

# Player Development Guideline

Grade 1 and 2 (U8) Co-Ed Soccer

[www.holdenyouthsoccer.org](http://www.holdenyouthsoccer.org)





# Holden Youth Soccer

## Holden Youth Soccer Mission

Our Mission is to promote the game of soccer as a means of improving the physical, psychological, and social well-being of children while allowing every player an opportunity to play at a level that considers their ability.

Our Core Values include sportsmanship, fair play, and to educate:

1. our community on the benefits of soccer,
2. coaches as the cornerstone of player development, and
3. players to develop competence in the sport of soccer.

We strive to create an environment that develops respect, promotes leadership, and instills confidence while making the game of soccer available to all who desire to participate. We aim to be progressive and innovative in program, coach, and player development

## Holden Youth Soccer Goals

Our goal as a group of volunteers on the HYS board, volunteer coaches, parents of our kids, our kids, and referees is to **BRING KIDS BACK YEAR ON YEAR!** This is our measure of success. We will accomplish this with three fundamental principles of coaching!!

### Maximize Enjoyment!



Providing an enjoyable experience for players is far and away our top priority, want them to come back.

### Maximize Repetition!



We look to provide players with a high number of repetitions of key technical skills—particularly foot work, juggling, shooting, and passing/receiving.

### Maximize Empowerment!



We look to empower players to take risks on the field, contribute thoughts and ideas, take on responsibilities, and generally have a sense of ownership.



# Player Development Guideline Objective

## The goal of this document is to:

- Establish clear and age-appropriate goals and objectives so our coaches, players, and parents know what we are working toward.
- Establish objectives so coaches have a collective understanding of which skills players should have when they proceed to the next age group.
- Establish age-appropriate priorities and focus areas in the four elements of the game (technical, tactical, psychological, and physical).
- Ensure consistency among our programs, so we are all teaching the same way and using the same vocabulary.
- Create confident coaches that are better prepared for the season ahead.



# Grade 1 & 2 (U8) Player Development Overview

The primary focus of Grade 1 & 2 soccer is to introduce the fundamentals of dribbling the ball and for the players to have fun.

## Transition Considerations

This, for many or all your players, is the first exposure to both soccer and organized sports. They may have no frame of reference or comparative experiences. Some may have played Pre-K & K soccer before.

### For most grade 1 & 2 Players:

- Have limited experience playing on a bounded field
- They are used to playing with their own ball
- May be aware of positions (Wing, Center, Defender, Goalie) but still lack the discipline to play any type of formation
- Soccer is about scoring goals, not defending
- Have limited understanding of soccer rules – goal kicks, free kicks, throw-ins etc.

## Typical Characteristics of Grade 1 & 2 (U8) Players

1. **Begin to see others perspectives** – unlike 6 year-olds, these children enjoy playing in pairs. Try to set up the pairs yourself to control the games and manage the personalities. They now have a sense of how others are feeling.
2. **Have an understanding of time and sequence** – they now understand “if I do this, then that happens”. They still much prefer playing to watching. Make sure every player has a ball in practice, so every player is always playing. They have a limited attention span (on average 15-20 seconds for listening, 20 minutes when engaged in a task) – keep your directions concise and to the point.
3. **Wide range of abilities** - wide range of abilities between children at this age – children all develop at varying paces. You may have an 8 year-old who seems more like a 10 year-old and one that seems more like a 6 year-old on the same team. Your challenge to is to manage this range in your practice in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player.
4. **Look for adult approval** – extremely aware of adult reactions – be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they look for your reaction frequently. be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you skills. They very much need reassurance and you need to help build their confidence to try new things at this age.



5. **Their bodies are still not conditioned for soccer yet** – many players will have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play – not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible. Their heating and cooling systems are still less efficient than adults – we need to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes).
6. **Some will keep score** – the competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Surely some parents are fueling the motors with their own. Regardless, we do not need to stress winning and losing at this age. Results should not be important at this age.
7. **Beginning to develop motor memories** – by attempting fundamental technical skills they are training their bodies to remember certain movements.



