

COACHES MANUAL

3-5 YEAR OLDS



WELCOME



COACHES



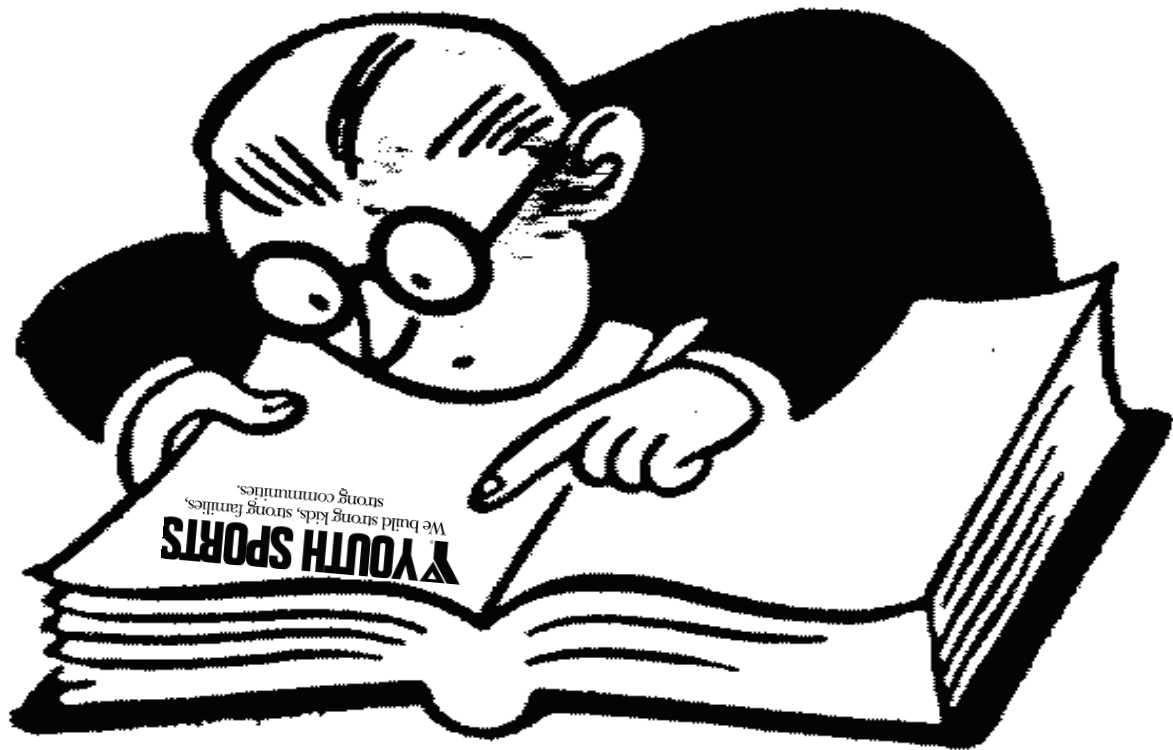
WELCOME TO YMCA YOUTH SPORTS

Thank you for agreeing to be a coach in the YMCA Youth Sports program. As a YMCA coach, you will introduce a group of young people to the game of soccer. We ask you to not only teach your players the basis skills and rules of the game, but also make learning the game a joyful experience for them. You see, we want them to play soccer not only for this season, but also for many years to come, and we want you to have fun teaching soccer because we'd like you to help us again next season.

Okay, let's get started. In this guide, you will find essential information about teaching soccer the YMCA way. In the first section, we will explain the philosophy of YMCA Youth Sports. Next is your job description for being a YMCA soccer coach, with reminders about how to work with this age group. Then we will show you how to teach soccer and provide you with a season plan and a complete set of practice plans for this age group. In the next part we will explain how to teach the YMCA Youth Sports Values. In the last section we will discuss risk management procedures.

Please read the entire guide carefully and consult it regularly during the season. Your YMCA offers you the opportunity to participate in a YMCA Soccer Coaches Course. The three and one-half hour course will help you use this approach to teaching soccer and values.

PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH SPORTS





YMCA OF GREATER HOUSTON PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH SPORTS



What we want youth sports to be at the YMCA is stated in our Seven Pillars of YMCA Youth Sports.



Everyone Plays. We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.



Safety First. Although children may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. We ask you to make sure the equipment and facilities are safe and to teach the sport as we've prescribed so the skills you teach are appropriate for children's developmental level. We ask you to gradually develop your players' fitness levels so they are conditioned for the sport. We also ask you to constantly supervise your young players so you can stop any unsafe activities.



Character Development. Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Faith are about playing by the rules and more. It's about you and your players showing respect for all that are involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It's about you being a role model of sporting behavior and guiding your players to do the same. Remember, we're more interested in developing children's character through sports than in developing a few highly skilled players.



