

If found please return this binder to:

Coach Name: _____

Coach Phone #: _____

Introduction

You are about to become the most important person in the world, to a small group of young people. Many people, when asked who was the most influential person in their life, will say “my coach”.

We are profoundly grateful for your sacrifice of time and energy. But you must ask yourself why you are doing this. What do you expect from the experience? What will make it worth it?

We want to make your experience with RYAA valuable and successful.

Why Kids Play Sports

Think back on your youth, and ask yourself why (or why not) you wanted to play sports. Some answers you might come up with are:

- To be with friends, or make new ones
- Nothing else to do
- Learn new things
- Possibly becoming a professional player some day
- A love of the game
- Competition
- Attention
- Fun!

These are important to remember. Each player may have different goals, and if kids don't experience these things in sport, they will lose interest and enthusiasm.

Now, think about why parents want their children to play sports. Some answers may be:

- Exercise
- Build character
- Discipline
- Free babysitting
- Develop a positive group of friends for their kids
- An opportunity to see their kids succeed
- Make their child into a champion soccer player

Be aware that parent expectations may be different than their children's desires, and sometimes may be unrealistic.

Elements of a Successful Coach

As a coach, you must remember that you are not a player on the field.. The kids are the ones playing the game, and you are the facilitator, the teacher, and the encourager. You are not the winner, or loser of a game, they are. So what is your game? What will make you a winning coach?

We believe that the job of the coach is the physical, mental and character development of the players. Its not winning games.The elements of a successful coach are:

- **Positive Role Model.** Your personal integrity, attitude and actions will speak louder than anything you say to your players.
- **Inspiring greatness.** Make your expectations high. Challenge your players to go beyond what they think they can do. Then lavishly praise them when they achieve it.
- **Disciplined.** Be early to practice and games. Expect your players to arrive on time, to be honoring in their speech, and to give all out effort.
- **Organized.** If you come to practice or games unprepared, you will lose your players respect.
- **Creative.** Be sure your practices have enough variety to maintain the interest of the players. Ask your players lots of questions, instead of just telling them answers, to teach them creativity and develop their minds.
- **Caring.** To achieve the greatest impact on your player's lives and performance, you must show individual attention to each player, and recognize each one publicly, and privately.

About RYAA

The Ravenswood Youth Athletic Association (RYAA) is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization whose mission is to build the character, families, and faith in the youth of East Palo Alto and east Menlo Park (the Belle Haven area). We do that through positive, faith-based sports programs at all levels of play.

RYAA is a non-denominational, Christ-centered organization. This means that we encourage our participants to express their faith and point of view in God, and at the same time we respect that we all have differences of opinion about God. Our participants come from a wide range of religious backgrounds, mostly from Catholic or Protestant churches, but we have others as well.

All of our activities include an opportunity for youth to explore their faith through prayer and Bible based curriculum. Our program is open to all youth, regardless of their religious affiliation, and they may choose not to participate in any portion of our activities as they, or their parent's desire. Coaches are asked to accommodate the religious beliefs of the families they are involved with.

About the Ravenswood Area

The Ravenswood area contains an amazingly diverse population and interesting history. Within the last 100 years, the area has gone from being an area of chicken farms and nurseries, to a center of African American self-governance and education, to being infamous for drug dealing and crime, to a starting point for Latino immigrants. Within the last 20 years it has changed from being a majority African-American community to majority Hispanic and has also become home to one of the largest Tongan populations outside of Tonga. All of these groups have brought their rich cultures with them, and their struggles.

In the 1850s, Ravenswood was a major port on the bay, out of which flowed redwood lumber, and into which flowed travelers between San Francisco and then the capital of California, San Jose. The area changed names many times since then, and was at one point incorporated into Menlo Park, and then disincorporated. The area became smaller and smaller as surrounding towns annexed pieces of it, and it finally was incorporated as East Palo Alto in 1983. However, through all those changes, the Ravenswood City School District kept its name, and still serves children in portions of the historical Ravenswood area that encompasses East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park.

The area is home to at least 40 churches, most of which are very small. Over 90% of the families that participate belong to a church in the local area.

Today, while there is much to appreciate here, the Ravenswood area is struggling with poverty, low academic achievement, high crime and high obesity rates. The cities and the school district have not been able to provide significant affordable recreational opportunities to the community.

Strategy

RYAA offers a variety of low-cost, high-quality sports programs to the Ravenswood community. Sport creates an environment of small groups where children are eager to learn from the coach. We recruit these coaches from churches inside and outside of the community, from parents of the participants, from the staff at local schools, and the community at large. We equip them with training and materials that will help them teach positive Biblical principles through sports.

RYAA Soccer is our recreational soccer program. It operates from the beginning of the school year in August to the week before Thanksgiving, which is very similar to soccer programs in other communities like AYSO.

We also have a competitive soccer program that operates year round, and is called the Ravenswood Youth Soccer Club. These teams play against other cities through CYSA, the California Youth Soccer Association.

Work-to-Play

All of our programs are priced affordably. RYAA Soccer costs \$40 for the whole season, and includes a uniform, team photo and award at the end of the season. Some of our families cannot afford even this amount, and so we offer a Work-to-Play program which

gives them an opportunity to earn their fees by setting up fields, cleaning up fields, or doing other tasks.

Because of this, there may be times where we are forced to tell a child that he or she cannot play in a game because they have not fulfilled their commitment to work in order to play. As the coach, you will need to support us in this effort. We will communicate with you ahead of time about a situation like this, and give you a chance to encourage the child or parent to fulfill their commitments before we are forced to pull them from a game.

Coaching Soccer in RYAA

Responsibilities of a Coach

As a coach, you will play a critical role in the lives of some of the youth here. Some of our youth come from difficult family situations, and you could possibly have an extreme amount of influence on them in the short amount of time you are with them. We have seen some youths completely transform in one soccer season.

The coach's task is a big one. As a coach, you will be responsible for the following:

- Communicating with children and parents
- Being mindful of the safety of everyone involved
- Maintaining and modeling a positive attitude and lifestyle
- Teaching children how to play soccer
- Teaching children the character development tools we will provide you
- Coming to practices and games on time
- Supporting the referees, coaches, and administration
- Organizing parents

Communication

You will have a login on our Web site which will give you access to the following resources:

- Team Rosters
- Team Schedule
- Positive Coaching Chart
- Picture Day Information

The Web site will also have copies of this book, practice ideas, and more.

Note that there is a version of the roster that is for your private use, and a version that you can hand out to your players that has some private information hidden.

When calling players, you may need to be persistent. Leaving messages with other family members often times will not work. If players miss practices or games, be sure to give them a call to see if they are OK, and to let them know when the next practice or game is.

The Team of Adults

The coach is one member of a team of people that have come together to support the kids. This team includes:

- Coaches and assistant coaches of all the teams
- Referees
- Team Manager
- Parents
- Volunteers who maintain, setup and cleanup the fields

One of your first responsibilities will be to coach the children and parents on how to be a supportive part of this team. Since soccer is a competitive sport, it is very easy for people to think of the other team, and the referees, as the “enemy”. In reality, everyone is giving their valuable time to make the soccer league fun, fair and safe, and they should all be thought of as comrades in that effort.

Remind everyone that referees are often volunteers who are there to do their best to call a fair game, and they need our support. Referees make mistakes. But without the referee, there is no game, and if people abuse the referees, we will quickly have none.

Also, without the opposing team and coach, we will have no game. The members of the opposite team this year may become members of your own team next year.

Modeling

The best way to create a positive environment is to model it yourself. For example, if you begin saying negative things about the referee, the parents who hear you will feel its OK to do the same. Then the children will see that and do the same, and by the end of the game, if they lose, it will all be the referee’s fault. The children will be upset and angry, and the focus will be on the unfairness of life. This is a very difficult environment in which to teach good character.

Rather, keep the end goal in mind, that whether they win or lose a game, they will have had fun, and they will have a frame of mind ready to hear you praise them and teach them. To that end, you can overlook referee calls that you don’t agree with, and rather focus on encouraging your players and praising them for the goals they accomplish during the game.

Also remind the parents to support you by keeping comments during the game positive and refraining from coaching their children during the game. You can model this behavior yourself by bringing a seat to the game, and enjoying watching the game quietly. Take notes on what to work on during practice. If you feel the need to give instruction to a player, don’t shout, but rather call that player over to the sideline and speak quietly to him or her. Your comments should be positive, and instructional. Its not a strategy session. Be sure you give the children freedom to learn the game on their own.

Team Organization

The most successful teams will be made up of two teams really, a team of players, and a team of parents. One of RYAA’s primary missions is to encourage the development of families, and a soccer team is an excellent environment to do that in.

Most of the parents on your team will not know each other. They will likely start out mistrustful, and shy. Because of the pressures of working in the Bay Area, many will be working evenings and weekends, and you may only see some parents occasionally. Also, as children get older, the parents tend to work more and more because their children are more self-sufficient, but this creates an environment where parents are less and less supportive of their kids due to lack of time.

Communication with parents can be difficult in the Ravenswood area. Many parents do not speak English, and most do not have email or Internet access. Phone numbers often get disconnected mid-season. Often, the only way to communicate to parents is through their children.

