




**THE  
COACHING  
MANUAL**

# **SPRING COACH CURRICULUM PACK - U8**



# SPRING 2024 INTRODUCTION

**12 weeks is not much time at all, it will fly by and, with as little as 12 hours of training, you have to be realistic about what you and your players will learn from the season. However, if we're going to keep youngsters on the soccer pathway, it's vital that they gradually make the improvements which will ignite a genuine passion for the game.**

The Coaching Manual is here to support you and ensure that your players and you come out of the season having improved.

This guide for coaches who are working with U8 has been built from a comprehensive technical framework that has been developed with some of the greatest soccer minds in the world game including heads of education from The Football Association, AYSO and a number of Premier League soccer clubs.

The guiding principles for this age group are simplicity, patience, and appropriate levels of challenge. You are working with a brilliant age group, because their fundamentals should be starting to be displayed and their ability to learn is fast at this age. You have a great opportunity to make good progress on technical skills and game understanding. We can inspire a lifelong love of soccer with this age group - and that's what this curriculum guide will help you do.

# SPRING 2024 OBJECTIVES

**The objectives for the Spring season for U8 fall into to brackets. What you, as the coach, will be confident in at the end of the season and what outcomes we are aiming for with players at this age.**

Learning soccer is all about gradual improvements over a long period of time, it's why children have to start learning the game young. It's the world's most popular sport, but it's also one of the world's most technically challenging sports. By the end of Spring...

## Coach Objectives

- 1...you'll be confident in teaching the ball mastery techniques: Toe Taps, Inside/Outside (and both feet), V-Pushes and Inside and Outside Cut (Hook Turns).
- 2...you will feel comfortable about correcting these ball mastery techniques with your players
- 3...you'll have a good understanding of and be confident in how to coach receiving and turning and basic combination play.

## Player Objectives

- 1...your players will be competent at the basic ball mastery moves: Toe Taps, Drag Taps and Inside Outside.
- 2...your players will be able to perform Intermediate ball mastery moves: Inside/Outside (both feet), V-Pushes Sole Inside and Inside and Outside Cut (hook) turns.
- 3...your players will be using simple passing combinations with teammates.

# HOW TO COACH

## 6 important things to remember for every session you deliver:

### **The soccer ball is the world's most popular toy**

It's great fun to play with and it's even more fun with friends. This means fun is implicit, you don't need to manufacture fun. As long as you start and end with a game, they will have a great time.

### **You don't need to over complicate things**

Too many practices in a session means you spend a lot of time setting things up and kids spend more time learning the session than the actual skills. Keep it simple and they'll get more time on the ball.

### **Make sure they get lots of opportunity to play**

It's their game. Whilst you're there to teach them they need space to work things out and express themselves. Stopping things too often can be counter productive, so try to be concise with feedback

### **You are working with young children**

You have to be encouraging and patient. Some of them might not be able to do the skills, don't worry, it's just an age thing. Also, little humans are brilliant at listening, even when you don't think they are.

### **If you can, try to involve the parents**

Involve all the stakeholders, they'll appreciate it. You can even send them the curriculum that you are working from, they will love that you are taking so much care of the development of their kids.

### **If they improve, they will want to keep coming back**

There's a risk in modern coaching that we sit back and observe. If you can help a player get something right (and praise them for it), their learning will accelerate and they'll enjoy it more.

# THE BALL MASTERY SKILLS

**The 4 Ball Mastery Skills for this Spring are Toe Taps, Inside Outside (both feet), V-Pushes and Inside and Outside Hook Turns**

**These skills are the perfect development tool for U8 players because it challenges them to think about where in the game they can use the skills and they are skills you need to use on the move. Watch the videos and learn how they work.**

**TIP: Share these skills with your parents, so the players can learn at home!**

**Toe Taps - <https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/1725>**

Agility, Balance and Co-ordination are all developed with Toe Taps and 6Os reps also helps you develop strength endurance.

