



NYSA

Coaches' Handbook

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Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to coach this season at Nashville Youth Soccer Association (NYSA). The main objective of NYSA is to make available a good place for children to learn and play soccer!

This handbook has been designed to help coaches during the season. It does not answer every question or resolve every issue that may arise, but coaches are encouraged to use it as a guideline throughout the season.

NYSA will communicate primarily with coaches via email or the NYSA website (www.nysa-soccer.org). During periods of inclement weather, it is advised that coaches regularly check the email address which is listed with the league.

Coaches are asked handle disputes quietly and allow the board to help with unruly parents and spectators. Coaches will be held responsible for unruly actions and/or the misconduct of his players, parents and unruly spectators. A coach shall not verbally abuse or demean a player for any reason. Coaches will ensure that players, parents and spectators follow the rules of NYSA.

NYSA welcomes coach's suggestions for improving the league, the soccer experience for our children and items to include in future versions of the handbook for coaches. If you would to make suggestions regarding the league or the handbook, please send comments to nysa-soccer@netzero.com.

League Rules

Coach Requirements

The Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA) requires that all coaches and assistant coaches complete a risk management volunteer disclosure statement and that a background check be completed. The TSSA has moved this process from paper forms to an online form on a secure server. Coaches may access the link entitled "Risk Management Volunteer Disclosure" from the TSSA web site (www.tnsoccer.org), or you may access the Disclosure directly at: <https://onlinereg.leagueone.com/rm/RmDisclosure.aspx?O=9027&I=28>.

It is required that coaches complete the online Disclosure Form within 48 hours of the coaches meeting and before the first practice.

NYSA must register every player with TSSA. NYSA sends those registrations to TSSA as teams. If the individual listed as the official "coach" for a team has not completed the disclosure, TSSA requires that we remove that individual as coach.

NYSA Rules

NYSA operates Heartland Soccer Park by proxy of the Nashville Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation. No pets, firearms or alcoholic beverages are allowed at Heartland Park. Please advise your parents of these rules.

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association, known worldwide by its acronym FIFA (pronounced fee-fah), is the international governing body of football (soccer) and the largest sporting organization in the world. NYSA follows FIFA's Laws of the Game. The Laws of the Game may be found on the FIFA website (www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame). Modified rules are in place for U4 - U11 age divisions and may be found on the "League Rules" page of the NYSA website (www.nysa-soccer.org). U12 and above follow all FIFA rules.

NYSA operates a recreational league, which means that score is not kept, there are no playoffs and all players will play a minimum of half the game. U4, U5, U6 and U8 division teams practice one day per week. Teams in the U11, U15 and U19 divisions may practice 2 times per week, but the total practice time is not to exceed 3 hours per week.

Coaches may not practice or play any player not assigned to them by the league. There are no exceptions to this rule.

No coach at any time shall use obscene or profane language to any player, parent or referee. Coaches shall not discuss publicly or privately with spectators or parents in a derogatory or abusive manner any play, decision, or the coach's opinion of the officials before, during or after the game. Coaches may not speak to referees during the game unless the referee initiates the conversation.

Teams will be assigned a date and time to work in the concession stand during the season. If your team's concession stand obligation is not fulfilled, the result will be the loss of the coach's player registration fee.

Season Timeline

- Coaches Meeting: receive roster, uniforms, sign code of conduct and submit online Volunteer Disclosure form
- Contact Parents/Players: begin contacting players within 4 days receiving your team roster
- Practices Begin: teams will have the opportunity to begin practicing before the season begins
- Games Begin: each season is a 10 week season
- Picture Day: occurs during season
- Rain Outs: if games are cancelled due to weather, coaches are to contact opposing coaches to schedule make games; coaches are to submit make up game schedule to league for approval and to assign referee
- End of Season Celebration: pick up medals and sponsor coupons for players prior to start of last game

End of Season

Each season NYSA provides participation medals to all players. These medals are distributed to coaches on the last game day of the season. Parents and coaches may choose to purchase trophies for their teams; however NYSA will not pay for those trophies.

NYSA plans a celebration for the last day of each season. During this time, NYSA tries to have activities for the players, such as games, inflatable rides, concession stand discounts, etc. Coaches may give medals and trophies to the players after the last game at Heartland Fields or they may choose to plan a team party away from Heartland Fields.

