



Coaching Manual

**Petite Soccer
8 Week Program**

August 2011

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1. Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to coach at Marple Newtown Soccer Association (MNSA). We hope that you enjoy the season.

MNSA is committed to providing a positive soccer experience for its players and you are a very important part of making this happen. We have worked hard to create an environment focused on fun and learning. This general attitude is especially important with kids of this age.

This manual is designed to give you some basic coaching guidelines and help you understand the developmental needs of the children you are coaching which in turn should also help you have a positive coaching experience. Further, we hope it will serve as a starting point for you to come up with your own creative ways to make soccer a fun and positive experience for our kids.

Being a soccer coach for this age group does not require soccer skills. All you need is a positive attitude, a willingness to be silly (even at the expense of embarrassing yourself), and of course a little patience. The goal for this age group is to introduce them to the basic concepts of soccer (dribbling, kicking, running, scoring goals!), help them improve their social skills, and most importantly...HAVE FUN!

If you have any questions about the manual or any other coaching queries please feel free to contact the MNSA Director of Coaching or the MNSA Director of Player Development.

2. Things You Can Expect

As coaches of these younger players there are things that we know that we can expect during training and games. If we know what to expect, we will be more effective in dealing with the hundreds of situations that come up. This will help us relax, and, in turn, allow us to enjoy the unpredictable nature of working with these children even more. Here are some of the things that we can expect:

- Most players cry immediately when something is hurt. Some cry even when something is not hurt.
- No matter how loud we shout, or how much we "practice" it, they cannot or will not pass the ball.
- Somebody will come off the field in need of a toilet. Somebody will stay on the field in need of a toilet.
- Don't even consider teaching positional play. Twenty seconds after the start of a game, every player will be within 5 yards of the ball.
- Several players will slap at the ball with their hands, or pick it up. Several parents will yell at them not to do that.
- A model rocket that is launched from a nearby field will get 99% of the player's attention. By all means, stop whatever you are doing and go watch for a couple of minutes!
- During a season, you will end up tying at least 40 - 50 shoelaces.
- They will do something that is absolutely hysterical. Make sure that you laugh!

3. Characteristics of Petite Players

Below is a list of just some of the characteristics of almost all children this age:

- Short attention span.
- Can attend to only one problem at a time.
- May understand simple rules that are explained briefly and demonstrated.
- May or may not understand or remember: what lines mean on the field; what team they are on; what goal they are going for. We need to be patient and laugh with them as they get 'lost' on the field.
- Easily bruised psychologically.
- Need generous praise and to play without pressure.
- Prefer "parallel play" (Will play on a team, but will not really engage with their teammates). Thus, 3 against 3 games are, in reality, 1 against 5 games because they all want the ball at the same time.
- Very individually oriented (me, mine, my).
- Constantly in motion, but, with no sense of pace. They will chase something until they drop. They are easily fatigued but recover rapidly.
- Development for boys and girls are quite similar.
- Physical coordination limited. Eye - hand and eye - foot coordination is not developed. Need to explore qualities of a rolling ball.
- Love to run, jump, roll, hop, etc.
- Prefer large, soft balls.
- Catching or throwing skills not developed.

4. Coaching Philosophy & Rational

It is important to understand at the outset that players coming to any sport at this age generally do not do so by their own choice. As a result, their coaches need to give them something about which to get excited. Further, at this age, learning to play soccer is not the primary focus in their lives. With the above assumptions, let's look at some things that we can do to energize the players, and, hopefully, get them to the point where they will enthusiastically initiate the sign up for next year!

