

Quick Reference Guide to Coaching U4/U5

Overview

The purpose of soccer at the U4/U5 age group is to simply introduce the basics of soccer: there is a ball; we kick it, chase it, kick it again; sometimes it ends up in a goal. *Parents should cheer for **BOTH** teams and **ALL** players in a supportive environment versus a competitive one.*

For all games, **the scheduled game time is the time the game should start.** Please arrive at the fields early in order to warm up or practice. This is consistent with how scheduling works with U7 and above., so *we might as well start training our parents now ;-)*

General Rules

- Remember, you are coaching 3-5 year olds; set expectations accordingly. There should be little coaching and the game should be mostly play. There is not right/wrong way to do things.
- **No practice league** -- use 15-20 minutes before scheduled game time
- 3v3 format (max roster is 6)
- Field is 20yd x 30yd
- Size 3 soccer ball
- No scorekeeping, balls kicked in goals are rolled back in to play (to an open space)
- Four 8-minute quarters; 5 minute half, plus 2 minutes between quarters
- Each player must play a minimum of 50% of each half (for which they are present)
- Coaches/parents put the ball back into play to open space, out-of-bounds loosely enforced
- NO GOALIES or positions
- Both coaches on field to assist/direct players/referee -- typically one on each half. Do not discipline a child on another team -- ask their coach if they could address the issue (pushing, rough play, etc).
- Multiple balls may be used to keep the game flowing on out-of-bounds
- Players don't switch sides at halftime (it confuses them)
- Recommended: Use stuffed animal as "team mascot" and put him in/on the goal to help orient the kids.

As a reminder, U4-U10 at T&C are recreational leagues. If your team is much stronger than the other team, please find creative ways to make the match more fair and ensure that both teams are having fun. Some suggestions include:

- Make a game of it and have players kick using their left/non-dominant foot
- Play all your weaker players at one time to allow the other team to score
- Let the other team control the ball all the way to midfield before you contest the ball
- If the other team is short players or has no subs and the other coach would like some help, see if you have a player or two who are willing to play with them.