

## **Season Structure and Checklist**

In accordance with the JKYSC Player Development Philosophy and US Youth Soccer our approach to coaching and the season structure will be as follows.

For players in the U7 & U8 age brackets we will teach several techniques:

- 1. Passing**
- 2. Dribbling**
- 3. Finishing**
- 4. Receiving**
- 5. Introduction to Heading (optional)**

For players in the U7 & U8 age bracket we will teach 2 tactical aspects:

- 1. Width and Depth**
- 2. Transition**

## **Characteristics of U7 & U8 Soccer Player**

### **Psychomotor Development**

1. Skeletal system is still growing: growth plates are near joints, thus injuries to those areas deserve special consideration
2. Cardiovascular system is less efficient than adults: a child's heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover
3. Temperature regulation system is less efficient than an adult's; children elevate their core temperature more quickly with activity And take longer than adult's to cool down
4. There is a perceivable improvement in pace and conditioning from U6-U8, however the immaturity of a U8's physical ability is obvious

### **Cognitive Development**

1. Concrete operational stage of cognitive development (Piaget)
2. Limited ability to attend to more than one task at a time; the simple task of controlling the ball demands most of the attention capacity, there by leaving little or no capacity for making tactical decisions

3. Concept of time and space relationship is just beginning to develop and will be limited by ability to attend to multiple tasks
4. Limited experience with personal evaluation: effort is synonymous with performance, "if I tried hard then I performed well", regardless of the actual performance
5. Beginning to categorize information; some relationships that "do" exist are not recognized and some relationships that "do not" exist are assumed

### **Psychosocial Development**

1. Self-concept and body image are beginning to develop; very fragile
2. Great need for approval from adults such as parents, teachers and coaches; like to show individual skills
3. Easily bruised psychologically by both peers and adults
4. Like to play soccer because it is fun, intrinsically motivated
5. Their universe is expanded to the neighborhood
6. True playmates emerge with the inclination towards small group activities
7. Team identity is limited; "I play on coach Steve's team" or "I play on the Tigers", club and league concepts are nonexistent
8. There is a desire for social acceptance, they want everyone to like them
9. The most influential person is most likely their father or significant parent

### Games:

#### 1. Get Outta of here:

**Objectives:** Improve dribbling, shielding, and tackling skills; improve fitness

**Setup:** Using markers, outline a rectangular area about 20 by 30 yards. All players, each with a ball, station within the playing area.

**Procedure:** Players begin by dribbling among themselves randomly. On a signal from the coach it becomes "All vs. All." Each player attempts to steal balls from other players and kick them out of the area while protecting his or her own ball. A player whose ball is kicked out of the area is eliminated. The game continues until only one player remains in possession of his or her ball. Repeat the game several times.

**Scoring:** None

**Practice Tips:** Vary the size of the area depending upon the number of players. The space should be crowded so that players must execute dribbling and feinting skills in close proximity to teammates. Players should use either the block or the poke tackle because of the crowded conditions. Players who are eliminated should retrieve their ball and practice ball juggling outside of the playing area until the next game.

## 2. Speed Dribble:

**Objectives:** Improve dribbling speed and endurance

**Setup:** Use one sideline of a regulation field as the starting line and the opposite sideline as the halfway line. If a regulation field is not available, place markers to designate starting and halfway line about 60 yards apart. All players, each with a ball, position an equal distance apart on the starting line.

**Procedure:** On the coach's command "Go," one member of each pair dribbles to the halfway line at top speed, turns, dribbles back to the starting line, and tags his or her partner who immediately dribbles the circuit at top speed. Run a minimum of five races with a short rest period between.

**Scoring:** The pair dribbling both balls to the starting lines first wins the race.

**Practice tips:** Reduce the space between markers, increase the number of markers, or do both to require more precise ball control for advanced players.

## 3. Dribble and score:

**Objectives:** Improve dribbling speed and develop endurance

**Setup:** Play on a regulation field with goals. All players, each with a ball, station in the center circle. Name each team; for example, "Strikers" and "Kickers." Colored scrimmage vests differentiate teams. There are no goalkeepers.

**Procedure:** Each team defends a goal and can score in the opponent's goal. To begin all players dribble in the center circle. After 30 to 40 seconds, the coach shouts a team name; for example, Strikers. At that signal the Strikers leave the circle to dribble at top speed towards the Kicker's goal. The Kickers leave their balls to give chase, trying to catch the dribblers and steal their balls before they can shoot to score. All shots must be taken from within center circle. Repeat the game at least six times, teams alternating as attackers and defenders.

**Scoring:** Attacking team gets 1 point for each goal; defending team gets 1 point for each ball stolen and dribbled back to the center circle; team scoring the most points wins.

**Practice Tips:** Adjust the field to the age and abilities of players; for younger players use a three-quarter-length field. Require defending players to recover to a position goalside of their opponent before challenging their opponent for the ball. Prohibit slide tackles initiated from behind the dribbler.

#### 4. 4 vs. 4 with 4 neutral Bumper players:

**Objective:** Develop dribbling skills and group tactics used to maintain possession from and penetrate the opponent.

**Setup:** Using markers, create a rectangle 30 by 30 yards. Make two areas. Station two teams within one area with different colored vests and one team outside the area. Place flags or cone at each end line one yard apart for goals. One team has the ball.

**Procedure:** 4 vs. 4 with 4 neutral players. Team with the ball maintains possession to try to dribble to end line to score. They can use neutral players who pass to the possession team. If the defending team wins the ball, they try to dribble to the other end line, using the outside players. Neutral players rotate in to play the winning team.

**Scoring:** Team gets one point for dribbling to end line, two points if a neutral player was used. Team with most point as end of session wins.

**Practice tips:** Emphasize shielding, shooting and position of attackers.