



Kasson-Mantorville
Youth Soccer Association

COACHES HANDBOOK



By Leo Barbosa, Palestra Soccer Academy

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2. TECHNICAL THEMES

2.1 Dribbling

Dribbling is one of the skills that is learned at an early age, these dribbling coaching points should be etched into your young soccer players minds.

Coaching Points:

- Keep the ball close to body when in traffic.
- Push the ball into space and run when in open space.
- Don't Panic! Keep body under control at all times when dribbling.
- Keep head up, eyes scanning the field, and be aware of surroundings.
- Good balance with knees slightly bent. Knees bent will help with change of speed, change of direction, change of pace, and balance.
- Players should be able to change direction quickly and effectively.
- Be able to perform moves and body feints.
- Change of pace.
- Protect the ball. Keep body between ball and opponent in order to properly shield and protect the ball.
- Use your arms. Dribblers should use their arms for balance as well as protecting their rightful space to "hold off" defenders.

2.2 Passing

Passing accurately and quickly requires practice. There are lots of ways to pass the ball – with the outside of the foot, in the air, driven along the ground, even backwards using the heel – but the easiest and most accurate, whether straight to a teammate or into space for them to run onto, is the side-foot pass.

Coaching Points:

- Use the inside of the foot – that's the area from the base of the big toe to the central area of the heel, under the ankle bone.

- Kick foot at right angles to the ball.
- Belly button should be facing the player receiving the pass.
- Non-kicking foot alongside the ball.
- Knee and ankle joints held firm.
- Body over the ball.
- Head steady, eyes on the ball.
- Use the arms to keep balanced.
- Hit through the ball's horizontal midline – that way it will keep low.
- Kicking foot follows through towards the target.

But getting the technique right isn't the end of the story – there are two other skills players should work on perfecting: timing and weight.

1. Timing tips

Get this wrong, for example, pass too early or too late, and the momentum of a move can stall. For example, a forward pass before a striker is ready to make their run could run harmlessly out of play, while delaying a pass too long can give defenders time to block off space and the passing angle, or mean your striker strays offside.

2. The 'weight' or power of a pass

Similarly, get the weight wrong, for instance, too heavy or too light, and that can also mean the end of an attack. Too heavy and a teammate could have trouble controlling the ball, while too light and the ball might not have the pace to reach the teammate, allowing a defender to intercept it.

A well "weighted" pass will allow a teammate to control the ball with a minimum of effort, giving them time and space.

2.3 Receiving

Coaching Points:

Vision = 3 Looks: 1) when you might get ball, 2) when you know you'll get it; 3) when it's on the way

Prep body with hips facing direction you want to play when possible

Raise bended knee so foot meets ball at or just above equator

Usually self-pass into a surrounding space ("Keep the ball awake"), not kill it dead where defender expects it and where it takes more time to get it moving again.

First-touch pass possible if body is in balance and hips facing target

Inside of foot:

- Good for providing big safe surface
- Toe out and slightly up or neutral
- Relax lower leg/ankle/foot muscles ("Pillow feet") for close control
- Firmer ankle to push ball into bigger space
- Angle foot to deflect ball in desired direction
- Body weight slightly forward to keep ball on ground and get moving on first touch

Outside of foot:

- Good for quickness (receiving ball on the run), deception, and/or shielding ability
- Toe in and slightly down or neutral
- Use pace on ball to deflect ball into desired space
- Add deception with body or foot feint away from desired direction
- If under pressure, keep body "sideways-on" between ball and defender for better vision and longer distance for defender to reach ball If under pressure, can self-pass backwards to possibly turn and face ("If you can't seal her, see her")

Turning (receiving with back to goal):

- ABC's: Angle of support, Body shape, Check shoulder
- If space, let ball run across half-turned body to far foot
- If under pressure, curl foot around ball (Draw a "C") as it arrives and pivot on plant foot to
- pull it back into space and face defender
- If defender is tight, can "roll" her by deflecting ball into space behind and spinning into it, shielding her from ball as you spin

Aerial receiving:

- Get body in line with flight
- Relax receiving body part muscle ("make a pillow, not a brick wall")
- Cushion ball as it makes contact, e.g. bend knees and lean back for chest receive
- Turn body or body part to direct ball into best space, e.g. away from pressure

2.4 Shooting

Shooting uses the same technical elements as passing, with the important difference being that the goal is to pass the ball beyond the goalkeeper.

