Adults more than willing to volunteer their time and effort to make the season successful. Send out an email to all parents, listing the specific activities you would like them to sign up for. Those activities could include:

Assistant Coaches

Even if you have a formally designated assistant coach, you may have other parents with experience or interest that can help out at practice or during games. This is especially important if you and/or your assistant find it a challenge to make all practices or games. Having additional assistants also gives you the opportunity for more effective, small group drills at practice.

Snack/Refreshment Coordinator

It is a good idea to provide oranges or other refreshments at half time during games as well as a snack (cookies, chips, etc.) after the game. Have someone coordinate this activity by assigning parents for halftime refreshments and after game snacks.

Other activities that you may want to involve parents include the fundraisers, picture day and in putting together an end of season get together for the team.

Utilize your volunteer parents to help insure a successful season and experience for all.

Organize Team Pictures / Fund Raiser

During fall season there will be a fund raiser and a team picture day. Your age group commissioner will supply the details. As a coach you are responsible for organizing these activities

Skills expectations by Age

Coming soon

Drills

There is a plethora of websites that contain great drills that are even broken down by age. We have a companion “Practice Sessions Idea and Drill Manual”. Its pretty good. There are also a ton of web sites like www.soccerhelp.com for starters.

Foul Weather considerations

Generally speaking, rain will not cancel a game, but wet fields are what usually causes a postponement. Postponements will be listed prominently on the club’s homepage (www.perkvalleysoccer.org). Coaches are required to check their email during game days with foul weather, as notification may also come through email. In the event of rain, coaches should setup an email/phone chain to inform all of their players. It is the responsibility of coaches to determine whether practices can be held, based upon foul

weather. The safety of the children should be the highest consideration for coaches in order to determine the cancellation of practices.

Tips:

Below are practice, game and general tips supplied by various PVSC coaches.

Practice Tips

- Attend the Coaches training sessions.
- 8 colored pinnies shirts for scrimmaging
- Use a stop watch for speed drills
- If possible, schedule your practice later in the week for younger players, this will increase the chances the skills covered in practice will be remembered at game time.
- Have the players perform a physical activity at the start of practice. This will help gain and maintain their attention.
- Use the game captains as a reward for a good practice (be sure each player gets a chance).
- Scrimmage. This can be done with another team or divide your team in half.
- Avoid drills that involve waiting in lines, focus on activities that give the players as many touches as possible. Try to keep them all involved.
- Set up three or four practice stations. Each focusing on a skill. It is best if there is supervision at each station.
- Teach “Space” work on activities that will support getting into an open position.
- Use activities that simulate the game. Emphasize communication, proper touches and field positions.

Game Time Tips

- Pick a skill for each player and reward it when it is executed in the game. The rewards can be something tangible or post game recognition.
- Have your assistant do the actual substituting. You can discuss the changes a let your assistant carryout the changes. This will allow to focus on the game and players.
- Bring an extra whistle to the game in the event a substitute referee is required.

General Tips

- Hand out players names and number to the parents and fans.
- Assign a parent to be in charge of first aid (ice and TLC)
- Motivate and be a constant role model, action speak louder then words. The players will know when you in a stressful situation and will be supportive.
- Kick Off the Season with a Pep Rally. Invite the players, parents and coaches. This is also a great time to set expectations and discuss behaviors.
- End of season get together
- Fan appreciation day

Excerpts from USYSA Parent/Coach Primer (copies following)

The following sections are taken from the USYSA Parent/Coach Primer:

- Suggested Absolutes
- Approach to the Game
- Coaching without Playing Experience

Some Suggested Absolutes

- Try to have fun yourself.
- The session, though fun in nature, must have a definite objective.
- Player mistakes are an expected circumstance.
- Criticism, threats, blame, yelling, humiliating, ridiculing, showing biases - None of these items are appropriate
- Above all, please leave the "Winning At All Cost" notion precisely where it belongs, in the ash tray of your car.

An Approach to The Game For U-6 Through U-10 Players

Many of our coaching role models have become bigger celebrities than their players because of their antics during games. Throwing chairs on a basketball court, tossing towels in the air, or punching players coming off the field are emotional acts that catch the eye of the television producers and ultimately the viewing audience, e.g., you, the coach.

Obviously, these are not the kind of models we want youth coaches in America to emulate. But you know and I know unfortunately, those types are out there.

