

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. *Coaches Responsibilities and Liabilities:*

As a coach you will have the custody and control of someone else's child for approximately 20 to 40 hours this season. This means you have the potential to both create and prevent accidents and injuries.

You should be aware of your responsibilities as a coach. Attention to them will help minimize your personal risk, prevent sports-related injuries, and avoid claims of coaching negligence. Your responsibilities include:

- a) Providing adequate supervision.
The health and safety of your players are entrusted to your care. You must provide adequate supervision to avoid foreseeable accidents and injuries. **NEVER** leave players unattended! **NEVER** leave after a game or practice until parents or guardians safely pick up all players.
- b) Sound planning.
Carefully plan all your practices and drills so players progress and learn skills at a safe pace. Don't move too fast and force improvement. This will lead to frustration, which will hamper further learning.
- c) Warn players and parents of inherent risks.
Do this at your first practice. Quickly and adamantly correct players using potentially dangerous techniques.
- d) Provide a safe playing environment.
Be certain that practice and playing fields are free of hazards (e.g. Holes, rocks, glass, etc.) and that equipment is in proper condition. Warn your players not to hang from goals.
- e) Provide proper first aid.
Have a first aid kit available along with a plan, which outlines emergency procedures. (Contained later in this manual) Know where to find emergency help and a telephone (a cellular phone would be most helpful). Don't attempt to provide aid beyond your abilities. Always have your players' medical release forms with you. **DO NOT** let your players practice or participate in games unless they have given you this form.

Coaches will:

1. Deal with the children in a positive manner.
 2. Lead by example and conduct themselves in a controlled manner on the field.
 3. Develop high self-esteem and help each player feel a part of the team.
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4. Teach soccer fundamentals appropriate to the age groups.
5. Arrive at practice on time and not leave the field until each child has been picked up by their parent or guardian or other authorized adult.

2. *Player Responsibilities:*

- a) To arrive at practice and games on time.
- b) To bring proper equipment to each practice and game.
- c) To treat teammates and coaches with respect.
- d) To inform the coach if they will miss a game or practice.

3. *Parents' Responsibilities:*

- a) Provide transportation to and from all practices and games ensuring that your child is prompt, not only in arriving but also in departure. (Remember, the coaches would like to go home immediately after practices and games)
- b) Ensure your child brings equipment to and from all games and practices when appropriate.
- c) Be available to kick the ball around with your child.
- d) Build the attitude that winning is not everything. The rewards lie in the fun of playing.
- e) Be a good listener. Make your child feel important and let them know they are contributing to a team effort.
- f) Lastly, allow your child to be a child.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

1. Shin guards.
 - These are an absolute requirement for games and should also be worn for practices.
 2. Soccer shoes.
 - Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not to be used. Soccer cleats must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats). Coaches should check their players' shoes for illegal cleats, protruding nails or sharp edges to avoid injuries to other players. Sneakers are also acceptable.
 3. Water bottle.
 - Each player should provide his or her own water bottle for practices and games.
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COACHING EQUIPMENT

A good coach is never without the following:

- 1) Players' medical release forms. You must have these with you at all practices and games. Verify that all the information is filled out and correct.
- 2) First aid kit.
- 3) Balls.
 - inflated to proper pressure. Each player should have their own but bring spares, as someone will usually forget theirs.
- 4) Cones or discs to set up small areas for practice drills, as obstacles for dribbling drills, etc.
- 5) Whistle and clipboard are helpful items.
- 6) Water should be available during practices and games. Have players bring their own water bottles. (but bring an extra bottle for that same player who also forgot to bring their soccer ball)

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEALING WITH PARENTS

Coaching is both fun and rewarding, but you may occasionally experience difficulty with a parent. Some will question how much their child plays, (Why isn't he playing more?) or question your judgment as coach. Whatever their concern, just remember a parent is generally just looking out for their child, often at your expense. Do not get discouraged. (Easier said than done.) There are things you can do to optimize positive communications between yourself and parents.

