



## **2007 Minis Coach Information**

# Judging a Good Coach

**Here are a few things we'd like for you to consider:**

- A good coach is someone who knows winning is wonderful but is not the triumph of sports.
- A kids' coach is someone who goes to work early, misses meals, gives away weekends and plays havoc with family schedules so he or she can help out a group of youngsters.
- A good coach is someone who stays half an hour or more after practice to make sure every one of the players has a safe ride home.
- A good coach is someone who rarely hears a mom or dad say 'Hey thanks', but receives a lot of advice on game day.
- A good coach is someone who makes sure that everyone gets to play.
- A good coach is someone who teaches young people that winning is not everything, but still lies in bed at night staring at the ceiling wondering whether he or she might have done anything differently to have turned a loss into a win.
- A good coach is someone who can help a child learn to take mistakes in stride.
- A good coach is someone who sometimes helps a child to develop ability and confidence that sometimes did not exist before.
- A good coach is someone a youngster will remember a long time after the last game has ended and the season is over.

# PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

## Planning

The way to have successful practices is to plan. Your practice planning should begin *before* you first get together with the team and should continue throughout the season as you plan for each practice.

## Pre-season planning

Younger teams (**minis**) should limit practice to 45 min or 1 hour, once or twice per week. As the players get older, practices can be increased in frequency and length.

The two main objectives for any soccer practice are (1) to have fun, and (2) to learn to become better soccer players. In order to achieve the second objective, it is important that you develop teaching goals for the season before you start. You will ordinarily have only four to six practices before the first game. Since you will not have time to teach everything, choose the topics you want to focus on and build your practices around these topics.

## Parent Orientation Meeting

All coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This may take the form of a casual discussion in your living room, could be combined with a team picnic, or the first practice.

Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay benefits for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, the following information could be put into a letter to parents/players, but a face to face meeting is preferable.

### **Purposes of a parent orientation meeting include the following:**

- Enables parents to understand the objectives and goals of the program
- Enables parents to become acquainted with you, the coach
- Informs parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport
- Informs parents of your expectations of them and of their child
- Enables you to address any concerns of the parents
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players
- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, *etc.*)

### **Things to consider when organizing a parent orientation meeting:**

- Hold it early in the season; preferably before the first team practice.
- Having the players present is optional.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
  - team roster (with names of parents and players, telephone numbers)
  - schedule of practices and games

- club rules
- team goals/rules
- summary or outline of the meeting
- Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.

**Important points to cover in your meeting:**

- Coach introduction
  - introduce yourself and assistant coaches (**or ask for volunteers at this time**)
  - give some background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience)
- Coaching philosophy
  - discuss what you consider to be the value of this sport
  - discuss your methods for teaching skills (describe a typical practice)
  - state the importance you assign to having fun and developing skills
  - state the importance you assign to winning and losing
  - discuss any team rules and guidelines, disciplinary procedures
  - discuss your philosophy regarding player rotation, substitution, playing time
- Specifics of the program
  - Practice schedule (how many per week? how long?)
  - Game schedule (how many? when do they begin?)
  - Minimum playing time
  - equipment required/recommended
  - inherent risks (soccer is a contact sport, albeit a relatively safe one)
  - medical insurance (Oregon Youth Soccer insurance provides secondary coverage)
- Team management
  - ask for volunteers as assistant coaches
  - ask for volunteers as team parents (snack schedule, help with nets/flags)
  - set up telephone tree and/or car pooling system

**Discuss COACH'S responsibilities, for example:**

- demonstrate leadership and good sportsmanship
- treat each player fairly
- have organized practices and teach soccer fundamentals appropriate to the age group

- provide a safe environment (e.g. arrive at practice on time and remain after practice until every child is picked up by an **authorized** adult, ensure that the players' equipment conforms to the club guidelines)
- contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem
- help each player set individual and team goals that are realistic
- give parents a schedule of practices and games in a timely fashion
- allow each player to play half of every game at a minimum
- respect the referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself in a controlled manner on the field

**Discuss PLAYER'S responsibilities, for example:**

- attend practices/games regularly, and to arrive on time
- bring proper equipment to each practice and game
- inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice/game
- make each practice a challenge to improve
- work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork
- respect the referees
- be supportive of all teammates all of the time

**Discuss PARENTS' responsibilities, for example:**

- transport your child to and from practices/games on time
- be supportive of all the players (criticism does not improve performance)
- help your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort
- focus on mastering skills and having fun, not on winning
- Avoid material rewards for your child (the reward is the fun of playing!)
- attend games and cheer the team
- refrain from criticizing opponents; be positive with all the players
- respect the referees (they will make mistakes, but they are doing their best; if you feel you are better qualified, see your club's Referee Coordinator - he or she could easily find work for you!)
- refrain from coaching your child during games (try to understand and respect the difference between the roles of the coach and the parent)

**Answer any questions from the parents.**

## Suggestions for Dealing with Parents

Coaching is exciting and rewarding, but occasionally you may experience difficulty with parents. Whatever the concern, a parent is generally just looking out for their child, often at your expense. There are some things you can do to open up communication and make dealing with parents a positive aspect.

