

Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club



Coaches Handbook

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Organization	3
Recreational Program (U5 to U8)	3
Travel Program (U8 to U19)	3
Seasons.....	4
Recreational Program Rules.....	5
U6 Recreational Program (U5 & U6 players)	5
U8 Recreational Program (U7 & U8 players)	6
Calendar of Events.....	7
Meetings	7
Equipment.....	8
Licensing - Getting Your Coaching Certificate.....	8
Player and Coach Carding Requirements	10
Websites.....	11

APPENDIX A

Code of Conduct.....	12
----------------------	----

APPENDIX B

Coaching Methods.....	13
Reasons Why Children Play - And Quit - Sports.....	13
Practical Psychology (Getting Mind with Body).....	13
Verbal Praises	14
Knowing the Needs of the U6 & U8 Player	15
Effective Communication.....	17
Pointers	18
Dribbling the Ball	18
Striking the Ball	18
Receiving the Ball	19
Ten Practice Tips	20
Backyard Play.....	20

Welcome

We welcome you as a coach for the Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club. As a volunteer, your dedication is appreciated. We hope that you enjoy your coaching experience and pass your knowledge and enthusiasm to your players.

It is our sincere hope that you continue to grow with the club. We offer many opportunities for you to share your talents. Your opinion counts. We hope you will continue to volunteer by attending club meetings and assisting in club committees and offices.

Please keep up to date by checking the club website for information on calendar events, upcoming meetings, forms, and membership information. Visit our website at: www.palrivsoccer.com

Thanks, and have fun!

Board of Trustees
Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club

Organization

Incorporated in 1977 as the Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club, our organization has grown to be the largest sports organization in our community.

The Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club is a member of the South Jersey Soccer League (SJSL) and South Jersey Girls Soccer League (SJGSL). The club programs are organized as follows:

Recreational Program (U5 to U8)

U6 Recreational Program

Our U6 program is designed for boys and girls ages 4 and 5. The players are broken up into teams of 6-10 players per team and play 3v3 with no goalie. They play two games side by side with a coach on each field. Ideally there is a coach in the middle with the subs. The coaches in this program are typically parents who have varying levels of experience. The club and league offer coaching clinics for new coaches. Drills for this age group can be found on the club website and elsewhere on the internet. The purpose of this age group is for the players to begin learning a few fundamentals of the game such as kicking, not using your hands, passing and scoring. The main goal is to have fun and develop a love of the game.

U8 Recreational Program

Our U8 program is designed for boys and girls ages 6 and 7. The players are split into teams of 8-12 players and play 3v3 with no goalies. They play two games side by side with coaches in between the fields. Ideally there is a head coach and an assistant, so there is a coach for each game. The coaches in this program are usually parents who have varying levels of experience. The club and league offer coaching clinics for new coaches. Drills for this age group can be found on the club website and elsewhere on the internet. The purpose of this age group is to learn more about the game. This program introduces referees, throw-ins, goal kicks and penalties. Passing and ball control are introduced at this level and the kids start to understand more about team play. As with all of our recreation programs, the main goal is to have fun and further develop a love of the game.

Travel Program (U8 to U19)

7v7 Travel Program

The 7v7 travel program is for boys and girls U8 to U10. The teams play 7v7 on a larger field than the recreational program. The players are coached by 'F' licensed coaches and play in either the South Jersey Soccer League (boys) or the South Jersey Girls Soccer League (girls). They play up to 10 games (5 home games & 5 away games) per season. Each team may roster a maximum of 14 players. Girls teams play on Saturdays and boys teams play on Sundays. The purpose of this program is to start to introduce competition, expand team play and start to engrain the soccer rules in the players. These games are officiated by licensed referees. The program stresses correct throw-ins, learning positions and working as a team. The goal is still to have fun and start to develop an appreciation and love of the game.

9v9 Travel Program

The 9v9 travel program is for boys and girls U11 to U12. The teams play 9v9 on fields larger than 7v7. The players are coached by 'F' (or higher) licensed coaches and play in either the South Jersey Soccer League (boys) or the South Jersey Girls Soccer League (girls). They play in the South Jersey Soccer League (boys) or the South Jersey Girls Soccer League (girls). They play up to 10 games (5 home games & 5 away games) per season. Each team may roster a maximum of 16 players. Standings are kept, and the league tracks team records and division champions are declared. Girls teams play on Saturdays and boys teams play on Sundays. The competition levels begin to progress as the players reach this second tier of travel soccer progression. The players start to develop stronger technical skills and further their team dynamic. The purpose is to develop skills, team play, sportsmanship and continue to strengthen enjoyment of the game.

11v11 Travel Program

The 11v11 travel program is for boys and girls U13 to U17. The teams play regulation 11v11 on full size fields. The players are coached by 'F' (or higher) licensed coaches and play in either the South Jersey Soccer League (boys) or the South Jersey Girls Soccer League (girls) as well as select options for Eastern Developmental Program (EDP) Leagues (boys and girls). They play up to 10 games (5 home games & 5 away games) per season. Each team may roster a maximum of 22 players with a max of 18 players available on any given game day. Standings are kept, and the league tracks team records and division champions are declared. Girls teams U13 to U15 play on Saturdays, girls teams U16 to U19 play on Sundays (or self-schedule) and boys teams U13 to U19 play on Sundays. The competition levels increase as the players get older. The players start to develop a good team spirit as many of them have now played together for many years. The purpose is to develop skills, team play, sportsmanship and an appreciation for the skills required to excel in the game. The club is very proud of our travel teams and has recorded numerous division champions throughout the years.

Friendship League

The club also participates in the Friendship League as roster sizes permit. This is a recreational travel league for U9 to U14 for local towns. The Friendship League has teams in two-year age increments, U9/U10, U11/U12 and U13/U14 and play co-ed.

Seasons

Recreational Program (U6 & U8)

Fall Season

Registration is in May. Teams are formed in July. Practices begin in August. The season runs for 10 weeks beginning the first Saturday after Labor Day. Games are held at Riverton Park on Saturdays usually in the morning.

Spring Season

Registration is in January. There are no practices. The training sessions are held on Saturdays at Charles Street School. Players are split up into groups each week and go through a circuit style training session.

Indoor Season (U5 - U15 recreational and travel players)

Registration is in November. There are no practices for indoor soccer. Games run on Saturday at Charles Street School Gym during the months of January and February.

Travel Program (7v7, 9v9 & 11v11): Travel program is organized as a seasonal year registration (Fall through Spring) detailed as follow:

Fall Tryout Registration

Registration is in March to identify total player numbers and determine if a tryout is required for the age group. Final registration confirmation for accepted players is in May.

