

Soccer Coaching 3 to 5 Year Olds

Being a soccer coach for this age group does not require soccer skills. All you need is a positive attitude, a willingness to be silly (even at the expense of embarrassing yourself), and of course a little patience. The goal for this age group is to introduce them to the basic concepts of soccer (dribbling, kicking, running, scoring goals!), help them improve their social skills, and most importantly...Have Fun!

Practices should be held once a week for 30 minutes. The day for practices should first be a day that you the coach can make without causing yourself constant inconveniences, second a day that most of the players (parents) can attend. There will always be a schedule conflict where “such and such day/time is not good for me.” You can ask the parents what days are best for them, but you need to pick the day. Everyone ultimately will adjust their schedules to make it work for them.

At your first team meeting/practice this is a good time to let the parents know a little about yourself and what they can do to help. Parents will usually help out if asked....they just need a little “push.” Let the parents know that their assistance would be greatly appreciated and that you will need their help. You will also need someone to be the “Team Mom” to help organize the snack schedule, team pictures, trophies, etc. Make sure you ask if someone is willing to do this for you.

Remember, for this age group most of the parents are new to this just like you/their kids.

Make sure the parents know what they need to bring to each practice/game:

- Size 3 soccer ball
- Cleats/athletic shoes
- Shin guards
- Water bottle

PRACTICES

This is probably where you said “I don’t know the first thing about soccer, how can I be the coach?” Well, if you know how run, kick a ball, have fun, and can show someone how to do these things.....then you can be a coach!

Practices for this age group is about improving social skills, improving coordination, learning the concepts of soccer, about having fun, and numerous other things which you will discover during your first season. These things are accomplished through games that are played that inadvertently teach them the skills they will need to play soccer.

Names:

On the first day of practice you should get all of the players to sit in a circle around you and have them tell you their names. At the second practice you will need to do this again so you can make sure you know their names. Make sure the other players are listening so they can remember them too. Next practice (or at the end of the second practice) you “try and remember” their names by miss-naming them (don’t look or be serious when you do this) and see if the other kids correct you. The kids generally get a kick out of this and they will soon know each others names quicker.

Rules:

On the first day of practice ask them some questions:

- Has anyone ever played soccer before?
- Does anyone know how to play soccer?
- Do you use your hands?
- How do you score points?
 - Do you throw the ball into the goal?

This gets them thinking and involved in what you are talking about.

Let them know that you only use your feet; that you kick the ball, and that you dribble the ball with your feet to get it from one end of the field to the other and that the object of the game is to score goals.

SHOW THEM HOW TO DO THIS!

One of the players can show everyone else too!

Warm-ups:

The warm-ups you and I remember (jumping jacks, wind sprints, etc) do not apply for this age group.

Get the players to warm-up with their ball.

- Toe-tops
 - Place the bottom of their foot on top of the ball and alternate feet doing this faster and faster.
- Tick-Tock
 - Place the ball between their feet and have them knock the ball back and forth between their feet.
**THEY WILL HAVE TROUBLE WITH THIS...IT'S OKAY.
LET THEM KNOW THAT IT IS HARD AND SHOW THEM
YOU HAVE TROUBLE TOO!**
- Run in place.
- Jump up and down and act silly.

The idea here is to get them going a little bit and get used to “getting ready” to practice. If you do the same warm-up exercise every week the players will actually start the warm-ups themselves when you call them over to start warming up.

Have them touch their toes and stretch up to the sky as far as they can. Stretching at this age is not recommended other than the token stretches above.

Remember, this age group has a short attention span. Have a back up plan in case the game/drill you have chosen is not working. They will love to just throw the ball in the air and try and catch it, or even try and “punt” the ball to see who can do it the farthest.

If all else fails a good game of Duck Duck Goose or Freeze Tag can keep them running and work on their motor/coordination/listening skills.

Most importantly...HAVE FUN!, if they see you having fun...they will too!

Some Sample Practice Plans are attached for your use.