- Have a parent meeting before the first practice to discuss your plans and expectations for the season. Encourage questions from the parents and let them know that you have given a lot of thought to the upcoming season.
- Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
- Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement. (If you have a preference for a certain time to voice these concerns, such as after practice, make this clear at the Parent Orientation Meeting.)
- Know what your objectives are and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not to the parents. No coach can please everyone!
- Know the club and game rules. Be prepared to abide by them and to explain them to parents.
- Handle any confrontation one-on-one and not in a crowd situation. Try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk while you listen. Often a parent will vent their frustrations just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, and then thank them for it.
- Resist unfair pressure. It is your responsibility as coach to make the final decision. This doesn't mean that you can't still listen to parents.
- Don't discuss individual players with other parents. The grapevine will hang you every time. Show the same respect for each player on the team that you want the parents to show toward you.
- Ask the parents not to criticize their children during practice or a game. Don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.
- Don't blame the players for their parents' actions.
- Be consistent! If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. At the very least, inform players and parents of any change as soon as possible.
- Most importantly, be fair! If you treat all players equally and with respect, you will gain their respect and that of their parents as well. Remember that you will be dealing with all types of children, and with parents having different backgrounds and ideals. The challenge for you as a coach is to address these differences in a positive manner so the season will be enjoyable for everyone involved.

# SAMPLE VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET

Position	Name	Phone
ASSISTANT COACH		
ASSISTANT COACH		
TEAM PARENT (GAME SNACK COORDINATOR)		
PHONE TREE COORDINATOR		
PHOTO COORDINATOR		
FUND-RAISER COORDINATOR		
PARENT REFEREE / TIMEKEEPER		
END-OF-SEASON PARTY COORDINATORS		

# Player Equipment

## **BALL**

Encourage each player to have his or her own ball and to use it often, not just during team practice. Players will not derive maximum benefit from practice unless they each have their own ball for warm-ups and individual drills.

Soccer balls come in a variety of sizes, each designated by a number:

- size #3 - smallest standard size, for the youngest players (Minis to U-8 or K-2<sup>nd</sup> grades)
- size #4 - intermediate size, appropriate for U-9 through U-12 (3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades)
- size #5 - largest standard size, for U-13 to adult (7<sup>th</sup> grade and up)

## **SHIN GUARDS**

***An absolute requirement for games should also be worn for all practices.*** The pull-on “legging” type with foam padding protecting the front of the leg from ankle to shin is an excellent shin guard. Shin guards with plastic inserts offer additional protection, especially for the older player. The shin Guards should be completely covered by the socks.

## **SOCCER SHOES**

Recommended, but not absolutely required by most clubs. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not legal for soccer. Soccer cleats for most recreational play must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats), and no less than 3/8 inch in diameter. Check your players’ shoes for illegal cleats, protruding nails, or sharp edges, and rectify any problems before a referee discovers a violation and one of your players is forced to sit out a game. Soccer cleats do not have a single toe cleat. Soccer shoes have two toe cleats, set back from the toe of the shoe.

**WATER BOTTLE** (with identifying marks on it) Fresh water should be available to your players at each practice and game. It is easier for the coach if each player provides his or her own water bottle.

## **SHIRTS, SOCKS, SHORTS**

A jersey, short and sock will be issued to each player. The jersey is reversible. Be sure that you are aware of your club’s policies with respect to uniforms and inform your players and parents of any requirements i.e. uniform and short is to be returned but player may retain the socks.

# Key Teaching Points for Coaching Soccer

## Coaching from the Touchline

It is important to realize that although we as coaches are permitted to instruct from the sideline, this is not a license to take over the game from the players.

### **Coaching is best done during practice time, not during the game.**

Support your players with positive comments from the sideline. Encourage them. Better luck next time, or "well done" mean a lot to a player. Every child out there wants to show you their best. Help bring the best out of them.

### **A Few Things to AVOID:**

1. Don't continually shout instructions - they often reach the players too late (the action has moved to a new situation), and may be distracting.
2. Don't send one of your assistants to instruct from the opposite touchline to "cover the field". It is doubly distracting to the players (often the instructions coming from opposite sides of the field differ!). Coaching should be done from the bench side of the field. Many clubs and leagues restrict coaching in this manner.
3. Don't send a parent or assistant to coach from behind the goal line; coaches and spectators do not belong there! The coach can be "carded" for permitting such a violation of the rules.

### **A Few GOOD IDEAS:**

1. Your sideline coaching should be limited. Prepare your players to think for themselves as much as possible. Observe. Take notes of situations and skills that your team has problems with and work on them during practice.
2. Watch how the opposition plays and point out to your substitutes anything that can be to your team's advantage (e.g. all their goal kicks go to a certain area, their defense plays far back or far forward, etc.).
3. Remind the players going in whom they are substituting for and what their duties are at that position. The less time spent shouting and the more time observing. The better understanding you gain of your team, the more information you will have to help them during your next practices. **Remember that as coaches we are in a supporting role. It is the kids' show!**

## Soccer Etiquette

Another aspect of sideline coaching is finding the best place to do it. Just as good fences make good neighbors, when teams establish themselves on opposite ends of the field it reduces the potential for friction between the teams. **RYSC requires** that both teams occupy the same side of the field, with spectators on the opposite side.

