

# U7/U8 Coach Handout



## U7/U8 Player Traits

### -Physical

- The cardiovascular system is less efficient than an adult; a child's heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover to full resting rate
- The temperature regulation system is less efficient than adults; children elevate their core body temperature more quickly with activity and take longer to cool down than adults
- This is one of the reasons for continuing to play the match by quarters and not by halves at this age
- The skeletal system is still growing; growth plates are near joints, thus injuries to those areas merit special consideration
- There is a perceivable improvement in pace and coordination from U6 to U8 however the immaturity of U8 children's physical ability is obvious

### -Mental

- Limited ability to attend to more than one task at a time; the simple task of controlling the ball demands most of the attention capacity, thereby leaving little or no capacity for making additional decisions
- Therefore, verbal distractions from the sidelines impedes the players' performance
- Limited experience with personal evaluation; effort is synonymous with performance, "If I try hard, then I performed well," regardless of the actual performance
- The concept of the time and space relationship is just beginning to develop and will be limited by capacity to attend to multiple tasks
- Subsequently, some intentional passing will occur, but it will be inconsistent
- Beginning to categorize information: some relationships that "do" exist are not recognized and some relationships that "do not" exist are assumed

### -Social Interaction

- Like to play soccer because it is "fun", intrinsically motivated
- True playmates emerge with the inclination toward partner activities
- Great need for approval from adults such as parents, teachers and coaches
- Give them simple ball skill "homework" challenges that they can demonstrate to the coach at the next training session
- They like to show their individual skills
- Self-concept and body image are beginning to develop, but still very fragile
- Easily bruised psychologically by both peers and adults; negative comments carry great weight
- By and large, critiques are not needed at this age. Coaches should comment more often on effort and positive outcomes

## Thing you'll need for practice and/or games

- **Water:** Ask every player to bring water in a plastic water jug with their name on it.
- **Watch:** Helps you keep track of activity and practice duration.
- **One Ball Per Player:** Ask every player to bring a ball to practice, but it would also be great if you have a spare as well as a ball pump.
- **Practice kit:** Small disk cones, practice bibs (vest), whistle

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- **Bench Manager/Assistants:** You will need help, ask the other parents. They can handle setting up cones, picking up after games/practice, team communication or post game snacks. Bench Manager will be required for the games.
- **Tent/Canopy:** Shade is essential for player safety, there is very little natural shade at the park ask the parents for help with providing a tent for the bench.

## Safety Issues

- **Lightning Awareness:** Do not take any chances, seek shelter any time lightning is a possibility. A soccer game is not worth the risk, when in doubt get off the field.
- **Concussions:** Any player suspected of having head trauma or cervical area must be removed from activity immediately. Player cannot resume activities until cleared by certified health professional. Always err of the side of the player's health and safety.

## Practice Setup

- Ideally an 1 hour long
- 10-15 Minute Warm-up, free play or soccerastics
- 20-30 Minute mixture of individual and partner activities
- 15-20 Minute small-sided game, 2 goals and no goalkeepers

## Coaching Tips:

**-Technique:** Experiment with the qualities of a rolling or spinning ball. Introduce ball lifting, juggling, block tackle, receiving ground balls with the inside and sole of the foot, shooting with the inside of the foot, toe passing and shooting and dribbling while changing direction. Introduce the push pass and throw-in.

Goalkeeper's fundamentals –path of the ball, collect ground balls and distribute rolling balls.

**-Fitness:** Agility, eye-foot and eye-hand coordination, balance, leaping, bounding, tumbling, catching, throwing, pulling, pushing, warm-up activities and movement education. Continue education on sports nutrition with players and parents.

**-Psychology:** Encourage working in pairs, sportsmanship, parental involvement, how to play, emotional management, creativity, dynamic activities, participation of all players and a safe and fun environment. There is still a short attention span unless the player has peaked (keep interest high). Like to show what they can do – encourage trying new things. Developing self-esteem – activities should foster positive feedback and attainable positive success.

**-Tactics:** Back line and forward line, 1v1 attack and choosing to dribble or pass. Introduce the names of positions (fullbacks and forwards). Institute games of 2v1, 1v2 and 2v2, playing with the ball with a purpose and promote problem solving.

### **-Practice Tips**

- FUN FUN FUN – games not drills / NO LINES – keep them moving
- Use movement education approach (play the games without the ball first)
- Demonstrate what you expect –“Can you do this?”
- Maximize touches on the ball –everyone has a ball, use boundaries, challenge.
- Keep it simple
- Plenty of water breaks
- If the games are not working, CHANGE IT during water breaks
- Passing is a foreign concept; allow them to dribble all they want.



