FWYSA COACHES

**Hello Coaches!**
Games are only days away! You should be ramping up practices, and we wanted to send out just a little guidance to help.

***Only a 3-minute read!*** - Do it, it will help your kids!

Please make sure you've done the following:

- Started and set consistent practice times and location(s). Please be respectful of parents' time.
- Held Parent Meeting - let me know if you want help with this, and I can send out some guidance.
- Sent out game schedule and organized game day logistics and assigned a coach helper for the 2nd field.

***Reward for Reading this far:*** Custom GPT - GAMES FOR PRACTICE
https://chatgpt.com/g/g-68b056a1fbc081919fa167a27d98c7c3-ai-for-soccer-u6-u7-u8-games

Steps: 1. Type a skill you want to work on at practice
2. Get a list of games!
3. Pick a game and get instructions on how to play

***Keep Reading... almost done!*** Please read below to help with your practices and feel free to reach out with any questions or if you want/need additional help.

## U6: Building the Foundations (The Game Is the Teacher)

At this stage, everything is about

- **listening,**
- **moving,**
- **the field - boundaries and direction (to score)**
- **learning what the game feels like.**

Run practices with **PPP (play - practice - play)**. The idea here is to learn through play. The game is the best teacher - and it's easier to do it than explain it! **Practice Structure —>**

⚽ **U6 (45–50 min total)**

- **Play 1 (10 min)**
  3v3 or 4v4 free play, limited coaching — just let them play and explore. Get them warmed up and instantly into the game—coach field boundaries.
- **Practice (20 min)**
  - Simple game: *Sharks & Minnows* or *Red Light, Green Light with the Ball*
  - Focus: don't run into each other (dribbling with head up), basic ball control, moving into space.
- **Play 2 (15 min)**
  Small-sided scrimmage 4v4. Encourage dribbling over kicking the ball away. Again, directions to score, field boundaries, and resets.

**Coaching Points:**

- Celebrate effort, not results.
- Encourage bravery with the ball.
- Keep instructions short and positive - and keep them moving.
- Emphasize fun and movement, not perfection.

**Main Ideas:**

1. **Train their ears** – at breaks, play little Movement games like "touch your toes," "touch your nose," "run to the blue cone," etc. Establish that your voice = action. Train them to listen to you.
2. **Field boundaries** – Teach them when the ball is out to stop and reset. Use the "freeze" method and bring them in to regroup.
3. **Diamond shape** – Reset in a diamond after kickoffs, goals, or throw-ins - (length and width - the foundational shape of the game). No lecture, line them up, and let repetition teach. This is your opportunity to set spacing, and then let them loose to go get the ball once it's in play
4. **Courtesy resets** – Move back a few steps when the other team restarts. No goal keepers - everyone is involved to the ball.
5. **No Stragglers** – If they're not playing, they're with parents. No sitting on the field. Set the tone: practice and games are for being active.
6. **One toy (the ball)** – Everyone goes for it. Don't fight bunching — at this age, the goal is involvement and bravery. Encourage - "put your foot on the ball" "go get the ball"

7. **“Get through or go around”** – Dribbling games with turning/steering. Make the ball feel like theirs.
8. **Celebrate everything** – give fives, point out who’s on target doing great, call them by name, and say great job 1 million times.

The fun of the game is learned at these young ages —>> keep PLAY in the playing!

Quick overview if you want to know why (and that we are not making this up!) -

**PPP Method Overview**
**History & Genesis**

The **PPP method** (Play–Practice–Play) was developed by U.S. Soccer as a departure from the traditional “lines, laps, and lectures” approach. Instead of starting with drills and ending with a scrimmage, PPP flips the order: kids begin with a game, learn skills through guided activities, and then return to a game.

**Why It’s Valuable**

- **Engagement first** – Kids love games, so you capture attention immediately.
- **Natural learning** – Skills develop in real soccer situations instead of isolated drills.
- **Age-appropriate** – Especially for U6–U8, fun and discovery drive development better than rigid structure.
- **Better retention** – Kids remember what they did in a game more than a lecture or static drill.

**The Shift from Traditional Drills**

Traditional practices often meant standing in line, waiting for a turn, and doing repetitive drills. PPP is the opposite: **more touches, more decisions, more fun.** It’s less about “perfect form” and more about **learning the game through play.**

At these young ages, the most important lesson isn’t a perfect drill or a perfect pass—it’s falling in love with the game. When kids associate soccer with joy, movement, and discovery, they build a foundation that keeps them coming back year after year. As a coach, your role is to protect and nurture that joy: let them play, let them explore, and let the game itself be the teacher. The structure you provide should create just enough guidance for learning while keeping the magic of play alive—because if they’re smiling, moving, and wanting more, you’ve already won.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or if you want help or ideas.
Thanks,
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