

# Soccer Coaching 3 to 6 Year Olds

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!

At your first team meeting/practice this is a good time to let the parents know a little about yourself and what they can do to help. Remember, for this age group most of the parents are new to this just like you/their kids.

Make sure the parents know what they need to bring to each practice/game:

- Size 3 soccer ball
- Cleats
- Shin guards
- Water bottle

## PRACTICES

This is probably where you said “I don’t know the first thing about soccer, how can I be the coach?” Well, if you know how run, kick a ball, have fun, and can show someone how to do these things.....then you can be a coach!

Practices for this age group is about improving social skills, improving coordination, learning the concepts of soccer, about having fun, and numerous other things which you will discover during your first season. These things are accomplished through games that are played that inadvertently teach them the skills they will need to play soccer.

Names: (You can make name tags for your team, it will be super helpful for you in learning names!)

On the first day of practice you should get all of the players to sit in a circle around you and have them tell you their names. At the second practice you will need to do this again so you can make sure you know their names. Make sure the other players are listening so they can remember them too. Next practice (or at the end of the second practice) you “try and remember” their names by miss-naming them (don’t look or be serious when you do this) and see if the other kids correct you. The kids generally get a kick out of this and they will soon know each others names quicker.

Rules:

On the first day of practice ask them some questions:

- Has anyone ever played soccer before?
- Does anyone know how to play soccer?
- Do you use your hands?
- How do you score points?
- Do you throw the ball into the goal?

This gets them thinking and involved in what you are talking about.

Let them know that you only use your feet; that you kick the ball, and that you dribble the ball with your feet to get it from one end of the field to the other and that the object of the game is to score goals.

SHOW THEM HOW TO DO THIS! One of the players can show everyone else too!

Warm-ups:

The warm-ups you and I remember (jumping jacks, wind sprints, etc) do not apply for this age group.

Get the players to warm-up with their ball.

- Toe-tops

o Place the bottom of their foot on top of the ball and alternate feet doing this faster and faster.

- Tick-Tock

o Place the ball between their feet and have them knock the ball back and forth between their feet.

THEY WILL HAVE TROUBLE WITH THIS....IT'S OKAY.

LET THEM KNOW THAT IT IS HARD AND SHOW THEM YOU HAVE TROUBLE TOO!

- Run in place.

- Jump up and down and act silly.

The idea here is to get them going a little bit and get used to “getting ready” to practice. If you do the same warm-up exercise every week the players will actually start the warm-ups themselves when you call them over to start warming up.

Have them touch their toes and stretch up to the sky as far as they can.

Stretching at this age is not recommended other than the token stretches above.

Remember, this age group has a short attention span. Have a back up plan in case the game/drill you have chosen is not working. They will love to just throw the ball in the air and try and catch it, or even try and “punt” the ball to see who can do it the farthest.

If all else fails a good game of Duck Duck Goose or Freeze Tag can keep them running and work on their motor/coordination/listening skills.

Most importantly...HAVE FUN!, if they see you having fun...they will too!

Some Sample Practice Plans are attached for your use.

Also, some helpful websites for games to play and instructional information are:

- <http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/index.htm>
- <http://www.soccerxpert.com/u6-u8-soccer-drills.aspx>
- <http://www.dprsports.com/drills.htm>
- <http://www.aysova.com/coaches.htm>
- [http://www.insidesoccer.com/learn\\_it/coaches/drills\\_practices/858](http://www.insidesoccer.com/learn_it/coaches/drills_practices/858)

## **Drills and Games:**

### **Dribbling:** Walk the Dog

0-5 minutes

Warmup by doing toe-tops and pretend that the ball is a dog and that they are “petting their dog.” Be gentle with their dog because the dog (ball) is their friend. Let the players know that it is okay to go slow and it is important that the dog is petted by both feet.

5 minutes±

The Coach will tell the players to walk their dog by dribbling slowly around the practice area. The coach will yell “Oh no, My dog got loose” and the players will kick their ball hard and chase it. But they need to be quick or the Dog Catcher (coaches) will get their dog. Once the players have their ball again the Coach will tell the players to “walk their dog”....Repeat several times

### **Running:** Races 3 minutes±

RUN to the Goal and Back

Players will Race from one end of the field to the other. Make sure you tell the players how fast they are and see if they can run faster and race again. Repeat at least three times.