The more you can encourage parents to get to know each other, the more effective you will be at working with their kids. If the parents can support each other, then they will help each other to know about schedule changes, important events, who is bringing snacks, etc. You can keep an eye out for the children who seem to have weak support from their family, and partner them with a stronger family. The ultimate is if they get to the point where they are sharing rides to practice.

Here are some ideas on encouraging parent participation:

Team Meeting

Have a team meeting at the beginning of the season. You will probably get the most parent attendance at the first game, so after the game is an excellent time. In the Appendix of this book is a sample handout you can use for you team meeting. This handout is downloadable from our Web site, and will also be available at the field on game days.

Some things to cover include:

- Your practice schedule
- Game schedules
- Team rosters
- Parent behavior during games
- Recruiting a team manager
- Organizing parents to bring snacks

Find a Team Manager

If you can find a parent who will agree to be the team manager, that will be a huge benefit to you. Some things a team manager can do are:

- Call parents when something changes, like there is a schedule change, or a game is rained out,
- Organize parents to bring snacks to games
- Organize a team party
- Organize parents to help setup or cleanup the field before and after games

- Organize parents to pray for their children

Getting Parents Involved in Practice

Often at practice you will have parents sitting on the side watching practice. Getting them involved in practice will help them communicate with each other, and is encouraging to the children. Some ways to have them help:

- Set up cones
- Act as goals by standing with legs apart and letting the children pass through their legs
- Use parents instead of cones for various drills. Just make sure the parents will not be in harms way of a mis-aimed shot.
- Have parents help you during demonstrations of various soccer skills
- Guard equipment, school bags and bikes

Prayer

Before games, circle the parents to pray for their kids. Be sure to ask for special prayer requests.

Safety and Security

Safety and security of players, volunteers and spectators is everyone's responsibility. Please take safety seriously, and report anything that you are concerned about to the league director.

Volunteer Screening

One particular concern we have is the possibility that a pedophile will use our league to gain access to children. In order to prevent this, all volunteers will be screened, and may have a background check done. References will be contacted and interviewed.

Please, if you have a problem being around children, do not volunteer with our organization.

Touching Policy

Hugs, high-fives, handshakes are all positive parts of sports. However, there are right ways and wrong ways to touch kids. Please do the following:

- Allow children to approach you first
- Hugs should be from the side
- Never touch a child's bottom or other private areas

Player Safety

All players MUST wear shinguards and shoes at all times during practice and games. Players may not wear any items that could pose a risk to themselves or others, including:

- Jewelry of any kind, including necklaces, bracelets, earrings or other body piercing jewelry
- Casts or Splints
- Cleats with metal studs
- Hair bands that are not completely soft
- Watches or bracelets of any kind
- Sikh ceremonial knives and bracelets

If a player claims that they cannot remove jewelry because it is permanently attached, then you are to tell them that they will not be able to play soccer. Most of the time, after you say that and the referee enforces it, they find a way to remove the jewelry.

We recommend that you do not hold jewelry for players, but rather have their parents hold the jewelry. You don't want to be held responsible for expensive jewelry that you forgot was in your pocket that you then put through the washer later, for example (it happened!)

Pay particular attention to making sure your players get enough water to drink during games and practices. If a player asks to get a drink of water, always say yes. You may

never discipline a child by withholding water. Be sure to give lots of breaks on hot days, and if it's a game day, ask the referee for an extra long break, or even a timeout to get water.

Parents are responsible for getting children to and from practices and games. Do not give children rides. Also, avoid situations where you are alone with a child that is not your own.

Injuries

If you see a player who is injured on the field and the referee does not see it, call it to the referee's attention. If the referee thinks it's more than a minor injury, the referee will wave you onto the field.

If a player has a minor injury, like a sprain, help the player move off the field.

If a player is ever seriously injured, do not move the player, but rather call an ambulance. Serious injuries that occasionally happen in soccer include, but are not limited to:

- Leg injuries that prevent a player from walking without severe pain,
- Head injuries where the player is unconscious or vomiting,
- Any time a bone looks broken or dislocated,
- Heat stroke, where the player's face is hot and red, but the player is not perspiring

The emergency number in East Palo Alto is 321-1112. Calling 911 causes a delay in reaching the emergency operator, so please memorize that number and call directly.

If a player is bleeding, the player must immediately leave the field, even if the referee is not aware of it. Players may not re-enter the field until bleeding is stopped. Any blood on the uniform must be disinfected before entering the field. Avoid touching someone else's blood, as there is a risk of transferring blood-borne diseases.

Players who you know are injured, or who come to practice or a game with a cast or splint may NOT play soccer until you see a doctor's note approving their play. Casts may not be padded in order to play, and if a player removes a splint, they still cannot play because they obviously have an injury. Players that have suffered a concussion may feel fine, however there is a great risk of developing permanent brain damage if they suffer another blow to the head within weeks of the concussion.

Goal Safety

Soccer goals can be dangerous. Every year, a child is injured by a soccer goal falling on him, and sometimes children are killed.

During play, soccer goals must be anchored to the ground using stakes. Never let a child hang on a soccer goal. When moving soccer goals, be sure you have enough people to easily lift and control it.

Volunteer Safety

By volunteering with our organization, you do open yourself up to a small amount of risk of a lawsuit.

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides a some protection from lawsuits. It states that if you are trained and certified to do your volunteer job, and you act within the boundaries of what you have been taught, you cannot be sued for negligence.

Our insurance covers you for \$1 million in general liability, providing you are acting within the bounds of your training.

Ultimately, you will be the person in the best position to prevent a lawsuit. If you are ever in doubt about whether something is safe, or whether someone is seriously injured, etc., please ask the league leadership for help.

Insurance

We have an insurance policy that covers the following:

- \$1 million in general liability
 - \$25,000 in supplemental medical insurance for both players and volunteers. This insurance covers medical expenses for RYAA soccer related injuries, after the primary insurance carrier stops covering an injury. In reality, this insurance is most helpful to children that are not covered by any insurance and that sustain an injury that needs medical attention.
 - \$5,000 in supplemental medical insurance for spectators.
-

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Policy

Smoking is not permitted on school grounds, or during soccer games or practices. This goes for everyone involved, including players, coaches, referees, spectators and parents.

You may not drink or take drugs while in the presence of children. Neither may you perform any duties for RYAA if you under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Managing Equipment

Unfortunately, theft on the field is all too common. Please be aware of your surroundings during practice and games. Encourage your players to put bags and bicycles together, close to the field, and away from gates.

You will be issued a ball for each player that you are to use for practice. That set of balls must last the entire season. Do not give the balls to the players. Be sure to write your team name on the balls and other equipment you will get. On game day, only bring one ball to the field and keep close track of it.

School Rules

Some of the fields we use are on school property, and in order to keep being able to use the fields, we need to observe the following rules as an entire organization. Many of these rules are printed on a small sign on the fence. Your help in gently reminding parents and other spectators is appreciated.

- No smoking on school grounds
- No dogs
- No motorized vehicles
- No barbecues or fires
- No parking on the school grounds except in designated parking lots. No cars should be parked on blacktop areas, the grass, or in fire lanes.

Team Nutrition Times (TNT)

TNT time is the most important part of our program. This is where you take time out with your team to build their character and develop relationships. As a coach, you have a powerful ability to influence the lives of your players, and this is your chance to do it.

Each week you will have a particular character trait to focus on. We will provide you with curriculum that will help you teach that character trait both from the perspective of sports, and the Bible. It will be a short lesson that you teach during the half-time water break in the middle of your practice.

You will also be given patches, one for each character trait, that you will award to your players. Each week, after the game, you will award the patch to the one player who most demonstrates that character trait. Try to award the patch to a different player each week, and award effort more than ability or accomplishment. You will email us or call us each week to tell us who received the patch on your team for that week.

Character Traits

The character traits we will be focusing on are:

TICKET/PATCH	GIVE IT TO A PLAYER WHEN HE OR SHE...
Ganas	<p>...Enthusiastically shows extra effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working extra hard or showing improvement Keeps trying hard, even when the team is losing
Encourager	<p>...Speaks words to others that build them up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That's ok! Get it next time!
Peacemaker	<p>...Finds a way to avoid or end a disagreement without violence rather than win it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking away from a fight or stopping an argument Not insisting on your own way Helping a down or injured player on the other team
Service	<p>...Puts other people before himself or herself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picking up trash without being told Being extra helpful at snack time Helping set up goals without being told
Team Player	<p>...Works with others to help the team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not hogging the ball Willingly listening and obeying the coach Not complaining ; being patient
Leadership	<p>...Leads the team in the right direction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coming to practice and games on time Being a good example for the rest Knowing what is right and doing it first
Faith	<p>...Believes the team can go beyond what they think is possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willing to pray Comes to Bible club tent Memorizes verses
Greatness	<p>...Strives to make a difference to others and God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives an extraordinary effort in the face of overwhelming odds for the sake of the team.

Practices

Make your practices fun.

The key to making your practices fun is keeping everyone active playing games.

