

PRESCHOOL

GENERAL RULES/ GUIDELINES:

4 vs. 4, no goalie

Team size: 8

4 x 8-minute quarters, 2-minute breaks except halftime which is 5 minutes.

Referee: Coaches

Field:

- Dimensions: 90' x 45'
- Lines: Center line and dot only

Ball Size: 3

Goal: 4' x 6'

Player Formation: Diamond: One forward, two wings and one defense

Rules:

Kickoff: Occurs to start the game and at the beginning at each quarter (alternating teams) and after a goal. The initial kick-off is determined by a coin toss. Kick is taken from the center of the field. Players should be in their diamond formation.

Fouls: 1. deliberate handballs 2. Dangerous play 3. Holding 4. Pushing or tripping. Coaches will officiate all games and all fouls result in a free kick with the opponent at least five yards away. If a player repeatedly commits fouls, their coach should remove them from the game and explain to the child (and their parent/s) why their behavior is not acceptable.

Throw-ins: There are no throw-ins at this age; parents or coaches keep the ball in play where it went out.

Goal Kicks: There are no goal kicks at this age; put the ball back in play and say play on, or the coach should restart play with the defensive team retaining possession.

Corner Kicks: There are no corner kicks at this age, simply put the ball back in play and say play on, or the coach should restart play with the offensive team retaining possession.

Substitutions: Can be made at the time of any dead ball, but it is recommended to sub at quarters.

Offsides: Not called but remind your players not to "cherry pick" and that there are no goalies.

COACHING GUIDELINES:

1. You do not need to know much about soccer. Pick games that kids love and incorporate a soccer ball like freeze tag, coach "Simon" says, cats and dogs, red light green light, sharks and minnows, etc. It's good to play these games without a ball first and then let these games become soccer games when you add a soccer ball.

2. Do not worry about passing, positioning, or proper technique. Demonstrate the correct way to perform a skill and then praise players highly when they do it, but do not waste time with repetitive technique drills. Pick "coaching moments" when you can make a point that helps the whole team.

3. Encourage players to spread out and not take the ball from their own teammate. This is the one coaching point you should make 100 times a game and constantly when you scrimmage during practice. Be patient and keep highlighting these two points and you will be amazed at the results.

4. Always play with the kids. If you are having fun, so are they!

Practice Breakdown:

Play – Warm Up (10 Minutes)

Each practice should begin with an engaging warmup. A warmup should consist of a fun game or small team scrimmages of 1v1, 2v2 or 3v3. Divide your field into small grids with goals made with cones and get players to play soccer as soon as they arrive to practice. Get their feet on a ball and play right away! No need to have the team run laps or sprints; let the game activities you choose provide players physical fitness conditioning.

Practice – Focused Skill Games (20 Minutes)

Practices should have a clear focus. Pick one skill at a time as the focus. Pick fun game activities that allow players to focus on the technique of your

choice and help develop the basic skill but also let the kids have a lot of fun. Add competition to your activities when you can to add fun!

Play – Scrimmage (20 Minutes)

Treat these scrimmages like a real game (subs, breaks, etc.) but do take the time to address rules or technique with your players. Stop the game and go over a rule if, for example, players keep playing the ball after it goes out of bounds. During the scrimmage, evaluate your coaching to see if the technique you practiced is being used in the scrimmage.

Practice Games:

Gather the cones - spread cones out across the field, kids must gather them (while dribbling their ball), and then bring them back to you one cone at a time.

Freeze tag - players dribble while you try to tag them. If you tag them, they sit on their ball until a teammate “unfreezes” them.

Body parts or animal sounds - these are a variation of the same game. Kids dribble and you call out an animal and they must imitate the animal. Or you call out a body part and they must touch it to the ball.

Kick the Coach - the kids will love this (and so will you). They have to dribble and try to shoot the ball and hit you while you are running around. It forces them to pick their head up and look around while dribbling, and also to shoot while the ball is moving.

Red Rover - Kids line up and you say “red rover, red rover, come on over” and they try to dribble to the other side of the field, while you try to knock their ball away.

Gates - Another old standby. Set up gates around the field and say go, and the kids try to dribble through them. Scatter the gates so there is no pattern and the kids decide where to go for themselves. Yell “stop” and ask them how many gates they have gone through.

Hot Potato - Divide the kids into two teams and put all the balls out in the middle. Make a halfway line using cones. The idea is that each team does not want any balls on their half when you yell stop. You can also play this game by telling the kids to try and gather all the balls on their half. Don’t do this at the same practice you play “hot potato” or the kids will get confused. Scrimmages, relay races, and keep away are also good for this age. Just use your imagination and have fun.