



Coaching Youth Soccer Tips



1. **Go to each practice with a plan** – list your drills and the amount of time you plan to spend on each drill. Stick to the plan. It is often easy to lose their attention when you over due one drill/skill until it is “*perfected*”. State the goal or skill they should learn from each drill. Don't have too many drills planned for each practice.
2. **Keep them moving, avoid standing in line** (*have players run around a cone away from the line or run give you a high-five before going to get in line again.*) Make sure all players have several touches on the ball during drills, as well as, scrimmages and games. Rotate who dribbles the ball up, throws it in or plays goalie.
3. **Make practice fun for you and your players!** Short simple instruction, do not lecture. Demonstrate everything while teaching and have them repeat back your quick cues (such as “tap, tap, trap”). Teach them what soccer listening looks like – *one foot on the ball, eyes on coach and lip-zipped*. PRAISE. PRAISE. PRAISE.
4. **Play skill games** while incorporating the soccer ball. Here are some examples:
 - a. **Duck-Duck-Goose**-players have to dribble the soccer ball around the circle before being tagged.
 - b. **Red Light – Green Light** -players practice trapping, speed and control dribbling.
 - c. **Sharks & Minnows** -players start at one end of the field and coaches or parents are the sharks in the middle who try to take the ball away or with younger players “pretend” to take it away while the minnows dribble to the other side. If “caught”, then that player also becomes a shark until one minnow is left (you can also have one player start as the shark if it's an older age division).
 - d. **Number Game** – divide players up into two teams have them on opposite sidelines. Then assign each player a number (1-5). Have a coach in the middle of the field with a ball call out a number in random order – “2's” both teams #2's would come out on the field and try to take the ball away from coach and then 1vs1 try to score a goal at their perspective goal (can also call more than one number to introduce/promote teamwork i.e. passing).
 - e. **Drive your Ball**– each player pretends their ball is a car and the coach/parent gives commands (and points) such as forward, backward, left, right, stop, turn-around and speed-up.
 - f. **Soccer Bowling**– have players or coaches put cones in forms like bowling pins (3-2-1) then have partners take turns kicking the soccer ball to knock down the cones (*works on aim and strong kicks for younger players*).
 - g. **Dribble Tag**– Each player has a ball and tries to control their own ball while kicking other players' balls out of the designated space (works on protecting their ball and control dribbling).
 - h. **Monkey-in-the-Middle** – players form a circle with one player in the middle of the circle (the “monkey”), players pass ball to their teammates calling out each other's names and keeping it away from the monkey. When the monkey gets the ball they trade places with whoever made the bad pass.

Here are a few good websites to get practice plans/drills and many coaching tips!

www.footy4kids.co.uk/soccer_coaching_and_the_very_young_child.htm

www.soccerxpert.com/u6-u8-soccer-drills.aspx

www.soccerhelp.com has many easy to use drills such as their "Dribble across a Square Game." Form a square with cones and have each player "control dribble" to the opposite side of the square and stop. You can advance the drill by having them stop and turn with the ball, as well as, enlarging the square to have them work on acceleration into open space and "speed dribbling".