Each coach should setup, and stay between the half line and the outer edge of the penalty box. The coach, assistant coaches and substitutes need to abide by this ruling. Pacing up and down the touchline, which is not a great idea under the best of circumstances, is extremely irritating if it means running in front of the opposing coach

and screaming over his coaching. The best solution is just to quit pacing and watch your team. A little consideration for others will increase everyone's enjoyment of the game.

After the game, give the other team a proper cheer (discourage cheers such as "Two, four, six, eight, who did we *eliminate!*" they are both arrogant and unsportsmanlike), then line up your squad and lead them onto the field to congratulate the opposing players and coach. Teach your players to win humbly and to lose graciously.

Finally, remember that, as coach, you are responsible for the behavior of your spectators (parents and others) as well as your own and that of your team. Spectators must be educated about the proper place to stand to watch the game. All spectators should remain between the two 18 yard lines (marking the penalty area) and 2 yards behind the touchline. This provides a clear line of sight for the linesperson (even if you don't use linespersons at your level of play, it is a good idea to get the spectators into the habit of watching from well off the touchline!). No one should ever be closer to the goal than 18 yards, and never directly behind the goal area.

## Substituting

The coach's main duty besides watching out for the welfare of his or her players is to keep track of playing time and to substitute players in and out so every player plays a comparable amount of time. **Know the situations when it is permissible to substitute.**

Each player must play a certain portion of the game (e.g. at least half). Only injury or, under exceptional circumstances, disciplinary action should prevent a registered, present, and properly equipped player from having his or her fair playing time.

**EQUAL PLAYING TIME** for all who regularly attend practice is a reasonable goal for every coach. "Everyone plays and everyone sits out" is a good rule. Don't use substitution as immediate punishment for mistakes made.

To avoid misunderstandings with parents we recommend that you:

1. Explain to your parents (e.g. at the Parent Meeting) the restrictions that are placed on you in terms of when you can legally substitute players during a game.
2. Prepare a fair substitution schedule before each game, follow it as best you can, and keep it on file for the season. We strongly recommend that coaches prepare their line-ups before game time and substitute between periods or, for the older players, mid-way in each half and at half-time. Remember to keep an eye on your watch! **TIP:** to keep the subs interested in the game
  - a. Ask them to observe the position where they will play next.
  - b. Have them keep statistics (e.g. number of passes made/missed, shots on goal).

# Techniques

It is important for the players to learn and practice the proper techniques

**Practice all foot skills with both right and left feet.**

## Inside of the foot pass

- Ankle locked
- Foot slightly up at the toe
- Thigh turned outward
- Look up to establish eye contact
- Connect with the middle of the ball just before the instep
- Follow through (contributes to direction and pace of the pass)

## Outside of the foot pass

- Ankle locked
- Foot pointing slightly downward at the toe
- Leg swings across the ball
- Ball should spin when kicked

## Receiving a pass

- Move toward the ball (don't wait for it to come to you)
- Inside or outside of the foot used most often
- Foot surface first touching the ball should be withdrawn slightly on contact to take the momentum out of the ball ("cushioning")
- Ball should not be stopped completely, but under close control
- Redirect ball in front or to the side in anticipation of moving in that direction to pass or dribble

## Dribbling

- Small controlled steps ... ball should be kept approximately 2-3 feet in front of you
- Strike the ball with either the inside or outside of the foot (softly and not with the toe)
- Look up frequently to establish eye contact
- Change speed and direction

## Ball juggling

- Continuous bouncing of ball off head, shoulders, thigh, foot, *etc.* without the ball touching the ground ... This will develop ball control.

## Shielding

- Legs bent
- Shoulders down
- Arms out at the sides. Used as a means of keeping an opponent away from the ball, or to stall for time waiting for a teammate to get open for a pass.

## Shooting

- Head down
- Let the ball come under the body (allows shot to stay low)
- Ankle locked with foot pointing downward at the toe
- Strike the ball with the laces of the shoe
- Accuracy before power (avoid shooting directly at the goalkeeper)

## Throw-ins

- Ball MUST go directly over the head
- Both hands must remain on the ball (R and L thumbs meet behind the ball; thumbs and fingers of both hands form a W)
- Both feet must be on the ground (not necessarily flat; it is permissible to drag the toe of the trailing foot)
- As soon as ball is released, player should get back onto the field (often to receive a return pass)

## “Trapping” (Settling or Controlling)

- Controlling the ball using any legal part of the body (NO HANDS unless you are the goalie)
- The controlling surface must “give” on contact to cushion the ball
- Ball should stay close to the player (not bounce away)
- If using a chest trap, bend the body backward slightly so the ball rolls down onto the ground at the feet
- Important when controlling the ball from the air to the ground, that it settle at your feet.

## Tactics

Remember, tactics are not important for the minis player and should not be stressed. As the players mature, and the concept of team play begins to develop, the tactical elements can be introduced. Listed below are some basic guidelines for the coach, which fall into the realm of tactics.

