

Transatlantic Soccer

U6/U8 Coaching Program



Transatlantic Soccer COACHING GUIDELINES

Welcome to Transatlantic Soccer We have developed a coaching program to help assist you throughout the season. Below are some helpful and important points to remember and use, in order for the children to experience a fantastic soccer season and receive the greatest possible benefit.

Each coaching session should focus upon **ONE** theme, i.e. dribbling. This continuous repetition of the skill, allows the children to learn at a faster rate as the focus is constantly upon one skill.

- This session should then be broken down into 4 parts
 - Warm up
 - Basic practice
 - Fun game/practice
 - Scrimmage

Organization

- Plan the coaching session in advance, ensuring as much activity for the children as possible. Also make certain that you have the appropriate amounts of equipment available for the session. Don't leave anything to chance!
- Ensure that the coaching area is clearly defined. This will ensure that the children are aware of the boundaries of the field, which will help when it comes to understanding the boundaries of the soccer field.
- When explaining a drill or speaking to the children, ensure that they all have their backs to the sun as much as possible. That way their attention will be fully focused upon you and not on blocking the sun from their eyes. Also, children have a very small attention span. Keep explanations to a minimum, i.e. maximum 30 seconds explanation
- Play small sided games as much as possible, i.e. 2v2, 3v3, 4v4. This will allow all the children to receive as many touches of the soccer ball as possible in a game related context.
- Ensure the safety of the children in each practice.

Demonstration

- Where possible let the children demonstrate as it provides the other children with motivation to try and better the team mate who demonstrated the drill. However if the drill is too advanced for any of the children then demonstrate it yourself. Also, rotate the children that demonstrate so as not to show favoritism.

Feedback

- Feedback should always be positive where possible. If they do something wrong then ask them if they know what they did wrong. If not then explain what they were doing wrong and give them a solution.
- Good **communication** is vital. Always use words that the children will understand. Remember, children's language is not as advanced as ours therefore we need to simplify it!
- Provide constant encouragement.

Motivation

- In order to keep the children motivated it is important to be enthusiastic at all times as the children will feed off your enthusiasm.
- Keep the practices varied so boredom does not set in. Use your imagination to keep practice fun!
- Set achievable goals. This will provide the children with success, in turn increasing their self confidence.

Coaching Philosophy

- **Fun and Enjoyment** is priority number 1!
- Maximum participation where possible for all children. Inclusion of all children in each practice is vital for progression and for the simple reason that it is not nice to leave children out.
- For learning to take place it is important to try and create a positive learning environment. Be friends with the children and try and come down to their level. The social aspect of working with U6/8 is just as important as the practical side. Team barbecues are a great idea for bringing the team together and creating a good team spirit.

Hopefully these points will assist you in the forthcoming season. Good luck!

Session 1:

Theme: Passing And Control

Time

Activity

15 Mins

Tension Breaker

Reaction Game- ‘Head, Shoulders, Knees And Toes (BALL!)’

Kids choose a partner from their group, introduce themselves and shake hands. Coaches demonstrate the practice, which involves players responding to the song, ‘head, shoulders, knees and toes’, by doing the actions. During this routine the coach will randomly shout, ‘ball’. On this command players have to react by quickly snatching the ball placed between the feet of them and their partner. The first player to grab the ball gets the point.

Variation; Players choose someone else to play against in their group, introducing themselves to each player.

Practice 1

In Groups

Control

Players stand opposite partner (5yards apart), each player standing at cone with another cone 1 yard in front. The idea is to control the ball, which is slowly rolled by their partner well enough so that they can stop the ball before it runs past the second cone’. Players take it in turns, scoring a point for every time they achieve the objective.

For this challenge the emphasis is on the first touch ‘taking the pace off the ball,’ in order to prepare for a pass. The inside of the foot is demonstrated as being the most effective technique to achieve this in that it has the biggest area. The main coaching point, which is emphasized, is to cushion the ball rather than swing at it’

Within each of the groups players are kept motivated by offering a ‘up and down league’ after each game. Reducing the distance between the cone they stand at and the cone they have to stop the ball before can differentiate each player’s target.

Practice 2

Passing

Emphasis is on accurate passing towards a static target. Players are initially challenged to exchange passes over a distance of between 4-5 yards, with the ball travelling between a gate of cones, placed half way between each player. Coaching points are as follows.

- Use inside of foot to pass
- Place non kicking foot next to ball in line with target
- Follow through in line of target.
- Strike through center of ball

Progressions:

Whilst continually re-iterating the above coaching points, the difficulty is increased can be increased by making the target narrower. This can be achieved the following ways,

1. Making gates a foot width smaller after a number of consecutive passes, this number can be decided by the coach but must be achievable for ability of participants.
2. Make distance longer to pass through.
3. Placing a ball on a cone next to each player with the target of knocking the ball off to gain a point.