- The #1 priority for this age group is to have FUN. If you make it FUN, they will want to come back again.
- Coaching the petite soccer player is not about finding the next great soccer superstar. It is about introducing the kids to an activity (soccer) that allows them to develop their physical/motor skills along with interacting with other kids their age in a fun and friendly atmosphere.
- **NO LAPS, NO LINES, and NO LECTURES** – Eliminate practices which involve the players standing around in long lines. We want to maximize the time they have with the ball and they will lose interest if they are standing in line. Running laps is a waste of time. You don't run laps of the field during a soccer game. Refrain from long lectures. Keep your directions to 30 seconds or less. Children come to soccer to participate and be active not to sit and be lectured for long periods of time.
- **ACTIVITY VERSUS DRILL** – We want our coaches to use games/activities rather than drills. Drills involve the repetition of movements/patterns exactly the same way each time which is unrealistic to what happens during a soccer game. Drills tend to be boring. Activities are dynamic, include free movement, and are FUN.
- Remember, although they may have very similar in birth dates, their physical and / or mental maturity may vary as much as 36 months. Activities need to accommodate these individual differences whenever possible.
- Team play and passing is an alien concept to these players. They know that if they pass the ball, they may never get it back. In fact, they often will steal it from their own teammates. Do not get uptight if they do not pass, let them dribble to their heart's content.
- Plan for several drink breaks, especially in warmer weather. Their "cooling system" is not as efficient as in older players.

5. Tips for Coaching Petite Soccer

- Know the players names; they love to be acknowledged. It makes them feel more comfortable with you and they will have confidence during the sessions. You would be surprised how the shyest child really appreciates it when you use his name during practices.
- Get the parents involved and communicate with them. Overall, this helps with your session and sometimes the child, at this level, feels safer if mom or dad is involved. If a child is hesitant to come onto the field and participate without their parents, then give the parent a ball and have them work out also.
- Have a plan. Take the weekly plan onto the field with you and follow the plan for the day. Be flexible though, because it may not be a great practice/game due to missing players, time constraints or weather. At least you were ready and you may use it another day.
- Have a backup plan in case the activity you have chosen isn't working. Kids will love something as simple as throwing the ball up in the air and catching it or punting it as high as they can. Be flexible!
- Change the drill on the fly if you feel it is past their abilities.
- Don't get frustrated if things don't work out. Remember...these children are 3 & 4 years old.
- Constantly support the children and offer many positive statements.
- Keep your speeches and demonstrations short.
- Sometimes they will not want to participate and it won't be because of you.
- Don't expect these children to start passing. They just won't grasp it yet.
- Bring some distracters (toy bowling pins, hula hoops, cones, other balls) to incorporate into your activities.
- One of the important focuses should be on running. They need practice in knowing when to run, how to run, with and without the ball.
- Agility, change of direction, balance and body awareness are also keys at this age.
- You are not by yourself. When in doubt ask parents to step in and use the adult bodies. (ie. for demonstrations, etc.)
- Try not to let the children wait too long to participate. They should all run and all have a ball.
- Be creative. The more creative the lessons, the better the sessions will be. They want to have fun, not train like adults.
- You don't need to know much about soccer. Pick a game kids love to play and incorporate a soccer ball. Tag, red rover, simon says, etc. These all become "soccer games" when you simply add a ball.
- Laugh and have fun with the children. If they see you having fun, they will too.
- Get to know the kids, pretend like you are a kid and you will have a great time!
- Above all, enjoy yourself. If you do, they probably will too.
- **HAVE FUN!!!**

6. Involving The Parents

It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they a major resource for your team, but the petite player views their parents as the most significant people in their lives.

A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team/league policies can be addressed.

Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are listed below:

- Most importantly, explain the philosophy about coaching at this level. We are all here to have fun. Let them know the format (warm-ups/activities/short scrimmage); that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older player's games; that you are there to ensure that their child is safe and has a good time, as well as learn a little bit about soccer.
- Second most important item is find someone to handle the snack schedule. Lets face it...by the end of the day, no one cares what activities were played or who scored how many goals...all the kids care about is what kind of snack are they getting at the end of the training session
- Let parents know the best way to communicate with them (email, phone calls, etc).
- Communicate the best means of contacting everyone in case of rainouts, schedule changes, etc. (email, phone calls, phone chains).
- Discuss the rules of the game.
- Ask if there are any carpool needs.
- Let them know training times and schedules.
- Discuss what each player should bring to training. Make sure all kids bring an inflated size 3 soccer ball, a filled water bottle, soccer attire appropriate for the weather conditions, and shin guards. Cleats are helpful but not mandatory. Shinguards are mandatory for all kids to wear during training
- Discuss what your expectations for them is during game time. Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines (players play, coaches coach, parents parent)

7. Basic Info for Parents

Since parents of kids at this level are most often first time participants in the game of soccer, here is some information about the training session.

