

Part 1

Welcome to County West Soccer!

We are going to try and make it FUN and have them LEARN a little about soccer. In order to do that, we need to all stay positive. Please do not EVER get upset with bad plays by the kids. They will all do it at some point. We WILL probably have goals scored on our own goal by our own players. Almost guaranteed we will miss wide open goals. Our players will get beat on the field by the other team when they are dribbling. No big deal! Please stay positive.

Remember – The Number #1 reason kids quit soccer (or any sport) – **The Ride Home**

The Number 2 reason is **the Coach**

Cheer them on no matter what happens. Try to focus on cheering “Good defense”, and “Good pass”. We will try to encourage them to play as a team, vs. trying to dribble through the entire team and score.

Quick info on soccer for the new players/parents

We are always doing one of two things on the field. Everyone needs to be either ATTACKING or DEFENDING. We are attacking if we have the ball, regardless of where it is on the field. For example, if we have a goal kick, we are attacking because we have the ball even though it is at our end of the field. If the other team has the ball, we are defending.

ATTACKING – when we are attacking, here are our team’s priorities:

SCORE – if we are close enough and can score – SCORE. Make sure we have a clear and good shot though. We should not try to ‘score’ through defenders, even though sometimes it works. 😊

PENETRATE/MOVE FORWARD – move the ball down the field by dribbling or passing toward the other team’s goal in order to score.

CONTROL – “Keep Away” - We cannot always score or penetrate, but we need to make sure we continue to possess (attack) the ball. This means moving the ball by dribbling or passing either sideways or backwards to keep the other team from getting the ball, and/or setting up a good score or penetration.

DEFENDING – when we are defending, we are trying to stop the other team from scoring and get the ball from them. Here are our team’s priorities when defending:

PRESSURE – or get the ball. One person, and only one person, usually the closest person attacks the person with the ball. Try to get the ball from them. When applying pressure, try to force them to one side or the other, usually toward the sideline. It is harder to score and pass from the sideline. If in the middle of the field, force them toward our other defenders, or in a last ditch effort, force them to the side with their weaker foot shooting (force a right footed person to have to shoot with their left foot).

COVER or BACK UP – If you are not applying pressure, cover space on the field or a person. Space is an area that the ball might be going to next or where the other team can score from. For example – the goalie covers the space in front of our goal. When the ball is at our end of the field, the forwards cover the space ‘behind’ the ball to prevent drop passes. The most important space to cover is the space behind the person who is applying PRESSURE. The ball will very likely come out of the PRESSURE, and the person covering that space will very likely get the ball. They are backing up the ‘pressure’.

GO TO GOAL or RECOVER – If a person applying PRESSURE gets beat (they often will), go straight toward our goal. This is the quickest way to get into a position to stop them from scoring. From that position, you can reapply pressure or cover space/person.

PRACTICES – There are several fundamental skills in soccer, and we will try to focus or tailor each practice to work on them, except one (Heading).

Practice structure

Target: 500-800 touches/practice

10 min warm up

Individual drills (Circuit format – 3-4 circuits)

Small sided drills (Circuit format 2-3 circuits)

Scrimmage – 20+ minutes.

DRIBBLING – dribbling is used to either penetrate or control the ball. We will work on using all sides of the feet and body. Inside foot, outside of the foot, top of the foot, and bottom of the foot. We will also try to show some move beyond the basic dribble forward with the inside of the foot. We will stress Pull Backs (rolling the ball back with the bottom of the foot) vs running around the ball to go in the other direction.

RECEIVING / TRAPPING – Receiving is getting the ball from a pass or the other team, and positioning the ball for ‘your next move’, whether that is a shot on goal, pass to another teammate, or dribbling down the field. It takes awareness of where you are on the field, where your opponents are, and where your teammates are on the field.

PASSING – passing the ball to your teammates to either penetrate or control the ball. There are several types of passes that we will work on.