For each practice players can keep score and an ‘up and down the league’ challenge can be offered

Themed Game

In Groups

Fun Game (passing)

Battleships

Each group is split into two teams with each teams players spread in a horizontal line opposite the opposing teams. Across each teams line are 10 cones with ten balls balanced on top. The object of the game is to play passes to knock all the balls off the opposition’s line, ‘sinking their battleship’. In order to start the game each team is given 1 ball to use. As each ball is knocked off, it can be used as ‘ammo’ to fire back across.

In order for the game to work well, the following points must be considered:

1. Passes must be played behind each teams own battleship
2. Players cannot stop a ball knocking another off the cone.
3. If a ball gets stuck in the middle players may grab it for ‘ammo,’ but must quickly return to their side and take the shot BEHIND the line
4. Players should try to share who gets the shots especially at the start where ‘ammo’ is limited.

- 7-10 yards between each teams line of balls

Practice 3 (30 Mins)

All groups

Fun Fours

For the first round of games a condition or incentive can be used to encourage players to apply skills identified previously (passing control) the theme of the day. For example,

1. A set Limit of touches
2. A certain amount of successful passes can constitute a goal.
3. Small ‘gate goals’ (no goalies) forcing an accurate pass to score.

Practice 4 (20 Mins)

In Groups

Game Related Practice

Focus here is the basic concept of passing and moving with a partner. The following progressions can be followed.

1. Players move freely, exchanging passes when a teammate shouts for ball.
2. Player’s exchange passes, to either side of one of the several cones placed around the area. This time the focus is on the receiver moving to the side of the cone, into a good position to receive the pass
3. Players are faced by a passive defender (coach and some helpers). Players must decide when the best time is to pass.
4. Knock out challenge! This time the defenders become active. If a couple loses their ball to the defender then they are out. The last two players are the winners

Themed Game (25 Mins)) In Groups

Soccer Marbles

The set up for this game in terms of teams and how they line up follows the same lines as battleships, although the distance between each team could possibly be increased by a few yards per group. The objective of this game is to force a neutral colored ball, ‘king marble’ (distinctive bright color) across the opposition teams line. This is achieved by players passing footballs from behind their own line in an attempt to contact ‘king marble’ and knock it on. Each team can use any one of the (approx 15 balls) used to start. Again, if the a ball stops in the middle players are allowed to grab it for ammo as long as they fire it from behind their team line. Players are not allowed to go all the way across to the other teams side for ammo.

NB: If any player touches ‘king marble with anything other than a ball then their team automatically lose the game.

Scrimmages (World Cup Tournament theme 2v2, 3v3 or 4v4)

Passing Challenge

Players are challenged to pass the ball through a channel of 3 gates, each gate get getting narrower. Points are issued for each gate they manage to cleanly pass the ball through with the jackpot being knocking a ball off a cone placed at the end of the channel. Points are awarded in the following way

Gate 1= 100pts

Gate 2=200pts

Gate 3=300pts

JACKPOT=500pts

Theme: Dribbling And Turning

Time

Group Relay (golden fleece)

This relay will firstly challenge each team (six per team) to a race whereby they use their hands to carry each ball to a target (1 ball and target per player). The progression from this is for each player to dribble the ball to the relevant target in relation to his or her age group. The older players are given the responsibility of helping the younger players by guiding them on where to go, thus generating a degree of interaction between all age groups.

In Groups

Basic Dribbling Warm up

‘Pirate ships’.

Players dribble the ball responding to the follow commands from the captain (coach) on the way to treasure island!

- **‘Captains coming’**- Players stop ball with foot, turn to face coach, salute and shout, ‘Aye Aye captain’
- **‘Cooks coming’**- Players stop ball with bottom, face coach and shout, ‘Yum Yum’
- **‘Scrub the deck’**- Players dance on ball, alternate bottom of feet.
- **‘Walk the plank’**- Players alternate touches between inside of right and inside of left.
- **‘Man Overboard’**- Players stop ball with stomach.
- **‘Climb the rigging’**- Players stop ball with bottom of foot, and toe tap the top of the ball with each foot.

OR

DVD

Players follow the commands outlined below.

- **Play**-Dribble
- **Stop**- Stop the ball, quickly
- **Pause**- Alternate feet, on the move
- **Fast Forward**-Players show a burst of pace keeping control of the ball
- **Rewind**-players move the ball backwards
- **Eject**-players throw ball up and play cushioned header.
- **Change DVD**-Players stop ball and take someone else’s

Practice 1

In Groups

Developing Turns

Players are introduced to the general idea of moving the ball in different directions by using inside outside and sole of the feet. This can be achieved by challenging them to spell their name with the ball, forcing them to 'adjust their feet'

After this Players can then be introduced to the basic idea of the inside and outside hook and the drag back. Finally the coach moves around challenging each player to turn away from him or her as they approach.

