

U4 COACHING OUR YOUNGEST STARS



★ KEEP IT FUN! ★



GAMES

"RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT" or "SHARKS & MINNOWS" with a soccer ball are perfect.

SHORT ACTIVITIES

They have tiny attention spans. Lots of VARIETY in a short practice makes everyone happier.

PATIENCE IS KEY

They won't 'get it' right away. Celebrate EFFORT over perfect technique.

LIMIT INSTRUCTION

Focus on showing them a skill QUICKLY, then LET THEM TRY IT.

EVERY KID GETS A BALL

When possible, this maximizes touches with the ball.

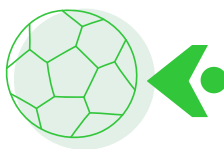


SKILLS TO TEACH



KICKING

Very basic kicking; focus on contact with the ball, not accuracy or power.



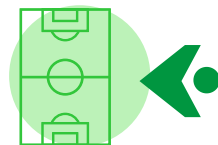
INTRODUCING PASSING

Short passes only (a few feet). More about the concept than execution.



DRIBBLING

Moving with the ball at their feet. Emphasize running with the ball close, not kicking it far ahead.



BASIC RULES

Staying inbounds, throw-ins (you might demo this, even if not used in games).

COMPETENCIES

Ball Comfort:

Feeling okay with the ball at their feet and not being afraid to touch it.

Enthusiasm:

Enjoying running, playing with friends, and the idea of playing soccer.

Basic Motor Skills:

Starting to show control of running, stopping, and changing direction while with the ball.

1. RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

Kids dribble on 'green', freeze on 'red'. Emphasizes ball control/stopping.

2. SIMON SAYS

(With soccer moves.) Helps with body awareness and learning soccer actions.

3. ANIMAL RACES

Kids divided into teams, each a different animal. Move down the field like the animal (crab walk, bear crawl, etc.), keeping the ball with them. Ball control and fun!

4. SHARKS & MINNOWS

Designate a few kids as 'sharks'. Everyone else dribbles across the field trying not to get their ball tagged by a shark. Develops dribbling under pressure.

5. FOLLOW THE LEADER

Coach dribbles with exaggerated movements (big touches, changes direction). Kids copy behind. Fun way to work on basic dribbling.

DRILLS + GAMES

PRACTICE STRUCTURE

WARM UP 5-10 MINUTES

Fun running game like tag with a soccer ball element
eg. Dribble while being chased, trying to tag others with their ball

SKILL ACTIVITY #1 15 MINUTES

Follow the Leader style dribbling,
or
Red Light, Green Light with balls.

SKILL ACTIVITY #2 15 MINUTES

Simple shooting at targets (cones, mini goals, whatever you have!)

GAME 15 MINUTES

Sharks & Minnows

COOL DOWN 5 MINUTES

Stretching or a simple Simon Says with soccer moves (pretend to shoot, dribble, etc.)



SoccerCoach Weekly.net

Offers practice plans, new training ideas, and a focus on fun drills for younger kids.

WEBSITES WITH DRILLS, GAMES, AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT



SoccerHelp.com

Extensive collection of drills, practice plans, coaching tactics, and tips. Filter by age and skill level.



SoccerXpert.com

Detailed drills with diagrams and articles on player development, coaching strategies, and soccer psychology.



TheCoaching Manual.com

A massive resource of drills, session plans, tactical analysis, and other insights specifically for soccer coaching.

BeastMode Soccer.com

Focuses on individual skill development with drills and training programs for players.

IMPORTANT NOTES!

FLEXIBILITY IS KEY:

ADAPT BASED ON KIDS' ENERGY LEVELS, NUMBER OF KIDS WHO SHOW UP, ETC.

WATER BREAKS:

FREQUENT BREAKS ARE ESSENTIAL, ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNGER KIDS.

ENTHUSIASM:

IF THE COACH HAS FUN, THE KIDS WILL TOO!

ADJUST GAME LENGTH:

SCRIMMAGES CAN BE LONGER OR SHORTER DEPENDING ON HOW THE PRACTICE IS GOING