Fall practices begin in late July or early August. Games start the first weekend after Labor Day. Spring practices begin in February (weather dependent). Games typically start the first weekend in March.

Summer Camps

Several summer camps are available in the local area. Please check the club website for available programs.

Recreational Program Rules

U6 Recreational Program (U5 & U6 players)

1. Practices
 - Team practice – 1 or 2 practices during the week on evenings determined by the coach.
2. Games
 - Played on Saturday mornings.
 - Each team will have 2 games going on in adjacent fields and simultaneously. It is important that each coach have an assistant coach or parent volunteer at each game.
 - Small sided 3v3 games with no goalies.
 - No referees.
 - i. 1 coach on the field per team to instruct players and maintain game flow.
 - ii. No coach or parents behind either goal.
 - iii. All rule infractions shall be briefly explained to the offending player
 - Parents must stay on the opposite side of the field as the players.
 - Players should come prepared for each game and practice.
 - i. Proper equipment – All players are required to wear shin guards covered by socks at all practices and games. Cleats are recommended but not required.
 - ii. All players should bring water or sports drink to every practice and game.
 - iii. No jewelry allowed (e.g., earrings, necklaces, watches etc.)
 - Oranges at halftime & snacks (optional) after the game.
 - i. Coach will establish a rotating orange / snack schedule with parents.
 - Players and coaches should arrive at least 15 minutes before game time.
 - If both coaches agree, it is permissible to exchange players with the other team during the game in the interest of keeping the games fair and to provide children with the best environment to learn the game of soccer.
 - No score keeping or record keeping.
 - At all times promote good sportsmanship.
 - Shake hands with other team after every game.
 - **HAVE FUN!**
3. Field & Equipment
 - Size 3 ball
 - Playing field is approximately 40 yards by 25 yards
 - Goal size is 4 feet by 3 feet (BowNets)
4. Rules
 - 8-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime break, switch goals at halftime.
 - Substitutions: When the play is dead (throw-ins, goal kicks, injuries, and between quarters)
 - Start of play: Opponents must be outside of the center circle until the kick-off has been completed. Kick offs are indirect kicks. A goal may not be scored until the ball has been played (touched) by a second player (who can be from either team).
 - Offside rule: No offside rule enforced.
 - Free kicks: All free kicks are indirect. No goal may be scored until the ball has been played (touched) by another player from either team.
 - Penalty kicks: No penalty kicks.
 - Throw-ins: If a player commits a foul on the initial throw-in, a second throw-in must be allowed. The coach shall explain the proper method before allowing the re-throw.
 - Goal kicks: The opposing team must be outside of the goal area before the goal kick is taken.
 - Corner kicks: Corner kicks will be taken as indirect kicks from the corner arcs with opponents no closer than 4 yards away from the corner arc.
 - Game conclusion: Players and coaches exchange handshakes after each game.
 - Fouls and misconduct: All fouls shall result in an indirect free kick with opponents at least 4 yards away from the spot of the free kick. The referee must explain all infractions to the offending player. The referee will admonish any player misconduct and the player will be subject to both immediate and delayed disciplinary action(s).
 - Do not record final score or record division standings.

U8 Recreational Program (U7 & U8 players)

1. Practices
 - Team practice – 1 or 2 practices during the week on evenings determined by the coach.
2. Games
 - Played on Saturday mornings.
 - Each team will have 2 games going on in adjacent fields and simultaneously. It is important that each coach have an assistant coach or parent volunteer at each game.
 - Small sided 3v3 games with no goalies.
 - 1 Referee – Usually a youth soccer player from our travel program.
 - i. Coaches must remain on the sidelines.
 - ii. No coach or parents behind either goal.
 - iii. All rule infractions shall be briefly explained to the offending player.
 - iv. Absolutely no yelling at a referee by coaches or parents, you'll be asked to leave the field immediately with your child.
 - Parents must stay on the opposite side of the field as the players.
 - Players should come prepared for each game and practice.
 - i. Proper equipment – All players are required to wear shin guards covered by socks at all practices and games. Cleats are recommended but not required.
 - ii. All players should bring water or sports drink to every practice and game.
 - iii. No jewelry allowed (e.g., earrings, necklaces, watches etc.)
 - Oranges at halftime & snacks (optional) after the game.
 - i. Coach will establish a rotating orange / snack schedule with parents.
 - Players and coaches should arrive at least 15 minutes before game time.
 - No score keeping or record keeping.
 - At all times promote good sportsmanship.
 - Shake hands with other team and referee after every game.
 - **HAVE FUN!**
5. Field & Equipment
 - Size 3 ball.
 - Playing field is approximately 60 yards by 40 yards.
 - Goal size is 4 feet by 3 feet (BowNets)
6. Rules
 - 10-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime break.
 - i. Switch goals at halftime.
 - Substitutions: When the play is dead (throw-ins, goal kicks, injuries, and between quarters).
 - Start of play: Opponents must be outside of the center circle until the kick-off has been completed. Kick offs are indirect kicks. A goal may not be scored until the ball has been played (touched) by a second player (who can be from either team).
 - Offside rule: No offside rule enforced.
 - Free kicks: All free kicks are indirect. No goal may be scored until the ball has been played (touched) by another player from either team.
 - Penalty kicks: No penalty kicks.
 - Throw-ins: If a player commits a foul on the initial throw-in, a second throw-in must be allowed. The referee shall explain the proper method before allowing the re-throw.
 - Goal kicks: The opposing team must be outside of the goal area before the goal kick is taken.
 - Corner kicks: Corner kicks will be taken as indirect kicks from the corner arcs with opponents no closer than 4 yards away from the corner arc.
 - Game conclusion: Players and coaches exchange handshakes after each game.
 - Fouls and misconduct: All fouls shall result in an indirect free kick with opponents at least 4 yards away from the spot of the free kick. The referee must explain all infractions to the offending player. The referee will admonish any player misconduct and the player will be subject to both immediate and delayed disciplinary action(s).
 - Do not record final score.
 - Do not record Division Standings.

Calendar of Events

January

- Indoor season begins
- Registration for spring season (new players or those who did not register for the full year)

February

- Indoor season ends

March

- Tryout registration (opened to determine tryout need or for select age groups needing players)
- Start of spring season

April

- Nominations of club officers
- Scholarship award winners determined
- Tryouts (if necessary)

May

- Registration for next travel season
- Election of club officers
- End of spring season

June

- Local summer soccer camps
- League registration deadline for travel teams (SJSL & SJGSL)
- State financial reporting due June 30th

July

- Local summer soccer camps
- Travel team practices begin
- Recreational teams sorted

August

- Recreational team practices begin
- Submit club paperwork to US Club for player and coach carding

September

- Start of fall season
- Team photos
- Federal financial reporting due September 15th

November

- Fall season ends
- Registration for indoor season

December

- Indoor teams sorted

Meetings

The club meetings are on the 2nd Monday of each month. Please check the club website for updates on meeting location and schedule. As a coach you are invited and encouraged to attend. Your opinion counts, and we can't do it without you!

