



Guide to coaching U7s and U8s

What to Coach



Small-Sided Games

- U7/U8 small-sided games: 1v1, 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3, 4v3, 4v4
- Encourage teamwork and co-operation
- Players to experience all positions

- Provide opportunities for all players to play as goalkeeper (if a GK is used)
- No heading in games



Ball

- Fundamental soccer skills with both feet
- Shooting from 5-10 yards
- Introduce short passing and receiving

- Introduce defending skills and winning the ball back
- No heading in practice or games
- Fundamental goalkeeping skills: passing, throwing, catching, diving



Body

- Fundamental movement skills: running; skipping; hopping; jumping and landing; leaping; throwing and catching

- Reaction speed and acceleration
- Goalkeeping: explosive footwork and landing safely



Tactics

- How to play 4v4 using a game model
- Attacking and defending roles in 4v4
- 4v4 formations: 1-2-1 (no GK)

How to Coach



Values and Beliefs

- Be enthusiastic, animated and fun
- Show patience and support
- Encourage player choice



Coaching Approach

- Focus on individuals in a team setting
- Encourage players to be creative and make decisions
- Use regular short breaks

- Encourage players to ask questions and think of solutions



Communication

- Keep instructions short
- Use simple words and phrases
- Use positive and specific praise
- Provide simple feedback

- Help players reflect and learn from mistakes



Individual Player Focus

- Provide individual player challenges
- Find different ways to include all players in each activity

Practice Design: Introduce basic routines and practice structure | Provide lots of opportunities to score goals

Each coaching guide builds on the content of the previous age-group.

Coaches should use a blend of activities and behaviors that meet the needs of the individuals in their group.