

Northfield Soccer Assn

Coaching Reminders

Ages 3 & 4

- Always positive, avoid using the word “No”
 - Allow for freedom of movement,
few lines and boundaries
- Start each exercise with as few rules as possible, and add
as you go
 - Allow for kid experimentation
 - Engage players by using their name
- Players will tire easily both mentally and physically
- Understand your group: high energy versus thoughtful
- Start each day with 5 minutes of scrimmage or scoring
on coach
 - Practice Format
Scrimmage & Scoring 5 min
Plan for three activities of 5 min each
Scrimmage type activity last 10 min

Coaching Tips

- Active Groups: Little discussion & explanation at the beginning. Introduce rules as you go.
- Listening Groups: Explain “why” things are done a certain way, but don’t get bogged down with too much conversation.
- Eagles & Mice can be played 50 different ways. Boys may get into Star Wars themes. Use a theme for imagination, but focus coaching points on topic (athleticism, how to dribble, change of direction, change of speed)
- Provide other sound guidance for player safety (what is/is not pushing, when do you steal/share a ball).
- Formally begin each day together and check-in with your players. End each day by congratulating them and finishing with a team cheer.
- Designate a bench area. This is extremely useful for scrimmage days.
- Be consistent. Example: I count down from 5 and kids come to the center of the field (I am always in the same spot). I usually kneel or sit down with the kids during discussion. If they have small conversations, use listening trick. I don’t vary on this routine as kids and assistants learn the cue.
- Treats: Some teams like to have treat and treat schedule. I have my own opinion to save it for the last day only, but it is up to each team how to manage it.

Northfield Soccer U4

Activity List – P1

Red light/Green light

All players have a ball and dribble in a limited space (or towards the coach). When coach says "red light", players must stop ball and put foot on top of ball. When coach says "yellow light", players must dribble very slowly. When coach says "green light", players dribble fast. Coach controls this game with the frequency of "light" changes and variety of changes. Once players catch on to this game, add other color lights and affix different actions to them. (i.e. purple light = hop back and forth over ball, orange light = run around the ball, black light = dance, blue light = hide behind the ball etc.).

Foxes & Chickens

The aim for this activity is for the young players to get the tail (pinney) from the parents. The parents act as the chickens and the kids are the foxes. The parents will need to put a pinney half tucked into the back of their pants/shorts. The kids have to chase after them and remove the pinney (acting as a tail). Once the kids have all of the pinneys the game ends. If there is a really fast parent then all of the foxes can aim to get the last chicken's tail!

Progression

A useful progression to this drill is to play the first game without soccer balls and then introduce them into the second game. This will help the young players understand what they have to do. Once the kids are comfortable with the parents having the tail see if the kids can be the chickens for a while. This drill can be used for older players by having all chickens and foxes dribbling a ball as a fun warm up game to any session.

Sleeping Bear

This game is all about getting the kids to take little touches of the soccer ball. The kids begin the game by shouting out altogether "What time is it sleeping bear?" The sleeping bear (who will be pretending to sleep talk) will respond with either one-o'clock, two-o'clock, three-o'clock or four-o'clock.

If the bear says three-o'clock, the kids will take three small touches/kicks of the soccer ball toward the bear. This continues until the kids get close to the sleeping bear. The bear will then wake-up and chase the kids back to where they started. Don't be too scary though or they will cry!

Progression

A useful progression to this soccer practice drill is to see how quickly the kids can get back to where they started after the bear wakes up. They must take their ball with them remember. Also, get the kids to show you their sole-of-the-foot pull-back turns and reward the best ones.

Northfield Soccer U4

Activity List – P2

Snake

In an appropriate space, have all players dribble their soccer balls, except for 2-3 players. These players (the snake) hold hands or lock arms and work together to tag the other players. The players with dribbling balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands or lock arms with the snake. The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must work together and not break into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss.

Follow the Leader

One partner leads, second follows and copies. Leader may skip, somersault, use imagination as previous. May use hands with ball.

Discuss dribbling

What is good dribbling? How do you dribble? Where do you dribble? Which feet? Can you touch the areas that you use to dribble? Follow the leader, no hands.

Build upon previous week.

Capture the Balls

Set up three or four “home bases” (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards wide. Break up the players into teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coach’s command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Players cannot use hands and there is no pushing each other or sitting/laying on the balls. Teams try to gather as many balls as possible into their home bases. Teams can steal balls from each others’ home bases. Coach calls time and count up how many balls are in each space to determine a winner. Coach allows team 1 minute to make up a new team strategy before playing again.

Northfield Soccer U4 Session P3

"Everyone is It"

Each player is it. Count the number of times you can tag someone else. After they wear down, maybe 90 seconds, call time. Ask how many tags everyone has, exaggerate results for fun. Add that each player must hold the ball in their hands. Play a round where players dribble the ball.

Kangaroo Jack & Jill

All players except two or three begin with a ball. Players without balls are kangaroo jacks and must hop like a kangaroo and try to tag players. If a player gets tagged, he/she becomes a kangaroo as well until all players are turned into kangaroos.

Sweep the Deck

Players pretend they are on a Pirate Ship and trying to keep the deck clean. Mark a rectangular grid about 40x20 yards with cones marking a center line. Half the players and balls are on one side and the other half on the other side. The object is to kick the balls to the other side and have the fewest balls when time is up. Play for 1-2 minutes and 3 to 5 rounds. Lastly, place coaches or helpers along the sides to redirect balls going out of bounds. Encourage players to kick with the laces rather than toe!

Northfield Soccer U4

Session P4

Storm the Castle

½ group (Castle Guards) take soccer balls and place them on top of disc cones. The other ½ group (Magicians) try to knock over those soccer balls by kicking their soccer balls at them. Castle Guards must replace the soccer balls on the cones as quickly as possible before all the Castles are destroyed.

Ouch Goes the Coach

Everyone has a ball. The goal is for each player to try to hit the coach with the ball. Every time the coach gets hit, they cry ouch or whatever animal sound the team wishes.

Also Called Bee Stinger (Players are bees and try to sting the coach by hitting them with the ball)

Moving Goal

Coaches hold a Pugg goal. Players each have a ball and try to score by kicking their ball through the goal. However, the coaches constantly move and turn to force the players to keep their head up and to change direction as they dribble.