SHOOTING or SCORING – Passing and scoring use different techniques. We will work on ‘how to shoot’, ‘when to shoot’, and ‘where to shoot’ (NOT at the goalie 😊).

HEADING – We will NOT work on heading due to the risk of concussions in this age group. Heading is not practiced until the U-15 age group. We will do a few games to get them heading properly.

ATTACKING – What do we do when we have the ball and try to get us to score. Where we should be on the field when attacking and what we should do and when. Score, Penetrate, or Control.

DEFENDING – Stop the other team from scoring and get the ball from them. Either apply Pressure, Cover/Back up, or Go to Goal/Recover.

GOALTENDING – Goal tending is focusing on one position – the Goalie. Where to stand in the goal, how to stop the ball, etc.

Referees - The referees are teenagers from our neighborhoods. They are our family, friends, & neighbor’s kids. Most of them are not ‘certified’ referees, although some are (they usually ref in the U-12, U-15 games). All of them have played soccer, and know the rules fairly well. With that being said, they will make mistakes, and make occasional bad calls. Please don’t get upset over the bad calls. They are just teenagers trying to make the right call.

Some ‘misinterpreted’ calls that the refs usually call correctly.

Handball – Not every handball is a handball. The ball must change momentum for it to be a handball.

Fouls – **Soccer is a contact sport.** Using your body to move someone out of the way is a part of soccer. Extending your arm out is a foul.

Tripping – If the foot hits the ball first, then trips the person – it is not a tripping foul. If the foot misses the ball, but then trips the person – it is a foul.

Offsides – When the person is behind the second to last player (one is usually the goalie) WHEN THE BALL is played (not when they get to the ball).

DEFINITIONS – some are basic, but some are not.

We NEVER 'kick the ball' in soccer. "Kick the Ball" tells young players to just kick the ball down the field with no rhyme or reason, and often results in the other team getting the ball. So **please do not cheer them on to 'kick the ball'**. We do one of the following:

SHOOT – kick the ball at the goal to try and score

FINISH – kick the ball at the goal to try and score.

CLEAR – kick the ball out from the front of our goal to prevent their team from getting a shot. Usually toward the sideline or up to midfield. We are trying to get the ball out of the 'danger zone'.

PASS – kick the ball to a teammate to either penetrate or control the ball.

CENTER – kick the ball to the center of the field. This is usually done on the other team's side of the field to either set up a shot on goal or to get the ball to space.

CROSS – Passing across the field, usually forward and often in the air.

SWITCH – Crossing the ball to gain access to space on the other side of the field so as to move the play forward with less defense. This might occur with 2-3 quick passes that crosses the ball across the field.

DROP or TRAIL – A pass directly behind when a player is directly behind the ball carrier and often when there are opponents ahead of the ball carrier.

SEND IT – A pass ahead of our players into space toward the opponent's goal or side of the field. Usually a forward would run up to the ball before a defender can get to it. Often occurs off of a drop pass or a thru pass.

THRU or SPLIT – a pass between defenders.

Other definitions

SPACE – Field without players or the ball. Open territory. When attacking, we try to move the ball into space in order to penetrate the opponent's defense. We cover space (or players) on defense to prevent the opponent from penetrating.

NEAR POST – the goal post closest to the ball.

FAR POST – the goal post that is away from the ball.

TIME – No one from the other team is near the person with the ball. They can take their time (not too much time) to settle the ball, look up, and dribble, pass or shoot.

CONTAIN – Keeping the opposing player and play in front of you and away from the intended areas. Usually away from the front of our goal or on the other team's side of the field.

DOWN THE LINE – a throw (from a throw in) or pass the ball down the side line to our player or space. Usually accompanied by a 'run' by our team down toward their goal.

I GOT BALL or I GOT IT – Tells other teammates you are going to defend the ball carrier or getting the ball. You should be the one applying Pressure or getting the ball.

LEAVE IT – Tells you teammate that you will be getting the ball.

ON YOU – An opposing player is approaching.

ON YOU HARD – the opposing player is running at the ball carrier quickly and is close.