Coaching Points:

- The player should look up to see the position of the goalkeeper, choosing a side to shoot the ball.
- Approach the ball.
- Plant the support foot beside or slightly ahead of the ball, which helps to keep the shot low.
- Keep the head steady and eyes on the ball.
- Make proper contact with the ball.
 - Ankle of kicking foot is locked and the toe is pointed down if shooting with instep.
 - Hips and knee of kicking foot are pointed in the direction of the shot.

- Follow through to keep the ball low (weight going forward, landing on the kicking foot).

2.6 1v1 Attacking

The role of the first attacker is PENETRATION. This may be accomplished by shooting, passing or dribbling.

Coaching Points:

Use body to fake defender (Ginga)

Quick change of direction if defender blocks a goal

Keep ball close to feet

Use different parts of the foot to move ball

Head up for awareness

Speed up to exploit space and attack gate.

Use body to protect the ball

Arm out to feel for defender

2.7 1v1 Defending

The role of the first defender is PRESSURE. We should look at speed of approach, position on approach and then patience. Effectively we want to influence the ball by getting the attacker to put their head down and make them predictable by reducing their options.

Coaching Points:

- Close down space and be 1-2 steps away from the attacker. If you are too far away that gives them time to get their head up and look around. Get close to force their head down.

- Jockey, be patient and don't dive in. The best attackers want you to dive in on them because they will just touch it around you and go. So we want to jockey them.
- Force the attacker onto their weak foot or weaker zone (make it predictable)
- Be on your toes! Don't be back on your heels.
- Keep your feet moving, don't stand like a statue.
- Keep your eye on the ball! Do not look at the attackers feet, hips or shoulders. Focus on the ball.
- Win the ball with confidence when the time is right. When you do step in get your body behind you. Don't just reach and lunge for the ball with your foot.

2. TACTICAL THEMES

2.7 Formations

- U8 - 4v4 (None)
- U10 - 7v7 (1-3-2-1)
- U12 - 9v9 (1-3-2-3)
- U13+ - 11v11 (1-4-3-3)

2.7 Game Understanding

- Read and understand the game and make autonomous decisions
- Applies knowledge of the details and implications of the cues
- Reads and analyzes situations regarding A/D/T in a split second and/or under pressure, thinks fast
- Aligns own actions with the other players, positions (understands relationships/partnerships)
- Is the best player at their position based on the style of play of the team
- Recognizes the transition moment as an opportunity and a threat
- Manages the game when it comes to the pace of the game and/or the moment in the game

Coaching Points:

Attacking

- Spread out
- Mobility
- Create 3v2, 2v1, 1v1,
- Vary the types of runs try to get behind defenders

Transition - Attacking to Defending

- Pressure the ball immediately after losing it, using player closest to the situation
- Get organized and balanced as quickly as possible; make it compact
- Delay the opponent's' attack when outnumbered

Defending

- Make it Compact / Stay compact
- Press the player with the ball
- Always pressure in the identified situations: they have a free kick, they play short - we always pressure the ball.
- Always try to outnumber the opponent
- Cover and Delay

Transition - Defending to Attacking

- Pass or dribble forward
- create passing lines
- give support
- keep the ball when you can't play forward

4.0 PRE-K THROUGH 2ND GRADE

A 6 year old is eager, active and likes to be on the go. Although keen to act independently, a 6 year old needs parental approval, understanding, praise and encouragement. Pushing too hard or expecting too much can result in the child becoming tense and nervous. An 8 year old is able to accept moderate responsibilities. Peer groups become important and the child will identify with other youngsters of the same sex and with similar interests and activities.

2.1 Development Focus

- Movement skills and technical development.
- Small sided games and teamwork activities are introduced.
- Speed training commences for Girls (6-8 years) & Boys (7-9 years)

2.3 How To Plan My Sessions

- 3-4 activities per session related to 1 or 2 themes (see coaching themes). Each activity to last 10-15 minutes and repeat at least a couple of times.
- NSCAA recommends coaches introduce no more than 2 new activities per session. 1 new activity per session is ideal.
- 85% of time should be dedicated to individual development with every player having a ball for the vast majority of the session.
- Plan to introduce and reinforce 1-2 key coaching points a session. Focus on skill, working in pairs and basic rules of the game.