- Training sessions will be approximately 45-50 minutes, split into “practice” time and “scrimmage” time. Practice time will be approximately 25-30 minutes. Scrimmage games will be 10 minutes long, split into two 5 minute halves with a brief intermission.
- Each session will focus on the “training” aspects of the weekly program and not the “scrimmage”
- Basic knowledge to be learned at this age level is the shape of the field, the touchlines and the direction of play. Basic skills to be learned are warm-ups and stretching, dribbling, and basic ball control.
- Training sessions will focus on developing skills both with and without a soccer ball. Coaches will go through various activities with the kids before moving into a game at the end of the training session.
- During games, parents must be at least 3 yards from the touch-line (sideline). No one can be at the ends of the fields.
- Games are played 4 players versus 4 players. There are no goalies, no penalty kicks, no direct free kicks, and no offsides.
- No slide tackling by any player. Sliding to get the ball is allowed but having contact with another player while on the ground is not.
- The major goal at this age is to allow the kids to have FUN playing soccer. That means no running up of the score during a game against a weaker opponent. Parents should support a coach’s decision to pull a very strong player for a while during a scrimmage to allow the other team to experience the fun and excitement of scoring or allow the other team to add an extra player if necessary.

8. Typical Training Session

Here are some items that should be included in a training session:

Warm-Up

A brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the time ahead. This should involve individual body activities without the ball.

"Soccernastics" activities may also be appropriate, like: rolling the ball with the bottom of their feet, with their elbows, backwards, with the back of their neck while holding on to it; throwing it up and catching it.

Individual Activities

Follow the warm-up with several individual activities where players act as individuals in a game environment. An example would be a kind of tag game, or "Red Light - Green Light", or a game where players are trying to knock their ball through gates. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. Play games of "inclusion" instead of games where the "looser sits".

Play The Game

4 v. 4, no goalies, substitute players in and out regularly. All balls over the side touch line will be restarted by a kick-in. All balls over the end touch line will be restarted as a goal kick or a corner kick. Players must give 3 yards for any restart.

Warm-Down & Homework

Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches, a light jog or exercises to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with. Also, give them some homework. Ask them what they learned during the session or what they liked best. Then ask them to practice that at home during the week. It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. Stop at this point and you will get an enthusiastic return.

The following section will outline eight (8) training sessions to use during the season.

9. Weekly Training Sessions

Many of the warm-ups and activities referenced on the following pages along with other information presented in this manual have been provided from these references:

- AYSO U-5 Master Coach Handbook
(http://www.rpayso.org/pdfdocs/U5_Manual.pdf)
- Soccer Coaching 3 to 5 Year Olds
(<http://ayso557.clubspaces.com/object.aspx?id=33&o=336984>)
- New Mexico Youth Soccer Coaching U4 and U5 Soccer Players
(<http://www.nmysa.net/TopNav/Coaches/coachescorner.htm>)
- Waterloo Minor Soccer Little Kickers and Soccer Fun Coaching Manual
(<http://www.waterloominorsoccer.com/Downloads/WaterlooSC/littlekickersoccerfuncoachingmanual.pdf>)
- Calgary Rangers Soccer Club – Soccer for U4
(http://calgaryrangers.com/page.php?page_id=30892)
- Westside Youth Sports Indoor Soccer Practice Pointers & Rule Book Micro Soccer 3/4 Year-Olds (http://www.ymca-westside.org/f/Soccer_3-4_Rules.pdf)
- 16 Town and Country Soccer Drills for U4-U6 Players
(<http://soccer.tandcsports.org/page.php?p=16>)
- Blaine Soccer U5/U6 Coach Handbook
(<http://www.blainesoccer.org/pdf/U5U6RecManual.pdf>)
- NYSL Coaching U5 and U6 Soccer
(<http://www.nysl.com/Assets/Northeast+Youth+Soccer+Digital+Assets/files/coachingu5u6.pdf>)

