

# American Youth Soccer Organization

## Vision Statement

To be the nationally recognized youth soccer organization of choice.

## Mission Statement

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which promote a fun, family environment based on our philosophies:

- Everyone Plays
- Balanced Teams
- Open Registration
- Positive Coaching
- Good Sportsmanship

# The Game

## How The Game Is Played

Soccer, by any measure, is the most popular game in the world. One reason is it's easy to play. It can be played just about anywhere and requires very little equipment—perhaps markers of some sort for the two goals and the four corners of the field, and, of course, a ball.

Soccer is non-stop action, played in two halves with far fewer interruptions than other team sports. For sheer exercise, it is hard to beat. In fact, it provides one of the best cardiovascular workouts in all of sport.

There are normally eleven players on a soccer team. However, smaller teams are used for younger players. The following is the AYSO Under-8 program which includes only those aspects of the game which are age-appropriate.

## Game Guidelines for Under-8

- A. FIELD
  - 1. Dimensions: 50 yards long and 25 yards wide maximum
  - 2. Markings: Distinctive lines recommended
    - a. Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines
    - b. Center circle with a six-yard radius in the center of the field
    - c. Corner arcs with a one-yard radius at each corner of the field
    - d. Goal area in front of each goal measuring 6 yards by 12 yards

- 3. Goals: Maximum six feet high and six yards wide

## B. THE BALL

Size three

## C. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 1. Maximum number of players on the field at any time: five, one of whom may be a goalkeeper
- 2. Maximum number of players on the roster: eight
- 3. Substitutions: Between periods and at halftime
- 4. Playing time: Minimum of 75% of the total playing time for each player, if possible. No one should play four periods until every-one has played three periods.
- 5. No co-ed teams. Separate girls teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

## D. PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

- 1. Footwear: Tennis shoes or soft-cleated soccer shoes
- 2. Shinguards: MANDATORY for practices and games

## E. REFEREE

- 1. The referee should be either a
  - a. adult referee
  - b. youth referee
  - c. coach
- 2. Referees shall emphasize
  - a. fun
  - b. fairness
  - c. safety
  - d. learning

Note: Referees should briefly explain any infringements to the players and help players with instructions. All referees must be registered AYSO volunteers.

- 3. Referee decisions are final and must not be questioned by coaches.

## F. ASSISTANT REFEREES

Parents may be used

## G. DURATION OF GAME

- 1. Four 10-minute periods
- 2. Halftime break of five to ten minutes

# About Under-8s

Traditionally, youth soccer programs are viewed from an adult perspective, using the 11-a-side game as a reference. But we need to remember, that children:

- must be treated as children, not as mini-adults.
- are essentially self-oriented and naturally relate only to a friend or two, not to groups of six or more.
- cannot sustain prolonged activity, and can function best with frequent rest periods.
- have a limited span of attention, so frequent activity changes are necessary.
- focus best when learning activities are fun.

Almost 70 percent of AYSO coaches are first-time coaches, and are parents with little free time. Short-sided soccer is a way to ease adults into coaching as well as to ease children into playing.

## What to Expect from Under-8 Players

Play in this very young age group is meant to give a "taste" of the game, some experience in working together as a team, and, most of all, a positive introduction to the sports experience.

One of the appealing things about soccer as a youth sport is that practically no skills at all are required to play the game at its simplest level. If a youngster can run and can kick a ball, he or she can play soccer and enjoy it.

New and exciting adventures begin to open up to the U-8 players as their coordination improves and their size and strength increase. However, new challenges are often met with a mixture of enthusiasm and frustration. U-8 players typically set unrealistically high standards for themselves, have difficulty making choices, and, at times, are overwhelmed by unfamiliar situations. At the same time, changes in their cognitive abilities enable them to see that underlying rules are often useful for understanding everyday events, objects, and the behavior of others.

## General Development Characteristics

### Physical/Gross Motor Development

#### Under-8s

- work and play hard
- have better timing
- have improved eye-hand coordination
- exhibit significant improvement in agility, balance, and endurance
- can now balance on one foot.

### Social/Emotional Development

- have definite likes and dislikes

## H. THE START OF PLAY

No change from regular play except that opponents must be eight yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.

## I. BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY - No change from regular play

## J. METHOD OF SCORING - No change from regular play

## K. OFFSIDE

There should be no offside called

## L. FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

No change from regular play, except:

1. *Direct free kicks* for all fouls, with the opponents eight yards away.
2. Referees will work cooperatively with the coaches and eliminate the need for cautions and send-offs. Do not show yellow or red cards.

## M. FREE KICKS

1. All kicks are *direct free kicks*.
2. Free kicks awarded the attacking team inside the defending team's goal area should be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line in front of the goal.

## N. PENALTY KICKS - No penalty kicks

## O. THROW-IN

A second throw-in should be allowed if the player commits a foul on the initial attempt. The referee should explain the proper method before allowing the player to re-throw.

## P. GOAL KICK

1. May be taken from any point inside the goal area
2. Opponents must be eight yards away from ball

## Q. CORNER KICK

No change from regular play except that opponents must be eight yards from the ball.

## AYSO Recommendations:

- Parents, coaches, and players from both teams exchange handshakes before and/or after each game.
- League standing are not recorded.
- Games scores are not recorded.
- All players receive participation awards.
- Spectators are not allowed behind either goal or within three yards outside the touchline.
- Only game participants are allowed to run the length of the field.
- Parents and coaches are to encourage players but not coach or instruct players during games.

- think friendship is important
- like purposeful play
- are afraid of failure
- need honesty training
- start to compare themselves to others
- are at the age where self-esteem and self concept are big issues
- become more outgoing
- are influenced by peer acceptance
- are quick to tattle when others aren't obeying
- cooperate with adults
- are interested in belonging to a group.

#### **Cognitive/Thought Development**

- internalize moral rules of soccer
- can solve some problems
- recognize parts of a whole
- understand viewpoints of others
- need concrete reinforcement
- treat every little mistake as a major crime
- apply a rigid understanding of justice and fair play
- begin to rank items according to a criteria.

Despite the turmoil and trying times (for the coach as well), most U-8 players experience an abundance of good times marked by a lively curiosity, an eagerness to learn, an endearing sense of humor, and exuberant outbursts of affection and good will.

## **Soccer Specific Training for the Under-8 Player**

Players under-8 will experience five-a-side play with a total of eight players per roster, while learning:

#### **Techniques**

- Dribbling (head up, ball close)
- Instep kick (passing and shooting)
- Inside of foot ball control (trap)
- Inside of foot pass (push pass)
- Throw-in

## **Knowledge**

- Ball in and out of play
- Kick-off
- Goal kick
- Corner kick
- Dropped ball
- No holding or pushing

## **Principles of Play**

- Penetration (direction)
- Width
- Mobility

## **Equipment**

Coach, you will need some basic equipment to get started.