1. Have a parent meeting before or at the first practice. Discuss your plans and expectations for the upcoming season. Encourage questions and express your expectations of what you require from them. (i.e. if they are just dropping their child off at practice, supply a phone number where they can be reached, etc.)
2. Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more at ease with you.
3. Always listen to their ideas and concerns. Remember that all parents are protective of their child. Encourage parental involvement. (If you have a preference for a certain time parents should voice their concerns, such as before or after practice, make this clear at your parent meeting.)
4. Know what your objectives are and do what you believe is best for the team, not the parents. No coach can please everyone!
5. Know the organization and game rules. Be prepared to abide by them and to explain them to the parents.
6. Handle any confrontation one on one and not in a crowd situation. Definitely not in front of the team. Try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk and actively listen to them. Often a parent will vent their frustrations just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, then thank them for it. Do not lose your temper.

7. Resist unfair pressure from the parents. It is your responsibility to make the final decision that is best for the team. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't listen to the parents.
8. Don't discuss individual players with other parents. This will come back to haunt you. Show the same respect for each player that you want the parents to show you.
9. Ask the parents not to criticize the children during practice or a game. Don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.
10. Don't hold the players responsible for their parents' actions.
11. Be consistent, and more importantly be fair. If you treat all your players equally and with respect, you will gain their respect and that of their parents as well.

Coaching Tips and Advice

1. Be realistic in selecting your objectives for the season. Consider the age and experience of your players. Decide on your priorities – what are the important things to cover before the games begin?
2. Designate (or draft) one or more assistant coaches. They are extremely valuable. They make it possible that each player gets some individual attention. Parents who would like to help but lack the necessary skills should be encouraged to attend practice to help shag balls or direct traffic during drills. You can never have too much help, especially with younger players. The best time to solicit help is at your parent meeting.
3. Prepare a bad weather contingency plan. If you need to cancel practice or a game, have an organized plan to inform parents. A telephone tree would work well and make your job easier.
4. Have a written plan for each practice. The plan may be written out in detail or it may just be notes jotted on the back of an envelope, but it really should be written. Writing down your plan will help you organize the equipment and setup you will need for the skills you will cover.
5. When you plan your practices, keep these points in mind:
 - a) Minimize the amount of talking that you do.
 - b) Get all the players involved.
 - c) Turn "drills" into games.
 - d) Give players a lot of touches with the ball.
 - e) Give players a lot of chances to shoot and score.
 - f) Let the kids PLAY!
6. Keep the practice focused. If you are trying to teach new skills, concentrate on a single major topic (i.e. passing).
7. Practices should follow a progression:
 - a) Warm-up.
 - plan so that each player uses a ball. Incorporate games and exercises that emphasize a lot of touches and dribbling. If possible, use or create conditioning exercises that require the players to work with a ball rather than just running; the kids will have

more fun and they will learn more soccer skills. Be sure to include stretching at the end of warm-ups.

b) Drills.

they should be appropriate for the skills you are teaching. Limit the number of drills in a given practice and don't spend too long on any drill. Remember a child's attention span is limited. Maximize the number of touches. No child likes to stand in line waiting.

c) Scrimmage.

remember, the kids signed up to PLAY soccer. Small-sided games are an excellent practice tool. They keep everyone involved and by reducing the size of each playing field, you can have two games going at the same time.

d) Cool down.

8. The main points to remember for a successful practice are:

- a) Be prepared. Have a plan.
- b) Keep it simple.
- c) Maximize touches for each player.
- d) Make it FUN!
- e) Strive for a progressive acquisition of basic skills. Begin with relatively simple drills. Always consider the age and skill level of your players.
- f) Always have time when the players JUST PLAY.
- g) Always be SAFETY CONSCIOUS.