Positive Competition. We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory remains in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the children before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for children, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. Through YMCA Youth Sports, we want to help children learn these values, and parents to do the same.



Family Involvement. YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents helping as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation. To help parents get involved appropriately, YMCA Youth Sports offers parent orientation programs.



Sport for All. YMCA Youth Sports is an inclusive sport program. That means that children who differ in various characteristics are included in rather than excluded from participation. We offer sports programs for children who differ in physical abilities by matching them with children of similar abilities and modifying the sport. We offer programs to all children regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the children and their parents to do the same.




Sport for Fun. Sports are naturally fun for most children. They love the challenge of mastering the skills of the game, playing with their friends, and competing with their peers. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sports they over organize and dominate the activity to the point that it destroys children's enjoyment of the sport. If we take the fun out of sports for our children, we are in danger of the kids taking themselves out of sports. Remember the sports are for the kids; let them have fun.


JOB DESCRIPTION





YOUR DUTIES AS A COACH


Here are your seven duties as a YMCA soccer coach:

 **Teach the skills and tactics of soccer to the best of your ability.** We want you to teach children the physical skills and tactics to play the sport to the best of their ability. Kids value learning these skills and tactics, and they respect those who can help them master them. Be a good teacher, but remember that not all children have the same ability to learn. A few have the ability to be outstanding, many to be competent, and a few to barely play the sport. We ask that you help them all be the best they can be.

 **Help your players learn the rules and traditions of soccer.** We will ask you to teach your players the rules of soccer as they learn the basic skills through the modified games of the sport. Beyond the rules, we'll also ask you to teach the basic traditions of the sport. By traditions, we mean the proper actions to show courtesy and avoid injury—in short, to be a good sport.

 **Help your players become fit and value fitness for a lifetime.** We want you to help your players be fit so they can play soccer safely and successfully. However, we also want more. We want you to do so in a way that your players learn to become fit on their own, understand the value of fitness, and enjoy training. Thus, we ask you not to make them do push-ups or run laps for punishment. Make it fun to get fit for soccer and make it fun to play soccer so they will stay fit for a lifetime.

 **Help young people develop character.** Character development is teaching children the core values—caring, honesty, faith, respect, and responsibility. These intangible qualities are no less important to teach than kicking or defensive skills. We ask you to teach these values to children by conducting team circles, which are built into every practice plan, and demonstrating and encouraging behaviors that express these values at all times.

 **Ensure the safety of your players.** You are responsible for supervising every aspect of your players' participation in soccer. Make sure the field is clear of hazardous objects and that the kids do not engage in activities that might injure themselves or others. You have not only a legal but also a moral responsibility to supervise them closely.

 **Help each child develop a sense of self-worth.** An essential goal in conducting YMCA Youth Sports programs is to help children gain a strong, positive sense

of their worth as human beings. For each of us, our most important possession is self-worth. Please teach our children soccer in a way that helps them grow to respect themselves and others.



Make it fun. Make learning the game a fantastic positive experience so your players will want to continue playing for many years to come.

BEING A GOOD COACH

Just what makes a good soccer coach?

- A person who knows the sport of soccer well. If you're not familiar with the sport, be sure to attend the YMCA Soccer Coaches Course and study more about the sport.
- A person who wants to teach soccer to young people, who cares. Excellent teachers are motivated, have a positive attitude, and give the time to do the job well.
- A person who understands young people, who possesses empathy. Empathy is caring about the young people you teach by showing you understand them.

We hope you will do your best to be a good soccer coach for the children on your team. By doing so, you can help them develop their spirits, minds, and bodies—the goal for all YMCA programs.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

Win or lose, I pledge before God to do my best, to be a team player, to respect my teammates, opponents and officials, and to improve myself in Spirit, Mind, and Body. Amen.

WORKING WITH 3-5 YEAR OLDS





WORKING WITH 3-4 YEAR

BEHAVIORS OF DEVELOPMENT

Motor/Physical Development

Lots of energy. Enjoys running, galloping, jumping, dancing.

Enjoys throwing balls, beanbags, etc.

Social/Emotional Development

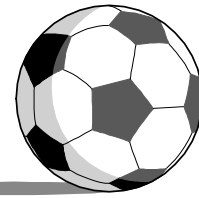
Parallel play evolves into cooperative Play.

Friendships develop and many develop a special friend who they seek for play.

Cognitive Development

Imaginative

Appreciation for diversity, uniqueness in children



ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT

Motor/Physical Development

Provide lots of physical activities, such as tricycles, balls, skipping ropes. Enjoys throwing activities such as frisbees, balls, beanbags, ring toss, bowling, etc.