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- Introduce the “up and back” concept (closing down space)
- Introduce spatial awareness games using multiple goals to attack
- Practice GK fundamentals for the whole team
- Talk to other coaches, ask them what works for them

### Gauging Success

1. Are they smiling?
2. Are they learning life lessons? Teamwork? Communication?
3. Are learning about soccer?
4. Are they trying their best

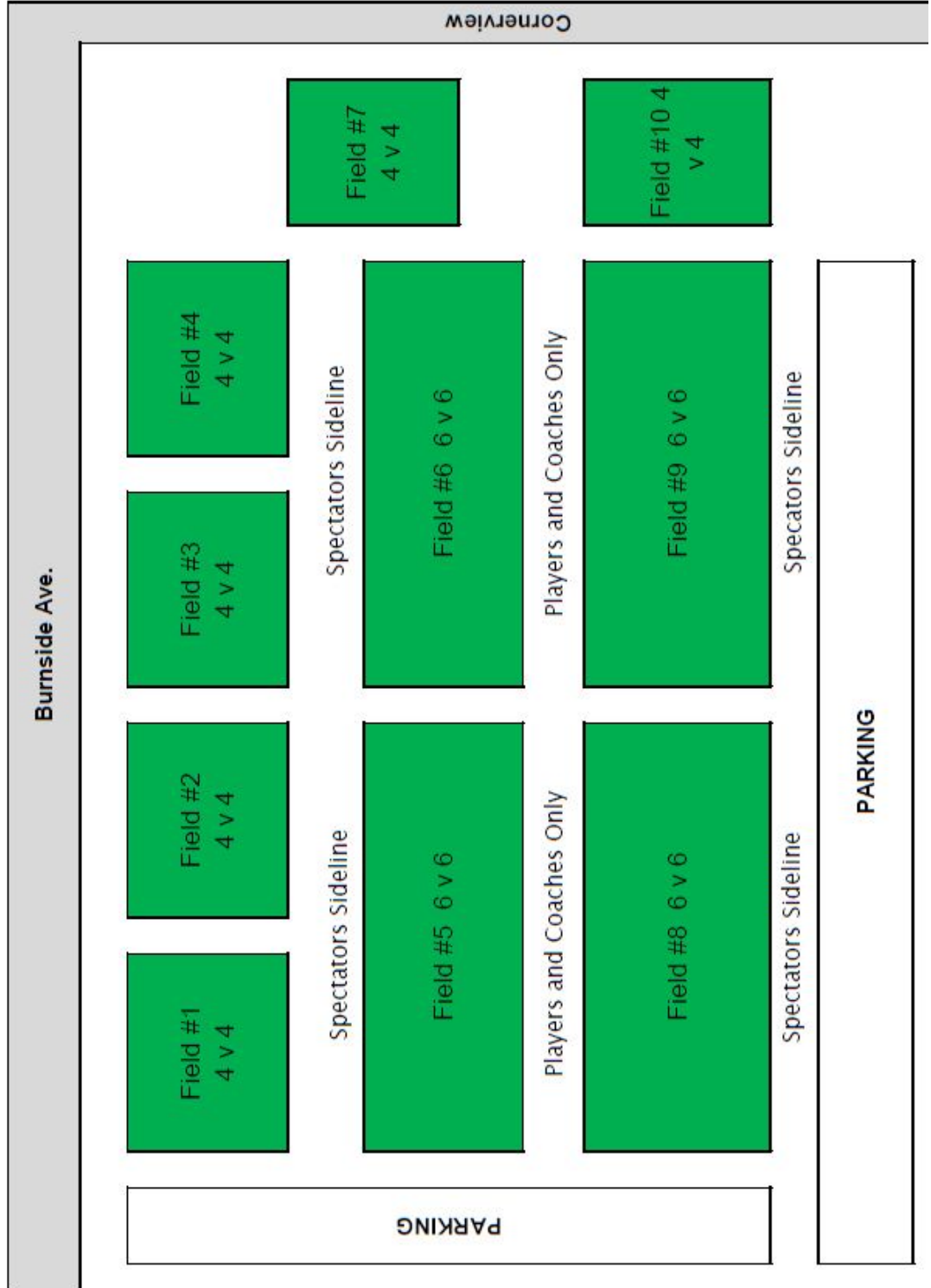
### Gameday:

- Goalkeeper need a bib or shirt different from either teams colors
- Bring a tent or sunbrella for the bench on hot days
- Spectators and teams on opposite sides of the field (see park layout)
- Somebody will need to use the restroom
- A fire truck, plane or flower will distract their attention
- Be prepared to tie their shoe laces
- Rotate Positions often, all players need to experience all aspects of the game
- **ALL** players need to rotate **ALL** positions as often as your roster allows. Playing the same position every game will hinder their development – the score is not as important as their development.