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RULES FOR MICRO LEAGUE

1. Length of Game.
 - a) 5 minute quarters.
 - b) 2 minutes between quarters.
 - c) 5 minutes between halves.
 - d) Home team supplies timekeeper. (parent volunteer)
 - e) Clock is not stopped during game.
 2. Dimension of Field.
 - a) Maximum length is 40 yds.
 - b) Width is 20 – 30 yds.
 3. Substitutions can be made by both teams during any stoppage of play or for an injury.
 4. Size 3 soccer balls are to be used.
 5. Teams will play 3 to a side, ~~NO~~ **NO** goaltender.
 6. When the ball goes out of play, play will resume in the following manner:
 - a) Over the sidelines – restart with a throw in.
 - b) Over the goal line – last touched by attacking team – restart with a goal kick; all opposing players must be 10 yds. from the ball.
 - c) Over the goal line – last touched by defending team – restart with a corner kick; all opposing players must be 5 yds. from the ball.
 - d) After a goal is scored - restart with a kick-off; all opposing players must be 5 yds. from the ball.
 - e) Restart with a drop ball if the game is stopped because of an injury.
 7. Fouls and Misconduct.

At this level all penalty kicks are indirect kicks (another player must touch the ball before a goal can be scored). A player who **INTENTIONALLY** commits any of the following fouls shall be penalized by the awarding of an indirect free kick to be taking by the opposing team from the place where the offense occurred.

 - a) Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
 - b) Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.
 - c) Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
 - d) Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.
 - e) Holding an opponent.
 - f) Pushing an opponent.
 - g) Handling the ball, i.e. carrying, striking or propelling the ball with the hand or arm. The key judgment for this rule is whether the contact was “hand to ball” (foul) or “ball to hand” (no foul).
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As there are no referees at this level it is incumbent on the coaches for both teams to fairly call all the intentional fouls, regardless of which team commits them. The idea of this level is the players begin to grasp the basic rules of soccer.

8. Two coaches are permitted on the field for each team during the game.

SPECIFIC RULES OF SYSAP

1. Playing time.

All players are entitled to play at least on half of each game. The SYSAP understands that failure to practice, disciplinary action, sickness or injury might be cause for an individual to play less than one half.

2. Equipment.

All players must wear shin guards. Soccer shoes with rounded, molded plastic cleats are recommended however regular sneakers are permissible. All players on the field must be attired in matching jerseys, goaltenders are to wear a pinney.

3. Keeping score.

Coaches are asked NOT to keep score at this level. (When the players ask who won, just advise them it was a tie.)

Characteristics of Micro Players

- Short attention span.
- Can attend to only one problem at a time.
- May understand simple rules that are explained briefly and demonstrated.
- May or may not understand or remember: what lines mean on the field; what team they are on; what goal they are shooting at. We need to be patient and laugh with them as they get "lost" on the field.
- Easily bruised psychologically. Shout praise often. Give "hints", don't criticize.
- Need generous praise and to play without pressure. No extrinsic rewards (trophies, medals, etc.) should be given for winning.
- Prefer "parallel play" (Will play on a team, but will not really engage with their teammates. Thus, a 3 against 3 game is, in reality, a 1 against 5 game because they all want the ball at the same time.
- Very individually oriented (me, mine, my).
- Constantly in motion, but, with no sense of pace. They will chase something until they drop. They are easily fatigued but recover rapidly.
- Development for boys and girls are quite similar.
- Physical coordination is limited. Eye - hand and eye - foot coordination is not developed.
- Love to run, jump, roll, hop, etc.

- Prefer large, soft balls.
- Catching or throwing skills not developed.
- Can balance on their "good" foot.

Things You Can Expect

- Most players cry immediately when something is hurt. Some cry even when something is not hurt.
- No matter how loud we shout, or how much we "practice" it, they cannot or will not pass the ball.
- Somebody will come off the field in need of a toilet. Somebody will stay on the field in need of a toilet.
- The only player to hold a position is the goalkeeper. Don't even consider teaching positional play.
- Twenty seconds after the start of a game, every player will be within 5 yards of the ball.
- Several players will slap at the ball with their hands, or pick it up. Several parents will yell at them not to do that.
- A model rocket that is launched from a nearby field will get 99% of the players' attention. By all means, stop whatever you are doing and go watch for a couple of minutes!
- During a season, you will end up tying at least 40-50 shoelaces.
- They will do something that is absolutely hysterical. Make sure you laugh!