Social/Emotional Development

Opportunities to get together with friends.

Cooperative games, rules.

Cognitive Development

Can recognize signs and logos.

Understands and appreciates other children's individuality.



WORKING WITH 5 YEAR OLDS

BEHAVIORS OF DEVELOPMENT

Language Development

Take things literally. "You can't have your cake and eat it too!" Would look around for cake?



Cognitive Development

Need to begin to make some of their own decisions by planning and managing their own time.



Motor/Physical Development

Very energetic. Masters skipping, throwing a ball. Catching is still not mastered. By this age, it is evident whether they are right or left handed.

At 5 years of age, body is poised and controlled.

Will develop certain interests in sports.

Physical skill development relates closely to development of self esteem.

Social/Emotional

Pleasant disposition to 5 ½ years.

Then can become brash and disobedient over demanding and explosive. Need patience and understanding.

Enjoys helping and receiving praise for same. Shows pride in achievements.

PRACTICE OVERVIEW





YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS



WEEK 1



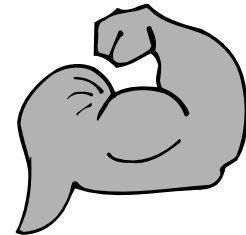
Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

1. Players free kick or dribble the ball using no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the field.
2. Players dribble or kick at targets (cones or parents) spread out around $\frac{1}{2}$ the field.

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

GENERAL FITNESS

Following the warm-up, gather your players and briefly discuss the fitness concept for that practice. In this first practice your fitness topic will be more general, but in future practices you will often discuss more specific concepts and issues such as safety, flexibility, healthy habits, and more.



Key Idea: General Fitness

Gather children about 10 to 15 feet away from a goal or cone. "Everyone jump 10 times. Our muscles help us jump. When you use your muscles a long time without getting too tired, it improves your endurance, which means you can run longer without getting tired. Now run really fast to the goal and back." Wait for them to return. "Running strengthens your heart and lungs. Now touch your toes; try to keep your fingers there while I count. Stretching makes you flexible, like a rubber band. When we play soccer, our bodies run, kick, and move. It makes our bodies stronger and improves our fitness, which means we can run and play longer and faster. Having

WEEK 1

good physical fitness is important for soccer and for being healthy. At every practice we will talk about fitness in our fitness circles.”



Skills/Drills (15 Minutes)

Dribbling – Teach dribbling as a series of “little kicks” meant to control the ball. Discuss which part of the foot (outside/inside) you use to dribble.

Accuracy Game – Bowling for Cones – Set up 3 cones like bowling alley pins. Place players 10 feet away. Have them kick the ball at the cones seeing how many they can knock down. Have parents ready to reset cones for next player.

Red Light/Green Light – Freeze Game – Have all players with balls on the goal line. Have them start to dribble the ball towards center field. When you blow the whistle they freeze. Make sure all players have control of their ball and stop. If they lose control, they go back to the goal line.



Game/Play (15 Minutes)

KICKING AT CONES

The players should be placed in a circle, approximately 20 feet wide. Place 6 cones inside the circle in various positions. Give the players three balls and tell them that they must kick the balls and knock the cones down. Parents can assist by returning the balls that get kicked out of the circle. You could time them and try to improve the amount of time to knock down all the cones. This will teach kicking accuracy and receiving a pass.

WEEK 1

INTRO TO VALUES (10 Minutes)



TEAM CIRCLE

Key Idea: YMCA Five Core Values

Gather players into a circle. “This season we’ll talk about the five values of the YMCA. These are values that all good people and teammates have. Number one is CARING. Tell me how you can show caring to others? By helping someone when they fall? Great! Number two is HONESTY. How can you show that you’re honest? How about if you tell your parents about something that you accidentally broke? Good! Number three is RESPECT. Do you know what respect is? One way to show respect is by listening to adults when they speak to you, just like you’re doing now. Number four is RESPONSIBILITY. If you’re responsible, you will pick up after yourself if you make a mess. Don’t wait for others to pick up after you. Number five is FAITH. One way to show faith is when you believe in yourself that you can do something hard – like make a goal in a soccer game – and you practice hard. When you believe in yourself, you’ll almost always reach that goal.” Ask them to share ways that they show the five values in their lives. “Good teammates show these values to each other. We’ll talk more about these values during the season.

WEEK 1

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS 3-5 Year Olds

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

Skills Drills (15 Minutes)

Game/Play (15 minutes)

Team Circle (10 minutes)



YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS



WEEK 2



Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

Have players practice close dribbling. Tell players “Keep the ball close when you run”, as they practice. Also, tell players that you will blow the whistle occasionally during practice. When you blow the whistle, they should stop and put a foot on the ball to show they have it under control.