3.3 Fun Games

GAME	RELATED THEME	RESOURCE
Freeze Tag	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/w3RaGq66ebM
Hand Tag	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/MPQCU_f9MVI

Knee Tag	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/z_RzkSQEXiY
Blob	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/OS1i1mBLp0U
Knockout	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/7VH2H_ZX5Zc
Red Light, Green Light	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/5TijmIGxTG4
Bunny Hop Tag	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/wONwB0byQ0s
Shadow Dribbling	Ball Control	https://youtu.be/nG6gdwUoe_Y
Colored Passing	Passing	https://youtu.be/a0V-nrjlimk
Numbered Passing	Passing	https://youtu.be/ggyeX8N2ZjE
Pac Man	Passing	https://youtu.be/P9AJNANVrRA
Static Passing	Passing	https://youtu.be/-hRbhncyu4k

* *Youtube - Soccer interactive*

4.0 3RD THROUGH 6TH GRADES

This is the beginning of pre-adolescence. Children begin to ‘spread out’ as their rate of development accelerates. Girls in particular start to physically mature quicker than boys and this growth surge can lead to awkward performance, particularly on tasks requiring fine motor movements. As friendships are developing and players are becoming more reliant on their peers it is important for team selection to be handled sensitively. The reason why so many athletes plateau during the later stages of their careers is primarily because of an overemphasis on competition instead of training during this important period in their development.

2.1 Development Focus

- This is a crucial time for developing advanced competency in basic techniques and this platform allows for the introduction of more advanced skills.
- Some basic tactical appreciation can also be introduced.

2.3 How To Plan My Sessions

- Start planning the session from the final stage - Game
- 5 W's of soccer problems:
 - What needs to improve?
 - Who is involved?
 - Where on the field do these players operate?
 - When do breakdowns occur?
 - Why do breakdowns occur?
- 4 activities per session related to 5 W's. Each activity to last 15-25 minute
- Plan to introduce and reinforce 2-3 key coaching points a session.

2.4 Structure of The Session

- Dynamic warm up
- Stage 1 - Technical warm-up (what)
- Stage 2 - Organizational Phase (what and who)
- Stage 3 - Learning Phase (what, who, when and where)
- Stage 4 - Implementation Phase - Game (5 W's)

1.0 THE COACHES' TOOL KIT

6.1 Coach the Individual within the Flow of the game.

- Individual players can be given information while the game is moving.
- Information should not be given when the player is in possession of the ball.

6.2 Coach the Group within the Flow of the game.

- Group coaching should seek to address strategic objectives, such as how to attack and defend as a team.
- Group coaching may also address the overall rhythm of attacking play and the success or failure to defend relative to the cues coming from the game.
- Essentially, group coaching should seek to address the positioning and organization (balance) of one or more lines.

6.3 Natural Stoppages.

- Information can be exchanged between coach and player(s) when the ball is not active.
- Natural stoppages include balls out of bounds, injuries, goals, fouls, and the end of time periods.
- The length of any coach-player exchanges during a natural stoppage should be proportional to the duration of the time-out.

5. Freeze Method.

- Freezing play should be the last option in the coaches' arsenal.
- The use of the freeze method is most relevant when the players are positionally organized and likely to face the same game situation again.
- The freeze method is least relevant for technical mistakes.
- In the communication during a freeze, it is more important that the players to begin to understand the tactical cues (player-centered approach of a situation that the absolute solutions (coach-centered approach).

1.0 OVER COACHING

Is over-coaching a problem? Does it happen frequently? I see this as a problem. Too often, coaches (and parents) feel an undue pressure to win games and therefore over-coach the players. As a result, at game time, and during practice, there is a constant barrage of comments directed at the player, making it impossible for the players to enjoy themselves and express themselves on the field.

What are the effects on players and coaches of over-coaching, both long and short term? Mostly, the players end up quitting. They do not want to subject themselves to this "hostile" environment. They rebel against the pressures and hyper supervision of the adults. If they do hang on, as they get older, they lack creativity in their play, or the ability to solve the games' problems by themselves. Thus, their development is retarded and they are no longer able to meet the demands of the game at the next level.