



Coaching Guide

Mini Division

Fall 2022/Spring 2023

Coaching Manual Mini Division



Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Coaching Philosophy
- Parent/Player Communication
- Practice Plan
- Game Principles

Appendix

- Game Operating Procedures
- Coaching U5 Soccer - from US Soccer
- Concussion Protocol
- Helpful Links
- Sample Communication Letters

HISTORY: The Beacon Soccer Club (BSC) has been in existence since 1978, as started by Patrick Kerr and a group of dedicated volunteers. Our club has been delivering quality soccer to the youth of Beacon and the surrounding community ever since. BSC continues to be a 100% volunteer organization, fueled by dedicated people who donate their time and energy to the young people of our community. BSC offers an In-House intramural program and an advanced Travel Soccer program. Our programs are designed for players from age 4 to 19. Our Midget program is for 4-5 yr. olds, Jr. Peewee 6-7 year olds, Peewee 8-9 year olds, Intermediate 10-13 year olds and Senior for 14-19 year olds. Our Travel program ranges from U9 to H.S. and level of play ranges from developmental up to the highest available.

Mini Coaching Manual – Introduction

Welcome to coaching the Minis for the Beacon Soccer Club. This coaching manual has been put together to guide you and your Mini team throughout your upcoming season. This document contains an aspirational vision for you as you lead your team in the finer points of dribbling, passing, shooting, and teamwork. All activities are appropriately designed for the U4 and U5 age range and every activity and game can be modified and adjusted to your own team's needs and abilities. Also included are some coaching guidelines and coaching points to refer to and use when working with this age group in teaching them basic skills.

The Mini division is often a child's first introduction to soccer. And as such the goal of Mini soccer is to have an experience the most replicates the way a young athlete best learns the game of soccer. To put it simply, our soccer players are meant to have fun. Winning a soccer game should not be the focus and will not be a child's motivation for why they will play on Saturday mornings.

In the Appendix of the packet are Mini Operating Procedures & helpful links

This manual is meant to act as a guide to help you set your players up. The Executive Board of the Beacon Soccer Club respects each coach's autonomy, but we recognize the needs of our young athletes must come first. It is with this spirit that we offer you these suggestions for how to work with your soccer players. Everything offered here are simply thoughts and ideas for you to utilize. We are happy to advise and discuss anything in this booklet with you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us by email.

On behalf of the Beacon Soccer Club, I want to wish you a very successful soccer season.

Respectfully,
Jacqueline Arroyo
Mini Division Coordinator

Coaching Philosophy/Expectations

BSC Philosophy: BSC strives to give our youth an opportunity to learn and play the game of soccer and in doing so, also teach the principles of sportsmanship, honesty, cooperation, teamwork and respect. We provide a supervised, orderly and progressive program of instruction (curriculum) and competitive soccer games. All Officers, Directors, Members, Coaches, Players, Sponsors, and Supporters shall bear in mind that the attainment of exceptional athletic skills or the winning of a game is secondary, and that the molding of future adults is of primary importance. The Club and its Board of Directors strives to provide reasonably equal benefits and opportunities to all registered players whether recreational, instructional or competitive travel.

“The coach’s long-term goal is to prepare the player to successfully recognize and solve the challenges of the game on his or her own. It is vital that the coach approaches soccer with this in mind.” – US Soccer

Coaching Requires:

**Kindness
Patience
Respect**

Coaching Supplies

Beacon Soccer T-Shirt
Whistle
2 – Size #3 Balls
6 cones
6 pinnies



Communication – Players and Parents

One of the more important things that you will do throughout the Fall and Spring season will be to communicate with your players and their parents. Below are some thoughts and ideas for how you can communicate with your players. Appendix 2 includes some sample letters and emails that can be sent out to the families of your players.

Each coach will get a “Team Page” thru Sports Sign UP. On this website/app you can find your team roster, send emails, and create a schedule. The app has some unique features. The most important feature is sending email reminders to your player’s parents about your upcoming practices and games. Each coach will receive their website information via email.

Your schedule should take about 15 minutes to create on the website/app. It is very easy - you can even cancel a practice at the last minute from your smart phone if it suddenly starts to rain.

Communication with Players

- Keep comments POSITIVE and ENCOURAGING.
- Soccer specific information should be limited to basic ideas (dribbling, turning the ball around, scoring, defending).
 - Ball handling is most important (players should not be passing).
- Encourage players to play throughout the entire field and both offense & defensive positioning.
 - Formations/Positions should not be addressed at this level.