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

CARDIO

Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory Fitness

Children gather into a group. "Everyone hold one hand up and make a fist. Squeeze your fist tightly, and then let go. Keep tightening and letting go." Children continue for 10 counts. "Your heart is a special muscle that tightens and relaxes just like your fist is doing. Your heart is about the size of your fist. Let's put our fists over our chests. Every time it tightens, or beats, your heart pumps blood all over . Children continue for 10 counts. When you run during soccer, your heart beats faster. The beat slows down when you slow down. Let's run with high knees for 15 counts while we count together. Stop and feel your heart beat by putting your hand over your chest." Model for players. "Running strengthens your heart and lungs and improves your fitness."



WEEK 2



Skills/Drills (15 Minutes) **KICKING/TARGETS**

Egg Hunt:

Kids line up on one goal line. Scatter balls (eggs) on the field. Release kids to get eggs into the opposite goal (basket). Key is to have at least as many balls as kids is better.

Game/Play (15 Minutes) **RELAYS/KICKING**



Players should be in two single file lines. Place 4 cones in a line directly in front of them. Cones should be approximately 10' apart. The first player in each line should attempt to dribble the ball around the cones and double back to the line. After each player has had a turn, start a relay against each other. Large team practices can use three or four lines. Try to maximize the amount of time the players will touch the ball.

WEEK 2

RESPONSIBILITY (10 Minutes)



TEAM CIRCLE

Key Idea: RESPONSIBILITY

Gather players into a group. “I want us all to pretend we are eggs. Eggs have shells that can break. What would happen if we bumped into each other if we were eggs? Right. We would all crack and break. Let’s move around the field and still pretend we’re eggs. Try not to bump into each other or you’ll break!” Continue this activity for about one minute. “We were all good and careful not to bump into each other! So our shells didn’t break! That was awesome! You were in charge of your self, or responsible for yourself, when you were moving around. When we are careful not to bump into each other, we are showing responsibility for our space and other players’ space. This shows responsibility during practices and games.” You are responsible to your team and to yourself to be a part of the team.”

WEEK 2

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS 3-5 Year Olds

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

Skills Drills (15 Minutes)

Game/Play (15 minutes)

Team Circle (10 minutes)



YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS



WEEK 3

Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

SOCCKER SHAPES



Each player with a ball. Using different parts of the body (foot, elbow, head, etc.) players make shapes with the ball as ordered by the coach. (i.e. "using your right foot on the ball, make a circle").

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

MUSCLE STRENGTH/ENDURANCE

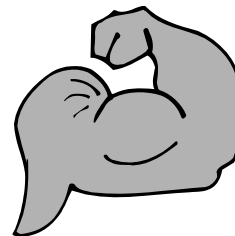
Key Idea: Muscular Strength & Endurance

Gather children into a circle. "Everyone find your own space so you don't bump your neighbor. You are going to run in your own spot for 30 seconds, then stop.

Ready? Go!" Time children and verbally let them know the time remaining; stop them at the end of the time.

"What part of the body did we just use the most when we ran?" Encourage their responses. "When we play soccer, which

part of your body do you use the most?" Wait for their responses. "Muscles in our body help us move our legs. Playing soccer will help our leg muscles get stronger and grow bigger."



WEEK 3



Skills/Drills (15 Minutes) **DRIBBLING**

The first skill needed to play soccer is dribbling, which is moving and controlling the ball using only the feet. Players can use dribbling to move the ball down the field for a pass or shot, to keep the ball from the opposing team, or to change direction.

Players must be able to use both the insides and outsides of their feet to dribble. To dribble with the inside of the foot, the player turns the foot out, then pushes the ball forward while moving. To dribble with the outside of the foot, the player must turn the foot in, then push the ball slightly forward or to the side.

Players may have trouble dribbling at first. Have them start by walking and dribbling. Once they can do that, ask them to speed up their dribbling pace. Insist that they look up as they dribble and not down at the ball. If they always look down, they are likely to have the ball stolen by an opponent or may not see a teammate who is open for a pass. Encourage players to use either foot to dribble--this will make it easier for them to protect the ball from opponents.

As your players improve, have them dribble against an opponent. Being marked (guarded) by a defender will require them to vary their speed, change direction, and shield the ball. Have them prepare for defensive pressure by practicing speeding up and slowing down as they dribble and by dribbling around towels or cones.

Here are some keys to dribbling:

- Push the ball softly in the desired direction if you are dribbling close to defenders.
- Look up and watch for other players.
- Keep the ball close to your feet. If it is too far ahead, other players can steal it.
- Shield the ball from opponents.
- Run at a speed at which you can control the ball.
- If you are dribbling fast, push the ball out several feet ahead and sprint to the ball.