Code of Ethics & Conduct

I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as an NYSA Coach by following the NYSA Code of Ethics:

- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.
- I agree to contact parents on my roster within the next 4 days to inform them of the team practice schedule and my contact information.
- I agree to complete the required Risk Management Volunteer Disclosure within 48 hours of the coaches meeting.
- I agree not to practice any player not assigned to my team by the league.

What is a Good Coach?

A good coach is someone who knows winning is wonderful but is not the triumph of sports.

A good 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 a half-hour after practice and more to make sure every one of the players has a safe ride home.

A good coach is someone who rarely has a mom or dad say, "Hey, Thanks!" but receives a lot of advice on game day.

A good coach is someone who makes sure everyone gets to play.

A good coach is someone who knows what to do if a player gets hurt.

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 what he or she might have done 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 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.

A Parent's Perspective on a Good Coach:

Parents have their ideas of what makes a good coach, for example, patience, tolerance and sportsmanship to name a few. To get a perspective from an American "soccer mom," check out the article "[Good Coaching](http://www.footy4kids.co.uk)" by Lori Reynolds posted on www.footy4kids.co.uk.

Team Organization

All coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This usually takes place during the first practice. The information for parents may be put into an email or letter, but face-to-face communication is often preferable. Establish during this meeting how you will primarily communicate with parents, i.e. email, in person, telephone, etc.

Communication with parents is important because it enables them to become acquainted with you, informs parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport, informs parents of league requirements for the team and allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.), among other things.

When first contacting parents on your roster, make sure they know the day and time of the first practice, and let them know of required or recommended equipment. All players should come to practice and games with soccer cleats (not baseball or football cleats as they have toe cleats), the correct size soccer ball for the age group (U4-U8: size 3, U11: size 4, U15 and above: size 5), shin guards and water bottle.

Take time at the beginning of the first team practice to introduce yourself to parents and players, introduce players to one another and distribute handouts such as, practice and game schedules or modified rules for the age group.

Ask for volunteers to be assistant coaches, team parents and concession stand workers. Your team will be assigned a time to work in the concession stand during the season. If the team's concession stand obligation is not fulfilled, the coach's player registration fee will not be rolled over to the next season, nor will it be refunded.

Dick's Sporting Goods is a sponsor of NYSA and offers a "SportSpace Community" to help you keep your team informed and connected. It is not required that you use this communication tool, however if you would like to set up a site to post your game schedule, snack schedule or team blog, visit the website at www.sportspacecommunity.com to get started.

Team Responsibilities

NYSA asks that you leave the practice and game facility in the same shape that you found it. Please pick up and dispose of trash in the trash cans provided in various locations on the fields. Benches are provided for players to use during practice and games. If you or a parent moves a player bench during practice, return once practice is over. These benches are intended for parents and spectators. Please ask spectators to bring chairs.

Teams will be assigned a date and time to work in the concession stand during the season. As coach, you are not responsible for working in the concession stand, but you are responsible for finding volunteer workers from your team. If your team's concession stand obligation is not fulfilled, the result will be the loss of the coach's player registration fee.

Parent Responsibilities

In addition to team responsibilities, let parents know of their responsibilities as soccer parents at NYSA. Some of the parent responsibilities include:

- Transporting your child to and from practice and games on time
- Being supportive of all the players
- Helping your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort
- Focusing on mastering skills and having fun, not winning
- Attending games and cheering the team on
- Working in the concession stand when the team is assigned that duty
- Refraining from criticizing the opponents; be positive with all players
- Respecting the referees (They will make mistakes, but they are doing their best. If you feel you are better qualified, or would like to volunteer as a referee, please see the NYSA Referee Assignor)
- Refraining from coaching your child during games (try to understand and respect the difference between the roles of the coach and parent)

Practice Guidelines

NYSA does not assign practice days and times to teams. Each coach determines the practice days and times for his/her team. However we have found that most teams practice one evening a week with practices usually lasting an hour in length (depending on the age group).

All teams must practice at the NYSA fields, and you may not practice anyone who is not assigned to your roster by the league.