- a very basic first-aid kit
- water container filled with water
- some size three soccer balls
- an extra pair of shinguards
- a marking pen
- whistle
- plenty of smiles

Your players should each bring a ball to every activity and must be wearing shinguards.

The regulation AYSO ball for U-8 play is size 3. Be sure each player's ball has his or her name on it.

## **Team Management**

Coaching a youth soccer team is more than teaching kids how to kick a ball and drawing Xs and Os on a chalkboard. Successful coaches realize that there are off-the-field responsibilities that also affect the team and players' well-being. These activities are lumped together and called team management.

Organizing the team should be your first priority.

- List the team's goal.
- Put your coaching philosophy in writing.
- Conduct a parents' meeting.
- Set team policies regarding

# Techniques

substitution, player positions, missed practices and games, player and parent behavior toward teammates, opponents, and officials.

- Get help. Enlist parent volunteers to make calls, arrange for treats, arrange for carpooling, etc.
- Distribute your activity schedule.
- Suggest that each player bring a ball to each activity.
- Explain the AYSO Under-8 soccer program.

## TECHNIQUE DRIBBLING

Dribbling is the art of using the feet to advance the ball on the ground.

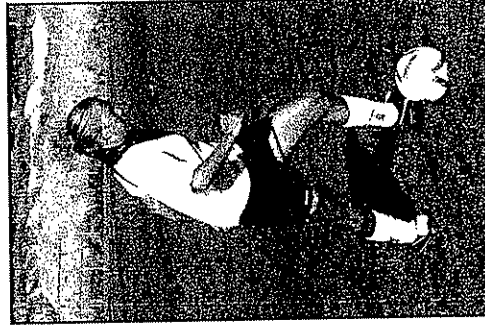
At this level there are two primary reasons to use dribbling skill

1. to retain possession of the ball,
2. to move the ball into a better position on the field.

Probably the most important element of dribbling is developing a "feel" or "touch" for the ball with the feet ... BOTH OF THEM. If you watch a good dribbler in soccer you will note that the player can control the ball with any part of the foot. The secret is to keep the ball close by kicking it softly.

## COACHING HINTS

1. When teaching dribbling, emphasize angling the foot to contact the ball with wide surfaces.
2. Tell players to try to keep their eyes on the ball but look up briefly from time to time when possible.
3. Discourage young dribblers from using their toes.
4. Teach them that the body weight is on the support foot and the foot that touches the ball has no weight on it.
5. Have young players start slowly. As they develop their dribbling skills, they will automatically increase their pace.
6. Help players understand that dribbling implies control. Just kicking the ball and running after it is not dribbling.



When teaching, it is important that you

1. tell your players why they need to learn to dribble,
2. demonstrate how to dribble, because children are visual,
3. let your players try it,
4. correct (very positively) any errors that are made,
5. minimize lectures,

Why dribble

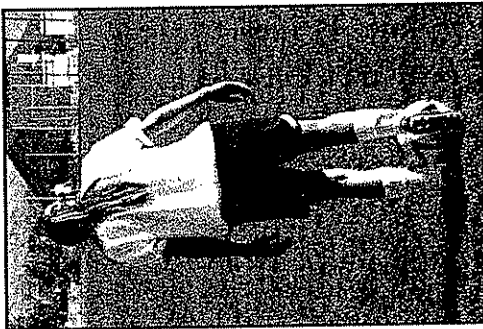
1. to maintain possession of the ball
2. to move the ball to a better position on the field

## TECHNIQUE

### INSTEP KICK (Passing and Shooting)

This technique is used for long passes and strong shots on goal.

Your young players should learn to strike the instep kick.



#### Prepare support leg

- Place support foot next to the ball pointed toward the target
- Bend knee slightly
- Put weight on supporting, non-kicking foot
- Use arms for balance

#### Prepare kicking leg

- Bend knee (cock lower leg)
- Withdraw leg at hip
- Lock ankle back and down

#### Striking movement

- Keep eyes on ball
- Set knee over ball (eye-knee-ball in line)
- Move thigh forward (whip action)
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep
- Move leg straight through toward target

#### Common errors in kicking

- The ball is stabbed or jabbed and rises off the ground.
- The leg is swung across the body instead of toward the target.
- The ankle is not locked back. (This is the most common mistake players make when passing and shooting.)
- Other problems you might see are players failing to keep their knee over the ball and placing the non-kicking foot behind the ball.

Get all of your players to practice passing and shooting with both feet.

## TECHNIQUE

### INSIDE OF FOOT BALL CONTROL (Trap)

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

#### COACHING HINTS

##### Support leg

- Place support foot near the path of the ball
- Bend knee slightly
- Put weight on support foot

##### Prepare action leg

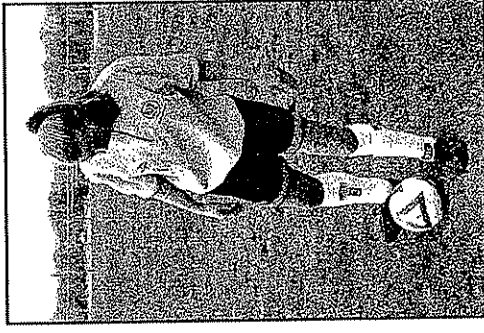
- Leg forward
- Bend knee slightly
- Rotate leg at hip 90 degrees out
- Raise toe up on foot
- Raise foot from ground

##### Control movement

- Keep eyes on the ball
- Withdraw action leg straight back as the ball arrives
- Let the ball hit on the inside of the foot
- Contact center of the ball with foot
- Step into your next move—pass, dribble, or shoot

#### Observe and correct common errors

- Players miss the ball; players are not in the path of the ball.
  - Keep eyes on the ball.
  - Shift weight onto the supporting foot.
- Weight is not on the supporting foot, so controlling foot cannot be moved.
- Incorrect placement of the support foot puts the supporting foot too far away causing the player to reach for the ball.
  - Place the support foot correctly.
- The ankle is not locked up and ball rolls over the foot.
  - Lock the ankle up on the controlling foot.
- Ball bounces off the controlling foot.
  - Draw the controlling leg back as the ball arrives.
- Body is too rigid, the ball bounces away.
  - Relax body.



## TECHNIQUE INSIDE OF FOOT PUSH PASS

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To advance the ball or to maintain possession.

