

West Des Moines Soccer Club Coaches Quick-reference Guide U7 & U8



1) Quick facts for the U7 and U8 soccer player

- a) Characteristics of the player
 - i) "Body & Mind" under construction
 - (1) Constant movement is normal (twitching and scratching)
 - (2) Boys and girls are physically and mentally very similar
 - (3) Players will run until they drop
 - (4) Body temperature increases quickly and cool down takes longer
 - (a) Be sure to take many water breaks!
 - (5) Players will chase the ball until they drop
 - (6) Limited ability to multi-task
 - (a) Too many tasks leave little or no capacity for decision making

2) Training sessions

- a) The player's needs
 - i) A ball should be included in all activities
 - (1) Ball mastery (activities that promote foot skills)
 - (2) Fundamentals (dribbling and shooting)
- b) Young players need frequent touches (one ball per player)
- c) Demonstrate (if possible)
- d) Involve all children in activity
 - i) If uneven numbers, then coach should participate in activity
- e) Players need continuous, consistent positive encouragement
- f) Introduce partner activities along with individual activities
- g) End with small-sided game, either 4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5, with two goals and no goalkeepers

3) Game day

- a) Arrive 15-20 minutes prior to starting time for adequate warm up
- b) Survey the field
 - i) Are there any safety issues? Look for holes or rocks on the field
- c) Clarify rules with referee prior to game
- d) Rotate positions of players; do not lock in a player to one spot
- e) Encourage goal scoring

4) Review of game rules

- a) Number of players; 4 vs. 4
- b) No goalkeeper
- c) No off sides called
- d) Only penalty area marked is in the goal area
- e) No penalty kicks; do as indirect free kick
- f) Restart for fouls; indirect free kick
- g) Opponent must be four yards from ball for goal kicks, corner kicks, direct and indirect free kicks
- h) No slide tackling allowed
- i) Goal cannot be scored on kickoff or from opposite end of field
- j) Assistant referees are not used in this age group
- k) Use size-3 ball
 - l) Each game includes four, 12-minute quarters; a two-minute break is given during each quarter; and halftime is five minutes
- m) Substitutions are allowed during goal kick, own throw in, goal scored and start of each period
- n) Do-overs are allowed for incorrectly taken kickoff, goal kick, corner kick or throw in





5) Coaches equipment

- a) Age-appropriate soccer balls (size 3)
- b) First aid kit is a critical necessity
 - i) Access to a cell phone in case of emergency
- c) Cones
- d) Well thought-out plan for each practice
- e) Plenty of patience

6) General information

- a) Practice should not exceed one hour
- b) No lines, no lectures and no laps

7) Principles of Youth Coaching

- a) Developmentally appropriate
 - i) Will your topic be received
- b) Clear, concise, correct information
 - i) Make it clear and brief
- c) Simple to complex
 - i) Coach by starting small and progressing
- d) Safe and appropriate training area
 - i) Survey the practice and game area before play
- e) Decision making
 - i) Does the activity allow for decision making by the players?
- f) Implications for the game
 - i) Is the activity game-related?

8) Bill of Rights

- a) Right of opportunity to participate in soccer regardless of ability level
- b) Right to participate at a level that is commensurate with each player's development level
- c) Right to have qualified coaches
- d) Right to participate in safe and healthy environments
- e) Right of each child to share in the leadership and decision making of their soccer participation
- f) Right to play as a child and not as an adult
- g) Right to proper preparation for participation in soccer
- h) Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success
- i) Right to be treated with dignity by all involved
- j) Right to have FUN through soccer

9) Injury prevention

- a) Proper use of equipment (shin guards)
- b) Check field for problem areas (rocks or holes)
- c) Field appropriate footwear (soccer cleats)
- d) Adequate water supply and breaks
- e) Avoid training during peak heat hours
- f) Follow-up call to parents if a serious injury occurs