Planning

Planning is the key to having successful practices. 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.

Practice Day & Time

Decide the day and time you will practice. Younger teams should limit practice to about 45 minutes to 1 hour per week. Per the NYSA rules, U4, U5, U6 and U8 division teams practice one day per week. Teams in the U11, U15 and U19 divisions may practice 2 times per week, but the total practice time is not to exceed 3 hours per week.

Remind parents that each player should bring cleats (not baseball or football cleats because they have toe cleats), the correct size soccer ball for the age group (U4-U8: size 3, U11: size 4, U15 and above: size 5), shin guards and water bottle to all practices.

Make sure to take plenty of water breaks on very hot days. Don't forget to take water breaks during cold weather too. Proper hydration is very important for all athletes.

Utilizing Parents

Identify one or more assistant coaches from the parents on your roster. Assistant coaches are extremely valuable. They make it possible to divide players into smaller groups so that each player gets individual attention. Parents who would like to help but feel they lack the necessary skills should be encouraged to attend practice to help gather stray balls, direct traffic or volunteer as Team Parent. It is hard to have too many helpers, especially with younger players.

Practice Objectives

The two main objectives for any soccer practice are:

- 1) to have fun**
- 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. Don't let setting goals for the season scare you. Depending on the age group, your main goal for the season may only be to have your team dribble toward the correct goal without you telling them or maybe kicking-off to a teammate without a reminder.

You will ordinarily have only one to two practices before the first game. Since you will not have time to teach everything, choose topics you want to focus on and build your practices around those topics.

Some of the topics you might consider include:

- **Rules:** Kick-off Throw-in Goal kick Corner kick
Offside (depending on age group)
- **Conditioning:** Speed Endurance Strength
- **Techniques:** Dribbling Foot trap Heading Turning
Thigh trap Juggling Shooting Pull back
Pass (outside foot) Pass (inside foot) Chipping
Tackling Curving Shielding Chest trap
- **Goalkeeper:** Catching Throwing Punting Diving
Punching
- **Tactics:** Positions Crossing Passing Marking
Support Defensive wall

You don't have to teach your team all the tactics that are suggested. Be realistic in selecting your objectives. Consider the age and experience of your players. Decide on your priorities - what are the most important things you want to cover before the games begin and things you want to continue throughout the season? If you have doubts about whether your team is ready for a new tactic, skill or concept, introduce it after you have seen it used by some of your players.

Use the game ideas featured at the end of this handbook during practice. Games can teach your players the same techniques without it becoming a boring instructional lecture.

Basic Coaching Concepts for Younger Children

Coordination and Basic Motor Skills – Very young children (four and five year olds) are learning to coordinate and control their body movements and dynamic balance, and are generally not very nimble or agile. Practice activities that develop these basic motor skills. Games with and without the soccer ball will be beneficial and fun for all young children.

Contacting the Ball – There are six surfaces (inside, outside, instep, sole, toe and heel) used for kicking, dribbling or controlling a soccer ball. For most U5 and U6 players, the toes and the laces are the most commonly used surfaces. Practice activities to encourage players to use different surfaces and ask them to "imagine" new ways to kick and dribble the ball. Games that cater to discovery learning and

imitation are the recommended approaches to “teaching” new skills to young children.

Dribbling – Dribbling the ball is arguably the most important soccer skill at any level, and practice activities should encourage all young players to dribble and stop and turn the ball with different surfaces and to move in different directions with the ball under control.

Passing – It is important to encourage beginners to take extra touches when controlling the ball so that passes (or dribbles) are attempted with a purpose in mind, rather than as a means of kicking the ball to safety. However, not all players will pass the ball – especially younger players – for fear they may not get it back. Keep this in mind as you teach passing.

Shooting – A player’s first thought should always be “Can I score a goal from here?” Goals in practice should be wide and high enough to encourage shots from various distances and angles, and coaches should encourage to players through practice activities that the objective of the game is to score more goals than the opponents in the time allowed. Soccer games and other activities with no stated “outcome” are less motivating than activities that provide a way to win.