Communication with Parents

Should also be positive and encouraging
Let parents know what expectations will be for playing time
Important for parents to understand sideline ethics

- Model the Model of good behavior
 - Parents should be cheering...but not coaching.
- No yelling at or criticizing the referees and/or the calls that they make.
 - Not taunting other players or referees
 - Parents sit on the sidelines.
- Cheering for their child, the other players on the team, and the opposing players are encouraged!



Mini Practices

Practices at the U5 level are meant to be fun-inspired opportunities for children to explore their creative sensibilities with a soccer ball. The coach's long-term goal is to prepare the player to successfully recognize and solve the challenges of the game on his or her own. It is vital that the coach approaches soccer with this in mind. The BSC hopes to provide coaches with a clear goal and idea of what should be accomplished at a practice:

- **NO LINES, NO LAPS, NO LECTURES.** Create exercises/games that replicate and repeat the movements and situations that are found in soccer and that allow the player to grow comfortable and confident with the ball.
- **ONE BALL PER CHILD (size 3).** Encourage players to move with the ball at his/her feet and deal with boundaries, opponents, teammates and goals.
- **PLAYERS ARE TAUGHT BY WATCHING AND COPYING.** Keep in mind that soccer is a pretty simple game. If you are involved in soccer for long enough, you begin to realize that all the many little games that work are really just variations on the same basic concepts.
- **When drilling keep numbers from 1v1 to 4v4 never more.** Players should practice for about 30 minutes and then play a 30-minute game against the other team.
- **REPETITION** – You will see that we suggest to do the same drills a couple of times a season to develop those skills in each player.

“I don't believe skill was, or ever will be, the result of coaches. It is a result of a love affair between the child and the ball” – Manfred Schellscheidt

Characteristics of Game/Activities

Dynamic
Organized but unstructured
Free Movement
Fun
Decision Making
Age Appropriate



Most Importantly – HAVE FUN!

Sample Week 1/Practice #1

Introductions (5 Minutes)

Introduce yourself to your players. Have them introduce themselves to you as well. Ask them an icebreaker questions - "What is your favorite dessert?"

Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Players free kick or dribble on one half of the field. Only use one half of the field (one player per ball).
- Players dribble or kick at cones or targets spread out on half of the field.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

Following the warm-up, gather your players and briefly discuss the fitness concept for that practice. In this first practice your fitness topic will be more general, but in future practices you will often discuss more specific concepts and issues such as safety, flexibility, healthy habits, and more.

Key Idea: General Fitness

Gather children about 10 to 15 feet away from a goal or cone. "Everyone jump 10times. Our muscles help us jump. When you use your muscles a longtime without getting too tired, it improves your endurance, which means you can run longer without getting tired. Now run really fast to the goal and back." Wait for them to return. "Running strengthens your heart and lungs. Now touch your toes; try to keep your fingers there while I count. Stretching makes you flexible, like a rubber band. When we play soccer, our bodies run, kick, and move. It makes our bodies stronger and improves our fitness, which means we can run and play longer and faster. Having good physical fitness is important for soccer and for being healthy. At every practice we will talk about fitness in our fitness circles.

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Dribbling** - Teach dribbling as a series of "little kicks" meant to control the ball – keeping the ball close to player's feet. Demonstrate which part of foot a player can use (inside/outside) and let them do it!
- **Red Light/Green Light with Ball** – Have players start one sideline and dribble to the other sideline – stopping them with the command of "Red Light!"

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 2/Practice #2

Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Close Dribbling – Dribble the ball on your half of the field. Utilize the entire field. Tell players to “Keep the ball close when you run.”
- Tell players that you will blow the whistle or yell, “freeze.” When you do that, they should stop the ball and put their foot on the ball to show they have control.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

Key Idea: Cardio respiratory Fitness

Children gather into a group. "Everyone hold one hand up and make a fist. Squeeze your fist tightly, and then let go. Keep tightening and letting go. "Children continue for 10counts."Your heart is a special muscle that tightens and relaxes just like your fist is doing. Your heart is about the size of your fist. Let's put our fists over our chests. Every time it tightens, or beats, your heart pumps blood all over. Children continue for 10counts. When you run during soccer, your heart beats faster. The beat slows down when you slow down. Let's run with high knees for 15 counts while we count together. Stop and feel your heart beat by putting your hand over your chest." Model for players. "Running strengthens your heart and lungs and improves your fitness."