Also, some helpful websites for games to play and instructional information are:

- <http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/index.htm>
- <http://www.soccerxpert.com/u6-u8-soccer-drills.aspx>
- <http://www.dprsports.com/drills.htm>
- <http://www.aysova.com/coaches.htm>
- http://www.insidesoccer.com/learn_it/coaches/drills_practices/858



PRACTICE PLAN

WEEK 1

<p>Activity #1 – Meet and Greet/Warmups <i>0-5 minutes</i></p>	
<p>Introduce yourself to the players. Ask the players their names and repeat it to them. Ask them if they have ever played before and talk about the game of soccer by asking questions: Do you score points by throwing the ball into the goal? Do you use your hands? Do we use our feet? (show them a kick). Do we run with the ball? (show them how to run with the ball “dribble”). Emphasize Soccer is played with the FEET. Warmup by doing toe-tops and pretend that the ball is a dog and that they are “petting their dog.” Be gentle with their dog because the dog (ball) is their friend. Let the players know that it is okay to go slow and it is important that the dog is petted by both feet.</p>	<p>Dribbling: Walk the Dog <i>5 minutes±</i></p> <p>The Coach will tell the players to walk their dog by dribbling slowly around the practice area. The coach will yell “Oh no, My dog got loose” and the players will kick their ball hard and chase it. But they need to be quick or the Dog Catcher (coaches) will get their dog. Once the players have their ball again the Coach will tell the players to “walk their dog”Repeat several times</p>
<p>Running: Races <i>3 minutes±</i></p>	<p>RUN to the Goal and Back</p>
<p>Players will Race from one end of the field to the other. Make sure you tell the players how fast they are and see if they can run faster and race again. Repeat at least three times.</p>	<p>Dribbling and Kicking: Race and Score <i>5 minutes±</i></p>
<p>Players will dribble from one end of the field to the other and kick (Shoot) the ball into the goal. Repeat at least three times. If they are having fun do it more.</p>	<p>Scrimmage: Even # of players each side (Pinnies not necessary week #1) <i>5 minutes±</i></p> <p>Explain to the Players some simple directions. Ask them which goal they are going to score in? Who is going to score? Which team is going to score first? Etc. Blow the whistle and let them get introduced to the game. It will be Chaotic...but just laugh with them and direct them, help them by kicking the ball some and stop to explain it again if necessary. MAKE SURE THEY HAVE FUN. This may be their first exposure to the game.</p>



PRACTICE PLAN

WEEK 2

<p>Activity #1 – Name Game/Warmups <i>0-5 minutes</i></p>	
<p>Ask the players their names (Tell them you forgot (you probably did) and repeat it to them. Talk about the game of soccer again by asking questions: Do you score points by throwing the ball into the goal? Do you use your hands? Do we use our feet? (Ask them if they remember how to kick and let them show you). Emphasize Soccer is played with the FEET. Re-emphasize the rules: #1 have fun, #2 No horseplay/rough housing.</p> <p>Warmup by doing toe-tops and pretend that the ball is a dog and that they are “petting their dog.” Be gentle with their dog because the dog (ball) is their friend. Let the players know that it is okay to go slow and it is important that the dog is petted by both feet.</p>	<p>How to Kick: <i>BattleShip</i> <i>5 minutes±</i> <i>Every two players need a ball and a mini cone with a ball.</i></p> <p>Demonstrate how to kick the ball and what part of the foot to use (Laces...NO TOES). Player will kick the ball (as shown by the coach) and try and knock the ball off of the cone (Sink the BattleShip). “Ready, Aim, FIRE” They get a point each time they knock the ball off.</p> <p>Let them know that they do not have to kick the ball hard. Focus on using the Laces and kicking it straight. Demonstrate to them that the Laces part of the foot is flat compared to your pointed toe and exaggerate the miss-direction of the kick if you use the toes.</p>
<p>Dribbling and stopping: <i>5 minutes±</i></p>	
<p>Dribbling and stopping: RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT <i>5 minutes±</i></p>	
<p>Players will dribble from one end of the field to the other when the Coach says “Green Light” and STOP their ball when the Coach says “Red Light”. Go slow the first time and challenge them to go faster each time. Repeat at least four times.</p>	<p>Scrimmage: <i>5 minutes±</i></p>

NOTE: Take a Water Break after each Activity.