Do not line up players to shoot on goal. That gives one person a chance to shoot, and everyone else a chance to be bored standing in line. It wastes valuable practice time. Do not have players run laps. Laps are boring, and there are ways to have them get in shape, and learn soccer skills at the same time. Laps waste valuable practice time.

The key to keeping everyone active is to have a plan.

Do not ask your players “What do you want to do?” That communicates two things: 1) You are unprepared, and 2) They can do whatever they want.

Preparing for Practice

Before practice you should create a written practice plan. With the resources we give you in this book, this should take at most 15 minutes. In fact, we have created many practice routines for you to use with no preparation at all.

Gather up the following materials for each practice:

- Practice Plan
- Coach Handbook
- Balls and pump
- Cones
- First Aid Kit
- Water
- Extra shin guards

The Practice Routine

Having a practice routine helps everyone know what to expect. If the routine is fun, players will want to come to practice early. Here is a sample practice routine that we suggest:

- 1) Fun Game
- 2) Warmup
- 3) Skill 1
 - a. Teach skill #1
 - b. Practice the skill
 - c. Use the skill in a competitive situation 1 vs. 1
- 4) Skill 2 (optional, depending on time)
 - a. Teach skill #2

- b. Practice the skill
 - c. Use the skill in a competitive situation 1 vs. 1
- 5) Half-time break and devotion
 - 6) Small sided games, or creative games
 - 7) Free scrimmage
 - 8) Conditioning
 - 9) Cool down and stretch

Below you will find a description of each part of the sample practice routine followed by sample practice routines completely prepared for you. The appendix has a list of even more ideas for each section that you can use to create your own practice routines.

Some of the practice plans may seem tailored to younger children. However, even the professional soccer players work on the basics, and even some of our older players are just learning to play soccer. There will be ideas included on how to make the games harder or more interesting for the older players.

Fun Game

Start each practice with a really fun game. It does not have to be anything related to soccer. The idea is to set a fun tone, and encourage players to come to practice early, or they will miss the fun game.

The game should be something that the players can easily join as they come to practice.

Ideas for games include various forms of tag, relay races, and contests. Early in the season, do games that don't require soccer balls or soccer skills, then later in the season you can do games that include the ball. You will find that it is helpful to choose the games based on whether you are working with boys or girls. Boys tend to be more individually competitive, and girls tend to want to be more cooperatively competitive. Fortunately, soccer is a sport where both are important.

Warmup

Warmup should be done with everyone having a ball and working on individual dribbling skills. Players can warmup in a group with everyone dribbling in a square, or individually using a figure-8 around 2 cones. Vary the warmup by having the players dribble with various parts of the foot, right or left foot only, back and forth, and then also add various stretches.

Skill Development

Teaching a skill involves a series of steps that help a child first understand, what is being asked and then apply that in more and more competitive situations. Progress should be gradual, realizing that children develop at different rates.

1. Demonstrate the skill with explanation
2. Have the children demonstrate the skill, while you correct
3. Have the children practice the skill by themselves or cooperatively with someone else with no opposition

4. Have the children practice with more and more opposition

Some skills will need to be practiced individually first, like dribbling skill for example. Others are better to do in partnership, like passing, or throw-ins.

Half-time Break and Team Nutrition Time (TNT)

This is the team building and character development part of the practice. Do this in the middle of practice so that players who come late to practice can be part of it. Have the players first get water, and then sit in a circle. The time together with the team should be short and to the point. The basic routine is:

- 1) Fun question of the day
- 2) Reading or discussion
- 3) Prayer requests and quick prayer

If you practice twice per week, the first practice you can do the reading, and the second practice have a very short discussion about what was read at the previous practice.

Remind your players that a patch will be given out at game day to the player who most demonstrates the character trait.

Short-sided Games

This part of the practice is dedicated to play time, but with a twist. You will play a game that is related to a skill that you are developing, or that is related to some aspect of building teamwork. These games will often be small-sided.

There is an unlimited number of ways you can alter the game of soccer to add interest or build a particular skill. Here are some possibilities:

- Change the dimensions of the field, making it narrower or wider, shorter or longer, or play with no boundaries at all.
- Change the goal. Change its size, Change its location, like putting a goal in each corner. Let players score from either side of the goal with no out of bounds. Or make a goal completing 5 passes, or dribbling across the end line, or completing a pass through the goal with a teammate receiving it on the other side.
- Change the number of players or teams. Make it 1 against 3 for example. Make 3 teams, each with their own goal to score in.
- Create neutral players that play for both teams. Whenever a neutral player receives a ball, he can't score, and must pass to someone on the same team who passed him the ball. Neutral players can be in the field, or along the sidelines.
- Create new rules. Make everyone a goalie in their own half of the field. Require that everyone be on the attacking side of a field to score, or the other team gets the point. Require only 1, 2 or 3 touches before someone has to pass.

Conditioning

Conditioning is a moment to allow your players to stretch themselves beyond what they think their limits are. Proper conditioning will not only help your players play better, but will also prevent injuries. Conditioning happens over time, though, and if you push too hard or too quickly, your players can hurt themselves.

Conditioning is more than physical, it is mental and emotional, it involves diet and sleep. Avoiding excess, practicing moderation and balance--choosing what you know is healthy and right. It boils down to the choices we make in our individuals lives--we are ultimately responsible for the conditioning of ourselves.

Soccer is a sport that requires a variety of skills, and so conditioning for soccer involves a variety of physical qualities to develop:

- Sprinting speed (also known as explosiveness)
- Endurance
- Abdominal strength (known as core strength)
- Limbness

However, in any sport, the mental game is always the bigger battle. The character patches and lessons included here will help you with that. Also, see the Positive Coach tips that are included with most of the soccer training lessons later in this book.

Practice Plan #1

Theme: Getting to Know the Team

Positive Coaching Tip

The most important thing kids need to know is that you care about them, that you are on their side. Do that by looking them in the eye at the end of each practice and game, and affirming them. Make a point of giving each player some amount of individual attention during each practice.

Fun Game

Square Tag. Make two squares with cones. Squares are about 2 yards on a side, and about 5 yards apart. These are safe zones. One child in the middle is the tagger. Kids run from one side to the other trying not to be tagged. Each time the tagger makes it, he or she counts out loud. If the person gets tagged, he must start over counting from 1 again. The first player to reach 7 wins and becomes the tagger. Be sure to get the name of the tagger and announce the name to the group.

Cooperative alternative: Play the same game, but in teams of two, where each team must link arms and stay connected as they run.

Warm Up

Teach the figure-8 warm up. Have each player get two cones and a ball. Teach them how to space the cones, and then start moving the ball between the cones. Only do the figure-8 warm up for a few minutes, since it is the first day.

Teach a skill: Throw-ins

Explain

- When the ball goes out of bounds, you throw it in with your hands.
- The ball must be all the way out. If the ball is even a little bit on the line, it is still in.
- Feet on the ground
- Two-hands from behind the head
- Throw to teammates feet
- For U10 and above, teach them that there is no offsides on a throw-in

Demonstrate

Practice

- 1 ball for two children.
- Line up across from partner and throw ball to partner's feet.

- U8, U10
 - Partner stops ball with feet, then throws it back.
- U12 and above
 - Partner one-touch passes back to thrower.

Fun Game

- U8 - U10
 - Put cone between partners and knock cone down
 - Next, coach or player runs between partners, try to hit the person at the feet
- U12 and above
 - Play a scrimmage, but allow players to pick the ball up with the hands and execute a throw-in from anywhere in the field at any time.
 - Players cannot catch the ball with the hands after someone throws it to them; they must stop it with the feet.
 - They can't throw the ball to themselves
 - They can't score with a throw-in

Teach a skill: Dribbling

Explain

- Short taps of the ball
- Use all sides, both feet, but mainly the shoe laces with the toe down
- For older kids, teach that they can fake one way and go another way, or fake a long kick or pass, and then dribble instead.

Demonstrate

Practice

- 1 ball per player.
- U8: play Snake. A follow-the-leader game. Kids line up and dribble, trying to stay in line. Coach jogs, and tries to lead the kids in a snake like way around the field.
- U10 and older: Have them play 1 vs. 1, but to get a goal you have to dribble through the cones. Remember to teach them the "Serve" from the coaching class before starting each game.

Fun Game

- Big Bad Coach. Make a square about 6 yards per side with cones. Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the square.
- Coach tries to steal the ball, players dribble away or shield with body. Today, everyone should be successful at keeping the ball away from coach. Future dates, we will add more challenge to this.

Water Break and TNT

Gather the team together and play a name game. Each player says their name, and something they like. The next player repeats the name, what they like, and then says their own name and what they like.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

For the first conditioning, keep it short, and fun, and be aware that conditioning takes time. Start slow and build over time.

- 10 situps
 - 10 lunges (touch knee to ground each step while walking)
 - Make teams of 2 and do 3 relay races.
-

Scrimmage

Use 2 sets of cones for goals. No boundaries. Play 3 v 3 or 2 v 2. No more than 3 per team right now, or you will get bunch ball! Make as many games as you have kids. Play for 5 minutes, then make new teams and play again.

Warm Down

While the kids are playing, have a short parents meeting. Tell when practices are and the next game. Explain that you will be having a short parents meeting after the first game.