1 ON – There is one player ON YOU.

SHAPE – The formation that the team is playing on the field.

GET INTO POSITION – Play your position. Usually telling the team or player that they are out of position, bunching up, and over-pursuing the ball. They are losing their SHAPE.

SPREAD OUT – Tells the team that they are bunching up around the ball. When defending, they need to spread out and cover more space or players. When attacking, get to space to receive a pass.

WALL or MAKE A WALL – means to gather into a straight formation 10 yards from the ball in the case of an opposing free kick. Usually 2-4 players stand together so as to block the shot.

CARRY – Plenty of space in front of our player. Dribble the ball down the field to penetrate.

Part 2

These are the **Basic Rules**

- **Player Safety** is paramount.
- **Make it FUN !**
- Have them learn and get better.
 - Learn Respect
 - Learn Sportsmanship
 - Learn Soccer

This is a recreation league, and the enjoyment of the kids is crucial for its success. With that being said, your players are the future high school stars so let's start their soccer life off on the right track. That starts all the way down in U-6 and continues all the way through high school, college and possibly beyond.

We want them to love the game.

When they love the game, they will want to get better at the game.

When they get better at the game, they love the game more!

The Practice

Practices are where kids get better at soccer! They don't get better during games.

Ideally, soccer practices should be designed to work on one of the skills throughout the entire practice. This often becomes difficult at the beginning of CWSA due to the limited number of practices before the first games, but the kids will develop their skills quicker as soon as practices become tailored toward specific skills.

The skills that practices should be tailored toward are:

1. **Dribbling** - Footwork and handling the ball individually is the foundation of soccer. Players need to become proficient in this skill before they will likely become good at any other skills. This skill should be practiced the most often. It is not just dribbling with the inside of their feet, but all parts of their feet and body.
2. **Trapping / Receiving** – With the feet, legs, chest, etc. This is a fundamental skill for Passing and often Shooting. Many times, players will pass to their teammates, but they are not skilled enough to receive the pass. This leads to less passing and shooting in games due to the number of turnovers and loss of possession.
3. **Passing** – To move the ball to another player with purpose. This can be done with the players feet, legs, chest, or head (in older age brackets).
4. **Shooting** – Should be worked into drills every practice (although it might not be a 'focus' of the practice).
5. **Goaltending** – Often done one on one, and sometimes not a part of the recreation soccer practice. There are games that allows many players to practice goalie. NOTE: Goaltending skills should be taught before anyone is allowed to be a goalie to prevent injuries. It can be a dangerous positions with the older age groups.
6. **Attacking** – Working as an individual or as a unit to attack the goal. When to Shoot, When to Pass, When to Dribble!
7. **Defending** – Working as an individual or as a unit to defend the goal.
8. **Heading** – Can ONLY be practiced in U-12 and U-15. Is only allowed in the game during U-15.

The Practice Plan

	Drill Size	Touches	1 Hr Practice	1.5 Hr Practice
Warm Up – Footwork	Individual	300+	5-10 Min	5-10 Min
Small Sided Circuit – Quick/Tight	Individual -> 1v1 2-4 Circuits	300+	10-15 min	15-20 min (3 circuits)
Large Sided Circuit – 3-4 players	Small Team 1-2 Circuits 2v2 -> 4v4	100	10-15 min (15-20 min (2 circuits)
Scrimmage	Game Size	50	20 min	30 min
Cool Down / Game	Various	50	5-10 min	5-10 min

Warm Up – Footwork

Footwork is a fundamental skill that all soccer players, at all ages need to learn, develop and continue to improve their entire skill set. Their ability to control how they 'touch' the ball with their feet (and ALL parts of their feet), will directly lead into how well they develop other skills. The number of touches is extremely high. **It all starts with footwork!**

Small Sided Circuit – Quick/Tight

For small circuits, you can set up several drills simultaneously depending on how much help you have. Generally, one coach or asst. coach/parent per circuit. Multiple parents per circuit works well. For the small sided circuits, it is generally 1 ball per player circuits that increase the number of touches and develops their skills independently. There are also 1v1 drills that can be part of the circuit to work on attacking/defending skills. The number of touches is very high. Pace is fast.