**Inside Outside (and both feet) - <https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/593>**

The most important dribbling skill, end of story. From George Best to Lionel Messi, the Inside/Outside skill has been the bedrock of the world's best dribblers.

**V-Pushes - <https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/57045>**

The foundation of a first touch that can take an opponent out of the game starts with v-pushes. Master this skill and you can create valuable time for yourself on the ball when you are under pressure

**Inside/Outside Cut (Hook Turn) - <https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/445>**

These two turns are the most used in soccer in the world. They will help players protect the ball, create space and get out of tight situations.

# MAIN COMPONENTS OF DEVELOPMENT



**Learn one new  
thing**



**Sweating**



**Smiling**

# 4 CORNER MODEL



**SOCIAL**



# WHERE CAN WE PRACTICE THESE TECHNIQUES?

## HOME

### Me and my Ball

Practice the techniques on my own, challenging myself to get better and better at specific techniques

“The longer a player actually plays with the ball, the better their ‘feel’ for it.”

- Don Howe

## WITH FRIENDS

### Me, my ball and friend(s)

Uninterrupted play with my friends, playing on different surfaces and areas to refine my technique or challenging each other

Soccer is the most beautiful game. We can play it in the street. We can play it everywhere.

- Johan Cruyff

## TRAINING

### Me, my ball and teammates

Put things into practice and work with the my teammates to focus on not only my technique but the principles of play

The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.