Practice Plan #2

Theme: Passing

Positive Coaching Tip

Children need 5 positives for each negative. Children will improve only if they think they are succeeding. Otherwise, they will give up. Make sure you appreciate each child multiple times in a practice and game.

Fun Game

U8-U12

Iceman. Make a square with cones, about 8 yards on a side. One ball per child. Children dribble in the square. The coach tries to steal a ball and kick that ball out of the square. If that happens, the child must get the ball, come back in the square, and hold the ball on top of his/her head with legs apart, and not move. Children can become unfrozen if a teammate kicks a ball through the frozen child's legs.

More advanced players can have someone else on the team do the ball stealing, and when everyone is frozen, or after some set amount of time, switch ball stealers.

Warm up

Like in the coaching video, teach each player how to make a goal. Then, have each player grab two cones, and begin to dribble a ball. The magic word for the day is “pass”. When you say the word, each child creates a goal with the cones, then begins dribbling around and between the cones. When you say “pass” again, have them pick up the cones and dribble randomly.

Teach a skill: Passing with instep

Explain

- Soccer is a team sport
- Passing is a way to move the ball down the field to set it up for a shot.
- Teams that pass well win more games

Demonstrate

- Turn foot to the side
- Knees bent
- Kick sharply and slightly down on the ball with the inside of the foot

Practice

- One ball for two children.
 - Children are about 2 yards apart. Passing back and forth
 - Coaches watch them pass and offer tips
 - Advanced players should work on making quick, sharp accurate passes that do not bounce at all.
 - An advanced game is to have a contest to see how many passes a pair can make in a one minute.
-

Fun Game

Keep Away. Make a square with cones. Players make a circle with one player in the middle. Players must pass to other players to keep it away from the one in the middle. The one in the middle tries to steal the ball. If successful, the player on the outside who touched it last switches places with the one in the middle.

To add more interest for older players, split the team up into groups of 4 or 5, or add more than one defender.

Water Break and TNT

Scrimmages

Under 8s, 4 v 0

Teach players to form a goal with cones, walk 40 paces, then form another goal. 3 or 4 players start on one side, no defense. No dribbling, only passing. Players must work the ball down and score a goal. Everyone must touch the ball before scoring. Time them to see how fast they are, then challenge them to get faster.

Under 10s, 4 v 1

Defense could be a coach. Same drill, everyone has to touch the ball before scoring.

Under 12s and higher, 4 v 2

Same drill, with 2 defenders.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

For the first conditioning, keep it short, and fun, and be aware that conditioning takes time. Start slow and build over time.

- Core development:
 - Leg curls: Child on back, ball under legs with legs bent. Curl legs up toward head and back down. 10 count.
 - Crunchies: Child on back, ball on stomach, elbows on ball. Squeeze the ball between elbows and thighs. 10 count.

- 10 yards of lunges (touch knee to ground each step while walking). 2 times.
 - 10 calf raises up on to toes and back down.
 - Make teams of 2 and do 3 relay races.
-

Teaching the Kickoff (U10 and higher)

Elements of the kickoff are:

- Ball must be on the line
- Only the attacking team can be in the circle
- Ball must move forward before it moves backwards
- Kicker cannot kick the ball to self

Traditionally, the kicker will touch to a partner, who will then pass backwards to the defense. Backwards passing is a very important concept in soccer, and this is a great introduction to that concept. It is OK to pass backwards. Midfielder should then pass to the outside in order to move the ball up the field along one of the sidelines.

Free scrimmage

End practice with even sided free scrimmage with big goals and no goalies. After a goal, have a kickoff. Make the goals big so that there are lots of scores, and therefore lots of chances to practice kickoffs.

Warm down

Homework: players must go home and practice passing with a friend, or pass against a wall.

High fives. Tell them when the next game or practice is.

Practice Plan #3

Theme: Shooting

Positive Coaching Tip

Change the Game. If you find yourself in a situation where you are winning by a large margin, or losing by a large margin, change the game. If winning, change it so that you score less and do not embarrass the other players. If losing, pick a different goal, that is achievable.

Examples if you are winning by too much:

- Pick a player who has not scored yet, and make that player the only one allowed to score
- Make scoring be the act of putting the ball in the goalie area and putting a foot on the ball, without kicking it in the goal
- Move your top scorer to the goalie and your goalie to forward

Examples if you are losing by a lot:

- Make scoring the act of getting the ball past half way, or into the penalty area of the opposing team.
- Make scoring be the completion of 3 passes without the other team touching the ball

Fun Game

Switcheroo. Make two squares with cones, about 4 yards on a side. One ball per child. Children dribble in the square. Children try to kick other players balls out of the square without letting their own ball get kicked. Players must get their ball, and then go to the other square, and continue playing the game in the other square. If the ball is kicked out of the other square, come back to the first square.

This game can be played cooperatively by having teams of two with arms linked together.

Warm up

Like in the coaching video, teach each player how to make a goal. Then, have each player grab two cones, and begin to dribble a ball. The magic word for the day is “shoot”. When you say the word, each child creates a goal with the cones, then begins dribbling around and between the cones in a figure-8. When you say “shoot” again, have them pick up the cones and dribble randomly.

Teach a skill: Shooting with the shoelaces

Explain

Proper shooting technique is one of the most difficult things to teach a player. Young children tend to shoot with a toe kick. A proper shot has these components:

- Eyes on the ball
- Planting the non-shooting foot right next to the ball. Most children put it too far back.
- Leaning forward. Most children lean backwards.
- Knees bent
- Toe down, kick with the shoelaces.
- Follow through, pointing toe where you want the ball to go.

Most children try to shoot the ball high and over the head of the goalie. Teach them that the best shot is one that is low, just inches off the ground, and in the corner.

Demonstrate

- Plant non-shooting foot next to the ball.
- Lean forward
- Toe down, lightly touch with shoelaces
- Slowly follow through leaning forward and pointing toe.

Practice

The following practice is a good one to get other parents and assistant coach involved in.

- Coach holds ball for child to practice kicking
- Child kicks 3 times with coaching holding the ball and teaching technique
- Final time, coach lets go and child kicks the ball

I + I

- 2 children make two goals, about 10 yards apart, just like in the video
- Children practice shooting at each other's goal.
- The child receiving the ball lets the ball go through. Then shoots it back.
- Have children first shoot a ball that is still. Then, have them shoot after doing a "Serve" from the coaching video.

I v I

Similar to cooperative play, but with the following changes:

- Make goals wider
 - Other player now plays goalie and tries to block the shot
 - Players keep track of how many goals they scored
 - Players should still use the Serve.
 - Rotate players every couple of minutes.
-

Water Break and TNT

Ask questions about how the game went. Get prayer requests.

Scrimmages

1 v 1

Play 1 v 1 like in the video. Goals are 10 yards apart. Be sure to teach the kids how to form these goals.

Teaching the Corner Kick (U10 and higher)

Elements of the corner kick are:

- Ball must be within the corner arc
- No offsides
- Opponents must be 10 yards away, but your own teammates could be very close

Offense should try to get the ball in front of the goal. If you do not have a kicker who can kick that far, then pass to a closer player who can then try to kick it close to the goal. The other offensive players should not line up in front of the goal, but rather should be about 10 yards away from the goal, and then run towards the goal during the kick.

Defense should put a player on each post of the goal, and everyone else guards a player on the offense.

Free scrimmage

End practice with even sided free scrimmage.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

Do the same elements as in the previous conditioning, but add the following.

- Core development:
 - Leg pass: Child on back, legs straight, ball in between feet. Lift ball and bend knees, while at the same time lifting head and reaching for the ball with hands. Grab ball with hands, put ball over head, and stretch out again. Then same thing, but in the reverse direction, passing the ball from hands back to the feet. If done correctly, only the butt will be on the ground during the pass.

- Liners
 - Changing relay so that one player runs up to a cone, then runs backward to the start. Have players do that 3 times to complete the race.
-

Warm Down

Homework: players must go home and practice shooting.

High Fives. Tell when next game is.

Practice Plan #4

Theme: Goalie

Positive Coaching Tip

Develop Players for Future Teams You have no idea as a coach what position your players will play in 5 years, or even what sport! Spend your time developing a variety of skill in your players, instead of trying to pick a set position for that player. Rotate every player through a variety of positions during the season, and during each game, including goalie. If they complain, point out that everyone will play goalie at some point, and forward, and defender. And make sure you follow through on that.

A Note About Goal Keeping

Being a goal keeper is emotionally the most difficult position:

- The goal keeper only loses goals
- When a goal keeper makes a mistake, there is no one to help. It usually means a goal for the other team, and often times teammates will criticize the goal keeper
- Its scary to stand in front of people who are shooting balls at you
- Goalkeeper rules can be confusing, particularly about when they can use hands, and when to put the ball down for a goal kick, or kick the ball from the hands after a save.

To help children overcome these fears, you need to slowly develop comfortableness with handling the ball, and then finally develop aggression to go after the ball. I like to tell kids that they have to pretend that they are a bear and they are going to gobble up the ball. Stand like a bear (knees bent, hands out), then when the ball gets close, pounce on it.