Week 1

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- Introductions – Introduce yourself to the team. Go around the group and have all the kids say their names. Then you try to repeat all their names (mess some up intentionally just to see if their paying attention). Then go around the group again and have them tell what their favorite color, animal, sport, food (pick something) is. This helps break the ice (especially for the shy ones).
- Explain the Rules of Soccer – in this case, there really is only 1 important rule: no one is to use their hands unless coach says you can pick up a ball. Explain that you want them to dribble the soccer ball with their feet as much as possible.
- Play Simon Says – play this simple kids game for a while and get them comfortable in doing things with the group (another ice breaker)
- Walk/Jog/Run – have all the kids spread out within half the field. Demonstrate to them the differences in a walk, a jog, and a run. Then have them start walking around the field. When you say “jog” or “run”, they should switch pace. Have them continue to change pace on your commands of either “walk”, “jog”, or “run”

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- Dribbling within an area – setup a grid large enough for your group (20x20?). Show the kids how to dribble (small touches on the ball) and stop the ball (by placing your foot on top of the ball). Then have them dribble around when you say “go” and stop the ball when you say “stop”. Tell them not to dribble outside the grid
- Dribble to a cone and stop – stand in the center of the grid with the kids around you with a ball at their feet. When you say “go” have them dribble out to a cone (any cone on the perimeter...set up enough cones so there are a couple more cones than players) and stop their ball at the cone. When everyone is stopped at a cone, have them dribble back to you in the center.
- Dribble to a cone, stop the ball and come back - stand in the center of the grid with the kids around you with a ball at their feet. When you say “go” have them dribble out to a cone (any cone on the perimeter), stop their ball at the cone then run back to you (without the ball). When everyone is back in the center, have them run out to their ball and dribble it back to you in the center
- Coach Says – gather all kids back into the grid with a soccer ball. On your command of “go”, all players begin dribbling their soccer ball. Then the kids will listen for other commands like “stop” (put foot on ball), “sit on ball”, “elbow on ball”, “slow down”, “speed up” but they must only perform task if direction is preceded by “Coach Says” (like Simon Says). If they do not hear “Coach Says”, they continue with the previous command

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)

Week 2

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- Introductions – Like first week, introduce yourself to the team (so everyone remembers your name) and then go around and have all the kids say their names (so you can try to remember all their names).
- In place dynamic warm-ups – have all kids facing you without a ball. Go thru series of in place warmup exercises (jogging in place, marching in place, walk in place, two-legged hops, one legged hops, running as fast as they can in place)
- Ball Gymnastics - have kids all start with a ball in front of them. Then proceed to do age appropriate ball gymnastics with them, for instance... have them bend down with their legs apart and move the ball with their hands in a figure 8 around their ankles, picking the ball up and trying to touch the sky, holding the ball standing on one leg and closing eyes (see who is last player standing!). Use your imagination!! Have kids come up with ideas to show you!

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- Red light/ Green Light – have all kids get their soccer ball and spread out within a gridded area. When you call ‘green light’ the kids make the sound of a car revving up and dribble their soccer ball forward. When you call ‘red light’ they must stop the ball with their foot (making the noise of screeching brakes) keeping their ball under the control. Add yellow light...that means walking! If you call red light twice in a row, watch all kids move – joke about them crashing!
- Body part dribble - each player has a ball in a grid, and dribbles it around with his/her feet. After 20 seconds or so, the coach calls out a part of their body (i.e. ‘foot’) and the players have to stop their ball with their foot as quickly as possible. Play several rounds, having fun using ideas such as ‘ear’, ‘nose’, ‘elbow’, ‘head’ or ‘knee’. Then advance the game where coach instead of calling a body part out, simply points to it on their body. The kids are therefore taught in a fun way to look up each time they touch the ball. Coach can move around when kids get used to looking up.
- Pac Man - the coach starts with a ball in the grid. All the others start in the grid without their balls (have them place their ball just outside the grid within easy reach). On command, the coach with the ball has to dribble his ball under control while attempting to tag others who are running around the grid without a ball. If he does, then they also get their ball and attempt the same.
- Sharks and Minnows - All players start in a line at one side of the field with a ball, while you are in the middle. The Coach puts his/her hands together on top of their head like a sharks fin. The players, on the coach’s call, try to dribble to the other side of the field safely. If they do they turn around and wait for the coach to call again. If they have their ball kicked by the coach then they become a shark in the middle with the coach. After a few runs, declare whoever is left winners and progress to having a player start as a shark without the coaches help