### COACHING HINTS

- Prepare support leg
- Place support foot even with or slightly behind and next to the ball
- Bend knee slightly
- Put weight on foot
- Use arms for balance
- Prepare action leg
- Draw leg back from hip
- Bend knee slightly
- Rotate leg at hip 90 degrees outward
- Lock ankle up

### Strike

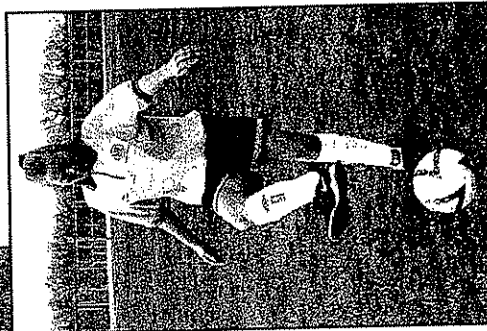
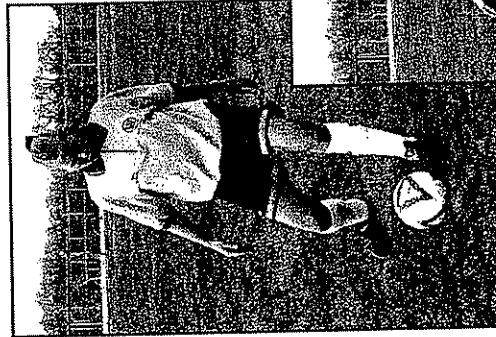
- Keep eyes on ball
- Move leg straight forward
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot

### Follow through

- Pull leg straight through while maintaining balance
- Lower body as leg rises
- Follow through and lift knee
- Step out of the kick

### Observe and correct common errors

- Weight is not on the support foot, so kicking foot cannot be moved.  
Shift weight onto the support foot.



- Ball "dribbles" off foot.

Lock ankle up. Incorrect placement of the support foot puts the supporting foot too far away causing the kicker to reach for the ball.

Place support foot correctly.

- The ankle is not locked up and ball "dribbles" off the foot.  
Lock the ankle up on the kicking foot.

### TECHNIQUE THROW-IN

A throw-in is used to restart the game after the entire ball has crossed the touch line, whether on the ground or in the air.

To execute a proper throw-in,

- the player must face the field of play;
- part of each foot must be either on the touchline or on the ground outside the touch line when the ball is released;
- the thrower must use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion.

The thrower may not play the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.

Your team should try to maintain possession when executing a throw-in.

### COACHING HINTS

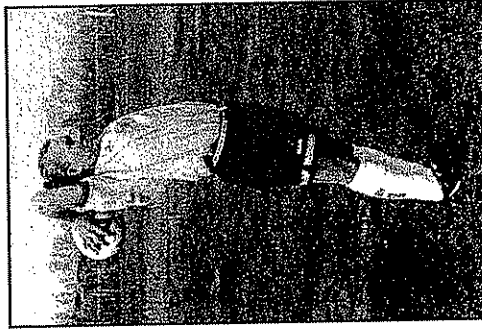
Lifting one foot is a common error but can be corrected by having players keep their feet together, knees bent and actually standing on their toes.

Remember, it is important that you

- tell your players why they need to learn throw-ins,
- demonstrate a throw-in, because children are visual,
- let your players try it,
- correct (very positively) any errors,
- minimize lectures.

You can get the parents involved. Have each one of your players execute a throw-in by making a throw-in to a parent.




Have each player continue to make throw-ins while you circulate and correct.



## KNOWLEDGE IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play when the entire ball has completely crossed the goal line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air, and when the referee stops the game.

Field of Play

- In Play 
- In Play 
- In Play 

It is perfectly all right for a player to step over the line in the course of action, or even run outside of it while dribbling the ball on the line.

Out of Play 

## KNOWLEDGE KICK-OFF

Preliminaries

- A coin is tossed and the team winning the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match.
- The other team takes the kick-off to start the match.
- The team winning the toss takes the kick-off at the start of the second half of the match.
- In the second half of the match, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.

A kick-off is a way of starting and restarting play

- at the start of the match,
- after a goal has been scored,
- at the start of the second half of the match.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.

Procedures

- All players are in their own half of the field.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least eight yards from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is stationary on the center mark.

- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.
- The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.

## KNOWLEDGE DROPPED BALL

A dropped ball is a way of restarting the match after a temporary stoppage, which becomes necessary, while the ball is in play, for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game.

Procedures

- The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped.
- Play restarts when the ball touches the ground.

## KNOWLEDGE GOAL KICK

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick but only against the opposing team.

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball, having last touched a player from the attacking team, passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored.

Procedures

- The ball is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player on the defending team.
- Opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
- The kicker cannot play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the penalty area.

## KNOWLEDGE CORNER KICK

A corner kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick but only against the opposing team.

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, passes over the goal line, either in the air or on the ground, and a goal is not scored.

Procedures

- The ball is placed inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flag.
- The corner flagpost is not moved.

# Sample Practices

- Opponents remain at least eight yards from the ball.
- The ball is kicked by a player of the attacking team.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

## **PRINCIPLE OF PLAY** PENETRATION (Advancement)

Getting the ball past all the defenders is achieved by

- shooting,
- dribbling,
- passing,
- using 2 vs. 1 situations.

## **PRINCIPLE OF PLAY** WIDTH

Attacking opponents on a broad front is achieved by

- creating space,
- isolating defenders 1 vs. 1.

## **PRINCIPLE OF PLAY** MOBILITY

During play, the changing of positions to provide opportunities for advancement and possession by creating numerical advantage is achieved by

- change of positions,
- movement without the ball.

*A coach should always go to a practice with an outline of what he or she would like to accomplish for the training session. Following are examples of practices that might be used for this age group.*

## **Practice 1 - (Week One) 40 to 60 mins.**

### **GOALS**

1. Start getting organized.
2. Introduce dribbling.
3. Introduce when the ball is in play and when it is out of play.

### **GETTING ORGANIZED**

Week one will be a bit hectic. Relax, everything will be fine. At this first practice, you can expect a few late arrivals, even though you have made it clear to the parents how important being on time is. Remember, this is not a life or death situation, and if you begin to feel tense, so will the children. They are under eight, so let them play and learn in a relaxed atmosphere.

### **DO A WARM-UP**

Keep it short, but do it. Young players must get used to warming up.

Proper warm-up

1. Light exercise (a small jog)
2. Static stretching
3. Dynamic stretching

### **INTRODUCE DRIBBLING**

Explain to your players that dribbling is the art of using the feet to advance the ball on the ground.

At this level, there are two primary reasons to use dribbling skill:

1. To retain possession of the ball.
2. To move the ball into a better position on the field.

Probably the most important element of dribbling is developing a "feel" for the ball with the feet... BOTH OF THEM. If you watch a good dribbler in soccer, you will note that the player can control the ball with any part of the foot. The secret is to keep the ball close by kicking it softly.