WEEK 3

Error

Letting the ball get away from the player while dribbling.

Correction

- Keep the ball underneath the body, close to the feet.
- Nudge the ball gently in different directions, never letting it get more than a stride's length away.
- Determine whether the grass or ball require adjustments. A highly inflated ball or extremely short grass will cause the ball to roll faster and farther.

Conduct relays with two sets of lines. Players must dribble the ball around parents (or cones).



Game/Play (15 Minutes)

~~RELAYS/SCRIMMAGE~~

Set up four goals with cones. Goals should be approximately 8 feet wide. Pair up the players. Ask parents to be goalies. Players will try to score against the parents. They should be encouraged to pass to each other before trying to score. After approximately 30 seconds they should rotate to another goal and repeat. Keep track of how many goals they score.

WEEK 3

RESPECT (10 Minutes)



TEAM CIRCLE

Key Idea: RESPECT

Gather players into a single file line near two cones about 10 feet apart. “I am going to walk down the line two times. Remember how it feels each time I pass you.” Walk down the line and nod to each player. Repeat this, but now tell each player “good game” or “way to play today” and shake their hand. “Which time that I passed by made you feel better?” Ask the players to stand near a cone that represents their answer. “Shaking hands and saying “good game” are important traditions that show we appreciate our opponents’ play in the game. It shows respect for your opponents.” Divide the team in half and have them practice an end-of-game “respect ritual.”

WEEK 3

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS 3-5 Year Olds

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

Skills Drills (15 Minutes)

Game/Play (15 minutes)

Team Circle (10 minutes)



YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS



WEEK 4



Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

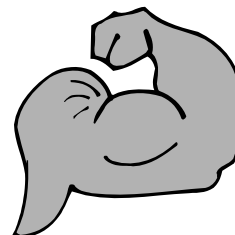
Repeat Relay games from week 3 practice.

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Key Idea: Safety Equipment & Rules

Bring a small piece of cardboard or a clipboard that can be used as a shield. Get one child to demonstrate. Provide a ball and have the child kick the ball at you at a medium effort. "Watch where the ball goes when Julia kicks it." Allow the ball to hit your legs. Then put the board in front of you, between you and the child kicking. Have the child kick again. "Now watch where the ball goes. This board is just like a shin guard that we wear on our legs. Wearing shin guards protects our legs just like the board protected my legs from the ball." Give each player a turn kicking the ball. "Can you think of other ways to be safe that you should remember to do when you play soccer?"



WEEK 4



Skills/ Drills (15 Minutes)

PASSING

Passing is another essential skill, as it allows the team to maintain possession of the ball and create scoring opportunities. Passes should be short and crisp; an opposing player is likely to steal long or slow passes. However, players should avoid using passes that are too hard and difficult to control. When passing under pressure, the player should pass, then move into space quickly.

Players should kick short passes with the inside of the foot. Here is the correct technique for short passes:

- Plant the non-kicking foot alongside and near the ball.
- Square up the hips and shoulders to the teammate for whom you intend the pass, and turn out the kicking foot.
- Swing the kicking foot straight at the center of the ball.
- Follow through by swinging the kicking leg well beyond the point of impact with the ball, in the direction of the teammate to whom you are passing the ball.

Sometimes a game situation will call for a player to make a long pass to a teammate across the field. The best way to make a long pass is to loft the ball through the air using the top of the foot. This is the correct technique for lofting passes:

- Plant the non-kicking foot slightly behind and to the side of the ball.
- Point the toes of the kicking foot down, and kick the ball with the shoelace area. Kick under the ball.
- Watch the kicking foot contact the bottom half of the ball and lift it off the ground.

Players should learn to use the outside of the foot to pass to the side, but this technique may be uncomfortable and difficult for them to perform. They also may have difficulty passing with the top of the foot or shoelace area (also called a power pass), as they tend to use their toes instead. Because of these problems, you may want to have young players master the short passes before they learn these other types of passes.

WEEK 4

Error Detection and Correction for Passing

Error

- Lack of accuracy

Correction

- Plant the non-kicking foot beside the ball with the toes pointed toward the teammate who will receive the pass.
- Square your shoulders and hips to the receiver.
- Keep the kicking foot firm throughout the kicking motion.
- Follow through with the kicking foot.

Skill Practice

- Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move to support a teammate with the ball.
- Practice moving to support a teammate with the ball.

Description

Pairs--Tell partners to practice getting the ball from one end of the field to the other without running with the ball. Ask, "How do you do it?" They should answer "Pass and move forward." After they practice passing the ball and score at the other end, they come back.