Instead of kicking the ball, goalkeepers should generally roll the ball or throw it to teammates. Its more accurate, and is easier for the team to maintain possession.

Fun Game

Goalie ball. This game is designed to get the hands and arms warmed up, ready to work on goalie skills. Make 2 teams, and setup a standard soccer field with cones. Play a game of soccer with the following extra rules:

- When you get the ball, you must pick it up with your hands immediately, or catch it with your hands.
- Once someone has the ball in hand, no other player can take it away from that person. Also, that person must stand still and cannot move.

- To pass the ball to someone else, or to score a goal, the ball must be dropped from the hands and kicked with the feet.
 - The ball must be rolling on the ground when it goes into the goal to count as a goal.
-

Warmup

Have players do the following exercises:

- Feet together, roll ball around the feet
 - Feet apart, roll ball between legs in a figure 8
 - One foot forward, one foot back in a stretch, roll ball around front foot and between legs. Switch feet.
 - Have the children throw the ball into the air, and then catch it, jumping up and using both hands to catch high in the air. After catching it, they should bring the ball down to the chest. Each time the child does this, the child should shout "I have it!" loudly.
-

I + I

The following exercises should be done with a partner:

- Toss the ball to the partner so the partner can catch it over the head. Partner bring the ball into the chest, then tosses it back to the other partner over the head.
- Toss the ball to the partner so the partner can catch it at stomach level. Partner tosses it back.
- Roll the ball to the partner. Partner puts legs together and scoops up the ball to the chest. Then rolls it back.

Now for some beginner diving practice. Have partners get on their knees across from each other. One partner throws the ball to the other partner, so that the partner can catch the ball just above the head. The player catching the ball falls down to one side landing first on the ball, and then rolling on to the shoulder. Repeat. Be sure they are practicing falling on both sides.

Goalie I-v-I

This is a fun game that increases the level of challenge. Partner make two goals about 2 yards wide, and about 4 yards apart. Each players gets on his/her knees in a goal and faces the other. Players try to roll the ball through the goal and past the other player. The other player tries to stop it with the hands. To score a point, the ball must roll through the goal on the ground.

Water Break – TNT time

In addition to the character lesson, ask questions about how they feel about being a goalie. May will express some fear, which is important to talk about.

Also, talk about these important goalie tips:

- When you get the ball, don't panic. Take a deep breath, and the look for your team mates.
 - Once you catch the ball, take a few steps, and then throw the ball to someone on your team. Throw it far away from the goal. Kick it if you want, but you don't have to. A lot of times, throwing the ball is better.
 - If the other team kicks the ball out of bounds near the goal, it is a goal kick and you put the ball down on the ground to kick. If you catch the ball, its not a goal kick. Throw the ball or kick it from your hands. Don't put the ball down.
-

Scrimmages

Shooting Gallery. Make teams so that there are 3 or 4 per team, and make a field with extra wide goals, about 8 yards apart. Everyone is a goalie. Players take turns shooting at the other goal. Whoever catches the ball on the other side shoots back. Players must stay on their own half of the field. If the ball goes in to the goal, it's a point.

Goalie Land. Play a regular scrimmage game with no set goalie. Whenever the ball is on your own half of the field, you can use your hands to pick it up. You can then run up to half way with the ball, and either roll it on the ground to yourself, or to someone else.

Teaching the Goal Kick (U10 and higher)

Elements of the goal kick are:

- Ball must be placed anywhere inside or on the goalie area (the square just in front of the goal). It does not have to be in the corner.
- Ball must go out of the penalty area before anyone touches it.
- Anyone can kick the ball. It does not have to be the goalie.

Often times children have a hard time with goalie kicks, kicking the ball to the other team. Emphasize that goalie kicks should be directed towards the sideline and away from the center.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

Do the same elements as in the previous conditioning, but add the following.

- Core development:
 - Leg pass: Child on back, legs straight, ball in between feet. Lift ball and bend knees, while at the same time lifting head and reaching for the ball with hands. Grab ball with hands, put ball over head, and stretch out again. Then same thing, but in the reverse direction, passing the ball from hands back to the feet. If done correctly, only the butt will be on the ground during the pass.
- Liners
 - Changing relay so that one player runs up to a cone, then runs backward to the start. Have players do that 3 times to complete the race.

Free Scrimmage

Play a regular scrimmage with goalies. Rotate goalies so everyone has a chance. Make the field short so there are lots of chances for goalie kicks.

Warm Down

Be sure to add stretching to your warm down.

Homework: Players at home can bounce the ball against the wall and practice catching it.

High fives, etc.

Practice Plan #5

Theme: Ball Control

Positive Coaching Tip

Why do we shake hands after a game? Why do we pray before a game? Teach your players the answer to these questions.

It is good to take some time to thank those who are responsible for allowing us to be able to play a soccer game each day. These people are:

- God
- The referees
- The coaches
- The people who set up the field
- The people who organize the league
- And especially, the other team!

We call this “Honor”. Win or lose, we honor those who work hard to help us.

Fun Game

Ten pass. This is a variation on keep-away that is commonly known as Possession. Make squares with cones, about 8 yards on a side. Split into teams of 4 or 5. Put one person in the middle. The person in the middle tries to kick the ball out of the square. The other people try to complete 10 passes, inside the square. If the ball goes out of the square, they start over. Once they complete 10 passes, the person inside picks a new person to be in the middle.

Warmup

Players are going to work heavily on ball feel and control. Each player is to have a ball and two cones. Like in the coaching video, have each player make a goal. Then they will do the following around the cones. Spend about 1 minute on each exercise:

- Dribble in a figure 8
- Dribble with just the **right** foot in figure 8
- Dribble with just the **left** foot in figure 8
- Dribble with just the **inside of the right** foot around the outside of the cones
- Dribble with just the **inside of the left** foot around the outside of the cones
- Dribble with just the **outside of the right** foot around the outside of the cones
- Dribble with just the **outside of the left** foot around the outside of the cones

1 + 1

Have the players play 1 against 1. In the 1 + 1, the defense must not steal the ball. Make the goal of the defense to always stay in front of the offense about 1 yard. The offense tries to get by the defense and dribble through the cones. Once one player is successful, they start again. Each session should start with a Serve. Make sure the defense does not touch the ball and the offense is successful.

1 v 1

Players play 1 against 1 with this change in the rules: In order to score, you must dribble between the goal, either way. Shooting doesn't count. You must touch the ball on both sides of the goal as you go through the goal, without the other player touching it. Play this for about 1 minute, then have the players switch and play someone else. Do this 4 times.

More Ball Control

OK, we are now back to ball control. Here are some additional things to work on. Spend about 1 minute on each:

- Put your **right** foot on the ball, and roll it right and left, back and forth keeping your foot on the ball.
 - Put your **left** foot on the ball, and roll it right and left, back and forth.
 - Tap the ball back and forth from one foot to the other.
 - Now roll the ball with the bottom of your **right** foot around the cones in a figure 8
 - Roll the ball with the bottom of your **left** foot around the cones in a figure 8
 - Pass the ball back and forth between your legs as you move around the cones
-

Water Break – TNT time

Also ask about what they did this last weekend besides soccer.

Scrimmages

2 v 2

Play 2 v 2, with same rules as 1 v 1, that you must dribble through the goals to score. Remember to make the goals about 20 yards apart. Do this for 5 minutes, then switch teams. Do it for another 5 minutes, then switch teams again.

Teaching Offsides (U10 and higher)

Offsides is a rule that prevents the offense from hanging out behind the defense (cherry picking). Elements of offsides are:

- Only called when an attacking player is actively part of the play. Just standing behind the defense is not a foul.

- Only determined at the moment the ball is kicked by an attacking player. If at that moment, the player is behind the last defender (not counting the goalie) and behind the ball and on the attacking side of the field, and is part of the play by moving towards the ball or obstructing another player, then the call is offsides.
- There is no offsides on a throw-in, corner kick, or goal kick.

Starting at the U10 age, you must teach your offense to be aware of their position, and not to line up behind the defense.

For older players, you can teach a defensive strategy of trying to get someone offsides by moving in front of the offense just before a ball is kicked to them. The defense must be careful to coordinate so that everyone on the defense moves together, or you will give a breakaway to the offense.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

Do the same elements as in the previous conditioning, but add the following.

- Core development:
 - Leg twirl: Child on back, legs straight, ball in between feet. Lift ball of ground and with legs straight, rotate legs so one is on top, the other on the bottom, and ball is still in between legs. Then rotate so the other leg is on top. 10 times.
- Liners
 - Have individuals run forward to a cone 5 yards away, then backwards to the start, then forwards to a cone 10 yards away, then backwards. 30 second break between sets, do 5 sets.

Free scrimmage

End practice with even sided free scrimmage.

Warm Down

Homework: players must go home and practice the same ball control exercises each day. High Fives. Tell when next game is.

Practice Plan #6

Theme: Teamwork

Positive Coaching Tip

Teach your players to encourage one another, and to never, never, complain or criticize another player on your team. Teach them the value of filling each other's emotional tanks.