### **COACHING HINTS**

1. When teaching to dribble, emphasize angling the foot to make contact with wide surfaces.

2. Players should try to keep eyes on the ball, but look up briefly from time to time if possible.
3. You don't want the young dribbler to use his or her toe.
4. The body weight is on the support foot and the foot that touches the ball has no weight on it.
5. Have the young players start slowly, and as they develop their dribbling skills, they will increase their pace automatically.
6. Dribbling implies control. Just kicking the ball and running after it is not dribbling.

**When teaching, it is important that you:**

1. Tell your players why they need to learn to dribble.
2. Demonstrate how to dribble. Remember, children are visual.
3. Let your players try it.
4. Correct (very positively) any errors that are made.
5. Minimize lectures.

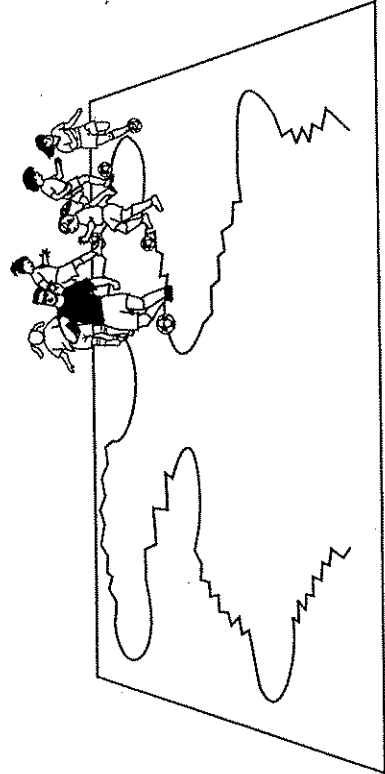
**DEMONSTRATE DRIBBLING**

Walk slowly forward with your toes pointing out about 45 degrees ("Charlie Chaplin" style), gently pushing the ball ahead of you. Alternate feet pushing the ball with the inside part of your feet.

Begin your demonstration at a walk, then gradually increase the speed to a pace with which you are comfortable while keeping it close.

**PLAY A GAME SNAKE**

Have your assistant lead the pack, starting slowly. Gradually increase the pace going in a snake-like fashion. At this time you can identify any player who might be having a problem.



**Give a short water break.**

**INTRODUCE IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

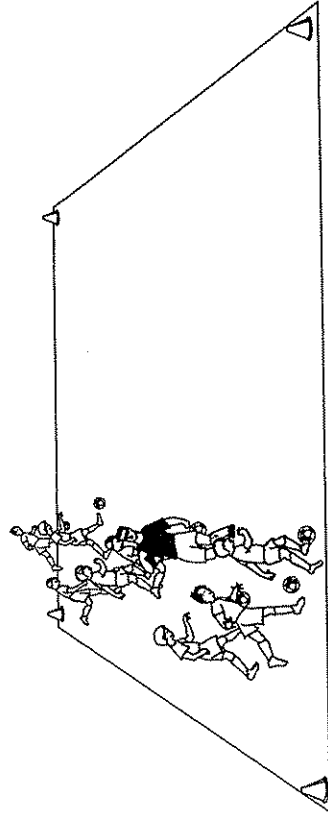
Assemble the team at the side of the field—preferably astride the touchline (sideline)—to demonstrate when the ball is in play and when it is out. If your field is not marked, use a long piece of string or ribbon to represent the sideline.

The ball is out of play when the entire ball has completely crossed the line, whether on the ground or in the air. If any part of the ball is above the line, it is still in play.

It is perfectly all right for a player to step over the touchline in the course of action or even run outside of it while dribbling the ball on the line.

**PLAY A GAME SHARKS AND MINNOWS**

All players (minnows) start at one point and attempt to dribble to another point. The coach acts as the shark and tries to tag as many kids as possible. Have a 10 minute scrimmage. 4 vs. 4 and **HAVE SOME FUN!**



# Practice 2 - (Week Two) 60 mins.

## GOALS

1. Introduce kick-off
2. Introduce throw-in
3. Review in and out of play
4. Review dribbling

## DO A WARM-UP

Keep it short, but do it. Young players must get used to warming up.

Proper warm-up

1. Light exercise (a small jog)
2. Static stretching
3. Dynamic stretching

## INTRODUCE KICK-OFF

A kick-off is a way of starting and restarting play:

- at the start of the match
- after a goal has been scored
- at the start of the second half of the match
- at the start of each period

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.

## Preliminaries

A coin is tossed and the team which wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match. The other team takes the kick-off to start the match.

In the second half of the match, the team that won the toss takes the kick-off to start. The teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.

**Procedures:** When there is a kick-off:

- All players are in their own half of the field.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least six yards from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is stationary on the center mark.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- The kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.

## INTRODUCE THROW-IN

- A throw-in is used to restart the game after the entire ball has crossed the touch line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- To execute a proper throw-in, the player must face the field of play.
- Part of each foot must be either on the sideline or on the ground outside the sideline when the ball is released.
- The thrower must use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over his head in one continuous motion.
- The thrower may not play the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.
- The team should try to maintain possession.

## COACHING HINT

Lifting one foot is a common error, but can be corrected by having players keep their feet together and knees bent and actually standing on their toes.

Remember when teaching, it is important that you:

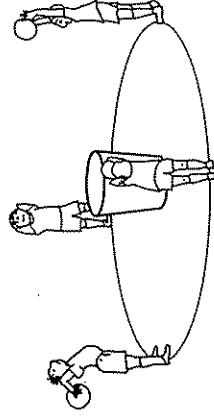
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2. Demonstrate a throw-in. Remember, children are visual.
3. Let your players try it.
4. Correct (very positively) any errors that are made.
5. Minimize lectures.

## DEMONSTRATE THROW-IN

- Have each player execute a throw-in.
- You can get the players' parents involved. Have each one of your players execute a throw-in by making a throw-in to one of their parents.
- Have each player continue while you circulate and correct.

## PLAY SOCCER HOOPS

Circle the players (5-yard diameter) around a target like a box or a trash can. The players attempt to throw the ball into the target all at once. The object is to improve the number of balls that go into the target, not to have a winner. Have the team work on improving the number of balls in the target.



# Games

## Games for the U-8 Player

The following are a few games that the AYSO National Coaching Commission recommends for use with the U-8 players, both boys and girls. Use them. We think you will like them. Be creative with the names and modify them. Change the speed, space, and opposition as you begin to feel comfortable with them. Enjoy!

Have a short water break.