Game/Play (15 Minutes)

SMALL-SIDED SCRIMMAGE

Set up four goals, similar to the previous week. However, instead of parent goalies, this will be a 2 on 2 scrimmage. Parents need to assist. 2 players will play defense and 2 players will play offense. After several minutes of play, they should switch from offense to defense.



WEEK 4

HONESTY (10 Minutes)



TEAM CIRCLE

Key Idea: HONESTY

Get the players into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. “Can you touch the ball with your hand in soccer? Even if it’s an accident? Those of you who think it’s okay to touch the ball, stand by this cone. Those of you who thinks it’s not okay, stand by this cone.” Wait for players to choose. Then ask them why they chose the cone they did. “Touching the ball with your hand, even if it’s an accident, is a foul. What should you do if this happens? Those of you who would just keep playing, stand by this cone. Those of you who would raise your hand and give the ball to the other team, go stand by that cone.” Wait for them to pick their cone. “It’s important to be honest about fouls. If you touch the ball with your hand, even if nobody sees it, raise your hand and give the ball to the other team.”

WEEK 4

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS 3-5 Year Olds

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

Skills Drills (15 Minutes)

Game/Play (15 minutes)

Team Circle (10 minutes)



YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS



WEEK 5



Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

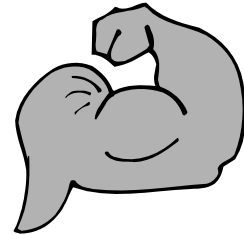
Break groups into 3 or 4 players. Have them pass the ball around the group with either foot.

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

HEALTHY HABITS

Key Idea: Healthy Habits

Gather children into a circle. "When your body doesn't eat healthy foods and get enough sleep, it moves slowly. Let's pretend we have no energy to move because we didn't eat enough healthy foods or get enough sleep." Begin to move slowly and encourage children to follow. Move extremely slowly. "Everyone stop. Now I am going to fill your bodies up with healthy foods." Act out giving them foods. "Pretend we're sleeping. When I say 'Wake up!' you can move faster because you have enough energy and enough rest. Wake up and move faster. Stop! What are some other healthy habits you have learned?" Examples: daily exercise, brushing teeth, saying no to drugs, no smoking. "



WEEK 5



Skills/Drills (15 Minutes) **PASSING / RECEIVING**

Have them find a partner, one ball per pair. This will take a little while so you might tell them to come back from the break with a partner and a ball before you dismiss them.

First have them pass the ball back and forth while standing about 3 yards apart. They will look hopeless.

Stop them and ask what part of foot to use for short accurate passes on the ground (Answer is inside of foot, show them what you mean; that part of the foot between the heel and ball of foot.) Have them resume. Point out that a pass is no good if it can't be received by their teammate. Ask what that means (Answer on ground, within reach, not too hard, not too soft, when it is expected, for example it does no good to pass to a teammate's back, or to one picking dandelions.)

Stop them and ask them how to receive the ball (Answer: cushion the ball so it slows and is left in front of you so you can step forward to pass it. Don't let them stop the ball under their foot, or so close that the ball is stuck between their feet and must be moved before it can be kicked. Tell them the ball should be keep moving. Now you will also have to tell them to back up after they pass the ball or else they will end up too close together.

In soccer, receiving and controlling a passed ball is called *receiving*. A player can receive the ball with just about any part of the body--the foot, the thigh, or the chest. Here are some key components in receiving:

- Get in front of the ball.
- Watch the ball.
- Cushion the ball.
- Keep the ball near the body.

At this level, you will be teaching players how to receive with the foot, the thigh, and the chest. To receive the ball on or near the ground with the foot, the player should stand in front of the ball and extend a leg and foot out to meet it. After the ball reaches the player's foot, he or she should pull the leg back to slow the ball and

WEEK 5

relax the foot when the ball makes contact. This technique is called *cushioning* the ball. If a player does not cushion the ball, it will bounce away from the foot and the player will lose control. It will bounce away from the foot and the player will lose control. Receiving with the inside of the foot provides the most surface area and is best for inexperienced players. Eventually, players should learn how to receive with the outside and top of both feet. Note that players receiving with the top of the foot should also use the lower shin and front part of the ankle to cushion the ball.

Error Detection and Correction for Receiving With the Foot

Error: Losing control of the ball off the foot.

Correction:

- Contact the bottom and side of the ball with the inside of the foot--midway between the heel and toes.
- Cushion the impact of the ball by dropping the foot as the ball contacts it.

A game to play is to give 1/2 the players balls and tell the others to take a ball sway and try to keep it. Players with a ball after 1 minute win. Repeat 2 or 3 times.

