

MYSA Youth Module COACHING GUIDE

www.mnyouthsoccer.org

“THE GAME IN THE CHILD”

This guide compliments MYSA’s Youth Module courses for coaches of children from pre-school through adolescence, or U6-U12. It takes the approach that the GAME WITHIN EACH CHILD is at the center of all beliefs, decisions, and actions taken by the child, coach, and organization, as opposed to trying to fit the child into an adult version of the game. It is the ultimate goal of youth soccer development within the United States to unlock the game within each child to reach full soccer potential.

Principles Of Youth Coaching

- Activities are fun, safe, and developmentally appropriate
- Provide appropriate training area
- Provide clear, concise, and correct information
- Encourage creativity and decision making by the players
- Provide appropriate feedback – positive and encouraging
- Activities have implications for the game

What Does a Good Coach Look Like?

- ☆ Players are active, energetic, and playful – and so is Coach.
- ☆ Players experience a fun environment with multiple opportunities to learn.
- ☆ Players’ attention is on Coach briefly and only when necessary; otherwise Coach pays attention to players.
- ☆ Players see eye-to-eye with Coach who meets them at their level – literally and theoretically.
- ☆ Players feel included and important regardless of their abilities.
- ☆ Players want to come back to play again – the next day and next season.

Who Are These Children?

U6 Player Characteristics

Single-task focus	→	Brief clear instructions
Short attention span	→	Many activities of short duration
Egocentric	→	1:1 ball-to-player ratio
Little concern for team	→	Focus on individual activities and successes
Primitive coordination	→	Include body awareness activities
No sense of pace	→	Frequent short breaks
No sense of space	→	“Beehive” around ball is normal
Psychologically fragile	→	Positive and encouraging communication

Implications for Coaches

Training Session Format For U6 Players

No more than 45 minutes long.

- Warmup, movement game, e.g. tag, each player without and then with a ball (5 minutes).
- Variety of short activities, each player with a ball, with frequent short breaks (25 minutes).
- Game, 1v1 to 3v3, possibly including multiple goals and balls (10 minutes).
- Cool down, each player with a ball, fun moving challenges (5 minutes).

U8 Player Characteristics

Limited multi-tasking	→	Brief clear instructions; Use “add-a-rule” method
Limited attention span	→	Activities should engage them, e.g. imagination
Enjoy partner activities	→	1:1 and 1:2 ball-to-player ratio
Limited coordination	→	Include body awareness activities
Limited sense of pace	→	Short frequent breaks
Seek adult approval	→	Positive and encouraging communication
Effort = Performance	→	Focus on effort rather than outcome
Psychologically sensitive	→	Vocabulary and positive reinforcement important

Implications for Coaches

Training Session Format For U8 Players

No more than 1 hour.

- Warmup, dynamic movement game, e.g. tag, without and with ball (10 minutes)
- Variety of body awareness, maze, and target games, individual and in pairs (30 minutes)
- Game, no more than 4v4, possibly including multiple goals and balls (15 minutes)
- Cool down, each player with a ball, fun moving challenges (5 minutes)

Who Are These Children?

U10 Player Characteristics

Motivated to learn and improve
Strong group/team identification
Improved coordination
Improved spatial awareness
Gender differences apparent
Becoming more social
Becoming serious about play
"Coach" an important figure

Implications for Coaches

→ Many skill development games
→ 1:1 to 1:4 ball-to-player ratio
→ Include challenging body movement activities
→ Encourage movement without ball; basic tactics
→ Account for specific needs of boys/girls
→ Include group problem solving; Be aware of peer pressure
→ Encourage self-directed practice activities
→ Be positive role model; instill values

Training Session Format for U10 Players

No more than 1 hour.