Probably the most critical time for this is after a goal is scored. Soccer on T.V. shows the goal scorer parading around the field, drawing attention to himself and ignoring the other 10 members of his team that helped him score. If your team gets scored upon, you might hear your players complain about the goalie, and the goalie complain about the defense. Sometimes a player will shout, "Coach, can I be the goalie!" (Do NOT switch the goalie at this time.)

Instead, teach your players to do a quick team huddle after a score. If your team scores, this is a time for congratulations all around, not just for the scorer. If your team gets scored upon, it's a time to encourage each other to try again. Your team will play better, and have more fun.

Fun Game

Juggling. Juggling is the art of keeping the ball in the air, using feet, thighs, head, shoulders, anything but hands. Some of the best soccer players are great jugglers. Pele was known for his ability to juggle anything, including a grapefruit. Ronaldinho is wowing people today with his juggling feats.

Start teaching juggling one bounce at a time. Teach them to bounce it once off the top of the thigh, and then catch it with their hands. After succeeding with that, try two bounces, and then catch. Proceed to more bounces as they get better. Try the same thing with the foot, then the head, etc.

Warmup

Do a short ball control time. Have players make goals and do a variety of figure 8 moves, first using one foot, and then the other foot.

Quick Passing

Have players pair up and start passing the ball back and forth using the inside of the foot. Tell them to concentrate on making quick, snappy passes that do not bounce, but rather glide smoothly along the ground.

Once they are good at that, then have them just pass with the right foot, and then just the left foot.

After a brief time of this, have a contest. Time how many passes they can complete in 30 seconds. After you are done, have each pair announce the number they achieved to the rest of the group. Do this a few times.

Ten pass. This game is from the previous practice. This is a variation on keep-away. Make squares with cones, about 8 yards on a side. Split into teams of 4 or 5. Put one person in the middle. The person in the middle tries to kick the ball out of the square. The other people try to complete 10 passes, inside the square. If the ball goes out of the square, they start over. Once they complete 10 passes, the person picks a new person to be in the middle.

Water Break – TNT time

Scrimmages

4 Corner. This is a regular soccer game, but instead of one big goal in the middle, create two small goals in the corners of each end line. Goals should be about 1 yard apart. There are no goalies and no out of bounds. Teams can score in either corner on the attacking side of the field.

If you find that too many goals are being scored. Add the rule that they need to complete a pass through a goal to score. If not enough goals are being scored, add another ball so two balls are going simultaneously.

This game encourages both attacking and defending teamwork.

Teaching Direct Kicks (U10 and higher)

Elements of the direct kick are:

- Called by the referee on common fouls, like hand ball, pushing, tripping, kicking, etc.
- Ball can be kicked right away. You do not have to wait for the referee to give the OK.
- Other team must be 10 yards away. If they are not, you can ask the referee to move them back. If you ask, you must wait for referee to say its OK to kick the ball.
- You can kick the ball directly in the goal. You cannot kick it to yourself.

Direct kicks are a chance to score. Teach your players to quickly kick the ball to a teammate to put the other team off guard if possible. Also, when possible, teach them to kick the ball near the goal to a teammate, kind of like a corner kick.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

Do the same elements as in the previous conditioning, but add the following.

- Core development:
 - Leg twirl: Child on back, legs straight, ball in between feet. Lift ball of ground and with legs straight, rotate legs so one is on top, the other on the bottom, and ball is still in between legs. Then rotate so the other leg is on top. 10 times.
- Liners

- Have individuals run forward to a cone 5 yards away, then backwards to the start, then forwards to a cone 10 yards away, then backwards. 30 second break between sets, do 5 sets.

Free scrimmage

End practice with even sided free scrimmage.

Warm Down

Homework: players must go home and practice quick passing. If they do not have a partner, use a wall. Emphasize passing the ball along the ground and trying not to let it bounce.

High Fives, etc.

Practice Plan #7

Theme: First Touch

Positive Coaching Tip

Reward Effort, not Outcomes! No coach can control the outcome of every game. If we could, then it would be no fun. But sometimes, we coach this way. Too many times, from coaches and parents, I have heard “If you make a goal, then you will get a...”, *ice cream, Happy Meal*, whatever. You fill in the blank. This rewards an outcome, which you simply can’t control.

Instead, put effort goals in front of your players. These are things they can accomplish, but that will stretch their abilities. Some examples of effort goals are:

- Complete 5 passes without the other team touching the ball
- Pass the ball back to the goalie once before starting a drive
- 3 times take a defensive stance that force someone to dribble to the outside
- Have every player take one shot during the game

You of course will have to keep track (remember your positive charting handout!) And then you will need a reward. One reward suggestion is to have a special item that symbolizes effort, and that acts as sort of a rotating trophy. You could have the “smelly sock award”, or a special armband to wear for the next game. Or use the Effort patches as an award.

Make sure the goal is specific, attainable, and that everyone on the team has an opportunity to earn the award during the course of the season.

A Note About First Touch

“First touch” in soccer is the ability to receive a ball coming to you, and quickly control it. Sometimes this is called “trapping”, but trapping misses an important part of the concept. “Trapping” implies controlling the ball so it stops. A lot of times this is not what you want to do. You want to be able to control the ball so that it moves in a direction *away from opposing players and into open space!* By doing this, you gain time to decide what the next thing to do is. Most often, this means moving the ball sideways. Most young players try to always move the ball down field, which often gives the ball immediately to the other team.

For more ideas about first touch, see the soccer video “Really Bend it Like Beckham”.

Fun Game

Three Flies Up. This is a spin on the popular football game. Have the team get in a crowd, and toss the ball in the air to them, very high. Whoever gets the ball back to you within two touches, gets a point. Other players can challenge the ball. Whoever gets 3 points gets to be the thrower.

Warm Up

Warm Up will be done with a partner today. The goal is to teach bringing the ball under control sideways. Partners will do the following drills:

- Pass the ball to the partner. On the first touch, the partner moves the ball gently to the outside, then passes back.
 - Pass the ball to the partner. The partner moves the ball to the inside, across the body, and then passes back.
 - Toss the ball in the air. The partner stops the ball with the thigh to the outside, then picks up the ball and tosses it back.
 - Toss the ball in the air. The partner stops the ball with the chest, then tosses it back.
-

Two-touch speed drill

Partners setup two goals about 2 yards apart. However, the goals should face sideways instead of straight ahead. Players practice first passing to the other player, who then taps the ball through the goal, and then passes back to the first player, who does the same thing.

Once they can do this reasonably well, have a contest where you time them for 30 seconds and see which pair can complete the most passes. Get everyone's scores, then switch teams and do it again at least 3 more times.

Water Break – TNT time

Scrimmages

2-touch. Scrimmage in small-sided games, and then in bigger groups. Add the rule that a player can only touch the ball twice, once to receive the ball, and once to pass it. If a player touches it more than 2 times, or only 1 time on a pass, blow your whistle and give the ball to the other team. This forces the players to think about using the first touch wisely.

Teaching Indirect Kicks (U10 and higher)

Elements of the indirect kick are:

- Called by the referee on uncommon fouls, like dangerous play (high kick), obstruction (blocking an opponent with your body when you are not close to the ball), offsides, and various goalie infractions like touching the ball with the hands after your teammate passes the ball to you with the feet.
- You can quickly kick the ball, like in a direct kick.

- Other team must be 10 yards away. If they are not, you can ask the referee to move them back. If you ask, you must wait for referee to say its OK to kick the ball.
- You **cannot** kick the ball directly in the goal. Another player must touch it first.

Indirect kicks can be confusing, especially when they happen in front of the goal. Indirect kicks can happen in the penalty area, and do **not** result in a penalty kick. Teach your players to quickly kick the ball to a teammate to put the other team off guard if possible.

The defense must be ready to charge an indirect kick. Once the ball is touched by the kicker, the defense can run in and try to stop the next kicker from taking a shot.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

Do the same elements as in the previous conditioning, but add the following.

- Core development:
 - Leg lift: Child on back, legs straight, ball in between feet. Lift ball of ground and straight in the air, then put legs back down. 10 times.

Free scrimmage

End practice with even sided free scrimmage.

Warm Down

Homework: Players at home can kick the ball with a friend, or against a wall. Challenge them to see how many different ways they can first-touch a ball. Encourage them to add little fake moves in combination with a first-touch.

High Fives, etc.

Practice Plan #8

Theme: Defense

Positive Coaching Tip

“That’s the way we do things here!” Every organization has a culture. Some cultures develop unintentionally. Others are directed to be a certain way. The culture helps to shape the participants, and the spectators, and sets expectations for behavior. The prayer we do before the game, the TNT times, the extra fun items are part of a positive culture we are creating. You have been creating culture this season on your team. Think about what you can do to end the season in a way that will reinforce the positive culture you have created, and will encourage your players to come back again next season.

Ideas:

- Ice cream party after the last game
- Pick a silly award for each player. “Craziest Hair”, “Muddiest”, “Loudest”, etc.
- Or, pick serious awards that reflect the badges of Leadership, Service, Ganas, etc. Make sure everyone gets an award

Teaching Defense

The defensive posture is similar to the goalie posture. Tell your kids to pretend they are bears. Knees bent, hands out, ready to move.