Practice 2)

In Groups

Dribbling And Turning Game

. **'What's The Time Mr. Wolf'?**

As the coach starts approx. 20 yards away, players shout, 'What's The Time Mr. Wolf?' The coach responds with a time and the player's move forward touching the ball as many times as the coach shouts hours (i.e. One o'clock = One touch). When the coach shouts 'Dinner time' he/she turns to chase players. Players respond by TURNING and dribbling the ball past the 'safe line'. Any player the coach catches, becomes an assistant wolf.

Game (30 Mins)

In groups

Fun fours

CONDITION OF GAME

Park would be made bigger than previous day and players would be encouraged to dribble when they have space. Players are also encouraged to try turns to get away or beat defenders, being rewarded bonus goals if they manage to do so successfully.

Dribble Race

Dribble Race.

Children have to complete a circuit, which challenges their dribbling and turning. Points are awarded for order of finish after each round, 10 being highest and so on. Try and create as many teams as possible with never more than 4 to one team.

Fun Game (30 Mins)

In Groups

Crab Football

Crab Soccer

The objective of the game is for a nominated player to dribble from one side of a channel to another without being caught by 'king crab' (the coach) who attempts to knock the player's ball out the channel or clamp it with their feet. If the coach manages to do either that player becomes a crab too. If the nominated player gets across, then the rest of the players attempt to go at the same time. Again, if any player is caught they join the crabs. The last remaining player is the winner.

*Crab football is a highly motivating and challenging game, which can be adapted to suit all age groups, by making the channel narrower or wider as necessary. The nature of the game requires players to focus on the key features of dribbling such as space awareness, changing speed and direction, whilst keeping control of the ball

Scrimmage(World Cup) 30 Mins

Theme: Shooting

Time

Activity

Warm Up (10 Mins)

Ankle Tag

Ankle tag is a one v one game whereby each player scores by 'tagging' their opponent below the knee's, using their hands. Short sharp foot movement should be encouraged. Also players must adopt a low ready position on the balls of their feet.

Practice 1 (15 Mins)

In Groups

Developing Shooting Technique

The coaching points for each for each of the groups are essentially the same

- Angled approach
- Place non kicking foot next to ball
- Strike through using laces

The way to portray each point varies between each group however. For example, the younger group who may not have developed the motor skills in order for them to set up in the correct position may be guided by the coach placing their feet and body in the correct position thus allowing them to gain intrinsic feeling of striking the ball with the laces. On the other hand the older group may be given examples of the value in using their hips to generate power.

Basic Practice

- Players aim to strike the ball with the laces in order to knock a ball off a cone that is placed between them and their partner.

This simple practice can be adjusted to ensure motivation players are encouraged to move back further back as they develop confidence. And gates can be added to give them a target. Again both those variables are adjusted to suite age and stage. Scoring systems can also be introduced.

Practice 2 (15 Mins)**In Groups****Shooting On The Move**

Players dribble between several markers before shooting at skittles, which are cones with a ball on top. After taking a shot at one set of skittles they retrieve their ball before moving to the next circuit (there are 5 in total) After the line is free the next player attempts to do the same. It is a team effort to knock down all skittles on the five lines. (Time targets can be set) The coaching point highlights taking small touches keeping the ball slightly in front of their feet so that when they go to strike it they are neither stretching nor hitting down on it. The use of the laces is continually re-emphasized and they coach may replace the ball if they are knocked down with a toe strike.

The phrase: *“laces for aces, toezo’s for bozo’s”* is effective when conveying the message to the young children.

Practice 3 (15 Mins)**In Groups****Shoot Out/Group Challenge**

1) Players shoot a ball, which is rolled towards them by a player slightly in front at an angle with their back to goal. Players must stop the ball before shooting. They are given unlimited touches to do this.

2) This time feeder is behind the shooter facing their back. The ball is rolled through the shooters legs as they face goal the shooter reacts to the ball catches up with it and hits it first time. The emphasis is on the shooter being in a ready position, ready to quickly react to the ball. (Relevant points flagged up during ankle tag can be re-iterated)

Practice 4 (20 Mins)**In Groups****Fun Fours****CONDITION OF GAME**

Goals would be made bigger and players would be encouraged to shoot at every possible opportunity. Award may be give for the team who scores the most goals. In order to encourage players to follow in their shot, two goals are awarded to any player who follows in and scores from their initial shot.

Fun Game)

In Groups

Cops & Robbers

The objective of the game is for players to run from one side of a channel to another, without being hit by a ball fired from the side. Initially, the coach nominates one player and it is the coach who tries to 'hit them'. If they get hit, **below the knees**, then they join the coach as a 'cop'. However, if they get across without being hit, they shout the 'buzzword' to cue every other player to attempt to get across. Again, any person caught during this time joins the 'cops' team. The last remaining player is the winner.