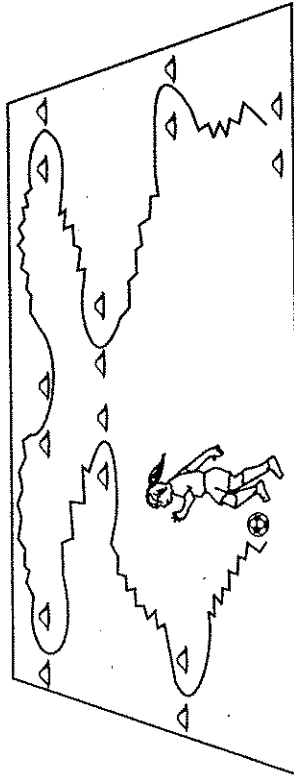


### REVIEW DRIBBLING

### REVIEW IN AND OUT OF PLAY

### PLAY SOCCER CROQUET

Set a croquet course using cones. Time each player as they dribble the entire course. Do not have a winner but allow each of them to try to better their own time. The coach needs to also dribble the course (children also like to laugh).



Have a 10-minute scrimmage. 4 vs. 4

**HAVE FUN!!!**

## Dribbling Game 1

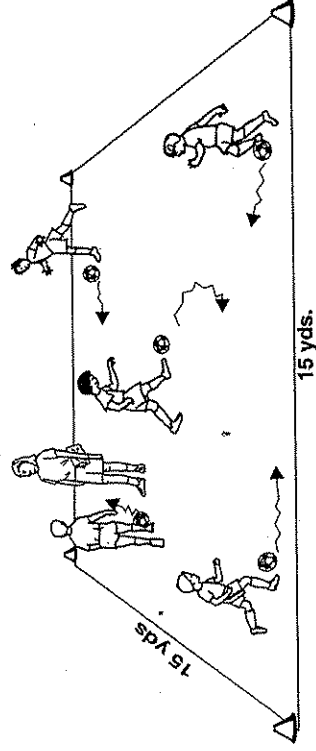
<b>Skill</b>	Dribbling
<b>Name of Game</b>	<i>LA Freeway at Rush Hour</i>
<b>Objective</b>	Develop a touch for the ball
<b>Number of Players</b>	All on team (should be no more than 8)
<b>Equipment</b>	Some type of marker to designate grid Soccer ball for each player
<b>Layout</b>	Make a 15 X 15-yard grid

### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

All players dribble around the grid using all parts of the feet (inside, outside, and top). Traffic Cop (the coach) moves about in the grid asking players to identify the number of fingers he or she is holding up. Play for one minute, rest and repeat.

### Variation #1

All players dribble around the grid using all parts of the feet (inside, outside, and top). Traffic Cop (the coach) moves about the grid holding a soccer ball which he or she will toss gently to the dribbling players. The players must catch the ball and pass it back to the coach. Coach will keep track of how many times the ball hits the ground which constitutes a crash. Look for a rush hour with very few crashes. Play for one minute, rest and repeat.



### Variation #2

All players dribble around the grid using all parts of the feet (inside, outside, and top). Traffic Cop (coach) moves about the grid and calls out "red light." All players must come to a fast stop. Traffic Cop (coach) then calls "green light." All players start dribbling again at full speed. Play for one minute, rest and repeat.

NOTE: For each of the variations, the coach can designate what part of the foot can be used. For example, designate only inside right, and then next time only top of the foot and so on. If the Traffic Cop has a lot of life, so will the kickers.

## Dribbling Game 2

**Skill** Dribbling

**Name of Game** Pac-man Tag

**Objective** Develop a touch for the ball

**Number of Players** All on team (should be no more than 8)

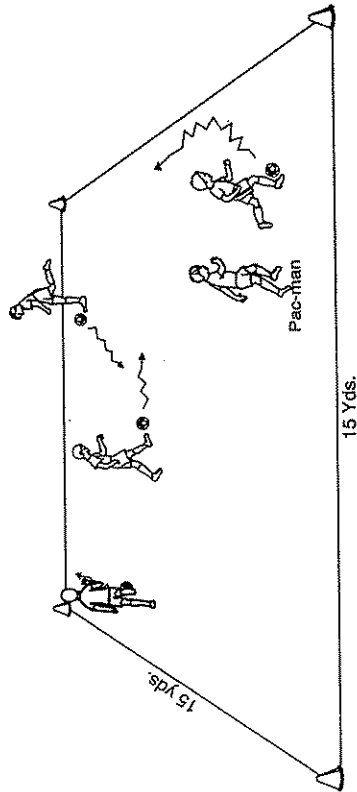
**Equipment** Some type of marker to designate grid

Soccer ball for each player

**Layout** Make a 15 X 15-yard grid

### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

All players dribble around the grid using all parts of the feet (inside, outside, and top). Pac-man (a player without a ball) chases and tags all players in the grid. Have the players feel like the only one being evaluated is the Pac-man and how fast he or she can eat up all the players. When a player is tagged he or she must sit down inside the grid where tagged. The game continues until all players are tagged by the Pac-man. The first player tagged becomes the Pac-man on the second go-around.



### Variation #1

Same as above, but the coach is the Pac-man.

### Variation #2

Same as above. However, if you have an exceptionally fast player, have the Pac-man (the fast player) also dribble.

### Variation #3

All players dribble around the grid using all parts of the feet (inside, outside, and top). Pac-man (a player without a ball) chases and tries to kick the dribbling players' balls out of the grid. When a player's ball is kicked out of the grid, the player must also leave the grid. Have the players feel like the only one being evaluated is the Pac-man and how fast he or she can kick all the balls out of the grid. The game continues until all players' balls are kicked out by the Pac-man. The first player whose ball was kicked out becomes the Pac-man on the second go around.

NOTE: Every child will want to be the Pac-man, so let them. For each of the variations, the coach can designate what part of the foot can be used. For example, designate only inside right, and then only top of the foot and so on. If the Pac-man has a lot of life, so will the kickers.