Ball Control – Time, space and repetition are the most important elements for improving comfort level on the ball. Small-sided games and one-player/one-ball activities provide opportunities for young players to begin to associate the techniques of dribbling and controlling the soccer ball. Beginning level players will rarely try to control balls coming out of the air, and bouncing balls present another problem for five and six year-olds.

Heading – Five and six year olds will not head the ball. You may have a child or two who will try to head the ball because they have seen older players do it. Encourage the effort if it happens.

Support – Young players should not be restricted in their movements on the field. Passing to other players should be encouraged, although dribbling the ball is the most likely method of advancing the ball. Instruction that limits players to a particular area of the field does not allow for the natural emergence of supporting positions and angles that become so important for positional play in later years.

Spaces versus Positions – For all players under the age of eight, positional coaching of any kind is irrelevant and detrimental to their fun, enjoyment and progress. Rather than be told what position to play, young players should be encouraged to “find” new supporting positions away from teammates so that passes can be exchanged.

Vision – Most young players have little or no visual awareness of their immediate surroundings, and, in particular, the proximity of teammates and opponents not directly in front of them. Receiving passes when facing away from the opponent’s goal is a difficult skill, even for experienced players, and most children will not look up until they have received the ball, secured possession and turned to face forward. Often, young players will simply let the ball run past them into what they hope will be open space.

Defending – “Defending” at this age should be no more complicated than encouraging the children to try and win the ball back when possession is lost. Players will often naturally transition from attack to defense and recover towards their goal, but it is also true that young children will often stop playing when the ball is lost. When the ball comes their way they will become involved again. Because players should be encouraged to move forward when attacking, there will be many situations when no one is at the back of the team when the opponents gain possession. This should be anticipated as a natural aspect of play for young children and one reason why scores are generally much higher in small-sided games.

Transition – When the ball turns over from the attacker to the defender or from the defender to the attacker, the game offers chances to demonstrate awareness of two very important concepts: immediate recovery of the ball and immediate counter-attack to goal. Players should be encouraged to react as quickly as possible to any change in possession.

Creativity – Because five and six year-olds are learning to coordinate game activities with body control, “creativity” is more likely to appear as good ball control or faking movements. Players who can change speed and direction and retain control of the ball are applying techniques in a creative way. Players who can move their bodies from side to side in an effort to unbalance a defender are showing signs of creativity. Players, who experiment with different parts of their feet or control the ball with different body parts, are showing signs of creativity. At this age, allowing children to think and to create their own solutions to the game’s problems is a critical element of coaching.

Weather Contingency Plans

Prepare a bad weather contingency plan. Inform your players and parents at the beginning of the season whether you will practice in the rain or cancel practice. Even if you plan to practice in the rain, you should not have practice when conditions are dangerous, for example when there is lightning or if the field has become too wet to permit safe play. If you do need to cancel practice due to adverse weather, have an organized plan to inform parents.

Please note that we don't let a little rain keep us from playing soccer. We will only cancel games or close fields for practice in the event of a thunderstorm or if there is standing water on the fields. We also do not cancel games due to cold weather. During cold weather games, players are encouraged to wear sweatpants, a sweatshirt or jacket and even a hat and gloves. Please keep in mind that sweatshirts and jackets must be worn underneath jerseys.

The Commissioner will make the decision to cancel games due to weather. If the decision is made to cancel games, we will post a notice on the front page of our website and send out an e-mail to the entire league. NYSA will make every attempt to have the decision made and the notices posted and distributed by 8:00am on Saturday morning.

If the weather is questionable and you don't see an e-mail or a notice on the web site closing the fields, assume that all practices and games will take place as scheduled.

Game Etiquette

Both teams will share the same side of the field, also known as the "bench" side of the field. Please note that the benches are for our players, not spectators. If you move a bench during practice, please return it to the correct side of the field once practice is over.

Only players, coaches and referees should be on the "bench" side of the field. In addition, no one is permitted to sit or stand at the ends of the fields near the goals. No more than one assistant coach or one team parent may sit on the bench with the players.

Parents, friends and family should sit on the side of the field that is opposite the players. Also, spectators should sit at least three feet from the sidelines so that the referee may clearly see the sidelines and so that the players have room to throw/kick the ball in.