The club also holds, from time to time, mandatory meetings which travel coaches (or their designees) are required to attend. Notice of these meetings will be given to coaches before each meeting, but it is anticipated that the meetings will be held in the Summer (before Fall season); January (before Spring) and before the Fall tryouts.

Palmyra-Riverton Soccer Club Bylaws

See the official Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club Bylaws document for detailed information on:

- Membership and club officers
- Meetings and committees
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of interest policy
- Rules and regulations
- Scholarship awards and policy
- Tryout and player evaluation process

Equipment

The Equipment Director will distribute to the head coach the following equipment:

- Balls (appropriate size for each age group)
- Cones
- Practice jerseys (pinnies)
- Uniform sizing (uniforms ordered independent by player via soccer.com)
- Referee Fees (via Treasurer for travel teams)

All equipment is property of the club and must be returned at the end of the season. If you have any questions about equipment or need new equipment, please see the Equipment Director.

Licensing – Getting Your Coaching Certificate

When you hear about licensing you think about long hours of training and testing. But...it is easier than you think.

The National, State, and League organization developed licensing for coaches as a way to demonstrate the training level of the coaches. The coaching levels run from “F” license to ‘A’ license (or equivalent). The ‘F’ license is the minimum license for a coach to coach a travel team (this includes assistant coaches). The ‘F’ license is a two-day course (classroom and on-field sessions) and teaches the fundamentals of coaching soccer.

The fundamentals include

- Your responsibility as a coach
- First aid and recognizing injuries
- The state laws for coaching
- Basic soccer drills
- Rules and regulations of the game.

The classes are offered numerous times throughout the year at many local clubs. There is a small class fee (Pal Riv coaches can receive reimbursement through the club). After receiving your ‘F’ license, coaches can increase their skill level by taking the other licensing classes (E through A).

Referee classes are also available (at low or no cost) through SJSJL and SJGSL – hosted by member clubs. See websites for scheduling and to sign up for classes. A coaching license is required to coach in either of the South Jersey leagues.

Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club Travel Coach Processes and Procedures:

General Info:

- Team Stipend of \$1200 (for training and tournament use and training equipment) is refreshed each Fall for the seasonal year Fall through Spring. Coaches turn in receipts for expenses against the stipend to the Treasurer.
- Referee Fees are provided in advance to each coach prior to the season. Any unused referee fees provided must be returned to the club.
- League Coach meetings are held prior to the start of the Fall season. Attendance is mandatory – coaches must sign in to be counted as present. Leagues may assess fines for missed meetings attendance.
- Trainer use is at your discretion (Trainers must be approved by the club and appropriately credentialed). Budget your stipend or ask parents for \$\$ support accordingly.
- Coaches are responsible to set up and put away nets/sandbags/corner flags for games and practices. Equipment is not to be left on the fields.
- Maintain a binder that stays with you for all team events and practices to include all player and coach paperwork, rosters, game cards, stat sheets, etc....
- Make contact with coaches in your flight prior to the start of the season to share contact info, jersey colors, field directions, special instructions, etc....
- Hold a player and parent meeting prior to the start of each season to share the code of conduct, set expectations and give/receive feedback, recruit team support (fundraising, team manager, communications...)
- There are special requirements for reimbursement receipts, fundraising and management of team funds – see the Treasurer for details.
- Assign roles if you so desire to team parents (i.e. fundraising, schedule coordination, etc....)

- Teams can utilize the GotSoccer Team app (free) or Team Snap (free or fee version) if desired for practice and game scheduling and player communications. Use fees can be covered by team stipends.
- Coach responsibility to police fields (ensure players do too) to pick up trash, water bottles, etc. and leave the fields in better shape than when you arrived (games and practices, home or away)

Uniforms:

- Jerseys are ordered and paid for independently by each player.
- Club equipment coordinator will facilitate ordering through soccer.com for new teams and for replacements as necessary.
- Uniforms can be used for multiple seasons for as long as the same uniform style is in use as the standard for the club.
- All player uniforms must match, including under-garments.
- Coaches assign the players distinct numbers or ask them for their first, second and third choice.
- If teams wish to add names to jerseys or numbers to shorts, this can be done independently, but must meet club approval.
- All team gear MUST have PRSC logo or Palmyra-Riverton Soccer Club identified and with our club colors (red/black/white).
- Various PRSC items are also available for purchase via soccer.com.

Team flighting (divisions):

- Coaches are invited to provide flight recommendations (boys) or attend a ratings meeting (girls) to determine best fit.
- New teams are tough are more challenging as no history exists – use best guess based on the perceived talent / competition level of the collective team.
- Flight selection is not by geographic region / location of opponents - it's meant to be focused on balancing talent, so everyone has a good competitive season with as few "blow outs" as possible.

Practice and Game Schedules:

- Practice schedule slots are decided via input/requests from coaches in July/August and balancing available days/times between teams. Club officers will finalize and communicate the schedule to coaches.
- Mon-Fri 5:30-7 PM for Riverton Park (Fall) or Charles Street (Spring)- can have 3 or 4 teams at one time.
- 7-8:30 PM slots at Legion Field are typically for older teams.
- Practices usually begin for fall in late July / early August depending on coach and player availability and your preference.
- Game scheduling is decided and communicated by the respective league. Schedules are released within a few weeks of the first round of games.
- Girls games are Saturdays, Boys games are Sundays - each typically between noon and 3:30 PM.

Field Prep/lining:

Coaches using grass fields for practice and/or games have an obligation to help set up/break down the fields and goals at the beginning and end of each season and to line fields from time to time as assigned by the Fields Coordinator.

Player Roster and Carding Process:

All teams are carded in August for the Fall-Spring seasonal year. New players added during the season are carded as they join. In preparation to complete your roster and the player passes, gather your player & coach paperwork (birth certificates, med releases and pictures) by early August.

For new coaches (or anyone who needs help), the respective (Boys/Girls league) Club Rep will be available to help you with your GotSoccer and US Club rosters and printing passes. Plan to complete all coach and player rostering and carding no later than mid-August to ensure full preparation for the opening weekend. Teams not prepared will be forced to forfeit and may be assessed a fine from the league.