## Dribbling Game 3

**Skill** Dribbling

**Name of Game** Big Bad Wolf

**Objective** Develop a touch for the ball

**Number of Players** All on team (should be no more than 8)

**Equipment** Some type of marker to designate grid

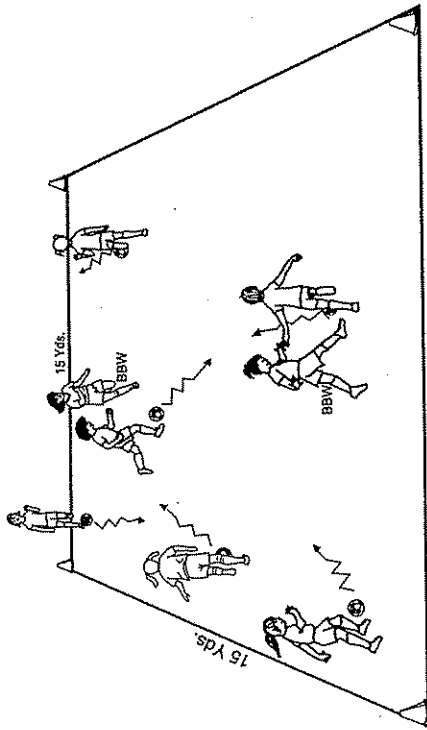
Soccer ball for each player

**Layout** Make a 15 x 15-yard grid

### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

The game has six (6) Piggies and two (2) Big Bad Wolves. All players dribble around the grid using all parts of the feet (inside, outside, and top). The Wolves must attempt to kick the balls out of the area. Once a Piggy's ball is kicked out, he or she must go get it, dribble it back in the grid, then stand with the ball above his or her head with his or her feet apart. Standing Piggies are free to dribble again only when another Piggy dribbles a ball between his or her feet. The objective is to see how fast the Wolves can eat up all the Piggies. The game continues until all Piggies are standing with the balls above

their heads. The last two Piggies left become the Big Bad Wolves.



#### Variation #1

Coaches play the Big Bad Wolves.

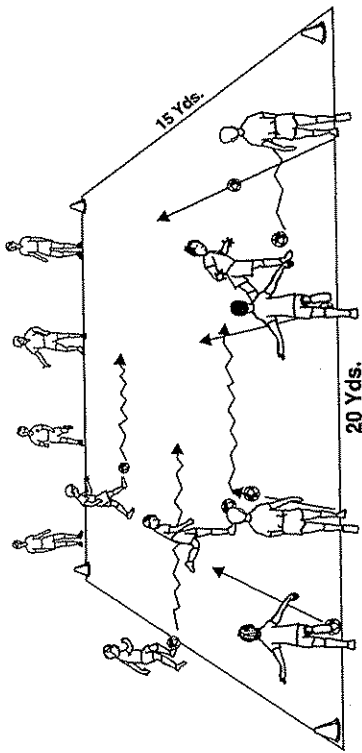
### Passing Game 1

<b>Skill</b>	Passing (instep/push pass)
<b>Name of Game</b>	Star Wars
<b>Objective</b>	Develop passing skills of accuracy and pace
<b>Number of Players</b>	Full team
<b>Equipment</b>	Soccer ball for each player Some type of marker to designate a grid
<b>Layout</b>	Make a 15 X 20-yard grid

#### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Divide the team into two groups. Place four players on two sides of the grid, facing each other. Coaches or older players become the invaders from another planet. The invaders must dribble across hostile space and not lose their ball. Luke and the boys, from outside the grid, must try to hit the invaders' soccer balls. See how many times the invaders can make it across hostile territory without their soccer balls being hit. Also count the number of hits that Luke and his boys make on the balls. **NOTE:** After the players get a feel for the game, you can designate invaders from the team. Moms and dads

also make great invaders.



#### Variation #1

Two coaches, standing at each end of the grid, just pass the ball between Luke and the boys. See if they can hit a moving ball. Coaches can constantly change the pace of their passes.

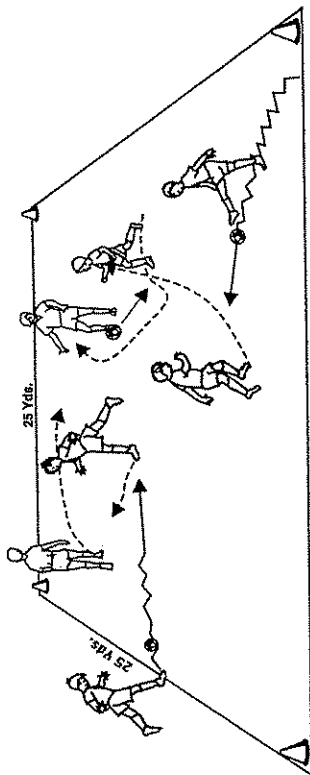
### Passing Game 2

<b>Skill</b>	Passing (instep/push pass)
<b>Name of Game</b>	Soccer Dodge Ball
<b>Objective</b>	Develop passing and shooting skills
<b>Number of Players</b>	Full team
<b>Equipment</b>	Soccer ball for each player Some type of marker to designate a grid
<b>Layout</b>	Make a 25 X 25-yard grid

#### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Divide the team in half. Players from Team One are inside the grid without balls. Team Two is outside the with balls at their feet. When the coach says, "go," Team Two players dribble into the grid and try to pass the ball to hit players from Team One with a pass. The pass must hit the players below the knees. All passes must be made with the inside of the right or left foot. Any player hit with a ball below the knees is eliminated, and he or she must leave

the grid until all players are hit.



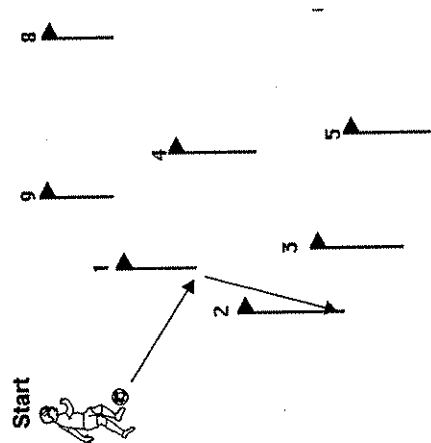
### Passing Game 3

- Skill** Passing (instep/push pass)
- Name of Game** Soccer Golf
- Objective** Develop passing skills of accuracy and pace
- Number of Players** Full team
- Equipment** Soccer ball for each player  
Some type of marker (corner flag, tall cones)
- Layout** Design a 9 hole golf course on a large field

#### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Players can compete individually or as partners against another two-player team. Each player tees off using an instep kick. The basic rules of golf will be used except the ball is kicked with the instep or inside of the right or left foot (your call coach). The ball must hit a flag-post, cone, bag—whatever is being used as the hole.

**NOTE:** Young players love this game. The only problem is it is time consuming. Have a golf tournament; you and your players will enjoy it.