For U4 & U5 age groups, the coach will be on the field with the players during the game. For U6, the coach will be on the sideline. The coach may move up and down the entire sideline during the game. For U8 and above, the coach must stay on his/her end of the sideline inside the coaches' box (the area between the center line and the goal box).

After the game, it is encouraged to line up your squad and lead them in shaking hands and congratulating the opposing players and coach. Teach your players to win humbly and to lose graciously.

Frequently Asked Questions

When are games played?

Games are played every Saturday during the season. Depending on the number of players registered (and the number of teams), games are usually scheduled between 8:00am and 2:00pm.

What is the make-up game procedure if games are rained out?

In the event that games are cancelled due to rain, the coaches of the teams scheduled to play each other should get in contact with each other to schedule a make-up game. Obviously, make-up games cannot be scheduled for Saturday mornings, but in most cases they can be scheduled for Saturday afternoons or week-day evenings. Please contact your coach regarding making up game(s).

Coaches: If you need a referee for a make-up game, please send an e-mail to the league at nysa.soccer@netzero.com with the age division and date & time of the scheduled make-up game. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to provide a referee, but we will make every effort to do so. Due to work and/or school schedules of our referees, it is much easier for NYSA to provide referees for Saturday afternoon games than it is for a week-day evening game. If a referee cannot be provided, please have an assistant coach or parent serve as referee. You may ask someone from each team to referee.

Do you keep score?

Since NYSA is a recreational soccer league we do not keep scores or standings. We strive to teach the kids good sportsmanship and the game of soccer.

We know that realistically a child who can count will probably know the score; however we do not encourage them to announce it to the team, or the opposing team. If they ask you if they won you should ask them "Did you have fun?" If they answer "yes" then that is all that is important.

How do I find a specific field for a game?

Included in this packet is a map of our fields. A map of our fields is also posted at the Board Building and the Concession Stand. If you should have any trouble finding a specific field, one of our Board members or a referee will be glad to direct you to the proper field.

and on the NYSA website

Where should I park on game day?

NYSA is very pleased to have plenty of paved parking for our players and their families. Please see our map of the fields to view the parking areas.

Please DO NOT park on the street or in the coves - the Metro Nashville Police department will ticket and/or tow your car. Also, DO NOT park in front of the double gates. This is the only way to get Emergency Vehicles onto the fields.

Soccer Coaching Games

Warm-ups don't have to be soccer related. All they need to do is to provide some gentle physical exercise and - most importantly - be a lot of fun. Remember that the kids aren't showing up to play soccer; they're showing up to have fun. Have fun with them! Play tag games, Simon Says, etc. Red Light, Green Light is an excellent warm up that can make use of a football.

Wee ones love the idea of a "new" game, so it is a good idea to change the rules of the game or change the game every 10 minutes to keep interest. Instructions have to be broken into little steps and kept very brief. If you can not do it and show it in about 20 seconds, then change it and do it in stages ... demo part 1, then expand to part 2, etc.

The key to little kids soccer drills is for every player to have a ball and a variety of "games" and drills that include every player. After playing soccer related games pick one aspect of the game (dribbling or shooting or passing) and build the rest of your practice session around that.

Numbers

The exercise is good for 1 vs. 1 dribbling skills. It is especially good on a hot day as the kids defending can rest a bit. Divide the kids into 2 groups. If you have ten kids, say, assign each kid a number between one and five. So each team has a number one, a number two, etc. Try to make sure the kids with the same number are evenly matched. Set up two very wide "goals" with pylons. Spread the five kids on each side across each goal line. Call out one or more numbers, and those kids come out to play 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2, etc. and the rest of the kids stay spread across the goal line as defenders. Throw a ball from the sideline into the centre and let them play it until a goal is scored, the defenders stop it, or it goes out of bounds.

Variation: Colors. Use two each of different colored bibs, armbands or stickers to place on shirts, as younger kids will have trouble remembering numbers.

Monkey in the Middle

All players form a circle and choose someone (the "Monkey") to be in its centre. The players forming the circle pass one ball among them while the person in the centre tries to gain control of the ball. When this happens, the person in the circle who last touched the ball goes to the centre. Some level of competitiveness develops but never on an individual basis and the "losers" quickly gets a chance to redeem themselves.