Player Pass Requirements: Each player must have

- Player Pass (printed in color via Kyck Play/US Club on paper and laminated) with picture
- Copy of Birth Certificate (on file and uploaded to Kyck)
- Medical Release Form (on file and uploaded to Kyck)

Coach Pass Requirements: Each coach must have (see next page for links and instructions)

- Coaches Pass (printed in color via Kyck Play/US Club on paper and laminated) with picture
- Copy of coaching license (coach license must also be uploaded via the respective league website)
- Background check completed (requires SafeSport and Sideline Sport Doc training certificates)

Game Day Requirements: In order to play the game, you MUST have

- Properly completed Game Day Roster (printed from GotSoccer within 3 days of the game date) including all active players who will participate in the game.
 - Pass numbers must match Kyck / US Club player ID number
 - No handwritten player names may be added – must be computer-generated
 - Players may be scratched out if not playing in the game
 - No more than the maximum allowable roster size per age group (14 for 7v7, 16 for 9v9, 18 for 11 v 11)
- Official player and coach passes for all participants
- Coach safety certificates
- Player medical release forms
- Appropriate referee fees
 - Be prepared with exact cash for 1, 2 or 3 refs (refs are not expected to make change)
 - Leagues will communicate the referee fees by age group

Post-Game Requirements:

- If any injuries occurred during the game, immediately ensure the referee has the player info and injury documented.
- Follow up with player/parents for appropriate medical clearance prior to return to play (especially if a suspected concussion). When in doubt, sit them out!
- Both teams complete referee evaluations by noon of the next day (following the game)
- Home team must complete the game score report by noon of the next day (following the game)

Additional requirements for home games:

- Properly inflated game ball
- Nets, properly set and counterweighted, and corner flags
- Fields lined and in safe playing condition
 - Field set up and preparation is typically the responsibility of the coach who has the first game of the weekend.
 - Field break down is the responsibility of the coach who has the last game of the weekend.
- Inclement weather: each league has a process for field closure and communication. The respective club reps (boys and girls) are responsible to check the fields and report to the league if un-playable

Make up games and scrimmages:

- Follow the specific rules and guidelines for the respective league for rescheduling games eligible for makeup due to cancellations or for scheduling TBD games.
- Coaches are responsible to clear the date with other club coaches having practice that night and club leadership to make certain there are no field or schedule conflicts prior to setting a date for makeup games or scrimmages.
- Club President, Vice President and Club Rep should be copied on reschedule communications after clearance from the club of game time and location has been obtained.

In addition to holding a valid License / Certification, ALL SJSL and SJGSL coaches must complete the following steps in order to receive a Coach Pass. Please check with your club for club specific instructions. Full instructions for these steps can be found at usclubsoccer.org/registration/staff/

US CLUB COACH REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS (Coach pass is good for 2 years)

1. SAFESPORT ONLINE TRAINING (No cost): Send an email to the following address and receive an auto-reply with the link, U.S. Soccer access code, and instructions to take the course: SafeSport@usclubsoccer.org
2. SIDELINE SPORTS DOC (\$5.00 cost) Go to following link: <http://usclubsoccer.sidelinesportsdoc.com/>
3. BACKGROUND SCREENING (\$18.00 cost): Note - this step can only be completed AFTER you have completed step #1 (SafeSport Online Training) and #2 (Sideline Sports Doc)

Background Screening Application link: <https://usclubsoccer.sportngin.com/register/form/885736910>

4. SUBMIT STAFF PASSCARD REQUEST (\$25.00 cost): Go to the following link: <https://play.kyck.com/home>

Websites

Soccer Associations

FIFA - Fédération Internationale de Football Association	- www.fifa.com
United States Soccer Federation	- www.ussoccer.com
USYSA - United States Youth Soccer Association	- usyouthsoccer.org
SJSL - South Jersey Soccer League	- www.sjsl.org
SJGSL - South Jersey Girls Soccer League	- www.sjgsl.org
PRSC - Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club	- palrivsoccer.com
GotSoccer - player registration and scheduling	- www.gotsport.com
US Club Soccer - tutorials	- http://usclubsoccer.org/
Kyck Play - player and coach passes	- https://play.kyck.com/home

Revision 1 - Copyright August 2005

- Compiled by Ken Brahl, Chris Calhoun & Jeff Elliot
- Board approved August 2005

Revision 2 - Copyright March 2013

- Revised by Jeff Elliot
- Board approved April 2013

Revision 3 - Copyright August 2018

- Revised by Scott Hartman
- Board approved _____

Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club

www.palrivsoccer.com

PO Box 172

Palmyra, NJ 08065



PALMYRA RIVERTON SOCCER CLUB
CODE OF CONDUCT

Important information about Youth and sports: Kids participate in sports primarily because it's *fun*. Adults need to keep it fun. Some adults get too emotional about youth sports because they are too concerned about how their kids are doing, have the mistaken belief that winning is very important, or have a desire for glory through their kid's success. Kids need to know that if they're trying their best, they are winners. Parents need to remember that their kids will not be great at everything. Recognizing that, parents can help most by relaxing and enjoying these fleeting years. Set a good example. Children learn by example.

COACH'S PLEDGE:

- When I coach I will remember that encouragement and praise for every child, not just the best athletes, are critically important to their self-esteem and their ability to achieve the most they can.
- Promote fun (on & off the field), friendships & learning new skills. Seek no unfair advantages, except those of skill.
- Only provide positive reinforcement and encouragement. Remember, it's only a game, so have fun with it.
- Referees, administrators and opponents should be treated with respect and dignity.
- Official decisions should be accepted without looking angry. Do not make loud offensive remarks. Always be professional.
- Concentrate on coaching, rather than on the accuracy of the referee's decisions.
- Teach each child how to win and lose with dignity and grace. You are their role model, so please act accordingly.
- The idea is to provide the greatest good to the greatest number of children. Children will always remember this experience.
- Give good guidelines to parents. Set high standards. Be firm with parents at games.
- Encourage fair sportsmanship. Treat all participants the way you would want to be treated.
- **I will set a good example.**

PLAYERS PLEDGE:

- When I Play I will have fun, make new friends, and learn new skills. Be a good and supportive teammate. Do the best for the team.
- Be generous and kind when you win or lose and be fair and honest, always, no matter what the circumstance.
- Obey the rules of the game. Listen to, and respect your coaches, officials, administrators and referees at all times.
- I recognize that striving to win, rather than winning itself is what is important in sports and life.
- Striving to win means doing the best you can. **I will set a good example.**