Large Sided Circuit

The large sided circuit starts to transition from individual skills to team skills. 2v2 or 3v3 are good types of drills that emphasize the skill that is being worked on that night. It should build on the Small Sided Circuits – larger versions of the Small Sided Circuits that were done earlier.

Scrimmage

This is a good time to work on rules, goal kicks, corner kicks, kick offs, etc. The kids love scrimmages (and therefore should be done every practice), but realistically it is when they develop their skills the least.

Cool Down / Game

Fun games. Easy drills. Whole team drills. Etc. Try to have them be somewhat instructional.

Online Support

There are thousands of drills and exercises that you can find online to use in your practices. EPIC Soccer Training provides outstanding 5 min. instructional videos for players. There are many, many more videos, both instructional and entertaining that would be worth your while to send out links with weekly emails to the parents and players to watch.

www.soccerxpert.com

<https://www.youtube.com/user/EpicSoccerTraining>

U-6

Expectations/Characteristics

- For U-6, it is NOT a soccer game. They are playing! Think recess.
- Short attention span
- Psychologically EASILY bruised. Use positive motivation instead of negative criticism.
- Most are individually oriented (Me! Mine! My!)
- They WILL NOT PASS, don't expect them to. When it happens, it is usually an accident.
- Most will not know, nor care what the score of the game is. ALL the parents will! Remember, it's about the kids! Everyone wins, and they all played great.
- The most exciting part of any game will be the butterfly or frog on the field.
- Little or no concern for team activities.
- Boys and Girls will have similar development and skills.
- NO SENSE OF PACE! Everything is full speed, flat out, until they run out of energy, get bored, or see a butterfly.
- The "Comet Effect" prevails during games.

PRACTICES

The practices should start with 5 min of footwork. Taps, Tic-Tocks, Pull Backs.

Maybe 5-10 min of dribbling drills. Dribbling through cones, turning, etc.

Then **play games** for the rest of the practice. Similar format as the Practice Plan. Initial games are 1 ball per person games. Leading into 1 ball per 2-4 kids.

Scrimmages are not necessary for every practice. Larger games often work instead of scrimmages.

GAMES

Sharks & Minnows

Red Light, Green Light

Simon Says

Animals

Cowboys & Indians

Tag

Dozens can be found online.

End of Season Expectations

40-80 taps/minute

Able to dribble and turn while dribbling (through cones, around players)

Can shoot about 10' from goal.

Can do a Pull Back and possibly use it in a game.

U-8

Expectations/Characteristics

- Attention span a little longer than U-6, but not much.
- Inclined more toward group activities (A little less Me!)
- Still very sensitive. Dislikes personal criticism.
- Starting to develop some physical coordination.
- Starting to enjoy the soccer game and competition, although intimidated by bigger players.
- NO SENSE OF PACE! Everything is full speed, flat out, until they run out of energy, get bored, or see a butterfly.
- Some/many players still won't know the score of the game.
- Most will still run to the ball. Few will hold their positions and spread out on the field.
- 1 or 2 developed soccer players will be able to completely dominate a game.

Practices

Start to follow a format outlined above.

Footwork – 5-10 min. Dribbling, Taps, Tic-Tocks, Pull Backs, Carry Over, Gags, Dobles. Start the season with the basics – Taps, Tic-Tocks and Pull Backs. Introduce the more advanced techniques, one at a time throughout the season. Most will develop fast, while some might struggle. They will all get better. The Gags and Dobles usually take a few weeks of working on them before they are able to do them consistently. Make sure they start using both feet consistently, and all parts of their feet (not just the inside of their feet). In the weekend games, they will primarily revert back to one type of dribbling, but keep working on different techniques and some will start using them by the end of the season in the games.