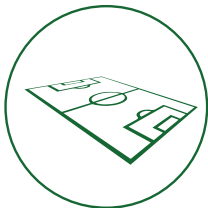
# General Player Development Objectives

This document will help to identify key objectives within the four key areas of player development. The priority areas will evolve for each age group progression. The key areas of player development across all age groups and levels are:



**Technical Development**– These are the skills used to play the game, i.e., the “fundamentals”. This includes things like dribbling, passing, shooting, receiving, tackling, juggling, heading, etc.

*Along with making sure players have fun, technical skills are probably the most important area for youth players to focus on.*



**Tactical Development** – Tactics for youth soccer focuses largely on decision making, i.e., how players can make the correct decision given a particular situation. We should try to understand the progression of tactics and develop the players in the proper sequence, so that players are comfortable solving easier problems (1v1, 2v1) before they move on to solve more complex ones (4v4).



**Psychological Development** – For youth soccer, this relates to whether the player is having fun playing soccer, and other aspects such as how they deal with winning and losing, their level of motivation, and how they interact with teammates, coaches, officials, and their parents.



**Physical Development** – Fitness for youth soccer players can be largely achieved by just letting them play soccer, although some of the older age groups (U14 and maybe U12) may start incorporating speed and conditioning into practice games and activities.



## Grade 1 & 2 (U8) Player Development Objectives

The following key training priorities are recommended by US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer for coaches of Grade 1 & 2 (U8) players. A focus on helping players develop these skills and very basic tactics is critical as it will serve as the foundation for skills and tactics that will be introduced when these players move on to the next age group.

**The key focus is an introduction to the basic technical aspects of the game and ensure all the players are having fun.**

### Technical



### Tactical



### Psychological



### Physical



### Key

Low Importance







High Importance



# Grade 1 & 2 (U8) Player Development Objectives



In the table below, we will go into the specific elements within each area that players will be encouraged to learn before entering the next age level.

Priority Area	Primary Focus	Secondary Focus
<b>Technical</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribble with all sides of both feet (inside, outside, sole)</li> <li>• Dribble out of trouble</li> <li>• Dribble past someone</li> <li>• Changes of speed/direction and turns</li> <li>• Soft first touch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to shielding the ball from opponents</li> <li>• Introduction to shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)</li> <li>• Introduction to passing with inside and outside of both feet</li> </ul>
<b>Tactical</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NO focus on tactics!!!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)</li> <li>• When we have the ball move forward</li> <li>• When we don't have the ball try to win it back</li> </ul>
<b>Psychological</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep it fun and enjoyable!!! This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)</li> <li>• Encourage imagination and creativity</li> <li>• Need constant positive coaching and approval</li> </ul>	
<b>Physical</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Just play soccer!!!!</b></li> <li>• Make sure every kid has a ball as much as possible at their feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No laps</li> <li>• No lines</li> <li>• No Lectures</li> </ul>





# Grade 1 & 2 (U8) Player Development Overview

At the introductory level of soccer, it is crucial that we do not overload our young players with too much information or try to teach them everything we know about soccer.

Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this end, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we will in future years.

Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. Keep it fun!

## Player Development Web References and Resources:

- Mass Youth Soccer week by week practice plans offering proper coaching technique and example drills:

[Holden Youth Soccer – Grades 1 & 2 Lesson Plans](#)

- Holden Youth Soccer has posted other coaching resources available for download at:

[Holden Youth Soccer - Blog](#)

### Player Development Curriculum Updates

Holden Youth Soccer wishes to thank its Board of Directors for their work in contributing to this development curriculum.

### Comments and Suggestions are always appreciated

Please forward all comments pertaining to the coach's handbook or players development handbook to the Director of Development who can be located at [rhall@holdenyouthsoccer.org](mailto:rhall@holdenyouthsoccer.org)