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)

Week 3

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- **Direction Running** - This is as simple as getting them to line up and follow your lead. Get them to run forwards, backwards, side to side, and insert some jumps into the game. This is a great challenge for them at this level.
- **Cone Running** – setup a series of cones spread out randomly within a grid. Have the kids jogging around the grid and every time they come to a cone, they will perform an activity. First have them jog around the grid and reach down and touch a cone with their hands, then jog over to another cone and touch with their hands, then continue for 30 seconds. Next have them jogging around the grid jumping over the cones with two foot jumps. Then have them do 1 foot jumps...then have them run around each cone in a complete circle before going onto the next cone, etc.
- **Snake** – same as follow the leader. You are the head of the snake with all the kids lined up behind you in a straight line. Have them follow you as you jog, hop on 1 foot, bunny hop, skip, etc. around the field. Then switch it up and have one of the kids be the leader (head of the snake)

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- **Keep away from coach** - Show players how to turn with the ball (as simple as turning in a tight small circle maneuvering the ball with the inside of the foot) keeping the ball close to their feet. Coach jogs around and says they will try and tag kids balls (but don't really!). Concentrate on having kids keeping the ball close to their feet but turning away from the coach (getting their body in between opponent and ball as soon as possible)!
- **Freeze Tag (with ball)** - Every player starts with a ball in a grid except one tagger (in different color bib). After 3 seconds, the tagger is free to tag anyone with a ball. If tagged, they have to freeze with their legs apart and ball by side. They can be released (or unfrozen) by another free player dribbling ball up to them and passing ball through frozen players legs. Swap taggers after 30 seconds or if they freeze everybody!
- **Ice Monster** - Mark off an area for the game to be played and select someone to be the "Ice Monster". Have the kids (each with a ball) dribble around within the area. The "Ice Monster" attempts to touch each player's ball with one of their feet, at which point that player "freezes" with their foot on the ball. If a player's ball goes out of bounds, they also freeze. The last remaining unfrozen player gets to be the new "Ice Monster" for the next round.
- **Egg hunt** – spread as many soccer ball (eggs) as you have around the field. Ideally you will have 1-2 soccer balls per player. Have all the kids line up at the end line. When you say "go", the object is for them to get all the "eggs" (soccer balls) into the "basket" (which is the goal). Kids must dribble the ball (no hands!) and cannot take a ball away from another kid. Time them to see how fast they can do it. Then repeat and see if they can beat their time

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)

Week 4

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- Duck-Duck-Goose – create a circle with cones and have them play a couple rounds of duck-duck-goose.
- Running Home – Using the circle of cones, get all the children to find a home on a cone. Number them off 1,2,1,2. Have all the ones stand up. When you say “go”, they are to race around the circle back to their homes. Then do the same with the two’s. Repeat a couple rounds.
- Animal Movements – Have the children move around in a designated area trying to act out an animal’s motion of their choice, such as a crab walk, duck walk, bear walk, frog leap, bunny hop, fish swim, etc. This will help with balance and strength. After you call out a couple animals, have the children pick a different type of animal to imitate.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- Gauntlet – Have the children line up with a ball in two straight lines about 5 yards apart facing each other. The coach has to try to make it thru the gauntlet without getting hit by a ball. The kids will be kicking their ball at you as you go thru. Make it easy on them at first to hit you with their ball (crawl thru on your hands and knees) then make it harder by walking thru, jogging thru, then running thru.
- Target Practice – setup cones (or soccer balls on disks) within a 10’x10’ gridded area. Spread them out as best you can. Have each player get a ball and setup outside the grid. When coach says go, players must kick their ball into the grid and try to knock down the cone (or knock down the soccer ball off the disk). Time them to see how long it takes to knock all the cones down. Play a second round...set up the cones again and see if they can beat their time. Use parents to help keep the kids out of the 10’x10’ grid.
- Marbles - split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble (a beach ball works well). Have them try to move the marble across the other team’s line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts, don’t require them to use their own ball, they are free to use any other ball they can find. At first the players may get really excited and kick the marble. If this happens, call time-out and put it back.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)