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Hit the Coach/Kick the Coach** – Players dribble around the field trying to “hit” or “kick” the coach with the ball. Coach should maneuver around the field both quickly and slowly – make sure that the players have opportunities to both hit and miss.
 - Stop game and ask the players what their challenges were and what their successes were. Have them work on both in the second round of the exercise.
- **Egg Hunt** – Scatter balls throughout the field. Have players face the opposite way at midfield. When you say go – they run to their ball and dribble it to get it into the goal! Have as many ball as players...have even more if available.

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 3/Practice #3

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Shapes – Each player with a ball. Using different parts of the body (knee, foot, elbow, head) players make shapes with the ball (i.e. “using your right foot with the ball, make a circle”).

Fitness (5 Minutes)

MUSCLE STRENGTH/ENDURANCE

Key Idea: Muscular Strength & Endurance

Gather children into a circle. "Everyone find your own space so you don't bump your neighbor. You are going to run in your own spot for 30 seconds, then stop. Ready? Go!" Time children and verbally let them know the time remaining; stop the mat the end of the time." What part of the body did we just use the most when we ran? " Encourage their responses. "When we play soccer, which part of your body do you use the most? "Wait for their responses. "Muscles in our body help us move our legs. Playing soccer will help our leg muscles get stronger and grow bigger."

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Gate** – Set up a series of “gates” with cones throughout the field. Players are to dribble around the field and dribble in between the “gates.” Have them keep count. After the first round have them shout out the number of gates they went thru. Try to beat that number in the second round.
- **Pairs** – Tell partners to practice moving the ball from one end of the field to the other side, BUT WITHOUT DRIBBLING. Ask them how they can do that. They should answer, “by passing back and forth.” When they get to the other side, they can score on the goal.

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 4/Practice #4

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Set up four goals with cones. Goals should be approx 4 feet wide. Have some parents volunteer to be the goalies. Have the players dribble around the field and try to score the different goals. Parents should be instructed to let some balls get by and then deflect other balls back into the field. Players keep trying to score until the coach blows the whistle.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Key Idea: Safety Equipment & Rules

Bring a small piece of cardboard or a clipboard that can be used as a shield. Get one child to demonstrate. Provide a ball and have the child kick the ball at you at a medium effort. "Watch where the ball goes when Julia kicks it." Allow the ball to hit your legs. Then put the board in front of you, between you and the child kicking. Have the child kick again. "Now watch where the ball goes. This board is just like a shin guard that we wear on our legs. Wearing shin guards protects our legs just like the board protected my legs from the ball. "Give each player a turn kicking the ball. "Can you think of other ways to be safe that you should remember to do when you play soccer?"

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Dribbling** - Teachers dribbling as a series of "little kicks" meant to control the ball – keeping the ball close to player's feet. Demonstrate which part of foot a player can use (inside/outside) and let them do it!
- **Red Light/Green Light with Ball** – Have players start one sideline and dribble to the other sideline – stopping them with the command of "Red Light!"

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 5/Practice #5

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Soccer Tag – Players dribble around the field while one player attempts to tag them. All standard rules of tag apply. Switch players every 30 seconds or so.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

HEALTHY HABITS

Key Idea: Healthy Habits

Gather children into a circle. "When your body doesn't eat healthy foods and get enough sleep, it moves slowly. Let's pretend we have no energy to move because we didn't eat enough healthy foods or get enough sleep." Begin to move slowly and encourage children to follow. Move extremely slowly. "Everyone stop. Now I am going to fill your bodies up with healthy foods." Act out giving them foods. "Pretend we're sleeping. When I say 'Wakeup!' you can move faster because you have enough energy and enough rest. Wakeup and move faster. Stop! What are some other healthy habits you have learned?" Examples: daily exercise, brushing teeth, no smoking, less sugar, more real food."

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (15 Minutes)

- 3v3 – Divide the players up into groups of 3 (if you have 9 players – have 3 teams and sub one group in after 5 mins). Have the players play “keep away”...NO GOALS.

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 6/Practice #6

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Play a shorter version of 3v3 (start with however many players you have and then add players as they show up). No goals...this is keep away.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

FLEXIBILITY

Key Idea: Flexibility

Bring a rubber band to use as a prop. "This rubber band is like our muscles.