Freeze

This drill teaches players to stop when they hear the referee's whistle. Younger children may need you to say "freeze" during games to help them remember to stop at the whistle.

All players line up on the end line or goal box line. The coach blows his whistle signaling the players to run. The coach blows his whistle again signaling the players

to stop or "freeze." The coach repeats this until the players have made to the end of the field.

Variation: The coach allows the players to chase him continuing to blow his whistle signaling them to either run or stop. As the coach makes turns in the field, the players must follow. Let the players freeze in funny poses.

Ice Monster

Mark off an area for the game to be played and select one kid to be the "Monster." Have the rest of the kids (each with a ball) dribble around within the area. The "Ice Monster" attempts to touch each player's ball, at which point the player "freezes" with their foot on the ball. If a player's ball goes out of bounds, they also freeze. The last remaining unfrozen player gets to be the new Ice Monster for the next round.

Cops and Robbers

Have the kids (each with a ball) line up on one side of the field. These guys are the "robbers." Have two more kids (the "cops") facing the robbers somewhere near halfway to the other side. The object is for the robbers to dribble to the other side without having a cop tackle the ball away. If a robber loses his ball to a cop, he goes to jail (designate a small area off to the side or use a goal structure). Have the robbers repeat the crossings until there are only 2 left. Make these guys the new cops, pull everyone out of jail and start over.

Pirate (or Monster)

This is a keep away game. Coaching points: concentrate on the player's close dribbling and screening techniques. Everybody inside a circle (centre circle is fine) with a ball. One player without a ball is the Pirate. Everybody starts dribbling around. The Pirate player tries to steal a ball from any player and pass it out of the circle. The player from whom the ball was stolen also becomes a Pirate. Now the two Pirates and go after the others.....then three, then four. Finally only one player is left with a ball. He/she becomes the Pirate in the next game.

Variation: Bomber. Just like above except the "IT" player has a ball and tries to roll/throw it at the other player's and knock their ball out of the circle.

Kick Out

Everyone dribbles and shields their ball within a circle while trying to kick everyone else's ball out, and simultaneously to protect their own. You can't kick someone else's ball out if your ball isn't in the circle. If your ball goes out you have to leave the circle it gets down to two kids in a duel. The coach may participate to keep the game from becoming too competitive, as the ones eliminated early may feel bad.

Give and Go

This one is good for getting the kids to move after they make a pass. It is appropriate for kids who are a little older, who pass the ball but like to stop and really admire their better passes. Everyone spaces themselves around the centre

circle. Give the ball to one person and they call out someone's name and pass to them. They then run to the receiver's position in the circle. The receiver upon hearing their name called steps forward to receive the pass and yells "I got it!" The sequence is then repeated. Several things are accomplished besides getting them used to movement. The "I got it!" yell addresses the problem of nobody playing the ball in a game because they thought the other was going to play it. We all learn each other's names quickly.

Invariably, someone is always left out so start a countdown from 10 to 0 and they have to figure out who has been left out (the left out person should be quiet). They start yelling among themselves to figure out who it is and this fosters communication on the field. (It's pretty humorous too).

After a few practices, they get it down so they look pretty sharp. Then you toss in another ball. They love it! Now they have to think a bit because people are moving and two are busy with the other ball.

Egg Hunt

Have more balls than players. Have the players line-up across one end of the field. Take their balls and spread them out around the field, these are the eggs. At the other end of the field is a goal called the "basket". Blow the whistle and turn them loose. The object of the game is to get all the "eggs" in the basket as quickly as possible. They are all on the same team, and aren't allowed to take a ball away from another player. Time them to see how fast they can accomplish the task. Or take the balls out of the goal and throw/roll them back into the field to keep the game going longer.

Marbles

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble (a #2 ball works well). Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts, don't require them to use their own ball, they are free to use any other ball they can find.

At first the players may get really excited and kick the marble. If this happens, call time-out and put it back.

Variation: eliminate the teams and play it in a circle. The game is over when the ball exits the circle.