PRACTICE PLAN

WEEK 3

<p>Activity #1 – Meet and Greet/Warmups <i>0-5 minutes</i></p>	
<p>Try and remember the players names but mix some of them up and see if the kids correct you. If not then fix it your self and make sure they listen to each others names. Re-emphasize the rules: #1 have fun, #2 No horseplay/rough housing. And how do we play Soccer?...With our FEET.</p> <p>Warmup by doing toe-tops and pretend that the ball is a dog and that they are "petting their dog." Be gentle with their dog because the dog (ball) is their friend. Let the players know that it is okay to go slow and it is important that the dog is petted by both feet.</p>	
<p>Awareness, Running, Dribbling, Scoring: Egg Hunt <i>5 minutes±</i></p>	
<p>Scatter the balls at one end of the field. Have the players line up along the end line of the opposite end. On "GO" they run and find their egg (ball) and dribble back and put it in the basket (score in the goal).</p>	
<p>Dribbling/Control: Red Light – Green Light <i>5 minutes±</i></p>	
<p>The Coach will tell the players that green means go and red means stop. Players must stop dribbling their balls when red is called. Object is to get the ball in the goal.Repeat several times</p>	
<p>Awareness/Dribbling: Wrong Way Game <i>5 minutes±</i></p>	
<p>Have the players line up along the end line of one end of the field. On "GO" they dribble to the other end to try and score...but the coach at the other end starts yelling "Turn Around, You're going the wrong way!" and the players turn around and go the other way...but when they start getting close you yell the same thing and they turn around and go the other way. After about four times let them score. Repeat one more time.</p>	
<p>Scrimmage: <i>5 minutes±</i></p>	

NOTE: Take a Water Break after each Activity.



PRACTICE PLAN

WEEK 4

<p>Warmups 0-5 minutes</p>	
<p>Get the Players to say each other's names. Warmup by doing toe-tops and pretend that the ball is a dog and that they are "petting their dog." Be gentle with their dog because the dog (ball) is their friend. Let the players know that it is okay to go slow and it is important that the dog is petted by both feet. Big Stretches.....</p>	
<p>Running and kicking; "Catch the Giant" 5 minutes±</p>	
<p>See if you can get one of the older brothers or sisters to help out by being the "Giant." Tell all of the players that they must catch the Giant. This will get the kids used to running and dribbling and constantly changing directions with the ball <WATER BREAK></p>	
<p>Kicking/Accuracy: "Busy Bees": 5 minutes±</p>	
<p>Have the players "BUZZ" around like a bunch of bees. Make sure you pretend to hear the bees and begin saying that you don't like bees. Have one of the Assistant coaches kick you with the ball and you fall down and yell "Ouch the bee stung me!" Be very dramatic and the kids will begin stinging you with their ball make sure you move around and stop frequently. They really love this game. <WATER BREAK></p>	
<p>Dribbling/Awareness: "Colors" 5 minutes±</p>	
<p>Players will dribble around inside an area bounded by different colored cones/shirts/etc. (Try and have at least three different colors like red, orange, yellow, green, etc) and yell out a color and have the players dribble to the color. Make sure you go to the wrong color the first time and say that you win (Be silly about it). The kids will tell you that you are wrong and laugh at you. Repeat this numerous times and tell them that they get a point if they are the first ones to the color they are supposed to be going to . <WATER BREAK></p>	
<p>Scrimmage: 5 minutes±</p>	

NOTE: Take a Water Break after each Activity.



PRACTICE PLAN

WEEK 5

<p>Activity #1 –Warmups <i>0-5 minutes</i></p> <p>Warmup by doing toe-tops and pretend that the ball is a dog and that they are “petting their dog.” Be gentle with their dog because the dog (ball) is their friend. Let the players know that it is okay to go slow and it is important that the dog is petted by both feet. Now hop up and down like a kangaroo/monkey/Rhinoceros.....</p>	
<p>Awareness/dribbling: Lost Dogs <i>5-7 minutes±</i> <i>This helps with using “other peoples” balls</i></p> <p>Scatter the balls at one end of the field. Have the players line up along the end line of the opposite end. On “GO” they run and find a lost dog (ball), but not their dog and dribble back and find the dogs owner. And Pass the ball to the owner. BUT watch out for the Dog Catchers!</p>	
<p>Dribbling/Kicking: Marbles <i>5-7 minutes±</i></p> <p>Each Team will try and kick their ball into the Larger ball such that the large ball is knocked into the goal. They cannot kick the large ball with their feet. If they do the ball is put back to start. Coaches will need to retrieve balls from the net if they are accidentally kicked in. This will teach controlling their kicks with direction and force and help with team work....Repeat several times</p>	
<p>Kicking: <i>5 minutes±</i></p> <p>Have the players line up opposite each other and kick the ball to the other player. Show them the proper technique of kicking (using the laces/inside of foot, etc.) and show them how to stop the ball (bottom of foot, inside of foot).</p>	
<p>Scrimmage: <i>5 minutes±</i></p>	