### **Dribbling and Kicking:** Race and Score

5 minutes±

Players will dribble from one end of the field to the other and kick (Shoot) the ball into the goal.

Repeat at least three times. If they are having fun do it more.

## **Learn the game! All kinds of kicks**

Description: Talk about the “ready stance” used in soccer where a player stands with legs slightly bent and shoulder width apart, lightly bouncing on the balls of their feet. Demonstrate for the players where the balls of their feet are and how lightly bouncing means that you are always ready to move.

Have the team line up in two lines facing each other in the ready stance, about 15 yds apart. Every player in one line should have a ball. Demonstrate for them the difference between a little kick (keeping the ball close to you) and a big kick (kicking the ball far away to another player or to try to score). To practice these two types of kicks, have the players with the ball run towards the other side of the field. As they go, have them follow this pattern of kicking the ball: a little kick, a little kick and then one big kick. As they run down the field, have them yell, “Little, little, big” to match their kicks.

**How to Kick:** BattleShip 5 minutes± Every two players need a ball and a mini cone with a ball.

Demonstrate how to kick the ball and what part of the foot to use (Laces....NO TOES).

Player will kick the ball (as shown by the coach) and try and knock the ball off of the cone (Sink the BattleShip). “Ready, Aim, FIRE”

They get a point each time they knock the ball off.

Let them know that they do not have to kick the ball hard. Focus on using the Laces and kicking it straight. Demonstrate to them that the Laces part of the foot is flat compared to your pointed toe and exaggerate the miss-direction of the kick if you use the toes.

## **Shooting: Shoot for the goal**

Description: Line players up in two to three lines about 3 yards away from the goal. Have the players take turns using little kicks to get up to the goal and then use a big kick to try to kick the ball into the goal. Repeat for 10 minutes. If they are having fun and showing progress at getting the ball into the goal, do it more.

## **Dribbling and stopping:**

Players will dribble from one end of the field to the other and STOP the ball on the end line. Show them how to stop the ball using the bottom of their foot. Go slow the first time and challenge them to go faster each time...then race Repeat at least four times.

### **Dribbling and stopping: RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT**

Players will dribble from one end of the field to the other when the Coach says “Green Light” and STOP their ball when the Coach says “Red Light”. Go slow the first time and challenge them to go faster each time. Repeat at least four times.

### **Awareness, Running, Dribbling, Scoring: Egg Hunt**

Scatter the balls at one end of the field. Have the players line up along the end line of the opposite end. On “GO” they run and find their egg (ball) and dribble back and put it in the basket (score in the goal).

### **Awareness/Dribbling: Wrong Way Game**

Have the players line up along the end line of one end of the field. On “GO” they dribble to the other end to try and score...but the coach at the other end starts yelling “Turn Around, You’re going the wrong way!” and the players turn around and go the other way...but when they start getting close you yell the same thing and they turn around and go the other way. After about four times let them score. Repeat one more time.

### **Running and kicking; “Catch the Giant” 5 minutes±**

See if you can get one of the older brothers or sisters to help out by being the “Giant.” Tell all of the players that they must catch the Giant. This will get the kids used to running and dribbling and constantly changing directions with the ball

### **Kicking/Accuracy: “Busy Bees”:**

#### **5 minutes±**

Have the players “BUZZ” around like a bunch of bees. Make sure you pretend to hear the bees and begin saying that you don’t like bees. Have one of the Assistant coaches kick you with the ball and you fall down and yell “Ouch the bee stung me!” Be very dramatic and the kids will begin stinging you with their ball make sure you move around and stop frequently. They really love this game.

### **Dribbling/Awareness: “Colors”**

#### **5 minutes±**

Players will dribble around inside an area bounded by different colored cones/ shirts/etc. (Try and have at least three different colors like red, orange, yellow, green, etc) and yell out a color and have the players dribble to the color. Make sure you go to the wrong color the first time and say that you win (Be silly about it). The kids will tell you that you are wrong and laugh at you.