Shark and Minnows

Teaches kids with the ball to shield it from an opponent and teaches kids without the ball how to take it away from an opponent. Use pylons to create a 15-yard square. One player, the shark, starts outside the square without a ball. All other players, the minnows, start inside the square with a ball. When the coach yells, "Shark's getting hungry!" the shark starts running around the outside of the square and the fish start dribbling around inside the square. When the coach yells, "Shark attack!" the shark enters the square and has 30 seconds to send as many balls as possible outside the

square. When a ball leaves the square for any reason, the corresponding fish must leave the square and stay out until the coach gives the "Stop!" command at the end of the 30 seconds. A fish has done well if still alive. The shark has done well if few fish survived. Choose a new shark and play another round until every player has been the shark once.

Camp Town Races

Line up all the players on one end of the field. They each have a ball. On the whistle, they all dribble to opposite end, shoot ball into goal, get ball out of goal, and run back and finish with a shot on opposite goal. The first one to finish is the winner. Ask them "Who is going to win the race?" They all learn to say "The player who can dribble it the straightest!" A variation is to start half at one end and half on the other. This really teaches them to try to do it fast while maintaining possession. This drill really helps players deal with the balls that pop out of the bunch.

Trick or Treat

Make a square with pretty small sides - players line up on each side. Put an adult in the middle of each side (that means four adults) holding a dozen or so flat cones (you could use anything else similar size and shape). 50 cones or 50 slips of construction paper will do.

On a go signal, players dribble across the square, stop the ball with a foot on it, say "Trick or Treat", take a cone from an adult, turn the ball, dribble back across, take a cone, etc. When all the cones are gone, who has the most?

This requires dribbling at speed, avoiding the clump in the middle, controlling the ball around an opponent, but minimal coordination holding the cones.

After a few rounds dribble across the square, dribble around the coach, and then stop the ball, say "Trick or treat," etc. Or place the adults randomly in the square, moving at a walking pace. This makes them keep their heads up and look for the target (i.e. the adult).

Obstacle Course

Set up cones around the field or make lanes for players to run through or dribble at speed through. Have them jump over cones and then receive passes from the coach. Then they must dribble through the cones and to take a shot on goal.

Teach the Parents

During the last practice of the season have a scrimmage between the parents and the players (with the coaches helping the players). This serves a couple of purposes. The kids love this game. They get a chance to show their parents what they can do and they enjoy beating their parents. (The parents never win, the coaches make sure of that....) Also, since many of the parents have never played soccer it shows them how difficult the game really is. The hope is that a parent may now think twice before yelling at a child for missing an "easy" shot in a game. Everybody seems to enjoy this scrimmage.

Ouch! (also know as Kick the Coach)

All the kids get a ball in a confined space and must dribble it around until they can pass it or shoot it at the Coach who is running around within the space attempting to avoid being hit by a ball. Often times you have to let some hit you. Make faces etc. to provoke them to try harder. Every time the coach is struck by the ball he yells "Ouch", usually louder based on the strength of the hit. The drill teaches ball control and shooting as well as making them think a little. As a bonus sometimes fall to the ground at the end if struck a couple times well. Consider using it at the end of practice so that the kids go home with a smile.

Just plain GAMES!

For warm-ups, play games which are not soccer related, but promote physical activity and are a lot of fun. Simon says, freeze tag, team tag, take-away, etc. Remember that the kids aren't showing up to play soccer, they're showing up to have fun. Have fun with them.

More Games & Drills

There are endless types of games a coach can use to teach basic skills during practice. Use the ones listed here, modify them or make up your own games. For more game ideas, drills for older players and other coaching resources, checkout the Links & Resources tab on the NYSA Website (www.nysa-soccer.org).

Additional Resources

There are many exceptional resources available on the internet and in your local library for coaches and parents. Take a look at the links below for more information about coaching theories and ideas.

For ideas about “Honoring the Game” using a simple code of Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and Self (ROOTS for short) or the “Elm Tree of Mastery” which focuses on effort, learning and mistakes, please visit the website www.responsiblesports.com.

You may also find additional games and coaching articles on the website www.footy4kids.co.uk.

Check out the Links and Resources tab on the NYSA website for more websites and other resources.

And please don't overlook one the most tremendous resources you have as a coach at NYSA ... the experience of other coaches and the NYSA Board of Directors. If you have questions, ask. If you can't find answers on your own, we are here to help.

NYSA Map of Fields