## General

- Play positions (the various roles can be understood *even as players rotate positions*).
- Get open and call for the ball.
- Look and listen for passing opportunities.
- Pass and move to space and/or to support.
- Work to build and maintain triangles - the basic structure for passing and support.
- Always support the player with the ball (forward and rear support within passing distance).

## Team Offense

- Maintain possession of the ball.
- Keep the offense wide in order to spread (and weaken) the opponents' defense and to create space for scoring opportunities.

- Penetrate as deeply as possible with every pass, without unduly risking loss of possession.
- Finish attacks with shots on goal.

### **Team Defense**

- Support and communication are critical.
- Pressure opponents to decrease their “comfort zone”.
- Delay opponents’ attack when your team first loses possession of the ball to permit defense to regroup.
- Mark “goal-side” to defend against shots on goal.
- Mark “ball-side” to defend against easy passes.
- Maintain defensive balance on the field; guard against reversing the ball (crossing passes).
- Mark tighter as you get closer to your goal.
- Concentrate defense in front of the goal as the ball approaches your goal (limiting space available for goal shots) and direct ball away from goal.

### **Kick off**

- Short pass and dribble.
- Short pass and pass back (triangle).
- (Note that the “long boot” is not encouraged!)

### **Throw-in**

- Throw to an open teammate if possible (first look for the farthest unmarked player).
- Throw toward the other team’s goal.
- Throw down the touchline.
- Throw to your goalkeeper (this is not considered an illegal pass back).
- Take throw-ins quickly (before the defense can set up) but always under control.
- Throw the ball so that it can be controlled in the air.
- Thrower should re-enter the field quickly to be open for a return pass.

### **Goal kick**

- Big kick up the side of the field.
- Avoid kicking the ball across the front of your goal.
- Consider having a defender take goal kicks while the goalkeeper maintains position to guard goal.

### **Free kick**

- Close to goal, direct - shoot!
- Close to goal, indirect - short pass and shoot.
- Far from goal - big kick toward the front of the opponents’ goal.

### **Corner kick**

- Big kick into the opponents’ goal area.
- Short pass and dribble or cross.

## **Drills (Skill Games) - General Guidelines**

Some popular skill games are included here for your immediate use (see after Scrimmage Guidelines). You don't need 100 drills. Pick a few drills (say, 4 or 5) and work at them.

Step 1 - Explain the drill (why it is done, how it is done).

Step 2 - Demonstrate the drill (slowly, step-by-step).

Step 3 - Execute the drill.

Step 4 - Figure out what went wrong (it's often the instructions); fix it, and start over!

Remember: showing is better than talking. Some drills will not work well at first. Maybe they need a small adjustment (e.g. too many players, or players standing too close or too far apart). Repetition of drills builds skills. It can also be boring. So use variations of drills, and don't repeat the same drill too often. If your players are not enjoying and not learning from a particular drill, find another that focuses on the same skills.

Start a drill simply and progress to the harder stuff. For example, begin with a simple passing triangle; then introduce a chaser. Play with the kids! Sometimes you should join in the drill as a participant rather than as a coach. Not only will the kids enjoy it, but you will gain a better appreciation of the skills you are asking them to master.

### **IDEA: Call a parent from the sidelines to be goalkeeper for a shooting drill!**

Experiment! Don't be afraid to try new ideas. Split the team into small groups for you and your assistants to teach a drill; then rotate. This keeps more players busy and allows more individual attention. When organizing the kids into small groups, consider their abilities. For example, in some dribbling or passing drills it might be best to have pairs with similar abilities. Conversely, in competition (e.g. 2v2) you might pair stronger and weaker players for balance. Start a drill slowly. WALK through it first, then do it at half speed, and finally at full speed.

## **SCRIMMAGES - GENERAL GUIDELINES**

### **General:**

- Not the best for improving skills (many players, only one ball). But the kids love scrimmage and its great fun for them. So allow plenty of time for scrimmage during every practice, but *don't* make it the *only* activity.
- Excellent for learning positions and game simulation.
- Good way to teach the rules (you are the referee!), but try not to stop play too often.

### **Scrimmage with conditions:**

- Maximum 5 touches: to encourage passing.
- Minimum 2 touches: to encourage control (no one-touch "passes").
- Minimum 5 touches: to encourage dribbling.
- Must pass 3 times before allowed to shoot: rewards passing and good spacing.

### **Freeze!**

- Blow the whistle and call "freeze".
- All players must stop where they are.
- Coach makes observation, e.g. players open on right flank.
- Excellent teaching tool (if not used too often).

# 3V3

## Coaching Minis

### Soccer Techniques

Five and six year olds should have fun and develop an appreciation for the game of soccer. The field is small, 20x30 yards, and goals are not protected, except for the field players of the opposing team. The theory is to allow the players to dribble and shoot the ball as much as possible. Players are usually arranged in a triangle, which allow for passing, but do not be concerned if this does not happen. Allow them to have fun, and training should be in getting them to go the proper direction, striking the ball properly with the foot, and how to defend.