Most players think that the job of the defense is to steal the ball. They then immediately try to take the ball away, which usually results in the offense getting by the defense quickly. As a coach, you should teach them these goals in this order.

- 1) Slow down the offense. To do this, the defense runs backwards just in front of the offensive players.
- 2) Control the ball to the outside. To do this, the defensive player takes a position that is between the offensive player, and the goal, and just a little bit to the inside as well.
- 3) Get help. By doing 1 and 2, you give the rest of your team time to run back and help.
- 4) Steal the ball. Only attempt a steal when you have someone backing you up in case you miss. If you have done 1, 2 and 3, you are ready to try to steal.

Fun Game

7 trip. This is a version of Square Tag from day 1. Make two squares with cones. Squares are about 2 yards on a side, and about 5 yards apart. These are safe zones. One child in the middle is the tagger. Each child has a ball, and attempts to dribble the ball from one

square to the other square without the person in the middle touching it. Players count each successful time they go from one square to the other, shouting out the count each time. (i.e. "One!", "Two!", etc.). If the tagger gets the ball, that player must start the count over. Whoever gets to 7 first wins and gets to be the tagger.

Warmup

Today's warmup will be done hopping on one foot. Players do the following in a figure 8 around the cones:

- Roll the ball forward with the bottom of the right foot while hopping on the left foot.
 - Switch feet, same thing
 - Roll the ball backward with the bottom of the right foot while hopping on the left foot.
 - Switch feet, same thing
 - Same drill, but rolling the ball sideways, left foot first, then right
 -
-

I + I

Players do the Serve, and then take up a defensive posture. Players should run to the opponent in a curve, pushing the opponent to the sideline, and then take up a defense posture. Defense backs up until offense is through goal. Make corrections to defensive posture as you go.

I v I Line Soccer

Have players setup goals about 10 yards apart from each other. Have them play 1-on-1, but to score, they must dribble through the goal, rather than shoot. This will encourage more defensive play.

Water Break – TNT time

Ask questions about how the game went. Get prayer requests.

Scrimmages

Transition Soccer. This is a scrimmage for the whole team. Setup a regular soccer field, with the addition of making sure you use cones to mark where halfway is. Here are some additional rules:

- You cannot score until everyone on your team (including the goalie!) is on the opponents half of the field.
- If you score, and not everyone on your own team is across half way, the other team gets the point.

- If you score, and someone from the other team is still on your half, then your team gets 2 points.

Zone Defender. Setup two square areas with cones, about 20 yards apart. No out of bounds. You score when you stop the ball in the opponents square and put your foot on the ball.

Offense vs. Defense. Set up a soccer field such that one side has a regular sized goal in the middle of the end-line, but the other side has 2 small goals in the corners of the opposite end-line. The offense starts with the ball and tries to score in the regular sized goal. If the defense gets the ball, they try to score in one of the 2 small goals in the corner. This will teach your defense to move the ball to the sides once they gain possession.

Teaching Penalty Kicks (U10 and higher)

Elements of the penalty kick are:

- Called by the referee if a direct free kick foul happens in the penalty area.
- You must wait for the referee to tell you when its OK to kick the ball.
- Both teams must be outside of the penalty area, outside of the arc, and behind the ball.
- You can only go inside the penalty area after the ball is kicked.

Once the ball is kicked, it is live. If the goalie blocks it and it rebounds to someone else, they can kick it again. However, if the ball bounces off the edge of the goal, the kicker may not touch it (considered kicking the ball to self), but anyone else can.

Teach your defense and offense to charge the goal immediately after the ball is kicked in case it rebounds of the edge of the goal, or off of the goalie.

Conditioning (U10 and above)

Do the same elements as in the previous conditioning, but do them 15 times.

Free scrimmage

End practice with even sided free scrimmage.

Warm Down

Homework: Players at home can kick the ball with a friend, or against a wall. Challenge them to see how many different ways they can first-touch a ball. Encourage them to add little fake moves in combination with a first-touch.

High Fives, etc.

Game Day

Game Day Routine

Your game day routine should typically look something like this:

- 1) At home, gather your materials.
 - One game ball, clearly marked with your team's name
 - Clipboard and pencil to take notes
 - Binder with TNT ready to share with players
 - Wear your RYAA shirt to identify you as a coach
 - Positive Coaching Chart (described later)
- 2) Arrive on the field about 30 minutes before the start of the game with your players. If your game is the first game of the day, you may have to set up the field, and recruit some parents to help you.
- 3) Have your players begin warmup. You should teach them a warmup routine, and then have them go through it before each game without your help. A typical routine might look like:
 - a. One lap around the field in a group
 - b. 5 minutes of stretching
 - c. Play a game of keep-away with the ball
- 4) While players are warming up, make a substitution plan.
- 5) Remind your players to take off all jewelry and put on shinguards.
- 6) Choose a captain to call the coin toss in the middle of the field.
- 7) Both teams form a huddle in the middle of the field. The referee inspects equipment, and then does the coin toss.
- 8) Someone says a prayer, and then teams take their positions
- 9) The game is started. You begin taking notes about player performance. The Positive Coaching Chart is a great way to do this. (See the following section).
- 10) Quarter break. Make substitutions quickly. This is not a break.
- 11) Half-time break. Make sure everyone drinks water. Keep your comments positive and encouraging.
- 12) 2nd half starts.
- 13) 3rd quarter break. Make quick substitutions
- 14) Game ends. Everyone lines up to shake hands.
- 15) Your team sits down in a circle.
- 16) Praise the performance of each individual player as you recorded in your Positive Chart. Be sure to personally shake the hand, or pat the back of every player on your team after the game.
- 17) While you snack, hand out character patches to players.
- 18) Remind players of Bible club that is available to them.

Positive Coaching

Each of your sample lesson plans has a positive coaching tip taken from the Positive Coaching Alliance. I encourage you to read over these before the season starts, as they are full of great ideas about encouraging and developing kids. More can be found at their Web site at www.positivecoach.com.

Positive Charting

Positive Charting comes from the Positive Coaching Alliance.

As coaches we tend to think that we add value by finding things that are done incorrectly and improving them. But it is more important to find things that are being done correctly and to reinforce them. Positive Charting is a method for increasing the number of "right things" that your players do. It also creates a wonderful positive atmosphere in which players are more receptive to being corrected because they feel appreciated. Effective Positive Charting helps you reach the Magic 5:1 ratio of positives verses corrections, which best keeps players' Emotional Tanks full.

Here's how Positive Charting works:

- Write the name of each player in a box on the Positive Charting Form. If there is a specific action you want to look for with that player (for example, hustling back on defense, blocking out for rebounds) write it in the space marked "Look-For."
- Look for the positive things players do. Whenever you see one, jot a note under the player's name. (Over time you'll develop your own shorthand. The key is to write enough so you'll remember it when you get to step #5 below.) Remember to look for the team-building things that players do to encourage each other as well as their physical actions.
- Make sure you have about the same number of comments (3-5 is good) for each player. You may have to look hard with some players. And you may have to limit the number of comments for the advanced players. Be disciplined: at the end of the game you should have 3-5 items for each player.
- Be honest. Don't be tempted to make something up or write something that isn't true about any player. This is the hard part - you have to find something positive about each player. It may be a small thing, but you can find it if you look hard enough.
- At your next practice, begin with a quick team meeting in which you review your positive charting with your team. Take each player in turn and share with the group the positives. This should take no more than 30 seconds or so per player. Enjoy the positive energy of your players during practice.

To help you with positive charting, there is a link in your login area on our Web site that will popup a chart with the names of your players already filled in, in alphabetical order by first name. If you filled in jersey numbers, you will see the jersey number too.

What is Coaching?

Now, you may say, "But if I am busy writing down all those things, how can I coach?" You may have the wrong idea about what coaching is. Coaching is **not** making sure your players do everything right and win the game. Coaching is:

- **Instruction.** You teach techniques during practice that help players improve. This should primarily be done at practice and rarely done at the game.
- **Encouragement.** The ultimate learning environment happens when people feel like they can succeed. Your job as coach is to give your players reasonable goals that they can strive at, and succeed, and then help them to celebrate the success. This happens both during a game and at practice.
- **Watching.** Game time is for the players. This means primarily that the coach should be quiet, and players should be allowed to play, to try new things and fail, to succeed on their own. Most coaches don't get this. When a coach is quiet during the game, it allows the players to develop. They learn to think for themselves.
- **Asking.** For the ultimate player development, the coach should use the observations made during the game to ask questions during practice. "How did that go?" "What worked?" "What didn't work?" "Why do you think that?" Build in your players the ability to reason out their own improvement.

Character Patches

If we want to develop something in a child, we need to teach it, look for it and reward it. Character patches are a way for you to reward your players for showing particular good character attributes so that you can encourage that behavior. Do this each week after the game.

You will have one of each kind of character patch. Each week, you will teach about that character trait at the practice, and then after the game, you will pick one player to receive that character patch.

Try to work it so that each player receives one of the patches throughout the season, but if that is not possible, that is OK. Also, reward them for effort, not necessarily success.

You will find a description of the character patches in the TNT section.