When I pull it, it stretches; when I let go, it pulls back to its original shape.

"Demonstrate with the rubber band, stretching it out and back, using a gentle, slow action. "Your muscles work the same way. When you reach and stretch, your muscles are stretching just like the rubber band. When your body comes back, your muscles go back to their original shape. Everyone reach down to the ground with your arm slowly, and then bring your arms backup." Have children repeat three times. "Your leg muscles need to stretch because you use them the most in soccer; stretching makes your leg muscles more flexible. When muscles are flexible, it keeps them from getting hurt and makes the muscles feel good."

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Dribbling** – Teach dribbling as a series of "little kicks" meant to control the ball – keeping the ball close to player's feet. Demonstrate which part of foot a player can use (inside/outside) and let them do it!
- **Red Light/Green Light with Ball** – Have players start one sideline and dribble to the other sideline – stopping them with the command of "Red Light!"

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 7/Practice #7

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Close Dribbling – Dribble the ball on your half of the field. Utilize the entire field. Tell players to “Keep the ball close when you run.”
- Tell players that you will blow the whistle or yell, “freeze.” When you do that, they should stop the ball and put their foot on the ball to show they have control.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

MUSCULAR STRENGTH/ ENDURANCE

Key Idea: Muscular strength & Endurance

Gather children into a group. Show children the differences between a kick with minimal effort and one with close to maximum effort. "Watch how far the ball goes when I kick it two different times. "Show both kicks to children. "Let's make a circle, and you show me how you would kick the ball. Pretend you are kicking a ball, and show me a short kick. Now step back two big steps and show me a long kick that will make the ball go across the circle. "High light the ball going farther in the second kick. "You can kick the ball farther when your muscles in your legs are strong. Your muscles in your legs get stronger when you practice kicking."

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Hit the Coach/Kick the Coach** – Players dribble around the field trying to “hit” or “kick” the coach with the ball. Coach should maneuver around the field both quickly and slowly – make sure that the players have opportunities to both hit and miss.
 - Stop game and ask the players what their challenges were and what their successes were. Have them work on both in the second round of the exercise.
- **Egg Hunt** – Scatter balls throughout the field. Have players face the opposite way at midfield. When you say go – they run to their ball and dribble it to get it into the goal! Have as many ball as players...have even more if available.

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 8/Practice #8

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Players kick a stationary ball into the goal.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

TRAINING AND CONDITIONING

Key Idea: Training and Conditioning

Gather children into a circle. "What will you do tonight after you eat dinner?" Wait for their responses. "At the end of the day, what do you do?" Encourage children to discuss sleep. "Let's pretend you are at your homes, and you climb into bed to go to sleep. Everyone lie down. Now let's pretend it's morning and a new day. You don't have soccer practice today. Your body needs to move every day to stay in good physical conditions for soccer. What should we do to move our bodies?" Wait for their responses. If a child suggests an activity (e.g., biking, walking, swimming), have everyone pretend to do that activity. Then have them "sleep" again, wakeup, and choose another physical activity idea

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Gate** – Set up a series of "gates" with cones throughout the field. Players are to dribble around the field and dribble in between the "gates." Have them keep count. After the first round have them shout out the number of gates they went thru. Try to beat that number in the second round.
- **Pairs** – Tell partners to practice moving the ball from one end of the field to the other side, BUT WITHOUT DRIBBLING. Ask them how they can do that. They should answer, "by passing back and forth." When they get to the other side, they can score on the goal.

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 9/Practice #9

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Soccer Tag – Players dribble around the field while one player attempts to tag them. All standard rules of tag apply. Switch players every 30 seconds or so.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

MUSCULAR STRENGTH/ ENDURANCE

Key Idea: Muscular Strength and Endurance

Have children spread out in a group. "Put your hand on the front of your thigh, then lift it up and set it down. Did you feel the muscle get tight when you lifted it up and then relax when you set it down? Try it again five times." Assist players if needed. "Muscles tighten, or contract, when you move. You use the thigh muscles, or quadriceps, when you kick the ball in soccer. The more you practice kicking the stronger your thigh, or quadriceps muscles, will get: that's called improving your muscular strength."