PARENTS PLEDGE

- When I'm at a game or practice, I will be positive or quiet. I will not be loud towards any participants. I acknowledge that failing to show respect for people who are doing the best they can sets a bad example for our children and can result in my expulsion from the field. If someone else makes an inappropriate comment, I will not make a negative response that could lead to a confrontation.
- I acknowledge that making mistakes and losing are part of life. I pledge that I will be tolerant of the mistakes of players, coaches, referees, and all other participants. I recognize the mistakes are opportunities for learning.
- I will not coach or give suggestions as a spectator. **Leave the coaching to the coach.**
- Children have more need of example and praise and encouragement, than for criticism and negative yelling.
- Be kind and respectful to your child's coaches, teammates and officials. Your child's coaches volunteer to give their personal time to provide a recreational activity for *your* child. These people are providing a valuable community service, often without reward, other than the personal satisfaction of having served the community and making a positive difference in the lives of Pal-Rive children. The best way to better the program is to volunteer to help in any way you can.
- Do not openly question the referee's judgment, and never his/her honesty. The referee is a symbol of fair play, integrity and sportsmanship. Please remember, many referees are still children learning how to ref, so please give them a break. Accept the results of the game, and encourage your child to be gracious in victory, and turn defeat into victory, by working towards improvement. *A child will not remember the results of a game but will remember how they felt of your actions.* **I will set a good example.**

The Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club has adopted this code of conduct for the organization. We are committed to the principles outlined in this code. Failure to abide by this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action, including expulsion from the club, or possible criminal prosecution under New Jersey State Statute. Disciplinary action will be decided by the Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club Executive Board.

I have read and agree to abide by the Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club Code of Conduct:

Signed: _____

Adopted by Palmyra Riverton Soccer Club – December 2002

Reasons Why Children Play - And Quit - Sports

Why They Play

1. Fun - The adjective that must describe the time spent at practices and games.
2. To learn and improve skills - The coach must be a teacher; but first, the coach must become a student.
3. To be with friends, and make new friends. Friendships are very important to players.
4. Excitement The thrill of playing the game is a reward.
5. To succeed or win - Notice that winning is not a very high priority - fun, learning, and being with friends are more important.
6. To exercise and improve fitness. Feeling good physically leads to feeling good mentally.

Why They Quit

1. Not playing - Kids do not develop, or have fun, on the bench. They need lots of playing time.
2. Being criticized and insulted - Making mistakes is a major part of the learning process. But players interpret insults and criticism as statements about their worth as human beings.
3. Mismatching - When mismatched with someone of greater size or skills, fun evaporates.
4. Stress - Stress derives not from the game, but from the reactions to it.
5. Failure - Failure is frequently determined from the messages the children get from the coach. Criticism and placing too much emphasis on the outcome, rather than the effort, lead to a lowered self-esteem - and less interest in playing.
6. Poor organization - A lack of activity at practice or too much rigidity become further reasons for children to drop out of the game.

Practical Psychology (Getting Mind with Body)

1. Player-Centered: Player-centered coaching is the act of helping players to develop a positive self-image through sports. The philosophy recognizes that a positive self-image is crucial to the future success of the players. This recognition translates into emphasizing that having fun, trying your best, and improving is more important than winning. In short, the emphasis is placed on effort rather than outcome.
2. Motivation: There are two types of motivation - negative and positive. Do you know the difference? Negative motivation uses threats, sarcasm, disappointment, humiliation, disrespect, forces, and employs cynicism. While negative motivation may cause the goose to lay one more golden egg, it strangles the goose in the process. Negative motivation causes the player to lower his self-esteem, and always leads to one result: rebellion. Positive motivation employs high expectations, uses visual images of success, tries to catch people doing things right, aims to create desire, uses attraction rather than forcing, is enthusiastic, treats the players with respect, sends a consistent message, and is fair with everyone.
3. Down-Talk: "Down-Talk" is one type of negative motivation. For instance, take the player who always gives the ball to the other team. If the coach says, "Billy, quit turning the ball over to the other team!" we have a problem. The word quit puts Billy into a negative state, meaning his sub-conscious compares this situation to past situations of beings scolded, times when he was called a quitter, and activities that were not fun. The body then corresponds to these sub-conscious thoughts by increasing the heart rate, taking shallower breaths, and tensing the muscles. The result is that Billy is more likely to make mistakes because his body is in a negative state.
4. Up-Talk: "Up-Talk" reflects a better choice of words. In the same scenario, the coach would say, "Billy, pass the ball to your teammates." While the verbal difference seems subtle, the psychological difference is not. Billy now has a positive image to visualize. And anytime the mind can see itself doing something, the chances for success have jumped. The body begins to conform to the image, resulting in a lowered heart rate, deeper breathing, and relaxed muscles. Down-Talk should only be used when all else has failed.
5. Labeling: "Labeling" is the act of referring to someone by something other than their first name. Labeling can cause problems because, besides often communicating disrespect, it can also provide an image for the child to fulfill. The same can be said of the team name. Have you heard a child openly referred to as a "Wildman," "Animal," or a "Terror?" Or a team referred to as the "Devils?" These images can become self-fulfilling prophecies.

6. The Feedback: Feedback is the signal that guide players towards Sandwich success - much like the signal that guides a plane to a safe landing. A "Feedback Sandwich" provides something good before and after the meat of the message. For instance, consider the player who shoots from bad angels rather than crossing. The player can be "sandwiched" into better behavior. "Billy, that was a great run you made up the sideline" - (Billy is now in a positive, receptive state). "Next time, take a look across the field - we had three people open waiting for a cross" - (The meat, or information). "And I know you can do it because you are a hard-worker, and I've seen you do it before." - (Something good to wash it down, and reinforces a positive state and image of success.)
7. Praise: Praise creates a positive self-image, when used Importance of correctly. Two types of praise prevail. "Praise for Separation Being" means the coach appreciates the children for who they are, rather than what they do. "It's good to see you;" "It's nice to have you here." The message is each player has an inherent value for just being. "Praise for Doing" reflects an appreciation for a player's efforts or accomplishments. "Good shot;" or, "Great game today." Be sure to separate "Praise for Being" from "Praise for Doing." If combined, mixed messages are sent. For instance, consider this: "Sarah, I like you. You played a good game today." Sarah might think that if she hadn't played a good game, maybe you wouldn't like her or her teammates might think that since they did not play well, you don't like them.
8. Senses: People input information primarily through the five senses - hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting, and smelling. Each player has one prevalent sense. But the coach may not know which sense that is. So, when teaching, be sure to show for the 'visualizers,' explain for the 'listeners,' and touch the surface of the foot used for the 'feelers.' (Smelling and tasting? Rarely used on the field.)
9. Subconscious: Be aware that the subconscious part of the brain Deposits & records everything that happens and stores it. Withdrawals Nothing is truly forgotten. And this is the section responsible for the majority of muscular movements. Every interaction between coach and player should be viewed as a deposit or a withdrawal. The idea is for the coach to build up a savings 'account' with each player based upon numerous deposits. One withdrawal can obliterate numerous deposits if it is big enough. But the coach who has managed his account diligently has built up enough 'interest' in the player to command respect.
10. Self-Talk: Players who say the right things to themselves force the brain to focus on the right clues, rather than being distracted. Teach the players to say the right things to themselves. Getting that brain to work for the player, rather than against him - "Push, Peak, Place (when shooting, for instance)" - will prove a worthy discipline - "Head up, see the field" - later in life.
11. Touch: The coach who touches a player appropriately - a hand on the back to say it is O.K., or a high five after a good response - is subconsciously conveying a powerful message. The idea through touch, however, is to only touch the player when giving, never in taking. For instance, to grab a child by the arm when the coach wants attention causes that child to become uncomfortable around the coach. This does not mean to touch "inappropriately" is acceptable - quite the contrary. But it does mean that a greater message can be conveyed if the touch is appropriate and in goodwill.
12. Individual: The coach cannot treat everyone the same - Treatment everyone is different. However, the coach can treat everyone fair. Treat them different, but treat them fair.