- Warm-up, each player with a ball and dynamic movement (10 minutes)
- A variety of individual, partner, and small group activities (25-30 minutes)
- Game, no more than 6v6, with or without rotating goalkeepers (15-20 minutes)
- Cool down, each player with a ball, movement with fun challenges and stretch (5 minutes)

U12 Player Characteristics

Fertile learning period
Capable of complex tasks
Refined coordination
Improved spatial awareness
Varied skill/physical abilities
Becoming more social
Becoming serious about play
"Coach" an important figure

Implications for Coaches

→ Many skill development games
→ 1:1 to 1:8 ball-to-player ratio
→ Encourage technical precision
→ Encourage tactical development, i.e. decision making
→ Adjust challenges to meet individual abilities
→ Include group problem solving; Be aware of peer pressure
→ Encourage self-directed practice activities
→ Be positive role model; instill values

Training Session Format for U12 Players

No more than 75 minutes.

- Warmup, each player with a ball, dynamic movement and dynamic stretching (10 mins)
- Variety of individual, small group, and team activities (35-40 minutes)
- Game, 4v4 to 8v8, with goalkeepers who may rotate (20-25 minutes)
- Cool down, each player with a ball, movement with fun challenges and stretch (5 minutes)

RESOURCES

ORGANIZATIONS

Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) www.mnyouthsoccer.org 952-933-2384

- Director of Coaching and Player Development
John Curtis 952-252-1686 johncurtis@mnyouthsoccer.org
- Director of Technical Education
Andy Coutts 952-252-0224 andycoutts@mnyouthsoccer.org

MYSA Resources and Programs

- Training sessions/Articles web page
- Coaches Corner e-newsletter
- Winter Symposium
- Educational Materials
- Lending Library – Videos and Books
- PACT – Parents and Coaches Together
- OATHS – Outstanding Ambassadors of Teams Honoring Sportsmanship
- ODP – Olympic Development Program
- PDP – Player Development Program
- GDP – Goalkeeper Development Program
- CDP – College Development Program
- TOPSoccer – The Outreach Program for Soccer
- Rec/RecPlus
- U9/U10 Jamborees – Summer and Fall
- Kohl's American Cup

US Youth Soccer Association: www.usyouthsoccer.org

National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA): www.nscaa.com

United States Soccer Federation (USSF): www.ussoccer.com

LICENSES

MYSA State Courses: "Y", "E", "D"

USSF National Licenses: "C", "B", "A", National Youth License

NSCAA Diplomas: State, Regional, National, Advanced National, Premier

Sample Activity: "GATES"

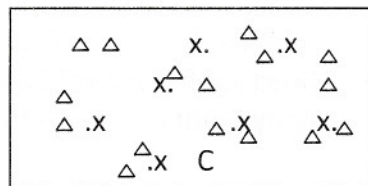
NOTE: For more activities refer to mnyouthsoccer.org/coaches/articles.cfm

"Gates" is a player centered version of the old-school slalom dribble drill through cones. This game can be adapted in the following ways to meet the developmental stages of children.

Setup: Randomly placed and spaced cone gates

Several more gates than players.

Gates are two-sided - can go thru in either direction.



U6

1. Without a ball: Players move through gates in different ways – skip, hop, run, backwards, etc.
2. Each player with ball: Players go through as many gates as they can in certain time. Move ball in different ways – carrying, bouncing, rolling, dribbling.
3. Challenge: Coach moves around to guard gates, requiring players to change direction.

☆ Coaching Questions:

Can you use different parts of both feet to move the ball?

How can you keep the ball close to you?

Can you beat your own score this next time?

U8

1. Two players to a ball: Partners move through gates as above, ball in hands then at feet.
2. Can only pass through, dribble through, alternate, etc.
3. Challenge: Add multiple gate guards as above

☆ Coaching Questions:

Who decides which gate to go to next?

How can you and your teammate get through more gates this next time?

U10

1. Groups of four with one ball
2. Only certain color gates or alternate among certain gates to require vision/movement
3. Challenge: One player from each group can act as gate guard or live defender

☆ Coaching Questions:

Where can you go when you don't have the ball to help your teammate with the ball?

How can you score more goals?

U12

1. Two groups of 6-8 with one ball each
2. Designate 1 or 2 players from each team to defend other team
3. Challenge: Play two teams with 1 ball. Score through any gate.

☆ Coaching Questions:

Where can you go without the ball to help your team keep the ball or score?

When should you pass and when should you dribble?