Game/Play (15 Minutes) **3 ON 3 KEEP AWAY**



When doing 3v3, consider using a neutral player to help the team with the ball. Again, reinforce the need to move to get open. Point out what happens if you hold the ball too long before passing (you get ganged up on). Keep such observations very brief and generally make them in the form of a question (to which you will likely get lots of wrong answers, just say "no, that's not what I'm looking for" or "that's it!" when you get the right answer). If the neutral player is reasonably talented, have them ask the players to get open whenever there if no good target. The neutral player needs to move to be a good receiving position all the time. The better the neutral player, the more players that can be involved. Tell

WEEK 5

the players with the ball to make the longest pass they are capable of to a teammate who is open. (Not the longest kick, but the longest pass to the teammate farthest away from the other team's players; same comments about passes as before, within reach, on ground, not too hard, not too soft).

WEEK 5

CARING (10 Minutes)



TEAM CIRCLE

Key Idea: CARING

Gather the players into a circle. Stand in the middle of the group with a ball. Pass to each player and give him/her a turn to pass it back to you. "I'm going to pass the ball. If a pass comes to you, pass the ball back to me." Work around the whole circle. Talk to the players about playing and learning when they come to practice. "Who had a turn to touch the ball?" Wait for their responses. "I made sure everyone had a chance to touch the ball. Raise your hand if it felt good to be able to have a turn. How would you have felt if you did not have a turn?" Listen to their answers. "We need to share the ball and take turns so everyone can learn and play. Sharing and taking turns shows you care."

WEEK 5

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS 3-5 Year Olds

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

Skills Drills (15 Minutes)

Game/Play (15 minutes)

Team Circle (10 minutes)



YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS



WEEK 6



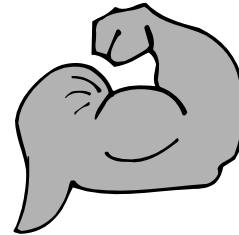
Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

Play a shorter version of 3-on-3 keep away. See week 5 game/play.

Fitness Component (5 Minutes) FLEXIBILITY

Key Idea: Flexibility

Bring a rubber band to use as a prop. "This rubber band is like our muscles. When I pull it, it stretches; when I let go, it pulls back to its original shape." Demonstrate with the rubber band, stretching it out and back, using a gentle, slow action. "Your muscles work the same way. When you reach and stretch, your muscles are stretching just like the rubber band. When your body comes back, your muscles go back to their original shape. Everyone reach down to the ground with your arms slowly, and then bring your arms back up." Have children repeat three times. "Your leg muscles need to stretch because you use them the most in soccer; stretching makes your leg muscles more flexible. When muscles are flexible, it keeps them from getting hurt and makes the muscles feel good."



WEEK 6



Skills/Drills (15 Minutes) **OFFENSIVE POSITIONS**

Positions: Refer to field grid and definition of positions. Wristbands can be useful in managing the lines of players. Forwards (yellow), half-backs (green), and full-backs (red). Discuss the responsibilities of each line. Have parents work with each line to keep the focus of the players on their field duties.



Game/Play (15 Minutes) **SCRIMMAGE**

All the players should be divided in to four teams. Set-up two goals with cones. With two teams at each goal, one team should be defense and one team should be offense. No goalie. Players should try to score on the “half-court” field. After several minutes, teams should switch from offense to defense. Acknowledge teams that use the offense positions and good passing.

End the section with the players scrimmaging the parents and/or siblings using the entire field. Kids should win.

WEEK 6

FAITH (10 Minutes)



TEAM CIRCLE

Key Idea: FAITH

Gather the players in a circle. Talk about the YMCA value called Faith. Explain to the players that to have faith is to believe that they can do anything they set their mind to do. Give them the example of the little train that kept saying "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can" over and over until he eventually did what he set out to do. Now separate the players into two lines with one off to the side of the goal and one at the top of the penalty box. Have the players rotate at goalie and at forward in each line. Tell the forward to dribble the ball and then kick it into the goal. Tell the goalie to block the ball. As they go through the action, tell them to say out loud "I think I can" before they start. Tell them they should think this in their mind while they are playing in games or at home with their family and friends while playing.

WEEK 6

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS 3-5 Year Olds

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

Skills Drills (15 Minutes)

Game/Play (15 minutes)

Team Circle (10 minutes)



YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS



WEEK 7



Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

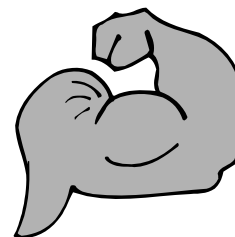
Groups of 3 – Players play 2 vs. 1 in an area 20 feet by 10 feet with a small goal. They must pass three times, and then shoot at the goal.

