

U8 Game Play

At this age, the kids are beginning to get a better understanding of how they impact the team, but play still tends to be pretty individual and their attention is in the moment.

- We play 4 10 minute quarters.
- We play 4 vs 4 with a goalie.
- There is no offsides. (this means that the kids can be anywhere on the field at anytime).
- They retake throw-ins. (You need to keep both feet on the ground and throw it over your head. If the kids don't, the refs will have them take it out of bounds and try again.)
- There is no heading.
- There are no penalties. (The refs will tell the kids what behavior is not acceptable, space will be given and a free kick will be awarded).

U8 Practice Plans

The Monday practices will run 60 min, starting at 6pm.

All the drills are planned with 2 coaches, so hopefully we will be able to get there.

We will have 2 teams splitting the u8 field and 2 teams on the u6 fields

We will have distanced cones set up for each of the kids to put their water bottles down. This will be their home base when they are not doing a drill.

At the whistle, we'll move to our first drill which will run for 10 min, a whistle and break, then the second drill. And so on.

Please remember that this will probably not run as smoothly as we'd like the first week, so try to have fun and enjoy them.

The questions are provided to help talk with the kids about the drills while they're happening or after the drill, when they're taking their water break. We tried to make the drills easy to set up and quick to execute. If you don't get to all the questions this week, not a big deal. We'll be doing these again in the future, so maybe you get to them next time.

Week One Drills

#1. Dribbling – Red Light/ Green Light

The kids will start on the goal line. A reminder for soft touches would probably help. They don't want to shoot from the far end of the field, they want to dribble and keep control until they get close enough. The coach says green light, the kids dribble. Red light, the kids stop. Yellow light, go slow.

Coaches, follow the kids as they go so you can ask questions and help runaway balls.

Here are some questions to ask the kids:

- Do our hands touch the ball? *No*
- What touches the ball? *Your foot*
- What part of the foot? *The inside of the foot*
- What are you trying to do? *Score a goal, keep control*

To make it harder, have them switch feet. Or add a different color that adds a new challenge – dark red could be stop with your foot on top of the ball.

#2. Throw-Ins

So, there is a time we get to touch the ball with our hands, anyone know? *Throw ins*

When do we use a throw in? *When the ball goes out of bounds on the sideline*

The kids line up out of bounds, one coach as the target, the other on the sidelines, reminding the kids about the objective of the drill.

- What are you trying to do? *Throw the ball to the coach*
- What do you need to remember?
 - o *2 feet on the ground, both hands on the ball, throw over your head*
- What should the kids do once they throw the ball? *In a game they should get back onto the field (maybe have them run around the coach before they get back in line?)*

The kids can try to hit the coaches with their throws (a couple of them are my kids, so totally acceptable). Have a cone set up, and coach can kick it back to the cone so the kid can get it and get back in line. For fun, on the last one, maybe ask What should the coach do? And if the kids say shoot/ score, have the coaches shoot, or pass it back to the kids so they can shoot.

#3. Shooting

Pick a spot on the field to start, line up in 2 lines. The kids dribble in, then shoot on the net. Coach can be in between kids, one coach at nets helping to get the balls out, or wide shots.

Where on the foot do you shoot? *On the inside, no toes*

#4. Corner kicks/ Goal kicks

Not sure we'll get to both in one time slot, but worth a try since they'll both come up during a game. Both indicate a switch of possession.

** Corner kicks happen when a defender kicks the ball out of bounds along the goal line. Corners are kicked by the offense, so they want to try to score them.

Corner kick drill – One coach in the middle of the field, in front of the net, perhaps moving. Other coach at the corner with the kids. After kicking it to mentor, have kids run out to a cone since they want to learn to get back on the field after they kick the corner, coach will gently kick their ball to the cone, kids can take it back to the line.

- Where do we take corner kicks from? *The corner, show them*
- Where do we want to kick it? *In bounds, or in front of the net, or to a teammate*
- What do we do after you take a corner kick? *Go on the field*
- What does the mentor/ coach want to do with the ball? *Shoot*
- More advanced – when do we kick corner kicks?

** Goal kicks happen when the offense kicks the ball out of bounds. Goal kicks are kicked by the defense along the semicircle in front of the goal.

Goal kick drill – Each kid finds a place to stand on the semicircle (or 6yd box for u8 fields). Coach with the kids at the goal, other coach on the field moving around a little. Kids kick the ball to other coach, run to cone (where ball will be) and return to the line.

- Where do we take goal kicks from? *In front of the goal*
- Where do we want to kick it? *To a teammate, in bounds, to the side*
- What do we do after we take a goal kick? *Get back on the field, try to score*

#5. Passing Drill

#6. Dribbling Drill