### Parents:

- Engage your parents, most are happy to help if asked
- Ask for bench manager help, can rotate if necessary
- Have a parent meeting prior to or after first practice
  - Discuss laws of the game
  - Discuss practice and game schedule
  - Discuss no smoking in the park
  - Tell them what you expect about attendance and timing
  - Discuss player equipment requirements (ball, water, shinguards)
  - Talk about sideline behavior expectations
  - Post-game snack schedule

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## Law 1 – The Field of Play:

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: 35 yards X 50 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line three (3) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of three (3) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

The Penalty Area: A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line three (12) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of three (12) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area.

## Law 2 – The Ball:

Size three (3)

## Law 3 – The Number of Players

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than six players including a goalkeeper.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time.

## Law 4 – The Players Equipment

Shoes and shin-guards are required. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry).

## Law 5 – The Referee:

An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

## Law 6 – The Assistant Referees:

None.

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## Law 7 – The Duration of the Match:

The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, twelve (12) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

## Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

A coin is tossed and the team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first quarter of the match. The other team takes the kick-off to start the match. The teams then alternate taking the kick-off at the beginning of each quarter 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 or restarting play:

- at the start of the match
- after a goal has been scored
- at the start of the second, third and fourth quarters of the match

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

Procedure for the kick-off

- all players must be in their own half of the field of play
- the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play
- the ball must be stationary on the center mark
- the referee/coach/parent gives a signal
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward
- the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player

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

Infringements and sanctions

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again before it has touched another player:

- a 'do over' is allowed one time
- on the second consecutive infringement a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the position of the ball when the infringement occurred

In the event of any other infringement of the kick-off procedure:

- the kick-off is retaken

Dropped ball

If, while the ball is still in play, the referee/coach/parent is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game, the match is restarted with a dropped ball.

Procedure

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

Infringements and sanctions

The ball is dropped again:

- if it is touched by a player before it makes contact with the ground

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- if the ball leaves the field of play after it makes contact with the ground, without a player touching it

## Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is out of play when:

- it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the referee

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- it rebounds off a goalpost or crossbar and remains in the field of play
- it rebounds off either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

## Law 10 – The Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.

The team scoring the greater number of goals during a match is the winner. If both teams score an equal number of goals, or if no goals are scored, the match is drawn.

## Law 11 – Offside:

None.

## Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- jumps at an opponent
- charges an opponent
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- pushes an opponent
- tackles an opponent
- holds an opponent
- spits at an opponent
- handles the ball deliberately

Or for:

- unsporting behavior
- dissent by word or action
- persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game
- delaying the restart of play
- failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or kick-in



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- entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission
- deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission

A direct free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

## Law 13 – Free Kicks

All free kicks are direct

Ball enters the goal

- if a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded
- if a direct free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team

Procedure

For the direct free kick, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

Position of free kick

- all opponents must be at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves
- the free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred or from the position of the ball when the infringement occurred

Infringements and sanctions

If, when a free kick is taken, an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance:

- the kick is retaken

## Law 14 – The Penalty Kick:

None.

## Law 15 – The Pass-In

A pass-in is a method of restarting play.

A pass-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

## Law 16 – The Goal Kick

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.



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The goal kick should be taken anywhere within the goal area. Opposing players must be outside the goal area AND at least four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

## Law 17 – The Corner Kick

A corner kick is a method of restarting play.

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

### Procedure

- The ball must be placed inside the corner arc nearest to the point where the ball crossed the goal line
- Opponents must remain at least 4 yards from the corner arc until the ball is in play
- The ball must be kicked by a player of the attacking team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves
- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player

### Infringements and sanctions

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred

In the event of any other infringement:

- the kick is retaken

## Sample Activities

### Sharks and Minnows

**Organization:** Start the game with one “Shark”, this could be the coach or a player.

**Setup:** Two lines 20-30 yards apart.

**Procedure:** Make two lines 20 yards apart and line the players along one side, they’re “Minnows”. The coach/player “Sharks” starts in the middle and the “Minnows” try to dribble to the other side. The



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sharks try to tag the “Minnows” as they dribble by, the players who get tag becomes sharks for the next round (Minnows dribble to other side).

**Observations:**

**Technical:** Dribbling.

**Physical:** Change in speed direction

**Tactical:** improve vision, spatial awareness.

**Social/Psychological:** High group interaction. Develops assertive play within an appropriate setting.

### Everybody's It

**Organization:** One ball per player.

**Setup:** Random formation in a confined area.

**Procedure:** Each player dribbles within the area attempting to tag anyone while maintaining control of the ball. Each time a player tag someone, they receive a point.

**Variation:** Play game without the ball for one or two rounds first

**Observations:**

**Technical:** Dribbling, changing direction, changing speed. Using all foot surfaces (i.e. inside, outside, sole, instep), close ball control.