### Ball Control Training

#### Dribbling & turning

##### A. Techniques

- Dribbling with inside of foot (R and L)
- Dribbling with outside of foot (R and L)
- Running with the ball for speed
- Show simple footwork
- Turning with the inside of the foot (left and right)
- Disguise dribbles and direction
- Protect the ball by placing body between ball and defender, or passing

##### B. Principles

- Keep ball under close control as defenders get near

#### Shooting

##### A. Techniques

- Lace kick with both feet (R & L)
- One-touch shooting

##### B. Principle

- Accuracy before power

#### Passing and support

##### A. Techniques

- Strike the ball in the middle
- Lace kick for power (R and L foot)
- Push pass (inside of foot) for short passing on the ground (R and L foot)

## B. Principles

- **Discourage kicking with the toes**

## Controlling (“trapping”)

### A. Techniques

- Limp foot to absorb the energy from the ball. Ball will stop at their feet.
- Inside of foot (R & L)
- Outside of foot (R & L)

### B. Principles

- Use relaxed stance, knees slightly bent
- Cushion control is the key
- Keep ball close

## Defending

### A. Techniques

- Keep the body between the ball and the opponent
- Staying goal side of the ball, and opponent
- Challenging
- Clearing

### B. Principle

- Decrease space and time (for the opponent)

## Positions and Systems of play

### A. Techniques

- Attackers (forwards, wings)
- Defenders (fullbacks)

### B. Principles

- All positions have both offensive and defensive responsibilities

## Practice Sessions - Introduction

Focus your attention on the listed points for each technique as you observe your players. It is important for your players to learn to practice techniques properly, but remember that this may take some time - more for some techniques than others, and more for some players than others. Again, be patient and be encouraging!

Lay out cones in a 15x20 yard box. This will do for all activities! Remember 5 year old players find it difficult to see an imaginary line between 2 cones so lay down as many as you can for sidelines. Also, try and **stay away** from the 4 L's; Lines, Lectures, Laps and Language.

- L = Laps; Young kids don't need stretching so start with a FUN warm up game – pick one below!
- L = Lines; Don't have kids wait in turn in a line, have them all play at same time
- L = Lectures; If you talk or make little kids wait in line for more than 30 seconds, then you will lose them! Their powers of concentration are not the same as an adult!
- L = Language; We are all important role-models in the lives of these young kids so don't use any bad language or behavior!

### ***I. Warm-up 10 min.***

Each practice session should be started with a warm-up. Use the "beehive" grid for this purpose. Dribbling games make the best warm-up. Use your imagination to improvise from the skill games described below. Keep it "ball" oriented and fun.

### ***II. Skill Games 20 min. each***

Utilize one or two skill games during each practice. Try and build each of your practices around a particular skill (e.g. dribbling or passing). First demonstrate the skill to the players before starting and then correct group and individual players' mistakes during the skill games. Try not to be over corrective - remember; let the game be the teacher!

### ***III. Scrimmages 15 - 30 min.***

Complete your practice with a small sided game. Try to make the skill you practiced earlier a "condition" of the game. For example, in a practice that emphasized passing, the players of a small sided scrimmage must complete 2 or more passes before they can shoot on the goal. Make the scrimmage as much like a competitive game as possible, utilizing the rules of soccer modified for the appropriate age.

## **Skill Games**

### **I. Dribbling**

***Beehive*** - Provide a 15 yd. x 20 yd. grid (or approximately 1 sq. yd. per player). Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the grid randomly using correct techniques and practicing avoiding other players. Players should practice inside and outside foot dribbling, stopping, changing direction, and maintaining control while in the beehive.

***King of the ring*** - Provide a 15 yd. x 20 yd. grid where each player has a ball. One player or the coach is "it" without a ball. Players start to dribble in the grid while trying to avoid having their ball kicked out of the grid by the player who is "it". Players can reenter the grid after retrieving their ball and completing some type of small skill penalty activity, like juggling the ball twice on their feet or knees or dribbling around a nearby tree before returning to the grid.

**Red Light - Green Light** - Just like the traditional game except the players dribble their balls forward and must learn to control and stop their balls on the "red light" command. Line all the players up and have the coach be the traffic cop. Send out of control players back to the starting line.

**Attack and Protect** - Provide a 15 yd. x 20 yd. grid. Each player has a ball. Players dribble around in the grid trying to kick another player's ball out of the grid while at the same time protecting their own ball. Provide the players with a skill "condition" that they must complete before they may reenter the grid.

**Spiderman** - Provide a 15 yd. x 30 yd. grid. Each player should have a ball. The coach starts as the first spider. The players dribble around the grid while trying to avoid the tag of the spider. When a player is tagged by the coach, they join hands and go after new prey. Each successive tagged player makes the web of the spider grow bigger, but, alas, less organized. Young players will request this game constantly.

## II. Passing

**Keep Away Circle** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle of cones. One player or the coach stands inside the circle and tries to intercept passes made between the players. Passes completed between partners count as goals. Change the player inside the circle after a pass is intercepted or after a short time interval.

**Cone Game** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle. Set up 6 or 8 cones in the middle of the circle as targets. Partners try and knock over the cones in the middle with accurate passes.

**Triangle Pass** - Set up a three player triangle. Each group has one ball. Players pass to each other around the triangle shape. Make sure they reverse the direction of their passes from time to time. After a certain level of proficiency is reached, add a defender to the center of the triangle who will try to intercept the ball.