Are players and their performances directly or indirectly affected by the behavior of the coach? You can bet they are. Consider for the moment the impression we make on a bunch of little children coming to play a sport they may never have played before, and we open up on them with a barrage of do's and don'ts regarding their conduct. Don't get me wrong, we need a sense of order in our training sessions, so setting a reasonable tone at the outset is a good idea. However, you can accomplish knowing the players and establishing standards in a very reasonable manner. Let's be perfectly clear at this

juncture. Children enjoy soccer because it gives them the opportunity to kick a ball. Using this as our basic assumption, it is imperative that we use the ball as an integral part of our communication. Short verbal blips followed by chances for them to touch the ball and move about will get satisfactory results. They'll have fun and you'll maintain your sanity!

An erroneous assumption about youth soccer in America is that all children come into it with an enormous zeal to become great players. In many instances nothing could be farther from the truth. Honestly, the overwhelming majority of six and seven year olds play soccer in this country because their Mothers make that decision for them.

So, given the developmental characteristics mentioned earlier and some of the general premises upon which we as coaches are confronted with the very young player, let's examine some specifics:

- They really would like to have fun playing soccer.
- The basis of their enjoyment is derived from touching the ball.
- Organize sessions that allow for minimal discussion and tons of opportunities for players to touch the ball.
- Short training sessions are far more beneficial than long extended periods. (Training a young player longer will not necessarily make him better. It may even burn him/her out early.)
- Small sided games are still the best means of spending time with them
- Play small sided games with uneven numbers 3 versus 2, 4 versus 3, etc.
- Keep things very simple. Do not get into tactics. You will regret it. They are not mentally mature enough to comprehend and perform.
- Emphasize the positive. Do stop a session to point out difficulties, but also be sure to stop training and glorify a particularly good performance by a player. Mix it up.
- Try to get into the session yourself. Have some fun.
- Be sure to create situations where they must do most of the thinking.
- Set it up, step back, and observe. Let them sort it out.

The fundamental difference between kicking and passing is thinking. The fundamental difference between drills and activities is thinking. If you agree with the previous two

statements, then surely you'll buy the premise-that soccer is a player's game and our training should give players as many opportunities to both play and think as possible.

As coaches of very young children we are not strapped by the urgency or intensity of winning. We really have a chance to do something about developing individuals. So enjoy this wonderful uncontrived freedom.

Technique Without Drills

In the overall development of a young soccer player, it is imperative that we place a lot of emphasis on the acquisition of skill or technique – touch on the ball ,pace, control and field vision We will be talking about ways to develop these specific tools in a fun, game like manner. But first let's discuss the individuals who will be attempting to learn what we teach.

Children between the ages of 6-10 cannot be viewed as mini-professionals, nor can we expect them to learn new skills the way we would. They need to be excited and entertained while they learn. Their attention span, which is very short, and their physiological make-up must receive a lot of attention. Activities must be short, varied, and have many rest periods built in.

In early stages of development, we must concern ourselves with improvement of general movement patterns (e.g. running, skipping, spinning, rolling, etc). These activities lend themselves to the inclusion of a soccer ball.

All we have to do is use our imagination to come up with a series of fun and exciting activities that are soccer related.

In order to keep your players interested in learning and in coming back year after year, you must create a game-like environment at training. Gamelike refers to activities that children involve themselves in, on their own, and that are not necessarily the game of soccer. Think of the games you played and enjoyed as a child. Think of the general activities that made you happy.

The coaches that do the most for these young developing players are the ones who haven't forgotten what it is like to feel like a child. To have success with this age group, we must get in touch with the child in all of us.

We must let that part of us take over during practice and games.

Hopefully, we can accept that when children come to play soccer, they come to PLAY AT Soccer. They do not come to:

- Listen
- Watch
- Stand in Line

- Be involved in anything that has to do with boredom inactivity or organization.

The following activities are just ideas that involve fun, movement, coordination, strength, decision making and, oh yes, soccer skills. Examine the characteristics of these games and you will be able to create your own. Rest assured, with the right attitude and some basic understanding, anyone could be very effective with the young, developing player.

Coaching Without Playing Experience

One major problem that typically faces the volunteer coach of today is the lack of an extensive playing background. Most beginning coaches feel that the absence of this experience is a severe handicap. They often feel inadequate to handle the job at hand. This lack of playing experience is a liability when related to the coaching of highly competitive, mature players. When coaching young players (U-10, U-8, U-6) a playing background is not a necessity. The philosophy of this manual calls for patient, interested, fun-loving people who have time to spend assisting the overall development of youngsters.

A key to being a successful (and I don't mean winning) youth soccer coach is to draw upon your experience. If you grew up playing sports of any kind, you possess some knowledge of good and bad coaching techniques.

<i>Don't</i>	Do
Become frustrated	Keep players active with a ball
Yell and intimidate	Vary activities based on attention span
Be afraid to adjust activities if the kids aren't having fun	Have fun and enjoy yourself

Always, always remain positive and compliment everyone not just the stars.