Repeat this numerous times and tell them that they get a point if they are the first ones to the color they are supposed to be going to.

**Kicking:**

Have the players line up opposite each other and kick the ball to the other player. Show them the proper technique of kicking (using the laces/inside of foot, etc.) and show them how to stop the ball (bottom of foot, inside of foot).

**Shooting/Scoring: Shooting and passing skills drill**

Description: Have players line up in two single file lines at the center of the field one yard apart, facing the goal. Make sure that the first few players in each line have a ball so that the drill doesn't get slowed down waiting for a ball. Set up a cone about 3 yards out from the goal. Have the first two players (Player A) start with one ball dribbling the ball down the field towards the cone while the other player (Player B) runs in step with Player A (staying in his/her lane). Once Player A reaches the cone, they must pass the ball to Player B. Player B must stop the ball and then take a shot on goal. Have them retrieve their ball and take it back to the next person in line without a ball. Encourage players to shoot once they feel like they are close enough to actually make a goal.

**Dribbling: Safari Game**

Description: Each player should have a ball. Instruct the players to follow you by dribbling their ball (small kicks). Stop every so often and say "look over there, there is an elephant, monkey, lion, snake, etc." Have players act out the animal for 10 seconds, then start dribbling again to the next "animal". Dribble all over your practice area. As the drill progresses have the players practice dribbling faster and/or using bigger kicks. This drill uses the imagination and improves large motor skills. Coaching Tip: To get players more engaged, ask them what animal they see or what their favorite animal is and have everyone act it out.

**Learning the Game: Offense and Defense**

Start this activity by reviewing what "Offense" and "Defense" mean again with the team. Relate the idea of "Offense" and "Defense" to playing the game of "Freeze Tag". When playing Freeze Tag, there is a person or group that is "IT". That person's job is to try to win by tagging and "freezing" as many other people as they can. The person who is "IT" is on "Offense", they are trying to score. Whoever is not "IT" is trying to keep from being tagged and defend themselves from getting frozen. They are on "Defense".

Divide the players into two even teams. Have one team be "IT" as Offense and the other team be Defense. Have them play Freeze Tag making sure to switch teams at least once so that everyone has a chance to be both Offense and Defense.

### **Game Action: 2v2**

Description: The goal of this game is for players to have a clearer understanding of what Offense and Defense mean and how to play Offense or Defense during a game. Create two lines at mid-field facing the goal, only one ball is needed. Have first two players step 10 ft in front of line, facing the line, they are defense. Have the next two players with the ball, they are offense. They have 45 seconds to score, the game is stopped, and the defense goes to end of line, offense moves to defense.

### **Game Action: Numbers game**

Description: Divide the team in half and give each person on each team a matching number. Have the teams line up on opposite sides of the goal. Roll the ball out and call a number at random. Those 2 players race out to get the ball. The first player to touch the ball becomes offense and tries to score while the other player plays defense.

\*Can also play full field if available

\*Can also use cones to make 2 small goals for your defender to have a scoring option

### **Dribbling control and Defense: Sharks and Minnows game**

Start with 1 Shark in the center of the field. All other players are minnows on one end line. Yell "Go!" Minnows must keep control of their ball and try to dribble to the other end without the shark kicking their ball away. If the ball gets kicked out of the field and/or the player loses control and it leaves the field, they will become a shark with the other sharks. The last remaining player can become the shark the new round!

### **Dribbling control: Marbles/Knock out game**

Create a box on the field. All players have a ball and dribble around trying to kick the other players balls out of the square while remaining in control of their ball. The last player in the square wins!

### **Passing: Pass Attack**

Description: The goal of this drill is to help players practice working together as a team both on offense and defense. Have one defensive player with you at the goal and two players at a time working together on offense to try to score a goal. Have them far enough from each other on the field that in order to set up an easy passing situation between the players making it easy for them to work together. Call out "PASS" at which point the two players on offense must pass the ball to their partner. Once you call out "Pass" the defensive player partnered with you by the goal can now go out to try to steal the ball. Either the defense

will successfully steal it and take it away or the other team will get an opportunity to shoot at the goal. Repeat until every player has had a turn.