- Phil Jackson



## PLAY



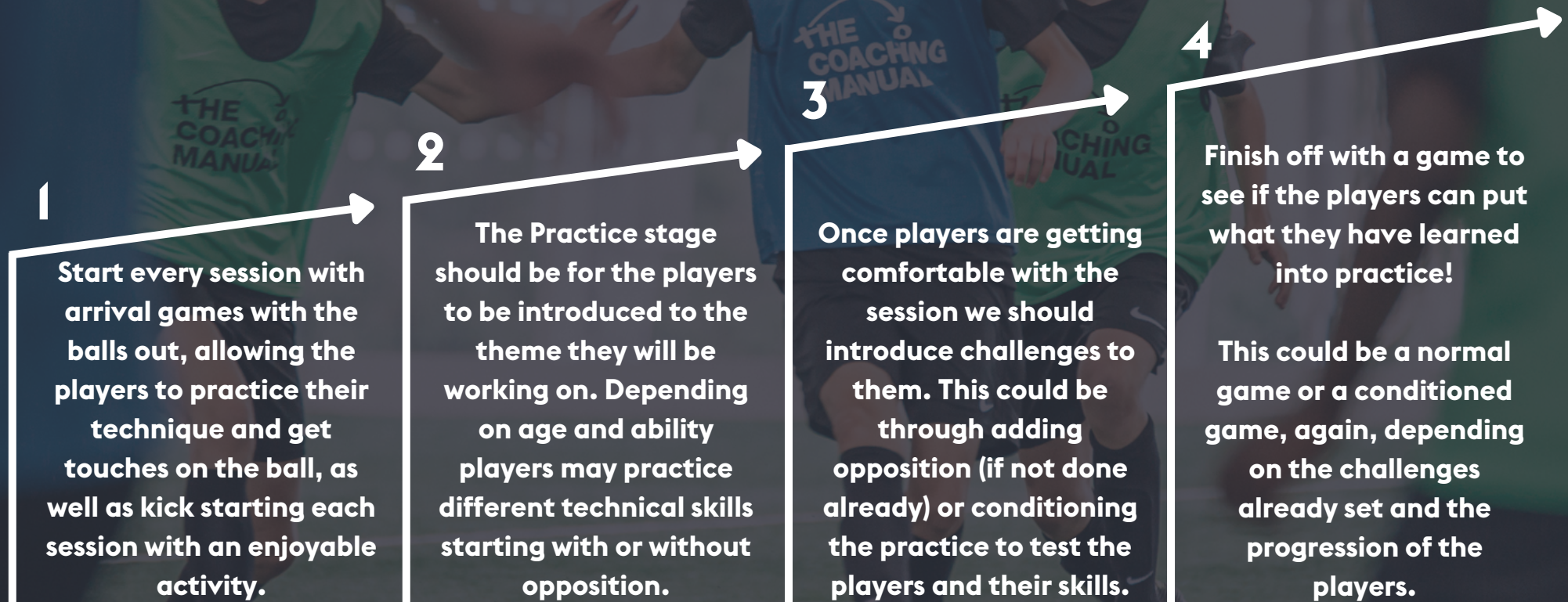
## PRACTICE



## PROGRESS



## PLAY



**1**  
Start every session with arrival games with the balls out, allowing the players to practice their technique and get touches on the ball, as well as kick starting each session with an enjoyable activity.

**2**  
The Practice stage should be for the players to be introduced to the theme they will be working on. Depending on age and ability players may practice different technical skills starting with or without opposition.

**3**  
Once players are getting comfortable with the session we should introduce challenges to them. This could be through adding opposition (if not done already) or conditioning the practice to test the players and their skills.

**4**  
Finish off with a game to see if the players can put what they have learned into practice!

This could be a normal game or a conditioned game, again, depending on the challenges already set and the progression of the players.

60m

15 minutes

15 minutes

15 minutes

15 minutes

90m

25 minutes

20 minutes

20 minutes

25 minutes

Organisation

Management

Coaching

PLAY

PRACTICE

PROGRESS

PLAY

High

S  
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S

Achievement Line

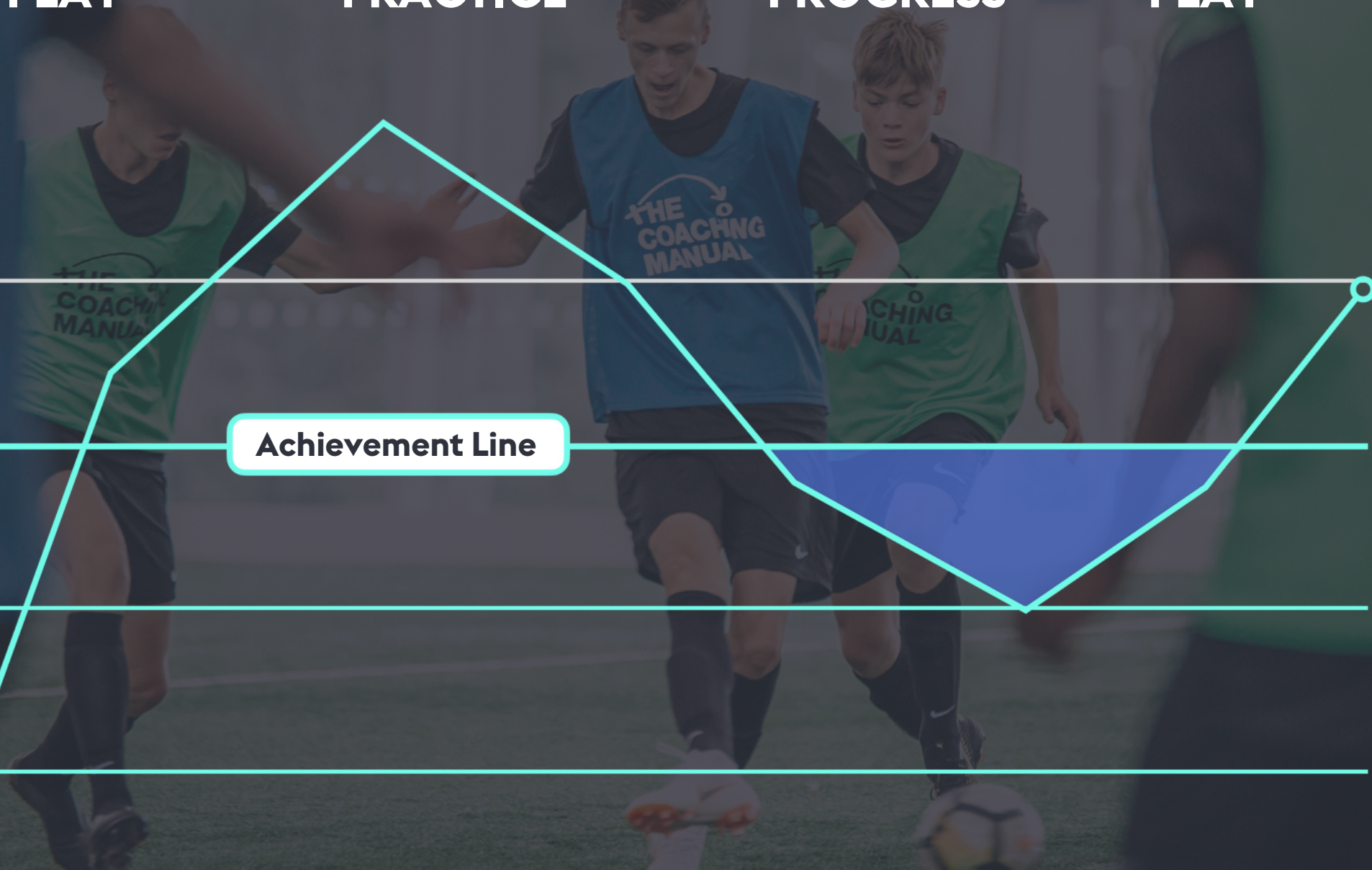
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INTRO