Coaching Rationale

It is important to understand at the outset that players coming to any sport prior to the age of 6 years old, in general, do not do so by their own choice. As a result, their coaches need to give them something to get excited about. Furthermore, at this age, learning to play soccer is secondary to most other things in their lives.

With the above assumptions, let's look at some things that you as a coach can do to energize the Micro player, and, hopefully, get them to the point where they enthusiastically sign up for next year!

- Each session should be geared around touching the ball as many times as possible. Involve the ball in as many activities as possible. Basic movements such as running, skipping, hopping, etc. need to be emphasized. If these can be done while kicking, catching, rolling, or dribbling a ball... all the better!
- Training should not last for more than one hour. This is primarily due to physical fatigue and attention span considerations. Train once or twice a week. Any more than this may lead to their and your burnout.
- Have as many different kinds of activities ready as you can get into one hour. Emphasis needs to be placed on what is FUN!

- Every player should bring his or her own size 3 ball.
- Remember that although they may have very similar birthdates, their physical and/or mental maturity may vary as much as 36 months. Activities need to accommodate these individual differences whenever possible.
- Team play and passing is an alien concept to these players. They know that if they pass the ball, they may never get it back. In fact, they often will steal it from their own teammates. Do not get uptight if they do not pass, let them dribble to their heart's content.
- Plan for at least 4, 90-second drink breaks, especially in warmer weather. Their "cooling system" is not as efficient as older players.

Rules for Under 8 Players

1. Length of game.
 - a) 8 minute quarters.
 - b) 2 minutes between quarters.
 - c) 5 minutes between halves.
 - d) Home team supplies timekeeper.
 - e) Clock is not stopped during game.
2. Dimension of field.
 - a) Length is ~~50~~ yards.
 - b) Width is ~~30~~ yards.
3. Size 3 ball is to be used.
4. Substitutions are permitted only in certain situations including:
 - a) Between quarters.
 - b) After a goal is scored.
 - c) On a goal kick if your team has possession.
 - d) On a throw in if your team has possession.
 - e) On a corner-kick if your team has possession.
 - f) After an injury (for the injured player).
5. Teams will play ~~6~~ to a side. (~~5~~ on the field and one goaltender)
6. After the half-time break, teams will switch ends of the field.
7. When the ball goes out of play, play will be resumed in the following manner:
 - a) Over the sidelines – restart with a throw in.
 - b) Over the goal line, last touched by attacking team – restart with a goal kick. All opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.
 - c) Over the goal line, last touched by the defending team – restart with a corner kick. All opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.
 - d) After a goal is scored – restart with a kick-off. All opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.
 - e) After an injury – restart with a drop ball.
8. Fouls and Misconduct.

At this level all penalty kicks are indirect kicks (another player must touch the ball before a goal can be scored). A player who INTENTIONALLY commits any of the following fouls shall be penalized by the awarding of an indirect free kick to be taken by the opposing team from the place where the offense occurred.

 - a) Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
 - b) Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.

- c) Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
- d) Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.
- e) Holding an opponent.
- f) Pushing an opponent.
- g) Handling the ball, i.e. carrying, striking or propelling the ball with the hand or arm. The key judgment for this rule is whether the contact was "hand to ball" (foul) or "ball to hand" (no foul).

As there are no referees at this level it is incumbent on the coaches for both teams to fairly call all intentional fouls, regardless of which team commits them. The idea of this level is the players begin to grasp the basic rules of soccer.

9. Two coaches are permitted on the field for each team during games.

SPECIFIC RULES OF SYSAP

1. Playing time.

All players are entitled to play at least on half of each game. The SYSAP understands that failure to practice, disciplinary action, sickness or injury might be cause for an individual to play less than one half.

2. Equipment.

All players must wear shin guards. Soccer shoes with rounded, molded plastic cleats are recommended however regular sneakers are permissible. All players on the field must be attired in matching jerseys, goaltenders are to wear a pinney.

3. Keeping score.

Coaches are asked NOT to keep score at this level. (When the players ask who won, just advise them it was a tie.)