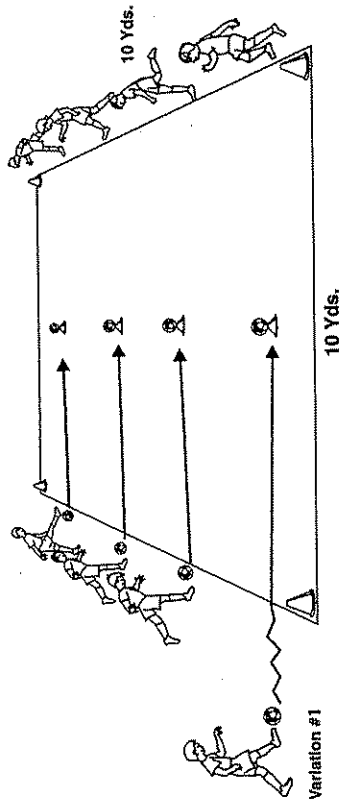


### Passing/Shooting Game 4

- Skill** Passing/shooting (instep kick)
- Name of Game** Shooting Gallery
- Objective** Develop passing/shooting skills
- Number of Players** Full team
- Equipment** Same number of balls as players  
Some type of marker to designate a grid
- Layout** Make a 10 X 10-yard grid

#### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Pair up players on opposite sides of the grid. Place four pro-cones across the middle of the grid. Put a soccer ball on each pro-cone, one ball per team. Players, working as a team of two, try to knock their ball off its cone. See how many times a team can knock the ball off the cone in three minutes.



#### Variations #1

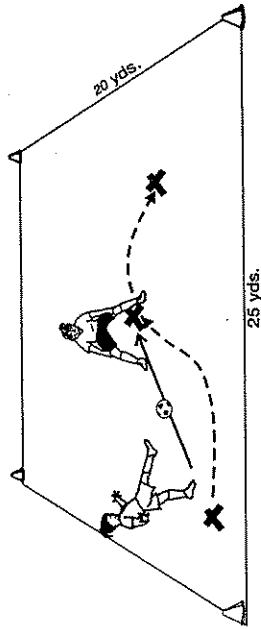
Have players dribble to the line and, without stopping, try to make a pass that knocks the ball off the cone.

## Passing Game 5

- Skill** Passing (push pass)  
**Name of Game** *Golden Arches*  
**Objective** Develop passing skills of accuracy and pace  
**Number of Players** Full team  
**Equipment** Soccer ball for pair of players  
 Some type of marker to designate a grid  
**Layout** Make a 20 X 25-yard grid

### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Partners position side by side, within the grid, one with a ball at his or her feet. To begin the game, the player with- out the ball jogs 3 to 5 yards from his or her partner, then positions facing the partner with legs spread wide apart forming a "Golden Arch." The partner tries to pass the ball through the arch. After each pass, the Golden Arch jogs to a different area of the grid and resets the arch. His or her partner collects the ball and attempts a pass through the new arch. Players switch roles after 5 passes.

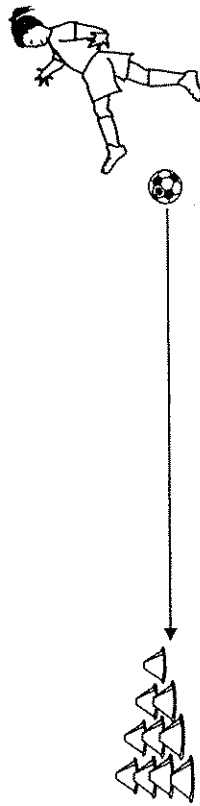


## Passing Game 6

- Skill** Passing (instep/push pass)  
**Name of Game** *Soccer Bowling*  
**Objective** Develop passing skills  
**Number of Players** Full team  
**Equipment** Soccer ball for each player  
 Some type of marker to designate a grid  
 10, 20, or 30, 6 inch cones  
**Layout** Make 1, 2, or three bowling alleys on the grass 2 X 10 yards

### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Set up one, two, or three bowling lanes. Have your players in teams of two. Keep regular bowling score for ten frames. Have parents be scorekeepers and pin (cone) setters. Have a bowling tournament. Kids will love it.



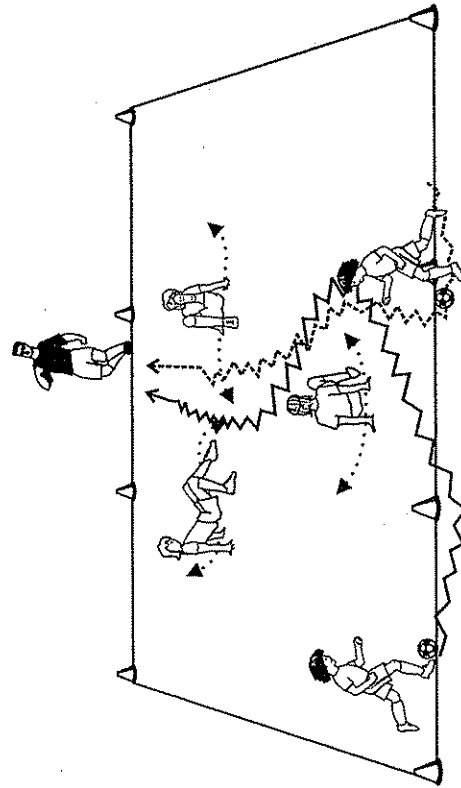
# See, Show, Say

## Shooting/Dribbling Game 1

- Skill** Shooting and dribbling
- Name of Game** *Crabs in My Way*
- Objective** Develop shooting and dribbling skills
- Number of Players** Full team
- Equipment** Soccer ball for each player  
Eight cones
- Layout** Make a 20 X 20-yard grid

### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Two teams of four players start on the corner of the grid with a ball at their feet. Put three crabs randomly in the grid. One player at a time from each team simultaneously dribbles down the side-line around the cone and through the gate toward the goal. Each player must dribble in and out of the crab defenders (defenders must stay in the crab position) to get a shot on goal. Coach is the Keeper. Give score after each round. If crabs eat the ball, no shot can be taken. Only shots will be added to total score.



Coaches, parents, and referees who want to practice positive coaching can profit from the use of the **See, Show, Say** method. Simple and easy to remember, this three step process can make a big difference in how kids feel about their AYSO experience.

### See

If seeing is believing, then we're asking you to believe in what you see. During practices and games, players attempt to recreate and innovate on the things they have learned. Coaches, parents, and referees need to be *observers* of the players' performances, looking to see if the *known skills, tactics, and strategies* that have been given to the children are being played out on the field, hopefully in a *functional* way.

Observation is a silent activity. (This doesn't mean no cheering for the home team. Just be aware that cheering is an *affirmation* not an *observation*.)

A coach who ignorantly tries to introduce new skills, tactics, and strategies by shouting out confusing or obvious instructions ("Jane, you kept it too long!") is doing more harm than good. This is not positive coaching.

The parent who repeatedly shouts out unfocused commands (Go get it, Brad! C'mon, run!) is overloading the player with non-functional gibberish. This is not positive coaching.

The referee who frequently says "Don't..." ("Don't lift your foot...don't use your hands...don't touch the ball twice") is planting a negative, conflicting message in the minds of players. This is not positive coaching.

All of these interruptive remarks help to contribute to a culture of failure for children. That's why silent observation is so important.

This is what "**seeing**" is:

Watch the players as they play or practice to see if they execute the skills, tactics, or strategies that you have taught them.