Week 5

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- Freeze Tag (without ball) - Every player starts in a grid except one tagger (in different color bib). After 3 seconds, the taggers are free to tag anyone with a ball. If tagged, they have to freeze with their legs apart. They can be released (or unfrozen) by another free player crawling through frozen players legs. Swap taggers after 30 seconds or if they freeze everybody!
- Hospital Tag - Lay out appropriate sized grid, with a small square on one side (the hospital). All players are in and try to tag each other. If tagged on shoulder for instance, player has to hold shoulder with one hand. If tagged a second time hold that spot with the other hand and run into the hospital to free themselves. Game gets amusing if player is tagged twice on the feet.
- Planes, Trains, and Automobiles – explain that you are going to their grandparents house and to get there, they can either take a plane, a train or an automobile. Have them jog within the gridded area, driving their favorite vehicle (either a plane, a train, or an automobile) and have them make the sound of that vehicle as loud as they can. After 20 seconds or so, the coach calls out either “plane”, “train”, or “automobile”. The kids must then all pretend to drive the vehicle called out. Coach should call out different vehicle every 15-20 seconds.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- Fetch – have all the kids gather around you in the center of the field. Pick up one of the kids soccer ball and roll it away (outside the grid). Have that kid go retrieve his ball and dribble back to you. While the first kid is getting his soccer ball, pick up another kids soccer ball and roll it away so he can retrieve. Continue until you have tossed all kids soccer balls and they have retrieved them
- Ball Master – Kids get in pairs. Each pair shares a ball and gathers around the coach. As the coach tosses the ball away, the coach gives the pair a command. For example “one hand and one leg”...the pair would have to bring the ball back with those body parts touching the ball. Go another couple rounds, calling out different body part combinations each round
- Busy Bees – setup a grid and have the players dribble their ball around the grid while buzzing like bees. Tell them that you don’t like bees and that you hope they don’t “sting” you by kicking their soccer ball at you. Let them chase you around the grid and try to hit you with their ball. When hit, be very dramatic and fall to the ground yelling “Ouch the bee stung me!” Get back up and start running away from the bees again to avoid getting stung.
- Dribble & Score – start with two lines about 10-12 yards from the goal. Setup a small goal mouth outside the goal (2 yards from the face of goal). 1 player from the first line dribbles towards the goal and shoots. Players should be outside the goal mouth when shooting their ball. Have a parent or assistant take ball out of net for kids and also have parents assist chasing down balls that miss the net. Kids must then dribble their ball back to their line. Alternate lines.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)

Week 6

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- I can do this – stand on 1 foot and say “I can do this, can you do this?” Have the players repeat. Then show another pose and ask the same question “I can do this, can you do this?” Have the players repeat. Then ask one of the players strike a pose and see if everyone can do it.
- Toe taps – have each player get a ball and place it at their feet. When the coach raises his hand, the players do toe taps on top of the ball (put bottom of one foot on top of the ball, then alternate feet repeatedly). When coach puts hand down, player stops. Continue for a minute
- Knee tag – players are in pairs. When the coach says go, they try to tag each others knees without having their knees tagged.
- 101 Dalmatians – all kids have a pinny tucked into their shorts like a tail. The kids are Dalmatians. The coach is Cruella D’Evil. The kids spread out in a gridded area. When Cruella screams “go”, she starts chasing the Dalmatians and tries to pull their tails out. Once a Dalmatian has its tail pulled out, Cruella leaves the tail on the ground and starts chasing another Dalmatian. The Dalmatian puts their tail back in and continues to run away from Cruella