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Dribbling** - Teachers dribbling as a series of "little kicks" meant to control the ball – keeping the ball close to player's feet. Demonstrate which part of foot a player can use (inside/outside) and let them do it!
- **Red Light/Green Light with Ball** – Have players start one sideline and dribble to the other sideline – stopping them with the command of "Red Light!"

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Sample Week 10/Practice #10

Introduction/Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

- Welcome team to practice
- Players free kick or dribble on one half of the field. Only use one half of the field (one player per ball).
- Players dribble or kick at cones or targets spread out on half of the field.

Fitness (5 Minutes)

HEALTHY HABITS

Key Idea: Healthy Habits

Gather children into a group. Mark boundary areas. "When I say 'go' you are all going to run as fast as you can, without bumping each other, staying in this area. Ready, go! "Children run for about a minute or until they get tired. "You had enough energy to run. But when you don't take care of your body, you can get tired much faster playing soccer. I am going to say a habit, and you shout if it's healthy or unhealthy." (Examples: smoking, brushing teeth, drinking plenty of water, getting plenty of sleep and rest, eating a variety of foods.) "Can you think of any others? Healthy or unhealthy?"

Water Break (2 Minutes)

Skills (10 Minutes)

- **Dribbling** - Teachers dribbling as a series of "little kicks" meant to control the ball – keeping the ball close to player's feet. Demonstrate which part of foot a player can use (inside/outside) and let them do it!
- **Red Light/Green Light with Ball** – Have players start one sideline and dribble to the other sideline – stopping them with the command of "Red Light!"

WATER BREAK – PREPARE FOR GAME

Game Principles

After a 30-minute practice, you will then have a 30-minute game with the opposing team (2 teams share a field for practice). Reach out to other coach across the field to start the game – both coaches should be on the field to both “referee” and “chaperone” the game. Below are some suggestions for handling the game:

- Two, 15ish minute halves – with a water break
- The goal is to play soccer, so let them play – ask parents to gently kick the ball back in bounds if it goes over the sideline (throw-ins should happen when the ball goes way out of bounds)
- Restarts happen as per the game operating procedures in the Appendix.
- Substitutions can happen on the fly
- Player numbers should be 4v4...no more than 5v5. To keep the field of play open and free.

Please know that winning games should not be and, most likely, will not be a child’s motivation. So, do not attempt to keep score. Consider the following excerpt from the United State’s Soccer Federation’s “Best Practices For Coaching Soccer In The United States”:

“At the younger ages (6 to about 10), soccer is not a team sport. On the contrary, it is a time for children to develop their individual relationship with the ball. The fact that younger children are placed into team environments is not their fault. Do not demand that the more confident players share the ball. Encourage them to be creative and go to goal. Do the same with the rest of your players. Work to bring all your players up to that level of confidence and comfort with the ball. Coaches should avoid the impulse to “coach” their players from “play to play” in order to help them win the match. Coaches should not be telling their young players to “pass rather than dribble,” to “hold their positions” or to “never” do something (like pass or dribble in front of the goal).”

Objectives of Mini Division Soccer

- Handling the ball with both feet (dribbling, shooting, and turning).
- Communication on the field amongst players.
- Throwing the ball in.
- Restarting the game (after a goal and when ball goes out of bounds)
- Moving ball towards goal (offense)
- Stopping goals (Defense)
- Turning ball around (Transition)



Appendix

#1

Mini Division 4-5 (No Standings) - Operating Procedures

Size 3 ball

Field Size 25x20

30-Minute Practice

30-Minute Game

No weekday practice

Ideal players = 4v4 (no more than 5v5)

No Forfeits (If a team does not have enough players, either play down or even out teams).

Game Operating Procedures

- Practice Objectives
 - Handle the ball with at least one foot and both hands
 - Running, jumping, and stopping with and without the ball.
 - No Lines, No Laps, No Lectures
 - 1 ball per child or 1 ball per two children (every player needs to bring a size 3 soccer ball)
 - Players need to be always engaged and never in line waiting
 - When drilling keep numbers from 1 v1 to 3 v 3 never more
- Games
 - All restarts are done with a kick in (any ball passing the goal line will be started with a goal kick off of the goal line by defending team regardless of who the ball touched last)
 - No goalies or goal tending
 - No set positions
 - All players should play more than half a game
 - All players should be substituted
 - Coaches and Parents should be positive and encouraging
 - Try to limit high score differentials. Coaches can swap players if necessary.
 - Communication with players
 - Soccer specific information should be limited to how to best keep the ball from running out of bounds
 - Limited discussion about positions or any other team concepts
 - Throw ins are introduced
 - by moving players around (i.e. best player moves to goalkeeper)...This should be assessed by the 4th goal over opponents score.
 - Players should not engage in HEADING, in either games or practice.