**Four Corner Pass** - Set up a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid with cones at each of the four corners. Four players work with one ball, one player on each side of the grid. A fifth player defends inside the grid. Players may only run between the cones on their side of the grid as they attempt to pass the ball across the grid. Change the middle player often to keep the play crisp and fast.

**Star Wars** - This competitive game is very exciting for younger players! Set up a 15 yd. x 20 yd. grid. Have all the players line up at one end prepared to run to the other end. The coach or a player stands just outside the grid at midway with several balls at the ready. On command the players attempt to run to the endline while evading balls kicked at them by the coach. All shots should be kept below waist level. Players hit by the balls become new additional shooters until only one runner is left.

### **III. Shooting Drills**

**Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reserve and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and side of the foot kicks for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only!

**Four Goal Game** - Set up four cone goals about two yards wide in each corner of a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid, Divide players into two equal teams. Players may score at any of the four goals. This game encourages teamwork and results in lots of shooting.

**Shoot Between Cones** - Set up a cone row with cones spaced 3 to 5 yards apart. Pair up players and position one player on each side of the cone row facing the cones and each other. Players should start close to the row of cones at first, striking the ball between the cones. The partner receives the ball and strikes it back between the cones. Move players farther away from the cones as their technique and accuracy improve.

**Go For Goal** - Players form two lines on either side of the coach who is standing about 18 to 20 yards from a goal of any size. The coach serves the ball toward the goal while one player from each line races to win the ball and shoot. As skills progress, add a goalkeeper. The coach should encourage correct shooting technique and a good first touch on the ball.

**Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards long with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.

### **IV. Other Games**

**The Numbers Game** - Young players will play this game for hours! Set up a 15 yd. x 20 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide players into two teams and place each team on one of the end lines. Number the players 1 - 6 (or use colors for very young players). The coach stands at the halfline and serves a ball into the grid while calling a number. Players who are called sprint off their end line to win the ball, play 1 v 1, and try to score. Players standing on the end line may keep the ball in play but may not protect the goal. The coach could try 2 or 3 numbers. Ball should be served on the ground.

**3V3 Pass and Strike** - Set up a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.

**Crab Soccer** - Set up a 15 yd. x 20 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide the players into two teams. Players must walk on their hands and feet simultaneously while trying to pass the ball to teammates and scoring.

This game really encourages teamwork because of the difficulty in movement by the players.

### **Ball Gymnastics**

Have kids all start with a ball in front of the coach. Then proceed to do age appropriate ball gymnastics with them, for instance... have them bend down with their legs apart and move the ball with their hands in a figure 8 around their ankles, picking the ball up and trying to touch the sky, holding the ball standing on one leg and closing eyes (see who is last player standing!). Coaches use your imagination!! Have kids come up with ideas to show you!

### **Sharks and Minnows**

All players start in a line at one end of the grid, while coach is in the middle. The Coach puts his/her hands together on top of their head like a shark's fin. The players, on the coach's call, try to reach the other side of the grid safely. If they do they turn around and wait for the coach to call again. If they are tagged by the coach then they become a shark in the middle with the coach. After a few runs, declare whoever is left winners and progress to having the kids each with a ball (gets them to attempt to look up for the 'shark' while dribbling!)

### **Swim across River (and take your ball)!**

Version of Sharks and Minnows. Have narrow river set up with cones. First have kids carry their ball and not be tagged by coach (crocodile), then progress to having them dribble across and not get tagged.

### **Freeze Tag**

Every player starts with a ball in a grid except two taggers (in different color bibs). After 3 seconds, the taggers are free to tag anyone with a ball. If tagged, they have to freeze with their legs apart and ball by side. They can be released (or unfrozen) by another free player dribbling ball up to them and passing ball through frozen players legs. Swap taggers after 30 seconds or if they freeze everybody! This can also be played without the ball, just as a tag game. To be unfrozen, free players crawl through the legs of the frozen players.

### **Hospital Tag**

Lay out appropriate sized grid, with a small square on one side (the hospital). All players are in it and try to tag each other. If tagged on shoulder for instance, player has to hold shoulder with one hand. If tagged a second time hold that spot with the other hand and run into the hospital to free themselves. Game gets amusing if player is tagged twice on the feet!

### **Fetch!**

Each player picks up a ball and brings it to the coach. The coach throws it away 10 yards and calls a number (i.e. 2). That is the # of body parts the player has to bring the ball back with. The coach can show them a couple of ways to retrieve ball if needed (i.e. holding ball between knee and one hand) then let them be creative! Then the number that the coach calls can represent the number of kicks the child should have to kick it back to the coach.

Then the coach can move to a different position after he throws the ball away.

### **Pac-Man**

The Coach starts with a ball in the grid. All the others start in the grid without their balls (placed just outside the grid within easy reach). On command the coach with the ball has to dribble the ball under control while attempting to tag others. If he does then they also get their ball and attempt the same.

### **Body Part Dribble**

Each player has a ball in a grid, and dribbles it around with his/her feet. After 20 seconds or so, the coach calls out a part of their body i.e. 'hand' and the players have to stop their ball with their hand as quickly as possible. Play a few times, having fun using ideas such as 'ear', 'nose', 'elbow', or 'knee'. Then advance the game where coach instead of calling a body part out, simply points to it on their body. The kids are therefore taught in a fun way to look up each time they touch the ball. Coach can move around when kids get used to looking up.