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- 101 Dalmatians – same as above except the kids must dribble their soccer ball around the area without having their tail pulled by Cruella (coach). Switch up and have one of the kids be Cruella and chase the other kids around for a while
- Junk Yard – divide the team up into 2 groups. Divide the field in half with a row of cones with one group on each side. Each kid has a soccer ball a must stay within their half of the field (or yard). The object is for each team to clean their yard of junk by kicking the soccer balls over to the other side (into the other yard). See if one team can kick all the balls into the other teams yard without having any soccer balls in their yard. Have parents assist with this one by standing to the rear of each yard and chase down the balls that are kicked thru the yards.
- Gates – set up gates with 2 cones located at various parts of the field. Setup more gates than there are players. Have kids stand in a gate with a ball at their feet. When you say go, the object for them is to dribble the ball thru as many other gates as they can within 1 minute. Have them count the number of gates they go thru (or have their parents count for them). After a minute, have them stop and see who got thru the most gates. Then go another round and see if they can beat their first scores
- Gates/scoring – have the kids line up in 2 lines about 10-12 yards from goal. Setup a gate to the left of the goal (about midway between the kids and the goal but about 2-3 yards further left. Do the same on the right. Have 1 kid in the left lane dribble thru the left gate, then toward the goal for a shot on goal. Have a parent or assistant take ball out of net for kids and also have parents assist chasing down balls that miss the net. Kids must then dribble back to their line. Alternate lines.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)

Week 7

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- Follow the leader – coach does coordination exercises without the ball (stretching, twisting, jumping, balancing, skipping, etc) and has the players repeat. Then ask one of the kids to come up with ones on their own that everyone can try.
- Relay races – divide the team in 2 groups and do different types of relay races. First just run to a cone and back. Then after both groups do that, try hopping on 2 feet as a relay race. 1 foot hops, skips, crawling...do several different races.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- Colors – setup a “base” in four corners of the field. Each “base” will be a different color. Use cones, shirts, water bottles, or whatever you can to differentiate each corner with a different color. Have the players dribble around the field with their ball. When you call out a color, the kids will have to dribble their ball to that base. Play the game with them and dribble your ball to a different color and say you win (be “serious” about it and let them tell you that you are wrong and laugh at you). Repeat several rounds. Then do a couple rounds where they must dribble around the color you call out and back to the center of the field.
- Walk the Dog – the coach will tell the players to walk their dog (ball) slowly around the practice area. When the coach yells “on no, my dog got loose”, the players will kick their ball as hard as they can then go chase after it. But they need to be quick or the dog catchers (coaches, assistant coaches, trainers or parents) may get their dog. Once all the players have their ball again, coach will tell them to walk their dog again. Repeat several times
- Lost Dogs – scatter the soccer balls at the end of the field opposite the goal. Have the players line up at the goal line. On “go”, the players must run to the other end, retrieve their lost dog (ball) and dribble it back to their home by shooting it into the net. But watch out again for the dog catchers (coaches, assistant coaches, trainers or parents) who may try to snatch their dogs up while being returned home. Repeat several times.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)

Week 8

Warmup (5-10 minutes)

- For the last week, have the kids show off how much they've learned during the season. Pick a couple different warm-ups that the kids can demonstrate to their parents. Have the kids be the "coaches" and show their parents how to do a warmup activity, then have the parent follow the kids lead

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Activities (10-15 minutes)

- Same with the activities. Pick 3 or 4 activities that the kids will be able to demonstrate to their parents. Have the kids be the "coaches" and demonstrate to the parents, then have the parents repeat.

Water Break (2-3 minutes)

Scimmage (Two 5 minute halves w/ 2 minute halftime intermission)

Warmdown (5 minutes)