Mini Division 4-5 (No Standings) - Operating Procedures

Spring Picnic

At the conclusion of the Spring season (mid-June), the Beacon Soccer Club hosts a barbeque picnic to celebrate the year's successes and honor our player's accomplishments.

- All families within each division are asked to provide a specific item for the picnic (water, brownies, cookies).
- The BSC will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, buns.
- Along with the picnic, coaches are asked to bring their teams over for a presentation of trophies. All players receive a trophy to commemorate their year of Beacon soccer!
- The Elks Soccer Shootout takes place during the picnic. Have your players get ready to take aim at some small goals. Players with the highest points receive a trophy and the chance to move on to the Regional Shootout.

Appendix

#2



Ball Control and Creativity: 6 - 12 years old

PRE ACADEMY LEVEL: U-6 THROUGH U-12 AGE GROUPS

U-6: K and 1st graders

Soccer at these ages should be discouraged in any form other than as a fun activity for kids, that happens to include a soccer ball. There should be groups of players rather than teams. Fees

GAME APPLICATION

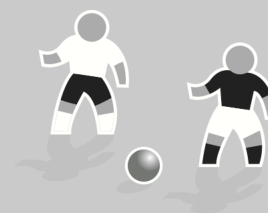
Game Form: 3 v 3 is best option for these ages

GK Status: Goalkeepers should not be used

Field Size: 4 v 4 (40 yards x 25 yards)—3 v 3 (30 yards x 20 yards)

Ball Size: 3

When ball goes out of bounds, the game is restarted with a kick-in or dribble-in. No throw-ins.



should be nominal. Attendance should be optional. Creating a joyful environment is mandatory.

■ SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS AGE:

Five- and six-year olds are too young to be involved in any structured, organized soccer program. At most, they should be involved in fun activities that encourage the children to explore their physical abilities, while also including a ball with which to play. Make sure these are activity-based games that emphasize exploration and experimentation with the rolling, spinning, and bouncing qualities of the ball. The soccer ball should be considered a toy. There should be no activities where players wait in lines to perform a pre-determined movement or required action.

Five- and six- year olds, although still young, are beginning to gain more control over their bodies. At the same time, it is still new to them and they will require a lot of time and energy figuring out what their bodies can do, and how to use this developing coordination. Children at this age also love to use their imagination when they play. Keep this in mind when designing games. They



enjoy playing on their terms, and as a by-product of their play, they will gain some limited comfort with the ball. Although they love to play, their ability to stay focused on any one thing is very limited. Keep your activities short and simple. Finally, even as they are steadily developing physical and mental abilities, they are still very young. Always treat children with care, patience and give plenty of encouragement. It can be helpful to include parents in the practice/play time so they can take ideas home with them to their backyards or parks. If children must be involved in these organized practice times, they should be having so much fun that when they go home, the soccer ball becomes one of their favorite toys.

■ DURATION OF PRACTICE; RATIO OF BALL TO CHILD AT PRACTICE

30 to 45 minutes is the best option for these ages. Most of the practice should be spent in ratios of one ball per child or one ball per two children.

■ GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING DURING PRACTICE

The children should be having fun with the ball. There should be periods of active playing where everyone is involved, and there should be ample opportunities for short breaks for water and for catching their breath. If there is more than one adult/coach, the children should be divided into smaller groups, with at least one adult per group. At these young ages, children work hard and tire quickly. Allow them to have “active rests,” where they are not running but are trying to do something specific with the ball, often sitting or standing. Everyone should be occupied with something, even when resting. Keep the numbers from 1 v 1 to 3 v 3 and keep as many children actively involved with a ball as possible. Let them go to small goals with no goalkeepers. When possible, a size 3 soccer ball should be used.

■ GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING IN MATCHES

U.S. Soccer recommends that there be no organized matches at this age. Consistently set up mini games at practice for your kids to compete with and against each other, according to their age.

CONSIDER THIS: At these young ages, the primary goal is to make the player’s experience with soccer so enjoyable that when he or she has a choice of activities, he or she choose to play soccer on his or her own.

■ GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION THAT IS COMMUNICATED TO THE PLAYERS BY THE COACH

At these ages, the coach/parent should be positive and encouraging of each child. Specific soccer-related information should be limited to basic ideas of how to best keep the ball from running out of bounds too often. There should not be any discussions about positions or any other team concepts.



■ BEST QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE PLAYER

Patience, good humor, and a willingness to see the world through a child's eyes. Also, the ability to speak their language and accept that the children's play will not look at all like soccer.

■ NUMBER OF MATCHES PER CALENDAR YEAR

Children at these ages should not be playing any organized games. Playing with and against their teammates during practice times is sufficient and is to be encouraged.

■ BREAKS FROM ORGANIZED/MANDATORY SOCCER

Children at this age should be able to play when they want to play, and walk away when they are through.

■ TRAVEL

None.

■ STATE, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

None.

■ TOURNAMENTS, FESTIVALS, ETC.

None.

Appendix

#3

Beacon Soccer Club Helpful Links:

These links are meant to help guide you as you as you frame your coaching ideals for the upcoming season (you will also receive this manual as a PDF, so that the links can be opened easily). Check them out as per your needs.

Programs affiliated with Beacon Soccer Club:

Beacon Soccer Club - <https://www.beaconsoccerclub.com/>

Red Bulls Soccer Camps - <https://www.redbullsacademy.com/training/camp-programs/>

Coerver Coaching (NY) - <https://www.coervernewyork.com/>

Soccer.Com - <https://www.soccer.com/>

Coaching Websites (some have a fee and some don't):

Soccer Coach Weekly - <https://www.soccercoachweekly.net/>

The Coaching Manual - <https://www.thecoachingmanual.com/>

Smart Soccer Coaching - <https://www.smartsoccercoaching.com>

If you would like to further your understanding of youth soccer coaching, please check out the Grassroots Soccer Certification program offered by US Soccer. The program is a two-hour long online course.

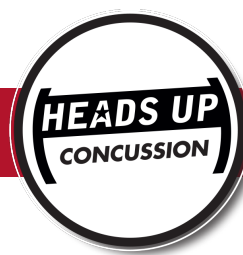
Grassroots Certification is offered in 7v7 coaching.

US Soccer Learning Center (create an account and click on Grassroots Soccer) - <https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach>

Appendix

#4

HEADS UP CONCUSSION ACTION PLAN



IF YOU SUSPECT THAT AN ATHLETE HAS A CONCUSSION, YOU SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury. An athlete should only return to play with permission from a health care professional, who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.

► **"IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON."**



CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp

HEADS UP

TO LEARN MORE GO TO [>> WWW.CDC.GOV/CONCUSSION](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion)

Content Source: CDC's Heads Up Program. Created through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).

Appendix

#5

****Sample Welcome Letter****

Dear Yankee Clipper Parents,

I trust that you are as excited as I am about the start of our soccer season. Our team is made up of pre-k and kindergarteners with various soccer experiences. Most players will be playing soccer for the first time. As we approach our first game, I want to share with you some goals, ideas and intentions for the upcoming year. These aspirations come from various sources, whether they are US Youth Soccer, Beacon Soccer Club, or my own views:

- **Play** – Soccer is known as the beautiful game and as such I will be encouraging skill and player development. Winning games should not be and, most likely, will not be a child's motivation. In fact, we won't even keep score during a game. Children want to be having fun. We will be focusing on skill-development, self-esteem, teamwork, good sportsmanship and fun!
- **Parent Responsibilities** – Come to the games in the spirit of fun and play. Meet other parents and coaches. Make sure your youngster comes ready to play – with proper equipment and attitude. Help them develop the skills and tactics for the game. Go to a pro or college game with your child or watch a game on television. Kick the ball in the backyard. Soccer is NOT an easy sport, so don't criticize a player for making mistakes – applaud good effort.
- **Sideline Ethics** – Let the players play, let the coach's coach, and let the referees judge. It is very important that the adults "model the model" of sportsmanlike behavior. So cheer for your children, cheer for the team, respect the coaches, and appreciate the work done by the volunteers who are making Beacon Soccer Club a wonderful experience for the players.
- **Perseverance** – Players will meet many obstacles on the soccer pitch. A missed call by a referee or getting knocked down by an opposing player will present challenges for our children to overcome. Perseverance is a skill that is learned through athletics and every obstacle presents an opportunity to persevere. So when challenges are presented to our players, I hope that you will join me and help them to persevere beyond those challenge.