Short Sided – 1 ball per person drills and exercises. Fast pace. Many touches. Focus on dribbling & trapping.

- Dribbling exercises progressively getting more difficult each week.
- 1v1 drills
- Box Out drills
- Start with trapping exercises and progress into passing after a few weeks.

Large Sided

- Numerous Small Sided Games found on line.
- 3v3, 4v4
- Multiple goals
- Start spreading field, Moving to Space games.

Scrimmage/Games

- U-8 can have a mixture of games done in U-6 and Scrimmages.

End of Season Expectations

- 80-100 taps/minute
- Can use outside and bottom of feet in practices.
- Able to do various traps (Feet, Chest).
- Starting to use pull backs in games.
- Can shoot about 10-20' from goal.
- Knows positions (Forward, Defense)
- 25% might start passing in games.
- 25% will start dribbling to space instead of at the goal.
- Knows rules for Goal Kicks, Corner Kicks, Throw Ins

U-10

Expectations/Characteristics

- Starting to demonstrate diversity in playing ability (dribbling, shooting, etc)
- Starting to develop pace and plan actions ahead (passes and plays)
- Starting to develop pace.
- Some are starting to move ball to space vs straight down the field.
- Keep explanations brief and simple.
- Repetitive technique in practices becoming more important.
- Peer pressure starting to be a factor in addition to parent pressure.
- Most will know the score of the game and enjoy competition.
- Starting to use body to protect the ball.

Practices – Most practices can follow the standard practice format outlined above. Most practices should end in short scrimmages. Need to start introducing goalie techniques and skills.

End of Season Expectations

- 120+ taps/minute
- Starting to use outside of their feet while dribbling in games.
- Able to do various traps (Feet, Chest) and transition to a dribble or pass.
- 50-75% start passing in games.
- Pull backs in games are the norm.
- 50% of players are starting to dribble to space instead of at the goal.
- Introduction and understanding of what Offsides is, although Offsides regularly in games.
- Most players are holding their positions on the field and spreading out.

U-12

Expectations/Characteristics

- Starting to enter puberty.
- Can start to develop overuse injuries. Flexibility training becomes more important.
- Begin to develop abilities for complex coordinated skills. Transitioning quicker.
- Starts to work as a team with fewer dominant players.
- Impressing (showing off) for other players starting to be more important than coaches/parents.
- Peer pressure becoming stronger.
- Most players are starting to be concerned on winning/losing and fair play.
- Some players will develop stronger individual skills (dribbling, shooting, goal keeping).
- Some players starting to specialize/prefer various positions/tendencies.
- Soccer skills are starting to dominate over speed & size.
- Less selfish play starts to develop.
- Play is starting to become more physical.

Practices – Most practices can follow the standard practice format outlined above. All practices should end in short scrimmages. Need to start practicing heading ONLY in practices.

End of Season Expectations

- 120+ taps/minute
- Regularly using outside of their feet while dribbling in games.
- Able to do various traps (Feet, Chest) and transition to a dribble or pass consistently (50% of the time) in games.
- 75+% players are passing in games regularly.
- Most players are dribbling to space instead of at the goal.
- Understanding of what Offsides is, although Offsides less often in games.
- Most players are holding their positions on the field and spreading out. Passing as a team starts to develop as fast as the trapping skills are developed.

U-15

Expectations/Characteristics

- Peer pressure and normal puberty issues throughout the practice.
- For many players, might be the last soccer teams they play on if they don't continue in high school.
- Play can be very physical. Starting to approach high school physicality.

Practices – Most practices can follow the standard practice format outlined above. Most practices should end in short scrimmages. Need to start introducing goalie techniques and skills.

End of Season Expectations

- 120+ taps/minute
- Use outside of their feet regularly while dribbling in games.
- Able to do various traps (Feet, Chest) and transition to a dribble or pass.
- Passing in games is the norm.
- Most players are starting to dribble to space instead of at the goal.
- Most players are holding their positions on the field and spreading out.
- Most players are using their bodies to protect the ball.