Use the general education you've received from school and life to help develop your player's minds, bodies, values, etc. Don't place yourself above these boys and girls or you'll never be approached for assistance. Be organized, but be aware of the problem related to over-organization, (i.e., boredom).

Follow general human nature concepts related to dealing with the attitudes and habits of your players. We must understand that every child has needs. These needs become apparent over a period of time in practice. The needs range from attention to the development of self-confidence. They include love, discipline, the desire to improve, friendship, etc. Try to determine each child's need, and then attempt to fill at least part of it. Your discipline problems will be greatly reduced as these needs are taken care of.

The area of child-rearing sheds a lot of light on proper youth coaching. Many of the general techniques used in guiding children into adulthood can be used successfully. *Use* what worked for you in this area, *Lose* what didn't work.

To get the most out of your soccer experience, utilize all of your assets. The characteristics that make you a success in relationships in business or with people are all useful.

If you're going to put some time into the development of young soccer players, you're also going to have to put some time into developing yourself. You'll have to gain insight into teaching methods, dealing with children, coaching developments, etc. The following are some suggestions:

- Attend Coaching Clinics. Learn from coaches who know how to teach. Take part in the coaching courses that your State Association offers, (Youth Modules, E, D & C licenses). Attend other coaching clinics that occur in your area as well. There is no better learning experience than this. You learn to develop skills, to improve fitness, to organize and handle players, and how to teach tactical aspects to various age groups.
- Read Soccer Books. The more opinions and methods you come across, the better off you'll be.
- Watch higher levels of play. Go see the best college games in your area. View U-19 and High School soccer. If there is a professional team in your area, take your players to see as many games as possible. The better the picture you provide to your players, the better they will be able to learn what you teach.
- Ask and take the advice of experienced coaches in your area. Realize that we don't teach 19 year olds the same as 16 year olds but there are similar principles.

We've talked about some of the areas that you need to improve yourself in as a coach. Now, let's talk about some of the methods that will help improve your players over the years. It's very easy to let time go by and not accomplish our maximum in most areas of life. Related to player development, here are some suggestions to insure that your players are always moving forward.

- Set goals for your players. All of us tend to stagnate unless we pursue both short and long term goals. Assist your players in setting soccer development goals. This idea will help them become better soccer players as well as more responsible people. Young players should be given specific attainable goals (e.g., Billy, I'd like to see you win the ball five times today; Susan, I'd like to see you get 3 shots on goal today, etc.). As the initiator of these goals, you must know when they have been achieved and when to go on to other goals. Keep track of the goals you have established in written form, and update them regularly. The goals you set for

players should fall somewhere in the range between attainable and challenging. Be careful to match the difficulty of the goal to the ability of the individual. Also be sure to give important feedback to small and large achievers alike.

- A second area of concern is the giving of praise. Too much can be as harmful as none at all. At times we tend to overdo the building up of superior players and give nothing to the less developed ones. Players who constantly hear, (Good shot, great move, etc.) may lose the motivation to continue the hard training on their own, which is needed to become complete players. If they receive too much reinforcement they might not have the need to reach their full potential. Ration praise. It can help; it can hurt.
- Finally, and this may be the most important concept to grasp, as a novice coach:
 - We improve at what we practice. This is not a profound statement but it is a fact. Therefore let's all accept that the game itself is the best teacher of all. When we rehearse the game, in a fun filled environment, we will improve. Honest! If you have any doubts about being an effective coach, you must realize that if you put a ball between a dozen youngsters and let them play, you will in fact develop many players. Consider the children that grow up in countries without a coach until the age of twelve, typically.
 - They play in groups of 4, 6, 10, etc., in backyards, on beaches and any place near their home. They make their own rules and play until they fall over. This is where love of the game begins. As they approach maturity, they have all the tools they need to go on to higher levels of play. In the backstreets these young players don't learn about positions, restarts, and systems. They learn about dribbling, shooting, passing, and Fun! Give these children the game, and you will be a fine coach.

Your Philosophy

You must have a clear cut idea of what you want to achieve as a coach. This need is basically your personal philosophy of coaching. You must decide what's important and then use your attributes to achieve this goal.

Consider ideas like:

- Winning vs. Losing
- Teaching the skills, even though you are likely to lose games to teams that rely on playing physically. The skilled players will be better in the long run.
- Total development vs. single position improvement
- Relation of parents and spectators to players, referees and opponents.

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- Playing Soccer vs. "Kick and Run".
- Development of all players on your team.

These ideas and many more will be part of your personal philosophy.

