

Copiah County Soccer U10/U12 Coaches Guide

On behalf of Copiah County Soccer (CCSA), thank you for coaching!! For most of you this is probably your first encounter with coaching youth soccer. You may be a bit apprehensive about the tasks at hand, but don't worry CCSA will be here to help along the way!

This guide is designed to help you with the basics of coaching and guide you on what fundamentals your players should be learning along the way. Enjoy the journey, use all available resources (YouTube, US soccer coaches center, fellow coaches, board members, etc.), and most of all make sure you and your players are having FUN!

Thank you,
Steven Singleton
CCSA President

Section I The Role of the Coach

CCSA believes that more is "caught than taught" and the coach is the center of that philosophy. You are the primary role model for the players and parents when it comes to "teaching" all that the game of soccer has to offer. What soccer has to offer is so much more than just Passing, Dribbling, and Shooting as you can see below.

A) Role Model

- a. Setup conditions and environment for learning (i.e. have practices, ask questions, and listen)
- b. Setup activities geared towards the players achieving success (FUN games with basic concepts)
- c. Above all give positive feedback to the players! ("You tried hard" or "Good effort")
- d. Demonstrate respect for team members and opponents.
- e. Demonstrate respect for parents, spectators, opposing coaches and game officials

B) Teacher

- a. Establish a minimum of 2 - 1 hr practices each week or maximum of 2 – 1.5 hr practices.
 - If you are a new coach schedule joint practices with a more experienced coach or ask a board member if they can work with you. Practices are VERY important so we want you to be comfortable with running them successfully.

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B) Teacher (cont.)

- When you register online make sure you list your preferred practice days. This will help the league to provide a practice schedule and prevent conflicts.

- In the event of a field scheduling conflict, be flexible. You can have a successful practice using cones, bags, extra balls, or parents as the markers for your "field" or "goals". As long as you have a grass surface you can practice! Make it fun!

b. Prepare a practice plan and field ahead of players arrival (<https://dcc.ussoccer.com/>)

c. Educate yourself on the game, practice techniques, practice activities, and rules (<https://dcc.ussoccer.com/>)

d. Show interest in the progress of each individual player

e. Communicate expectations of each activity clearly and concisely, step back and observe the players, ask them questions, let them answer, BE PATIENT, and watch them grow! What they learn on their own will stay with them much longer than what they are told and that translates to smart play in a game.

f. Inform parents at the conclusion of each practice what key concept(s) you covered and how they can work on that until next practice.

C) Administrator

a. Before your first game recruit at least one parent to be an assistant coach! You WILL miss a game or practice during the season!

b. Establish a snack schedule for each family to bring snacks for the end of each game. You can also recruit a parent to prepare the schedule and follow-up with the other families each week.

c. Engage with Director of Volunteers via league group text for important reminders and updates during season. We usually use Group Me.

d. Review your teams volunteer schedule and communicate with parents to make sure they will be there. The Director of Volunteers will send you a reminder each week. (i.e. Concession stand, field setup, field cleanup, etc.)

e. Encourage parents to get involved, register for upcoming seasons, and encourage their player! Recruit parents to help with practices, keeping up with volunteer schedule, taking care of game snacks, etc.

f. Follow the Times 2 policy of CCSA and make sure you are never alone with a player!

g. Follow the Concussion Policy and make sure your players are not practicing or encouraged to head the ball during practices or during a game.

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Section II The Game

A) Tactics and Fitness

- a. Do not use running laps, sprints, sit-ups, etc. as they will likely view them as punishment and it is not needed at this level of play. Player fitness is still important, encourage players to move by designing very active games that require active participation of all players. Running a lap as a warm-up on a cold day can be help as well if needed.
- b. Tactics are not generally useful at this age, we are more concerned with developing basic concepts and learning the rules of the game that will benefit them as they grow. However, some tactical play will naturally develop as the players learn the game. Guide the player discussions and help them develop solid foundations of ball movement, shot placement, position, pace, etc.
- c. Allow all players to play different positions, remember we are not here to win games but develop players!
- d. It is more important for players to learn to Dribble the ball, Create/Find Space, Pass the Ball, and Attack on defense than it is for them to win games. However, if they learn to effectively do these things they WILL win games eventually.
- e. Players at this level will have vastly different skill levels, mix up different skill players in your practice activities as well as in games so they can further develop their proficiencies. We want all players to play every position at some point during the season.

B) Basic Concepts

- a. These skills need to be fully developed as well as their creativity in using them so when the players move up to the next age bracket or play for their school they will be prepared to learn strategy and team concepts critical to their success.
- b. Dribbling the ball is one of the most basic and most important concepts. Control of the ball in open space will always be necessary. At this age they should be able to dribble some, we want to develop activities for them to practice and further develop their creativity and proficiency with this skill.
 - Dribbling - to move a ball along using small repeated movements of the foot. This is practiced using game like activities teaching the players maintain control of the ball in a crowded area.
- c. Space when you do not have the ball so you can support your teammate. This is a critical concept that will always be necessary. At this age they should be able to better understand their position on the field relative to other players. We want all players to participate in attacking on defense and attacking on offense during the game, but they should understand how to maintain space to support their teammate.
 - Space – to find an open area of the field, when on offense, so you are available to receive/make passes with teammates. Without space you cannot successfully pass the ball.
- d. Passing the ball to an open teammate when you are under pressure by a defender. This one concept will change the performance of your team. Without space this concept is not even possible, help your

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team at this age level begin to understand how these concepts build and depend upon each other. This age player should be able to pass accurately and understand his/her relationship to at least 2 other teammates on the field of play.

- Passing – kicking the ball to a teammate in order to maintain control of the ball by your team. Passes can be made forward, side to side, or backward to your teammates in order to avoid a takeaway by the defense or to provide an opportunity for your team to score when on offense.

e. Attacking on defense when your team has lost control of the ball. This age player tends want to kick the ball away from themselves as quickly as possible and let a more skilled player move the ball. Attacking should be closely accompanied by Dribbling and Passing once they win the ball. A player at this age needs to learn proficiency in winning the ball back and controlling the ball with their team.

- Attacking – aggressively engaging the ball in order to regain control for your team. This is an individual task during a game, the player should actively try to kick the ball away from the opposing player on their own and, when it's loose, pass to an open teammate who has maintained their space to assist. Should the opposing team bypass this player another teammate should take their place in attacking the ball and so on.

Section III Rules of Thumb

A) The Three L's

- a. No "Lines" - Don't have "drills" or "activities" or "games" that involve players lining up.
- b. No "Lectures" – Don't spend a long time explaining anything to the players. Ask them questions to help guide them to the right answers.
- c. No "Laps" – Don't have players run laps as a rule, this isn't fun and is often unproductive. It is sometimes effective as a warm-up on a cold day. Design active group play that gets everyone involved in learning!

B) FUN

- a. Fun may sound like a trivial element, but it is THE most important thing we can encourage for our players!
- b. Players, parents, spectators, and coaches that have FUN will continue to participate in CCSA activities and the great sport of Soccer for many years to come!
- c. Players that have FUN are much more likely to continue participation in physical activity in general
- d. Guide the players to making their own discoveries about this game! Self-Discovery is much more rewarding and, yes, more FUN!
- e. Include everyone in the learning activities, because it's more FUN when you're playing!