I look forward to coaching your child and seeing you throughout the season. **Please plan to arrive 5 minutes before every game to allow players to be ready to being practice.**

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sample Spring Welcome Back Letter

Dear Yankee Clipper Parents,

I trust that you are ready for the snow to end and for Spring weather to upon us.

Last season, my coaching focused on individual player development. This season, I will have the players begin to explore the concepts of offense and defense. During each game, players will be assigned to be an offensive or defensive player and they will experience how to intuitively respond to that assignment. In soccer, all players (forwards, midfielders, backs...and even the goalie!) play both offense and defense. This will NOT be an exercise in positioning, but rather an opportunity for players to independently respond to the ongoing changes that happen during a soccer game.

"I don't believe skill was, or ever will be, the result of coaches. It is a result of a love affair between the child and the ball." - Manfred Schellscheidt (longtime coach with US Soccer)

As with last season, the goal for each player will be for them to be involved, dribble with the ball, attack the goal, experiment and be creative.

Below are a couple of updates and reminders for the approaching season:

- **Parent Responsibilities Reminder** – Come to the games in the spirit of fun and play. Meet other parents and coaches. Make sure your youngster comes ready to play – with proper equipment and attitude. Help them develop the skills and tactics for the game. Go to a pro or college game with your child or watch a game on television. Kick the ball in the backyard. Soccer is NOT an easy sport, so don't criticize a player for making mistakes – applaud good effort.
- **Sideline Ethics Reminder** - *Let the players play, let the coach's coach, and let the referees judge.* It is very important that the adults "model the model" of sportsmanlike behavior. So cheer for your children, cheer for the team, honor the referees, and appreciate the work done by the volunteers who are making Beacon Soccer Club a wonderful experience for the players.

I look forward to coaching your child and seeing you throughout the season. **Please plan to arrive 5 minutes before our Saturday soccer session to allow for pre-game preparations.**

Sample Emails To Families



Dear Yankee Clipper Parent,

This is a friendly reminder that the Sponsors Tournament will happen this Saturday - **please have our players at the field by 9am.**

After the tournament, the Beacon Soccer Club will host the annual BSC picnic. Parents from our team are being asked to bring brownies or cookies. These can be dropped off at the big food tent at the fields.

I look forward to seeing everyone on Saturday.



Dear Yankee Clipper Parents,

I hope that many of you plan to join our team for Sunday's West Point Game Day Experience. Watching college athletics is a great way for young athletes to begin understand some of the nuances of specific sports. Below are some details for th

- Plan to arrive around 5:30pm. I suggest you pack dinner and do a tailga parking lots (my family usually brings a pizza to the game). The concess stand is very expensive
- Gametime is at 6pm.
- The event is free.
- Our players will be able to hang around after the game for autographs frc team - this is a memorable experience, as every West Point player will lii and give our kids their autograph.
- Dress appropriate - it should be a brisk fall evening. Bring blankets.
- Bring siblings and family!
- **EVERY PERSON OVER THE AGE OF 16 MUST HAVE A VALID IDENTIFICATION (DRIVERS LICENSE, ETC.)**
- **GPS Directions - 51 Cullum Road, West Point NY**

Please let me know if you have any questions.



Dear **Barb's Butchery** Parents.

I hope that you had an enjoyable winter.

The upcoming soccer season is quickly approaching. We are slated to start the seas on Saturday, April 7th (pending on whether or not the fields are ready). Also, team pictures are schedules for April 5th and 6th. I do not know any details beyond that. Please pencil those dates into your calendar.

In the meantime, I suggest that you take a moment to find your child's uniform in preparation for our first game. Also, check their shoe size - it has been almost 5 mon and your child's cleats may no longer fit.

If you are planning to withdraw your child from Beacon Soccer please let know so we make proper roster accomodations.

If you have any questions, just let me know.



Dear Roundhouse Parents,

As your child progress through the Beacon Soccer Club, he/she will be given opportunities to play at a more competitive level. Tryouts for the Beacon Travel Teams will being next week. The closest age bracket for our division is the U9 (boys) team (girls may participate on the boys team). I believe that everyone has recieved an email about this, if you have not I have pasted it below.

If you have any questions let me know.