Verbal Praises

Higher Self-Esteem = Higher Performance

Praise for Doing

Way to go * Well done * Good stuff * That's the one * Super * How smart * That a girl * Fantastic job * Now you got it * Way to be * Learning fast * Top of the line * Good for you * Like it * Fantastic * Good as gold * Great job * Gotta love it * Looking good * Excellent * Nice creativity * You've got it now * Sweet * Beautiful * I knew you'd do it * Making me proud * Clean as a whistle * Nice work * Good effort * Wow * What a quick learner * Right on target * Bravo * Good as it gets * Outstanding * That'll do it * Awesome * Tough to beat * Neat o * Making it look easy * Really creative there * Terrific * Getting it down now * Unstoppable * You're on top of it * Dynamite * What a trooper * Great run * Such a good listener * Nice ball * Some handy work there * Tricky * Nothing less than super * Bingo * Tremendous touch * Marvelous * Good creativity * Exceptional IV That's the way to win with class * Nice team play * Imaginative * That's the ticket * Killer pass * Magic * Couldn't have done it better myself * That's the way * Well in * Good answer * That's it * Gotta love it * You're on your way * Unbeatable * You've got a handle on it now * Good example * You're such a quick learner * That's what I'm looking for

Praise for Being

It's good to see you * You are special to me * Thanks for coming * Looking good today * I'm glad you're here * You're important * You made my day * Give me five * It makes me happy to see you * You're growing up fast * I trust you * You are the man * You belong * I respect you * You mean the world to me * You are important * What a joy you are * You're unique * I like you * You make me laugh * You look strong * Couldn't have done it without you * I'm so proud of you * You're A OK * I enjoy being around you

Knowing the Needs of the U6 & U8 Player

A. Characteristics of Typical U6 & U8 Players

The following is important so that the coach understands what type of audience with which he or she is working.

CATEGORY	U6 PLAYERS	U8 PLAYERS
1. Important persons of reference	Mom & Dad	Parents, family, and other associated adult guardians
2. Environment they feel most comfortable in	Home	Home, school, neighborhood
3. Physical dimensions	Immature-lack physical size and developed musculature	Change individually, with each player developing at his or her rate
4. Organizational ability (organize themselves and others)	Very low; anything complicated is confusing or boring	Low; can begin to teach difference between teammate and opponent
Motor ability (agility, balance, and pace)	Very low; pace is full tilt or a standing stop; can examine balance by observing stopping and starting, or standing on one foot	Low; some improvement because of increased body control and body awareness; leads to guided discovery of skill
Cognitive dimensions (evaluate, reason, and use judgment in decision making)	Beings of need, not reason; can begin to identify shapes, learning to count, alphabet	Low; learn by trial and error; simple problem solving improves
Perception of time and space on the soccer field	Perceive only the space their body occupies; one space away is another world; cluster around ball in "beehive"	Beginning to become aware of adjacent space in the immediate vicinity of their body; beginning to comprehend connection between themselves and the ball
Game they play	Size 3 ball; need lots of participation; no standing, no waiting; no offside or complicated rules; 3 v 3 activities	Small groups (3 v 3 to 5 v 5); size 3 ball; no offside or complicated rules; simplicity; encourage players to move freely over entire field area

B. The U6 Player

Do You Know the Audience?

Mental Development	
Imagination and pretend activities dominate play time	Problem solving situations usually attended to one task at a time
The relationship between time and space is only remotely comprehended -"big" could equal 10 or 100 million	Lengthy, sequential instructions are left unprocessed; grasp only small pieces of information
Rules of all activities are very uncomplicated	Beginning to assign meanings to symbols, symbols to environment, i.e. B = baaa = ball
Physical Development	
Body management is a top priority	Running should be for enjoyment only
The difference between males and females minimal	Increased usage of body parts occurring daily

Education through movement-oriented activities -Show me how you might touch the ball. Can you show me your left foot?	Fatigue reached easily, with rapid recovery; average heart beat around 90 bpm for male & female
Advancement in motor development begins with head, down towards feet, and body center outward	Fundamental movement skills a priority: jumping, balancing, throwing, catching, etc.
Males and females weigh between 30 - 50 pounds.; males approximately 35 - 45", females 37 - 45"	Body segments grow at different rates
Social and Emotional Development	
Need 'play" without pressure, with generous praise	World only perceived from their perspective
The concept of "team" or group play not understood, although it might be verbally expressed -Team consists of little more than wearing the same color shirt	Awareness of body, the self-concept, and self-image are developed through movement -nobody wants to share 'their' ball -good effort equals good performance
Psychologically, once past midfield, the game is almost "downhill;" no going back, full tilt	Mother or significant parent is most influential person in their life

C. The U8 Player

Do You Know the Audience?