**Physical:** Balance, expanding peripheral vision agility.

**Tactical:** Shielding, getting away from players, looking to attack players. Quick decision-making.

**Social/Psychological:** Positive interaction within entire group. Developing an attack and defensive posture.

### Body Part Dribbling

**Organization:** Each player with a ball

**Setup:** Random formation within a confined area.

**Procedures:** Players dribble to keep control while avoiding touching others. While they dribble, coach or leader calls out a body part, players immediately stops the ball with that body part. You can call “right elbow”, “chin”, “left knee”, etc.

**Observation:**

**Technical:** Dribbling in confine area, close control, changing direction, changing speed.



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**Physical:** Reaction time, reinforce knowledge of body parts.

**Tactical:** Reading the environment, looking and moving into open spaces.

**Social/Psychological:** Working within a group, positive interaction. Listening Skills – responding to what the coach/leader is saying.

### Rat/Fox/Donkey Tails

**Organization:** Each player with a ball and a practice vest. The vest must be tucked in the waist of each player's shorts.

**Structure:** Random formation within a confined area. Play game for a set time (i.e. 30 sec., etc.)

**Procedure:** Players tuck a training vest in the back of their shorts and dribble around in the assigned area. Each player tries to get as many tails as possible before coach says freeze/stop.

**Observation:**

**Technical:** Dribbling, changing direction and speed.

**Physical:** constantly readjusting body's balance around a new center of gravity, agility, and strength

**Tactical:** Expands peripheral vision, introduces attacking and defending posture.

**Social/Psychological:** Fun positive competition. A positive social interaction with players in the group.



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## Musical Balls

**Organization:** Start with one ball per player

**Structure:** General area, defined space not necessary.

**Procedures:** Play like musical chairs, could use a music box, your own melodic voice or a whistle. Everyone begins dribbling his or her ball within the area. When the music stops or you blow the whistle, all players must leave their balls and run to another. During the change take one ball away. Player without a ball continues to run in the area until the next change then attempts to grab a ball. Continue this until you take 4 or 5 balls away then begin adding them back. You would not want to play until the last ball because too many players would be without a ball to dribble.

**Technical:** Dribbling.

**Physical:** Agility, quick reactions.

**Tactical:** Quick decisions to challenge for loose balls.

**Social/Psychological:** High group interaction. Develops assertive play within an appropriate setting.

## Red Light, Green Light

**Organization:** Select one player to be "IT". Each player with a ball, except for the person who is IT.

**Structure:** Two lines about 20-30 yards apart.

**Procedures:** Players with ball start at one line. The player that is IT, is at the other line. IT should start by facing away from the player/teammates and call green light. Players begin dribbling their balls towards "IT" on the other side. When "IT" calls "Red Light," players must freeze by placing their foot on top of the ball, before "IT" turns around and catches them still moving/dribbling. Anyone caught must go back to the starting line. The first player to cross the end line, becomes the new "IT" or is permitted to pick someone else who may not have been it.

**Technical:** Dribbling under close control.

**Physical:** Promotes quick reaction time and balance.

**Tactical:** Anticipation of stop signal.

**Social/Psychological:** Everyone can play and allows for the observation of different personality types. Observe to see which players are risk takers and move quickly or which players are more cautious and may move slower, but under more control.



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## Shadow Dribbling

**Organization:** Each player with a ball.

**Structure:** Confine area, random formation.

**Procedure:** Players take turns being the leader/shadow. The shadow attempts to dribble their ball to stay with the leader.

**Variation 1:** Leader without ball and Shadow with ball.

**Variation 2:** Both Leader and Shadow with balls.

### Observations:

**Technical:** Dribbling while changing direction, changing speeds, and raising the head to keep partner in view. Allows player to expand field of vision without losing sight or control of the ball. Close control of ball.

**Physical:** Balance, agility, fitness, changing direction and changing speed. Quick adjustments with ball using either foot.

**Tactical:** Increasing field of vision, avoiding other players.

**Social/Psychological:** Working with a partner. Developing field vision and sense of control with ball.

## Simon Says

**Organization:** Each player with a ball.

**Structure:** Rectangular area large enough to accommodate all players

**Procedure:** Call out commands for them to follow such as, dribble in circle, turn, stop the ball with your..., kick the ball as far away as you can.

### Observations:

**Technical:** Dribbling while changing direction, changing speeds, and raising the head to keep partner in view. Allows player to expand field of vision without losing sight or control of the ball. Close control of ball.

**Physical:** Balance, agility, fitness, changing direction and changing speed.

**Tactical:** Listening for “Simon Says”

**Social/Psychological:** Developing field vision and sense of control with ball.