Challenge kids to dribble faster!

### **Blob / Link Tag**

Coach is it; all the players have a ball in a grid. If the coach tags someone's ball (usually get the best dribbler first to allow the weaker kids to get more touches), that player's ball is knocked out of the grid and then the two link arms (or hold hands) and try to tag somebody else's ball. Game continues. Instead of having 6 people linked, the blob can mutate to 2 blobs of 3. Can play again!

### **Magic Goals!**

Each player starts in area with a ball. The coach and assistant hold up one end each of a bright t-shirt twisted up and ask the kids what it looks like. Hopefully one of the parents will call it a goal and then play with them having to kick their ball through the goal. They cannot run through/under the goal otherwise they lose a point. The goal can then walk around the area!

### **Everybody's it!**

Every player starts with a ball in a grid. On command they can hunt each other down and if they can touch their ball against somebody else's then they score a point. This teaches them to be creative, fake to get a view of someone's ball or in turn shield their own ball from attack!

### **Crab Soccer**

Divide the kids into 2 teams of 3-4 players. Set up a grid with a goal at one end. Have one team (each with a ball) stand on the opposite end line from the goal and get them to dribble around the other team (down on hands and feet like crabs with bottoms off the floor). If player scores, have them pick ball up run back to start line and try again. Switch teams after 1-2 minutes. Each team will score a lot (thus having fun and success) so you can call it a tie!

### **Everybody Tag!**

Every player starts with a ball on a small field. On command they can dribble towards each other and if they can lightly tag someone else's arm then they score a point. This teaches them to be creative, fake, turn with their ball, shield and get their head up. Coaches can play and be tagged easily to help all kids be successful and have fun!

### **Keep away from coach!**

Show players how to turn with the ball (as simple as turning in a tight small circle maneuvering the ball with the inside of the right foot) keeping the ball close to their feet. Coach jogs around and says they will try and tag kids balls (but don't really)! Concentrate on having kids keeping the ball close to their feet but turning away from the coach (getting their body in between opponent and ball as soon as possible).

### **Fun Shielding Game using hands**

Introduce the concept of shielding the ball using hands first (younger players will comprehend this infinitely quicker as they are more dexterous with their hands than feet). Each player has a partner with one ball between them. (The Coach should give a good picture to start so they do not go straight down and bang heads). One player tries to keep the ball away from coach. The only rules are that the ball has to remain on the ground and that you can only maneuver it with one hand at a time. If partner (coach) touches the ball with his/her hand possession changes! When coach wins ball, demonstrate that you don't have to run away, just simply place your body frame between the ball and the opponent. Secondly, tell players not to travel – can stay in one spot and still retain possession. Third, get shielder to keep hip pointing to partner. Fourth, give everyone a ball in the rectangle and if coach (without ball) approaches them they are to turn away to shield. Coach can introduce inside and outside of foot turns this way.

### **Minefield**

Put all the cones randomly on the field (half right way up and half upside down). Coach and assistant coach make two teams and join one each. Appoint one team to search out the cones that are right way up and flip them upside down while the other team is doing the opposite. Play for 30 seconds then yell stop and see which team wins! Losing team gets a fun silly exercise, i.e. do a donkey impression.

#### **Variations of Minefield**

Dribble round cone in order to pick up Croquet – same as above only introduce knocking other persons ball away with your ball

### **Kick to the edge of the world**

Have all the players stand at one edge of your grid with their ball and then tell them that they all have 3 kicks to get it as close to the other side (edge of the world) without going over as they will lose their ball. Coach should demonstrate! For fun ask they how far away the other line is! This gives the kids the idea of putting the correct weight behind a pass or when they are kicking the ball.

### **1v1 Circle of Fire**

Divide players into 2 team and number each player of each team 1, 2, 3 etc. Put 4 goals out (a goal being 2 cones close to each other) then throw a ball out and call a number. Those 2 players go out and play for 20 seconds. They score points by kicking through the cones, so yes they can challenge each other.

### **Shoot on Coach**

Make two goals with 2 flags (or pop up goals) and have the coach and assistant (or parent) sit down in the middle of the goal and be goalkeeper! Kids take it in turns to try and score goals on whichever goal they choose. Of course the coach lets them all score lots!

### **Simple Body Fake or Trick!**

All kids/players love to learn new tricks! Instructor can use their favorite trick or any Cover move as long as they break it into very small steps. I prefer to teach tricks without the ball first! Get all participants to stand 3 steps back from their ball to learn the foot positioning first before complicating things with the ball! Lift the left foot up, take a small diagonal step forward (to the left), bend the left knee and drop the left shoulder down. Then lift the right foot up and take a quick hop diagonally forward to the right. When the ball is involved, on the hop push the ball forward in the same direction with whichever part of the foot is comfortable, preferably the right hand side of the laces of the right shoe. Let them practice on their own for 30 seconds. Do not spend long on this exercise. Some players will understand the concept and this will begin to rub off on the players around. I have had a 3 year old do this fake at camp and remember it the next day! Only spend 3-4 minutes on this then move onto another high intensity activity.