Mental Development	
Limited capacity to attend multiple tasks; concept of space and time relationship minimal	Effort synonymous with performance, i.e. "If I tried hard then I performed well," regardless.
Categorizing of information beginning; do not recognize some relationships that exist, but assume others do, that actually do not	Since limited by capacity to attend multiple tasks, controlling the ball requires most attention, leaving little for tactical decisions
Physical Development	
Coordination and pace improved considerably since U6 level, but still immature	Cardiovascular system still underdeveloped as child's heart rate peaks early, recovers late
Injuries near joints must be taken seriously since growth plates are there, skeleton is still growing	Temperature regulation system immature; core body temperature raises faster with movement yet takes longer to cool down than adults, i.e. "Put on your jacket." "But I'm not cold."
Social and Emotional Development	
Intrinsically motivated; soccer is purely "fun." Influential person likely father or only parent	Personal universe expanded to neighborhood
Effect of negative comments great; easily upset psychologically by peers and adults	Desire social acceptance; they want to be liked
Self-image, concept beginning to develop, but is very fragile	Begin to interact with true playmates, with an inclination towards small groups
Identification with team is very limited - "I play for Coach Jim," or, 'I play for the Sharks.' Awareness of club or leagues is remote.	Need for approval from parents, teachers and coaches is great

Effective Communication

Coach to Player Basics

As you know, young kids have very short attention spans. This being true, it means:

- Don't have players standing around in lines; if using lines; keep them to something like one player working, maybe three in a line but not waiting long.
- Use the K.I.S.S. principle - Keep It Short and Simple when speaking to the players.
- Use some crowd control tactics to help get the message across when communicating.
 - Make sure the players are facing away from the sun - let the coach face the sun.
 - When the coach is talking, all balls stop moving.
 - Be sure to face the team away from activities behind the speaker - the last thing we want is players watching someone behind the speaker and not listening.
 - When the coach talks, everyone listens; then when a player talks, everyone provides him the same respect.
 - Talk with the wind at your back rather than into it.
 - No one is to stand behind the speaker's peripheral vision; you don't want somebody making faces behind your back.
 - When calling the team in, make it a competition to get them there faster - i.e., "The last one behind me is a rotten egg!" or, "The last one behind the end line owes me a push up!"
 - Ask questions when you are done, like, "Billy, now what did I say the purpose of this game is?," or, "Sarah, which goal are you to score on?"
 - Reward those who answer correctly with something like, "OK, whoever answers my questions right today gets a piece of bubble gum," or, "Whoever answers this question right gets to go first."
 - Use demonstrations more than words - give the players a picture to look at and then ask them to do it.
 - Move from activity to activity so that the kids do not get bored. Spend 10-20 minutes per activity, and then move on.
 - Remember the first rule of communication: The message sent is not always the message received.
 - Avoid screaming. It is better to call the players in to listen, than holler constantly to make yourself heard.
 - Portray yourself as in control and organized. Avoid fidgeting, kicking the dirt or grasping for notes when speaking.
 - When speaking, be stationary - avoid running and talking at the same time. When making a point, being stationary helps.
 - Coaches are less intimidating when they get down on the players physical level to make a point. Staring up at a giant in itself can heighten anxiety. Calling 'em in? Get on a knee.
 - Ask specific people specific questions after making a point. For instance, "So Jessica, what are you supposed to do after throwing a move?" When you ask a crowd, "Anybody got any questions?" many people say nothing out of fear of being embarrassed. Being specific keeps people involved and helps the communicator gauge reception.

Pointers

The next few pages provide the coach with some pointers which help teach the three vital skills: striking, receiving, and dribbling.

Dribbling the Ball

What to Watch For

- The three qualities of good dribbling are:
 - tight control
 - change of speed
 - change of direction
- It is advantageous to keep the ball very close to the foot. It is hard to change speed and direction unless you can touch the ball.
- When dribbling, keep the knees bent at a 45-degree angle. 90 degrees would be sitting in a chair. Show the kids what 45 degrees is. Can they stand at 45 degrees?
- Dribbling with the knees bent enables the player to cut and slash. You cannot cut and slash well if you are standing straight up. The 45-degree angle also means that the dribbler has good enough balance to take a collision and not lose balance as easily as if standing straight up.
- Young players want to dribble with the toe touching the ball. But there are no more kickers who kick in the NFL with the toe because the toe is too small a surface, and which way the ball goes off of it is unpredictable. The same with dribbling. Players should be shown how to dribble with the outside of the foot and the inside of the foot.
- Dribbling with the outside of the foot (turning the foot slightly in and touching the ball on the surface where the shoe starts to bend) allows the player to have a wider surface to touch the ball than the front of the shoe.
- Dribbling with the outside of the foot enables the player to run. Notice that it is possible to sprint pigeon-toed (toes turned inside). Some of the fastest sprinters in the world are pigeon-toed. This is the way to dribble when you want to accelerate. Trying to escape, cut and slash? This way.
- Dribbling with the inside of the foot puts a wide surface on the ball. It keeps the ball under control. However, it slows you down because you cannot run with the inside of the foot coming forward.
- In a nutshell, the ball should be kept close when in traffic, i.e. when near the other teams' goal.
- When the player wants to "fast break" and has the space to do so, it is quicker to push the ball out into the open space and run, i.e. don't keep the ball so close when in wide terrain. Having to touch the ball often slows the runner down.
- Dribbling usually yields the most dividends when used in the opponent's half of the field. Players who want to run with the ball in their half usually run into trouble.
- The more dribbling moves a player knows, the more chances he has of escaping trouble. The goal is to train all players to be good dribblers - not just the attackers.
- Players who dribble with the head down do not see much. Continually ask the players to get the head up, to look and see.
- There is a big difference between just looking, and seeing. Sometimes one can look and yet not see. To see is to recognize.

Striking the Ball

What to Watch For

- Knowing how to strike the ball, or having good form, is the largest part of passing or shooting. Some of the hardest strikes come from players no larger than a pencil. They just have good form.
- Because the inside of the foot is such a wide surface, it is usually the first striking surface taught. The inside is excellent for accurate, short range passes. Unfortunately, the inside surface is for opponents to read.
- The outside of the foot is used to release passes quickly. It is difficult for opponents to predict because it lacks a wind-up.
- The "laces" are the surface of choice for power. When shooting, passing over distance, or wanting to hit the ball hard, the "laces" come into play.
- "Laces" really means striking the ball with the toe aimed down, and the big toe bone striking the ball. If you have ever bent your foot back, hyper-extended it, you know this hurts. So avoid using the center of the foot.

- Be aware that the "laces" part of the foot on a young player is very small, only a few inches. For this reason, it is often easier to begin learning striking mechanics with the inside of the foot first.