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

MUSCULAR STRENGTH / ENDURANCE

Key Idea: Muscular strength & Endurance

Gather children into a group. Show children the differences between a kick with minimal effort and one with close to maximum effort. "Watch how far the ball goes when I kick it two different times." Show both kicks to children. "Let's make a circle, and you show me how you would kick the ball. Pretend you are kicking a ball, and show me a short kick. Now step back two big steps and show me a long kick that will make the ball go across the circle." Highlight the ball going farther in the second kick. "You can kick the ball farther when your muscles in your legs are strong. Your muscles in your legs get stronger when you practice kicking."



Skills/Drills (15 Minutes)

GOAL KEEPING

WEEK 7



Goalie Position: A basic understanding of this position is best at this age. It will be easier to teach the child to throw the ball instead of a drop kick. Remember, always throw to the sides, never down the middle.

Gathering Ground Balls: From the ready position, goalies should stop shots on the ground through these techniques:

- Quickly shuffle sideways to a position between the ball and the goal.
- Keep your legs straight, with your feet a few inches apart, and bend forward at the waist as the ball arrives.
- Reach your arms down with your palms forward and slightly cupped.
- Allow the ball to roll up onto your wrists and forearms.
- Return to an upright position, clutching the ball tightly to your chest.

Error Detection and Correction for gathering Ground Balls

Error: The ball rolls through your hand, between your legs, and into the goal.

Correction: Keep your feet only a few inches apart. If the ball slips through your hands, it will rebound off your legs.

Error: The ball rebounds off your hands into the area in front of the goal.

Correction: Allow the ball to roll up onto your wrists and forearms, and then use a scoop-like motion of your arms as you return to an upright position and clutch the ball to your chest.

Error Detection and Correction for Distributing the Ball

Error: The ball bounces toward the target when it is rolled.

Correction: Release the ball smoothly at ground level

Error: Your kick lacks accuracy.

Correction:

- Step toward the target with your non-kicking foot.
- Square your shoulders and hips to the target.
- Contact the center of the ball with the full instep.

WEEK 7

Error: Your kick lacks distance.

Correction:

- Keep your foot firmly planted and kick through the point of contact, using your instep.
- Swing your kicking foot waist high or higher.

Game/Play (15 Minutes) SCRIMMAGE

Keeper Wars

Goal: To develop and encourage the basic diving technique for goalkeepers.



Description: This game is for two players. Use cones to mark a 15x20 yard area, with one goal (use adjustable goals or four flags) that is 5 feet high (6 yards wide for younger players and 8 yards wide for older players. (If you use flags for the goal, set them up so they are 5 feet high.) The low goals force low shots and diving saves.

Place a goalkeeper in the goal and have the other player shoot at the goal. Give the goalie five tries to dive and save. (Encourage the goalkeeper to land on his or her side and to lead with the hands to make the save.) Award a point for each successful dive and save. Have the shooter redo any shots that don't require dives. Rotate the goalie and the shooter after five legitimate save attempts, and rotate the players through each role three times. Each player will attempt to save 15 shots, so "15" is a perfect score.

To make the game easier:

- Reduce the width of the goal.
- Require longer shots.

To make the game harder

- Increase the width of the goal.
- Add a player who tries to score goals from rebounds if the goalkeeper fails to deal with the shot effectively.

Note: You can adapt this game to focus on goalkeepers gathering air balls, too, without diving for them.

Bowling Balls

WEEK 7

Goal: To develop the ability to distribute the ball by rolling it.

Description: Play 2v3. Use cones to set up a 20x20 yard area, and create one goal, 4 yards wide, using two flags. The two offensive players attack the goal; after the goalie saves a shot, he or she rolls the ball to a teammate. Give a point for each ball successfully rolled (one that is controlled by one of the goalie's teammates). Rotate goalies after three attempts at rolling the ball.

WEEK 7

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT (10 Minutes)



TEAM CIRCLE

Key Idea: FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Gather your players and their parents together in a big group. Have them all sit in front of you. Start a discussion about family and how important it is for them. Tell them about this situation. “One family often bowled together, but the older, bigger kids always won. Finally, the family figured out a way for everyone to win. Instead of keeping individual scores, they kept a family total score. If the whole family reached a certain score, they all celebrated by going out for ice cream after bowling.” Ask these questions. “Do the members of your family compete? How could you turn that competition into a situation where everyone wins?”

WEEK 7

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PRACTICE SESSION PLANS 3-5 Year Olds

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Fitness Component (5 Minutes)

Skills Drills (15 Minutes)

Game/Play (15 minutes)

Team Circle (10 minutes)