### **Scrimmage**

Always end up with a 3v3 game at the end. Pick 2 teams and each have an adult leader to facilitate the team picking a team name. Hands in – team cheer ‘1, 2, 3, GO <‘scary tigers’ or whatever kids decide>’. At kindergarten level don’t be afraid to put 2 or 3 balls on the field at a time to make sure all kids are involved. Work towards only having one ball on field as that is what they will play on Saturday! Make sure they know each other’s name!

Don’t worry about playing 2v3 or 3v4. Make sure no kid is sitting out!

***Remember to give them plenty of water breaks! If in doubt, fall back on one of their old favorites!***

## **The Game**

### ***Play Formation***

Place 3 players in a triangle. The goal is to have them sort of resemble that shape during play. The triangle may have 2 players forward and one behind, or 1 forward and 2 behind.

### ***Game Preparation***

1. At each game, the HOME TEAM coach is in charge. The home team will be so designated on the schedule, and will rotate each week.
2. The coaches may be the referee for the game. Coaches will be on the touchline with their substitute players and assistant coaches.
3. The HOME TEAM coach appoints a timekeeper (parent volunteer) if the coach is the referee.

4. A **Coin Toss** determines who starts play. The visiting team calls the toss. The winning team gets to choose the goal they want to attack first, and the other team gets the kick off.
5. Play starts with a kick off from the center of the field. The player kicking off must move the ball forward, and may not touch the ball again until the ball has been touched by another player. All opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle.

### ***Length of Game***

1. Games will consist of 2 equal 20 minute halves, with a 5 minute half time break.
2. The clock is not stopped during the game.
3. The parent timekeeper (supplied by the home team) will blow a whistle to indicate the start of play, the end of the half and the end of the game.

### ***Substituting***

Substitutions should be made about every 5-6 minutes, or as needed. Substitutions during play are made when the ball is naturally put out of play. Ball out of play is; *i.e.* throw-in, goal kick, after a goal is scored, or for an injury. Each coach should determine a system of substituting (platoon style - 3 at a time, individually - one at a time, *etc.*).

### ***Switching at Half Time***

After the half time break, the teams switch sides of fields.

### ***Goals***

There are no goalkeepers in 3v3 soccer. The intent is for the kids to be encouraged by the success of scoring goals. All free kicks are indirect kicks, meaning that two players must touch the ball before a goal is scored off a free kick. Goals **cannot** be scored directly from a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in. A second player, from either team, must touch the ball before the goal can be scored. Coaches are asked not to keep score.

### ***Equipment***

1. Minis use a size 3 soccer ball.
2. Players are responsible for providing their own equipment. Players should have soccer shoes or turf shoes with molded plastic cleats, single toe cleats are not permitted. All players must wear shin guards during practice and games. Shin Guards must be covered by socks. All players on the team should be attired in matching jerseys. In case of color clash the home team will change.
3. No ear-rings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands or casts may be worn during game play or during practices. Hair bands, if used, must be elastic, with no balls on them. Any other articles, which in the opinion of the referee may endanger the player or other players, are also not allowed. **Pierced earrings may not be worn, even if taped.**

4. Splints, casts, or braces with hard components may not be worn. Soft, elastic bandages may be worn provided the ends are taped to cover metal clips.

### ***Starting the Game***

The game starts with each team on their respective side of the mid line. The defending team must be outside of the center circle. The person kicking off plays the ball to a teammate, who may also be within the center circle. The player kicking off may not touch the ball a second time before another player has touched it. The game starts when whistle blows or the ball is first played by a player.

### ***Restarting the Game***

1. When the ball goes out of play, restart in the following way:
  - a. Over the touchlines - restart with a *throw-in* (**shall be retaken if not properly done**). The ball is out of play, only when the entire ball passes over the entire side line. Players need not be on the field to play the ball;
  - b. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by the attacking team - restart with a *goal kick*; all opposing players must stand at least 5 yards away from the ball;
  - c. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by defending team - restart with a *corner kick*; all players must be 5 yards from the ball.
  - d. Dead ball within the goal box, restarted by an indirect free kick taken from outside of the box by the team that did not last touch the ball.
2. After a goal is scored, restart with a *kick-off*; all opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle
3. Restart with a *drop ball* if:
  - a. The referee did not see who last touched the ball;
  - b. The game is stopped because of an injury.
  - c. A *drop ball* is between two players. All other players should be 5 yards away from the ball drop. The ball must touch the ground before either player touches it. It is safer for the players, if the ball is rolled slightly away from them as it is dropped. The players are least likely to kick each other while trying to kick the ball.

**Code of Conduct** – Reynolds Youth Soccer Club considers good conduct by coaches, parents and children to be an extremely important part of the soccer program. The referee is responsible for calling the game, but the coach is responsible for the behavior of spectators and team members.

Neither the referee nor the children should be subjected to negative comments from anyone. Remember that referees have a difficult job at best and provide a valuable service that contributes to a successful soccer season. ***The Club wants all soccer participants - coaches, referees and children treated with respect so they will return the next year.***