* The distance of the channel both width and length should be varied in accordance with age group. It is VERY IMPORTANT, to stress the significance of keeping the ball on the ground, for safety reasons and also to conform to the rules.

Theme: Defending And Goalkeeping

Time

Activity

Warm Up

Stealing The Bibs

This fun warm up introduces the basic concept of players turning their body to shield the ball. For example, the players have to defend a bib, which is slightly tucked into their shorts by turning their body so their back is to the person trying to steal it. Each player is given a bib to start with and when they manage to steal one they must tuck it in together with any other bib they have. The player with the most bibs at the end is the winner.

Practice 1

In Groups

Shielding The Ball

Tiger ball

Each player is given a ball and asked to dribble within a specific area. The coach pretends to the 'tiger' locked in the cage and lets the players know he/she will be released in 30 seconds. Without running out the area, the players must protect their ball from the tiger by turning their body. If the tiger gets the ball in two hands they throw the ball out the square. The player they have dispossessed now becomes a tiger too, until everyone is a tiger except the one remaining player (the winner)

After several demos, showing the players the benefit of shielding the coach would condition the practice so the tigers can only steal the ball from side-on, or in front of the dribbler, this encourages tackling from the correct position. The next progression is for the tigers to tackle with their feet, however the coach has to continually discourage tackles from behind.

Practice 2)

All Ages

Gladiator Tackling

The general idea of this practice is for the defenders (gladiators) to stop players passing through their zone onto the next. (Defenders cannot move into another zone once beaten) Gladiators keep count of how many points they accumulate in a spell of 2minutes of constant attacks. Scoring is awarded the following way

- **One point, if the attacker dribbles the ball out the boundaries of the defenders zone.**
- **Two points are awarded if the defender delays the attacker in their zone for more than 10 seconds**
- **Three points are awarded if the defender knocks the ball or dribbles it out the zone.**

Organizational And Coaching Issues For Consideration

The number of zones and their width varies between the age groups (normally between 2 and 3). It is important to remember that DEFENDING is the key focus for the practice, therefore the areas should be set up in a way which will allow defenders to get success at, whilst still remaining relatively challenging.

With the younger groups the focus is simply on remaining between the goal and the attacker and keeping the eye on the ball. With the more experienced players then they may be expected to channel players. And adopt a suitable low, mobile body position.

Practice 3 In Groups Clean Up Your Field (clearing)

Each group is split into two teams; each team takes their place on their side of the field. Each player is given a ball and when the command of go is given they attempt to clear the ball into the other teams half. Players then continue to clear any ball that comes to them into the other half. When the coach shouts stop (after two mins) the team with the fewest balls in their half are the winners.

Again it is important to make the area relevant to the age of players. For example if it is too big then the players will struggle to get the ball into the other half. If it's too short then the ball will run out the half, therefore out the game.

Responsibilities, Teamwork And Tactical Considerations

After each game players should consider where the opposite team managed to land most balls. The coach may work with them advise them to be **responsible** for certain areas rather than them all chasing every ball thus leaving gaps. This relates well to a disciplined organized defense. It may also be conditioned so the players have to take two touches. One touch to get it under control and another to play the ball into the gap, rather than just aimlessly kicking it first time.

Practice 1

In Groups

Goalkeeping

The goalkeeping component looks to introduce goalies to the 3 basic techniques, used to field shots of varying heights. Each practice involves two goalies, one feeder and one worker, alternating after each 10 feeds

1. ***‘W’ Technique.*** This is used when fielding shots above the chin. Goalkeepers are encouraged to place their thumbs in the shape of ‘w’ behind the ball providing a barrier. **Feed: Chest pass, aim for nose**
2. ***‘Basket’ Technique.*** This is used to field shots between chin and waist. This time the body is the barrier, by scooping the ball in towards the chest. **Feed: One handed throw aiming for mid-body.**
3. ***‘Schmiechal Scoop’.*** This technique is used for balls traveling along the ground. This time the goalie moves towards the ball, bends onto one knee, scoops the ball into the basket and follows through onto stomach, all in one smooth movement. In this technique the whole bodyline acts as a barrier. **Feed; One handed FAST bowl across the ground.**

Fun Game

In Groups

Handball

Handball, follows similar structure of normal game in terms of objective, pass move and score, the key difference being that players use their hands to throw the ball rather than kick it.

The basic rules are as follows;

1. Players cannot run with ball
2. Players cannot score in box (varying size)
3. Players cannot hold ball for more than six seconds

Goalies are encouraged to communicate and compete ‘bravely’ for any ball in the air or any that spills and is on the ground.