Avoid looking for or expecting things you haven't taught them.

When you see skills, tactics, or strategies being used, focus on execution and effect.

Make notes (mental or written) on the successful elements in the execution.

Make a note (ONE note) on how execution can be improved.

Make notes on the positive outcomes of the effect.

Make a note (ONE note) on how the effect can be enhanced.

Through the act of seeing (without speaking or directing), you can focus on *analyzing* the players and their performance. This analysis is the basis for the next step: **show**.

## Show

**Showing** really consists of two complementary parts: description and demonstration. Description involves telling the players what you saw in terms of their successful execution and effect, then providing them with attainable modifications to correct one or two deficits. (This is called analysis and application.) Don't try to describe every error or apply every remedy.

Once you've given the description, move quickly to demonstration to reinforce the teaching point. Here again one or two meaningful demonstrations of things that the players can do are more effective than stunning displays of techniques that only one or two players can achieve. You may not have the skill to do an effective demonstration, in which case, a player or players will suffice. Avoid using the best player each time. This only reinforces the other players' feelings of inadequacy.

This is how the process might play out:

During practice, you **Show** only during a break, or after a drill or practice game; during games, **Show** only to substitutes on the sidelines or to players at halftime.

Talk to a player or players about your observation, emphasizing those things done right. ("John, I liked the way you kept the ball controlled and away from the marking player. You also varied your pace and tempo, which kept your opponent on his toes.")

Emphasize the one or two points you need to make about execution and effect. ("You got into trouble because you didn't know where your teammates were. Here's how you can correct that problem...")

Demonstrate the technique (or have it demonstrated for you).

Ask the players if they understand.

Give them an opportunity to apply what they learned.

Nowhere in this discussion is there a "don't" or "can't" statement ("Don't keep your head down—you can't see"). Rather, all correct performance issues have been validated, and positive actions have been introduced to offset the mistakes. Finally, the corrections are made one or two at a time, not in a complicated and confusing list that kids can't handle.

The **show** part is easier than the **see** part, and if the **see** and **show** are done right, the **say** part is easiest of all.

## Say

When your players have been observed and analyzed silently, been given constructive description and demonstration, and then perform the skill, tactic, or strategy effectively, it's time to let them know! Say so, out loud so everyone can

hear: "Way to go John; I like the way you looked! Did you see that? He knew where everyone was. All right, John, way to look!" (Never miss a chance to teach others while praising. Imitation is a form of flattery; it's also a form of learning.) That's the whole thing: **See, Show, Say**. Make positive coaching work for you.

# Player Progress Log

One of the most important elements of any teaching or coaching program is feedback, the process where the coach evaluates the players' progress and communicates or feeds back that information to the players.

This process performs two critical functions in teaching:

1. For the coach, it requires conscious observation and assessment of each player, then talking to that individual.
2. For the player, it provides positive reinforcement of the skills learned and motivation to reach for the next level of skill competence.

## Sample Player Progress Log for U-8

Division 6 Under-8 Players' Progress Log												
Player's Name	Passing			Shooting			Dribbling		Controlling			
	Push Pass	Instep Kick	Accuracy	Touch and Vision	Instep of Foot	Instep of Foot	Instep of Foot	Instep of Foot	Instep of Foot	Instep of Foot	Instep of Foot	
1	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												

\*Progress: 1=Grasps concept 2=Performs static movements 3=Performs dynamic movements  
(Below: As each of the three levels is achieved, insert the date in the corresponding boxes for each skill listed.)

The rating progression or build-up of skill levels for Division 6 is as follows:  
1. Grasps Concept - means the player understands the concept for and the basic mechanical movements of the skill.  
2. Performs Static Movements - means a player's ability to perform the component parts of the skill while stationary.  
3. Performs Dynamic Movements - means a player's ability to execute all elements of the skill while moving or in action.

One Player Progress Log is used to chart all the players' progress. A full-sized log can be found on the back page of this manual. Throughout the season, the coach should periodically inform each player of his or her progress, without actually showing the form to the player. This prevents players from making comparisons, which is not in their best interests. At the end of the season, the coach reviews the Player Progress Log with the parents of his or her players.

# Glossary of Terms for Coaching Under-8

**corner kick** - A corner kick is a method of restarting play. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team. A corner kick is awarded when: the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, passes over the goal line, either in the air, or on the ground, and a goal is not scored.

**dribbling** - Is the art of using the feet to advance the ball on the ground when opponents are near.

**dropped ball** - A dropped ball is a way of restarting the match after a temporary stoppage which becomes necessary, while the ball is in play, for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game.

**everyone plays** - In AYSO our goal is for children to play soccer, not to sit on the bench. So we have a rule — strictly enforced — that every child plays at least half of every game.

**good sportsmanship** - AYSO creates a positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a "win at all cost" attitude.

**in and out of play** - The ball is out of play when the entire ball has completely crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air.

**inside of foot ball control** - Controlling the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

**inside of foot push pass** - To advance the ball or to maintain possession or to shoot on goal using the inside of the foot.

**instep kick (passing and shooting)** - This technique is used for long passes and strong shots on goal using the instep of the foot.

**kick-off** - A kick-off is a way of starting and restarting play:

- at the start of the match
- after a goal has been scored
- at the start of the second half of the match
- at the start of each period

**mobility** - During play, the changing of positions to provide opportunities for advancement and possession by creating numerical advantage achieved by:

- change of positions
- movement without the ball

**penetration** - Advancement, getting the ball past all the defenders is achieved by:

- shooting
- dribbling
- passing
- using 2 vs. 1 situations

**positive coaching** - It is a lot of fun to win games — but it is even more fun for a youngster to see his or her skills steadily improving as the season progresses. So we say, winning kids come first, winning games comes second. Kids thrive on encouragement. The extra effort it takes to offer positive help to our players, rather than negative criticism, is an investment in the future of all our kids — on or off the playing field.

**throw-in** - The throw-in is used to restart the game after the entire ball has crossed the sideline, whether on the ground or in the air.

**width** - Attacking opponents on a broad front achieved by:

- creating space
- isolating defenders 1 vs. 1

## Under-8 Players Progress Log

\*Progress: 1=Grasps concept 2=Performs static movements 3=Performs dynamic movements

(Below: As each of the three levels is achieved, insert the date in the corresponding boxes for each skill listed.)

Player's Name	Passing			Passing			Shooting			Dribbling			Controlling		
	Push Pass			Instep Kick			Accuracy			Touch and Vision			Inside of Foot		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															

\*The rating progression or build-up of skill levels for Under-8 is as follows:

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3. Performs Dynamic Movements - means a player's ability to execute all elements of the skill while moving or in action.