As you form these ideas you must have the ability to communicate them to everyone involved with your team (players and parents alike). One way to achieve this is to call for a team meeting prior to the commencement of your season. Invite your children and parents to a cook-out, and at some point of the evening sit everyone down and explain how they can help you achieve the maximum benefits for their children. Ask their help in areas like:

- Not yelling at players.
- Not applauding bad habits (i.e., constant long kicking)
- Not yelling at the referees or opponents.
- Deemphasizing winning/losing.

If you can get to these people early and explain what you need to give their children the best possible experience, they will help you. Give it a try

The Training Session

When considering items of importance in a training session for the developmental level player, the following must be mentioned:

- Players should have a good time during the training session.
- Players should be spending the majority of their time in technical development, e.g., touching the ball as often as possible.
- Some portion of each training session should emphasize shooting on goal.
- Some portion of each training session should deal with goalkeeping. At this early age, all players should have an opportunity to practice at goalkeeping.

Form of The Training Session

The session should begin with some form of warm-up. The warm-up, where possible, should relate to the one, two, three or more technical features that will be presented in that particular session.

Each time a technical topic is presented, the progression should be from fundamental through game related, and wherever possible, to game conditions. If left too long in the fundamental stage, the session becomes boring. Specifically, the progression should be

the presentation of a mental picture for the players by the coach or one of the more advanced players, or a local older player recruited for the demonstration. The demonstration should be done properly, but not belabored. By this means, each player has an opportunity to look at the example and then go about trying to duplicate it.

Moving out of the fundamental stage, we can then put the players under one of three pressures. 1. The pressure of time... doing it faster. 2. The pressure of space...doing it in a smaller area. 3. The pressure of an opponent. The pressure of an opponent at first should be restrained to allow the attacking player some immediate success. As the player enhances his ability to perform the technique, then more pressure from the opponent is appropriate. If at all possible, we try to take the technique being emphasized into game conditions. At this point, we have two objectives. Although we always award one point for a goal, if we are working on the technique of passing, then each time a proper pass is delivered by a player, the award can be two, three, four or as many points as the coach designates, depending upon how well the pass was executed. In this way, we never lose sight of the fact that to win at soccer we must score goals. But there are other important facets of the game, which we must concentrate upon and try to perfect in order to score those goals. By awarding more points in the technical area we are focusing upon, we may heighten the awareness of our players to the importance of the technique in game situations.

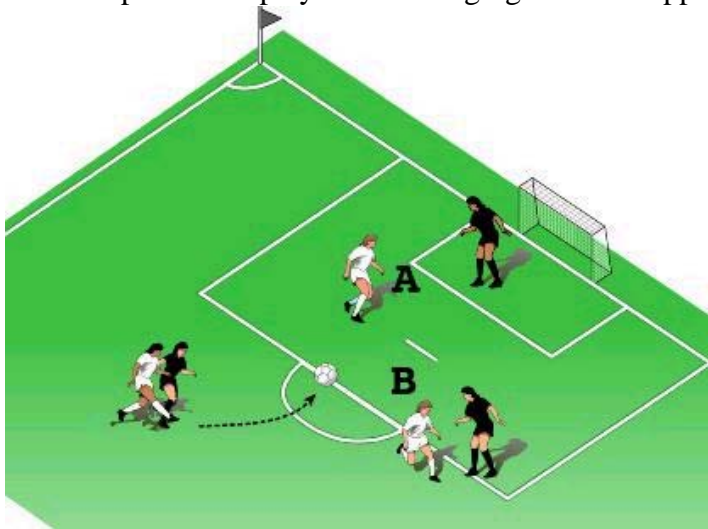
Quick Offsides primer

Perhaps the most difficult soccer rule infraction to understand:

Offside essentially is when an offensive player (Player A) without the ball, has fewer than two defenders (includes goalie) between herself and the end line when the ball is played forward by a teammate.

(Player B in the diagram below, is onside because a defender and the goalie are between her and the endline).

The rule prevents a player from hanging out at an opponent's goal.



Offside is called at the moment the ball is passed ("the ball is played forward by a teammate") ...not when the pass arrives or travels past the defender.

An offensive player MAY dribble past the last defender or RETRIEVE a pass past the last defender, as long as she was NOT behind the last defender WHEN the pass was made.

A player can not be in an offside position if:

- He is in his own half of the field of play
- He is level with the last two opponents (i.e. even is NOT offside) NOTE: this is a change from how you might have grown up playing -- it used to be 'even is off'.
- He is behind the ball
- On a goal kick
- On a corner kick
- On a throw-in.

Available Website information

The club's website is located at www.perkvalleysoccer.org and a plethora of information is contained there. Please familiarize yourself with the website.