Below are techniques and mechanics relative to all kinds of striking:

- Point the toe of the plant foot at the target. This helps accuracy as this ground foot begins the aiming process.
- Whenever striking, lock the ankle of the striking foot. Imagine trying to hit a baseball with a bat that was not stiff when you swung. The ball would not hit off it very far. The same with the ankle.
- Slightly lower the center of balance when contact with the ball is made, allowing better balance and a better power base.
- Before approaching, the head is up locating a target. But during the approach, the head should be down concentrating on the ball.
- Upon approaching the ball, keep the head still. If the head is bouncing around, vision gets distorted, resulting in inaccuracy.
- Striking with the right foot? Hold the left arm out for balance.
- It helps for the player to imagine a line going from the ball to the target. The idea, then, is to send the ball up that line.
- The only reason the ball goes up is, the bottom was struck.
- A theory of getting the ball into the air goes like this: if the plant foot is planted behind the ball, the striker tends to reach for the ball and lean slightly back. The player then tends to strike the bottom of the ball, and the ball goes up. However, if the top is struck, the ball will stay down.
- A theory of keeping the ball down: if planting beside the ball, the body tends to lean over it, causing a strike mid-height on the ball, which keeps it down. However, if the player strikes under the ball, it will go up.
- The follow through with the striking leg is very important. Just as an NFL punter follows through high, if the target is high, follow through high. If the target is low, the follow through should be kept low.
- For maximum, low-target power (i.e. shooting at goal), the player should land on the foot that swings, meaning "jump through" the swing and follow through at the target - low. This is an awkward feeling at first. But the follow through gets the body weight behind the strike.
- Can you observe players landing on their plant foot after a strike? This usually meant a lack of power, or usually, a chip shot.
- Many young kids make it hard upon themselves because they lose their balance and fall down when they strike the ball. Stay on your feet.
- Kids also tend to reach for the ball, planting too far behind. The result is a lack of power. The plant foot should be close to the ball.
- One of the biggest goals of youth coaching is to develop players who can strike the ball powerfully with both legs. This takes lots of repetition, lots of praise, and patience.
- Having the correct sized ball makes a big difference.

Receiving the Ball

What to Watch For

- Knowing how to confidently receive an incoming ball allows the player to move from tentative to aggressive. All that is needed is good form.
- Ground balls are a good starting point since bouncing balls are harder.
- The player must step into the line of flight and get the body behind the ball. With body behind ball, the ball has less chance of escaping.
- A good phrase which describes the receiving action is to "collect the ball." Some coaches use the word "trap," but trap usually refers to killing the ball dead. Rather, the first touch can redirect it away from pressure.
- The easiest surface to collect a ground ball is the inside of the foot, turning the toe outside. It is a very wide surface.
- When collecting with the inside, players might say to themselves, "Toe up, heel down." The toe is only slightly up and the heel slightly down - not a radical angle. The receiving foot is off the ground an inch or so.
- This requires the players to be able to stand on one leg. For little kids, it is helpful to practice jogging around, and upon the command "one inch," all players balance on one foot while keeping the other one inch off the ground, and the inside surface facing out. Hands out for balance helps.

- "Cushion" the ball by giving a little with the ball's force. This is known as "taking speed off" the ball. If the foot does not give, and a fast rolling ball smacks into it, the ball bounces off the foot like it hit a wall.
- This "cushion" principle is fundamental to collecting all kinds of incoming balls. "Cushion" is a good word to use.
- Another means of "taking the speed off" is to hop an inch backwards with the plant foot, creating a giving surface, much like a mattress.
- When collecting, the eyes should follow the ball into the receiving surface, so that the ball does not roll under it.

Ten Practice Tips

Suggestions for a Better Training Session

1. Have practice designed before driving to the field. Write it down.
2. Organize practice so it moves through a number of activities. Players have short attention spans. Don't give them the chance to get bored.
3. Dress like a soccer coach when coaching. Would farmers listen to the President if he dressed like a business man? Would industry listen to a President dressed like a farmer? Tailor to the audience.
4. Avoid letting players see you read your notes. We do not want them to think without notes, you are clueless. Leave the clipboard at home.
5. Soccer is a chaotic game incorporating movement and decision making. Standing in lines does not foster that. Keep line time to a minimum.
6. Practice activities usually include both "exercises" and "games." Understand there is a big difference.
7. "Exercises" - those activities that include less than 4 v 4, such as "drills," skill work, etc. - should be employed at the beginning of practice, serve as a "warm-up" and occupy 25% or less of practice.
8. "Games" - those activities that include at least 4 v 4 - should occupy 75% of the allotted practice time.
9. The more "small-sided" games at practice (4 v 4, etc.) the more learning. Small-sided games are more efficient since the lessons are increased. Two games of 4 v 4 are better than one game of 11 v 11.
10. Once in a while, let them scrimmage the whole practice. Occasionally say "Try this. Forget that. Play." The surprise heightens motivation.

Backyard Play

Investing in Quality Time

Any time a parent spends "playing" with a child is an investment in a future relationship. It can also be a very good way for the child to learn the subtleties of ball control. As long as the activity is something the child wants to do, it has the potential to bring a return.

The following activities help develop "back yard" skills:

Adult and child play one v one, with the objective being to score between the cones (shoes, rocks, etc.) while keeping the ball below the knees. The idea is for the player to learn how to win, and lose, while having fun.

Pitch to the player and make him bring the ball down (collect it) with the shoe laces. If too difficult, do not hesitate to regress: drop the ball from head height; from above head height; then a pitch. Player must keep eyes on the ball. Can the player use different surfaces: inside foot, outside, thighs, etc?

Have the player dribble at you with the ball. Player must throw a move (simple cut, fake kick, leg swing) before going past you. Player goes past about 10 feet, turns and passes back, and it is your turn. This is called practicing "dribble overlaps." It is good because it forces the player to rehearse moves, while providing repetition and a high success rate.

Adult and player pass back and forth between the cones (shoes, rocks, etc.). The player can be asked to pass with the laces, the inside, or outside of the foot; to pass the ball back after stopping it, or with the first touch. Also, the surface receiving the ball can include inside or outside foot.

Have the player come to you. When the player is within a couple feet, throw the ball over their head and have them run to retrieve it. The idea is to turn the ball around, and bring it back. As the player becomes more adept, the focus is shifted

upon the first touch. This touch should be directly back towards the target (thrower). Can you use the outside of the foot? The inside?

The player dribbles between the cones, using the outside and inside of the foot's surface to direct the ball. Be advised that young players like to dribble with the toe. This is not necessarily a mistake, but the outside and inside of the foot are a better choice since there will be more control.

Have the player play "climb the ladder." This is an exercise which determines how many times a player can juggle. Get the highest number you can within a minute, etc. How many with the head? How many with the thighs? The laces? Can you go head, thigh and then laces? The other way around?

References: The Coaching Methods and Pointers sections of this handbook and drills listed on our website were put together with club information, South Jersey Soccer League information, and information available at various on line sources including the Alabama Youth Soccer Association, Footy4kids, Soccer Coach - L, Kick-off Coaching Manual, and others.