Basic Rules of Soccer

Below are some basic rules of soccer. For the complete list, download the "Laws of the Game" from ussoccer.com or fifa.com.

Referee

The referee's job is to make sure the game is fun, fair and safe. The referee is in charge of the soccer game. Referee decisions are never to be challenged by players, coaches or spectators unless there is a safety concern.

Players

Players must have on uniforms that match, and that are different than the opposing team and the referees. Goalies must have a uniform that does not match either team. Everyone must have shoes, shin guards, socks, shirt and shorts. Players may not wear anything that poses a danger to themselves or others.

Goalies

The goalie can handle the ball within his own penalty area. The goalie can kick the ball from anywhere on the field. If someone on the same team as the goalie kicks the ball to the goalie, or throws the ball in, the goalie may not touch the ball with his hands, but may kick the ball.

Out of Bounds

If the ball goes out of bounds, there will be either a throw-in, corner kick, or goal kick, depending on where it went out of bounds. The ball is only out when the entire ball passes the entire width of the line. If the ball is on the line, it is still in.

Throw-ins happen when a player sends the ball over the sideline. The other team must throw the ball in with two hands, from behind the head, and with both feet on the ground and either behind or on the line.

Goal kicks happen when a player sends the ball over the opponent's end line. The opponent then puts the ball anywhere in the goal area and kicks the ball. The ball must go out of the penalty area before it is touched by any player, or else the kick is redone. Anyone can kick a goal kick, it doesn't have to be the goalie.

Corner kicks happen when someone sends the ball over their own endline. The opponent gets to put the ball in or on the corner arc, and then kick it in.

Fouls

Fouls are classified as direct or indirect fouls. A foul gives the other team a free kick. Direct free kicks let the other team kick the ball straight into the goal. Indirect free kicks require someone else to touch the ball before it goes in the goal. The referee will hold his arm straight up to indicate an indirect free kick.

Direct fouls that are committed in the players own penalty area result in a penalty kick for the other team.

Typical direct fouls are pushing, tripping, kicking a player, or handling the ball.

Typical indirect fouls are dangerous play (a high kick, or playing the ball on the ground while in a crowd), and offsides.

Offsides

A somewhat tricky rule to understand is offsides. Offside occurs when the following things happen:

- At the time the ball is kicked by a teammate,
- A player is closer to the goal than the 2nd to last defender, or the ball, and
- Becomes part of the play, by either touching the ball, running to the ball, or impeding an opponent

This is a tricky rule because it requires judging whether someone is in an offside position at the time a ball was kicked by his own teammate. Sometimes, there is a long time between when a ball is kicked and when it is received, and players can change position quite a bit during that time.

Special RYAA Rules

RYAA is a recreational league. The emphasis is on fun, learning, and maximizing the play time of every player. We ask for your cooperation with these goals, and the following rules.

Substitutions

Every player is guaranteed to play at least half of the game. To make sure this happens, the game is divided into 4 quarters with substitutions happening on the quarter only, or during an injury.

In addition, you as the coach are to make sure everyone gets as much play time as possible. Therefore, you are required to create a player rotation, and pick players to substitute in the rotation. The end result of this is that if a player has sat out a quarter, he cannot sit out another quarter until everyone else on the team has sat out a quarter.

Rotations should continue from game to game. So whoever sat out the last quarter of a game will be the first ones in the next quarter.

Also, rotate the goalie at least once per half. Whoever plays goalie in a game must play at least half the game on the field. This will mean that many people will get to play goalie during the season.

Scoring and Standings

Scoring is not tracked for the first few weeks of the season, as teams are continuing to form. After the fourth week, scores will be informally tracked, but not published, for the purpose of seeding the tournament.

Special Rules by Age Group

Under-8 Boys

- Ball size is 3
- Boys will have up to 10 per team. They will split into 2 games and play games simultaneously on two fields. The games will be play 4 against 4.
- Games are 20 minute halves, with a 5 minute half-time.
- No offsides

Under-9 Girls

- Size 3 ball
- Girls will have 6 per team, and play 4 against 4
- Games are 20 minute halves, with a 5 minute half-time.
- No offsides

Under-10 Boys

- Size 4 ball
- 10 per team
- Games are 7 against 7
- 25 minute halves
- Full FIFA rules, including offsides

Under 12 Boys and Girls

- Size 4 ball
- 12 per team
- Games are 9 against 9
- 30 minute halves

Under 14 Boys and Girls and higher

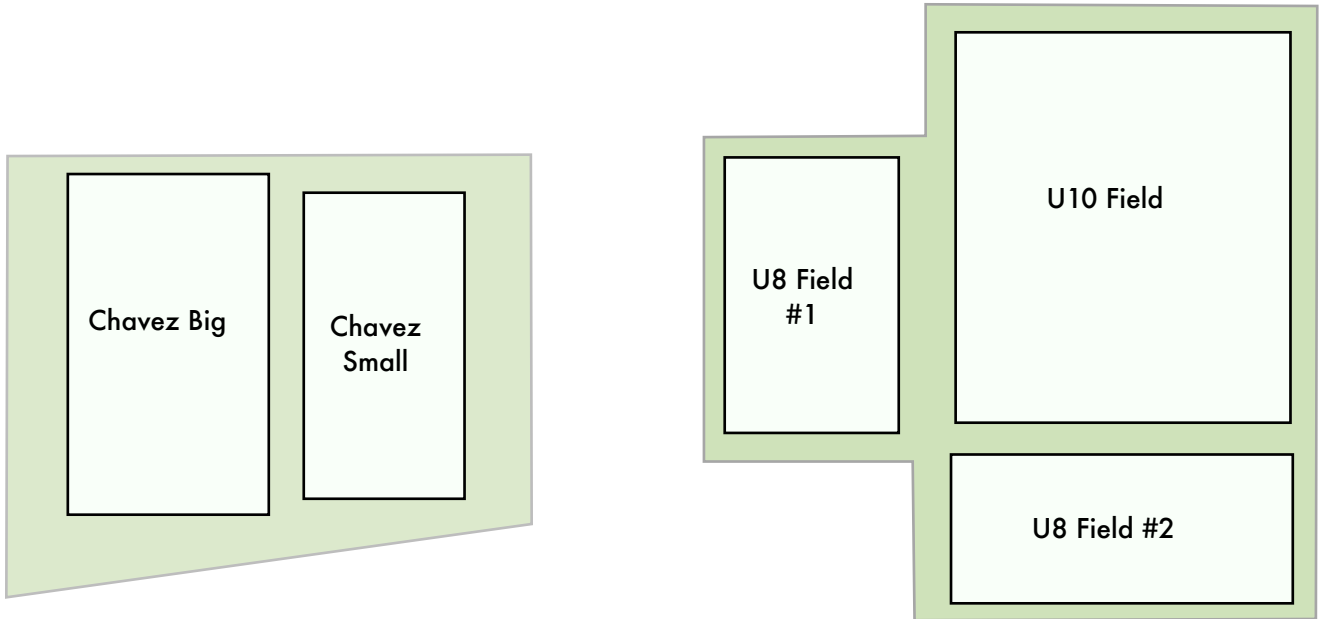
- Size 5 ball
- 15 per team
- Games are 11 against 11
- 35 minute halves

The Tournament

The last weekend of the season is a tournament day. Games are shortened, and we have a single elimination tournament for ages 10 and over. Younger ages are given a Jamboree day, which is many short games against different teams, but no standings or scores are kept.

Everyone in the league will get a medal. 1st and 2nd place medals will be given out, and others will get participation medals.

Worksheets and Appendixes



Important Phone Numbers

East Palo Alto Emergency	321-1112
Shannon Pekary, Executive Director	248-0488
April Pekary	906-4054
Paul Clauson	305-1556
Israel Navarrette, President of Ravenswood Youth Soccer Club	533-7617

Important Dates

Sep 12, 2008	First Games
Oct 10, 2008	Picture Day
Nov 7, 2008	Tournament Day

Field Locations and Maps

Chavez Field, Green Oaks Field, Old CDC Field

Entrance is at the Corner of Dumbarton St. and Bay Rd. in East Palo Alto. To get to Green Oaks and CDC Fields, walk down the road to the right of the fields and you will see it in the back.



Kelly Park

Behind the Onetta Harris Center at 100 Terminal Ave. in Menlo Park. Go into the parking lot, and drive around the back of the center to the left. You will see the field on your right.



Martin Luther King Jr. Park

Easiest parking and access to the field is at the end of Beech St. Parking is also at the other end on Daisy Lane



Parent Medical Permissions

Be sure to have the parents of each player sign one of the medical releases below. Keep these with you at all practices and games. Use them to allow emergency personnel to help your players.

Parents Name: _____ Child's Name: _____

EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION: I, the undersigned parent or legal guardian of the above player, a minor, hereby authorize the coaches, team parents and/or other RYAA officials to act as my agents in the capacity of activity supervisors and vehicle drivers, and to consent to medical, surgical or dental examination and/or treatment.

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Practice Plan Worksheet

Theme	
Fun Game	
Warmup	
New Skill	
1 + 1	
1 v 1	
Break	
Short Sided	
Scrimmage	
Conditioning	
Warm Down	

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