PRACTICE

CHALLENGE

ADAPT



# THE SEASON PLAN

**There's no need to spend any time planning this Spring, we've taken care of it for you and have crafted an age specific curriculum which will help you and your players meet your objectives. At the end of the season, you'll be more confident and your players will be better players.**

The plan is built around a play-practice-play model, which gives the players lots of repetition.

The plan also repeats sessions to give your players a chance to show how much they've improved from the first time they did it.

## WEEK 1 - BALL MASTERY

**Week 1 is about helping your players re acquaint themselves with the ball. Lots of touches, lots of chance to move**

**<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18724>**

## WEEK 2 - DRIBBLING

**Lots of touches of the ball, close control and changes of direction are all skills your players will need in later weeks of the plan, so this is a great week to work on these skills**

**<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18725>**

## WEEK 3 - TURNING

Week 3 is turning. Changes of direction will help your players protect the ball, get them out of trouble, evade defenders and give them time to make their next decision

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18726>

## WEEK 4 - SHORT PASSING

This week, we're working on short passing and combinations

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18728>

## WEEK 5 - RECEIVING AND CONTROL

In week 5 we focus on how they receive the ball. A perfect follow on from how they move the ball from last week!

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18729>

## WEEK 6 - IV1 ATTACKING

**IV1 Skills are important for players in any position (yes even keepers occasionally)!**

**<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18731>**

## WEEK 7 - IV1 DEFENDING

**For the first time we work on defending, it's at this age group that youngsters start to appreciate soccer isn't just about scoring goals. It's also about stopping them.**

**<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18732>**

## WEEK 8 - FINISHING

**Most players' favourite session!**

**<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18733>**

## WEEK 9 - HANDLING (GOALKEEPING)

Hopefully you are mixing all your players in different positions, but here's some help for goalkeepers!

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18735>

## WEEK 10 - BALL MASTERY

Lets check in on the ball mastery skills!

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18738>

## WEEK 11 - DRIBBLING

Nearly there, so by now their dribbling skills should be on point!

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18739>

## WEEK 12 - FINISHING

We love to finish a season with goalscoring. It means they'll be desperate to return next season!

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/Session/18740>

## Well Done, you made it!

Now it's time to reflect and give yourself (and your players) a huge pat on the back!