Characteristics of Under 8 Players

- Attention span is a bit longer than Micro players but still not at a "competitive" stage.
- Inclined towards small group activities.
- Always in motion: scratching, blinking, jerking, rocking, ...
- Easily bruised psychologically. They will remember negative comments for a long time. Shout praise, give "hints".
- They want everybody to like them.
- They are developing physical confidence. (Most are able to ride a two-wheeler)
- They are starting to imitate older players or sports heroes. They want the same "gear" as them.
- Lack sense of pace. They go flat out until they drop.

- Skeletal system growing rapidly. Often results in apparent lack of coordination.
- Cardiovascular and temperature regulation system is not fully developed. Their heart rate peaks quickly and they overheat quickly. Make sure they get adequate water breaks.
- Limited understanding with personal evaluation. "If they tried hard, they performed well" regardless of the actual performance. Thus, they need to be encouraged constantly.
- Better at recognizing when the ball is out of play, and remembering what goal they are going for, but in the heat of battle, they will still sometimes forget. They still find it difficult to really be aware of more than one thing at a time.

Things You Can Expect

6, 7 and 8-year-old players are a bit more compliant than the Micro players. They will also be able to follow more complex instructions and are starting to understand the concept of what it means to play a "game". They are also starting to cooperate more with teammates. In fact, they will now recognize that they have teammates and even occasionally pass the ball to one of them on purpose. Some of the other things you can expect from this age group are:

- There will be at least 200 – 300 falls during the season, but now they will usually pick themselves up.
- The water puddle on the field will be too tempting to resist.
- Keep a spare air pump in your bag as they will not notice that their ball is flat until they try to kick it or you tell them it's flat.
- Some of the girls are tougher than the boys.
- It will be impossible to remember who is whose best friend when you make up teams for a scrimmage game.
- School conflicts and homework will come up. Please let them go. (They have to face their teachers five days a week)
- They will wear their uniform to bed, to school, etc.

Coaching Rationale

Remember, some of your players will have played soccer for more than two years. Others will just be starting out in the sport. Because of this it is imperative that activities are geared towards individual success and participation. Emphasis needs to be placed on the individual's ability to control the ball with his/her body. The following are some more items that a coach at this level should consider.

- Small-sided soccer scrimmages are the best options for these players. Not only will they get more touches on the ball, but it is an easier game to understand.

- Because of rapid growth spurts during this age, players will go through times when they seem to have lost control of their bodies. What they could do easily two weeks ago is now more difficult. Be patient.
- Passing is not an important part of the game to them, no matter how much anybody yells at them to pass the ball. It is much more fun to dribble and shoot. Let them.
- Training once or twice a week is plenty and should not last longer than one hour and fifteen minutes.
- Each player should bring his or her own ball to practice. Learning how to control it should be the main objective. They need to touch it as many times as possible during fun activities that will engage them.
- Challenge them to get better by practicing on their own. There is no rule which states that they can't learn by themselves, no matter how important we think we are.
- Incidental things are important. They are forming the habits that will impact their future participation. Ask them to take care of their equipment, cooperate, listen, behave and try hard. Realize however that they often forget and will need to be reminded often.
- Ask them to work with others to solve a particular challenge. Start them with just one partner and work from there.

Rules for Under 10 Players

1. Length of Game.
 - a) 10 minute quarters.
 - b) 2 minutes between quarters.
 - c) 5 minutes between halves.
 - d) Home team supplies timekeeper.
 - e) Clock is stopped during game only for an injury.
2. Dimension of Field.
 - a) Length is ~~70~~ yards.
 - b) Width is ~~40~~ yards.
3. Size #4 soccer ball is to be used.
4. Substitutions are permitted only in certain situations including:
 - a) Between quarters.
 - b) After a goal is scored.
 - c) On a goal kick if your team has possession.
 - d) On a throw in if your team has possession.
 - e) On a corner-kick if your team has possession.
 - f) After an injury. (For the injured player.)
5. Teams will play ~~7~~ to a side plus a goaltender. (~~8 + 0 + 1~~)
6. After the half, teams will switch sides.
7. When the ball goes out of play, play will be resumed in the following manner:
 - a) Over the sidelines – restart with a throw in.
 - b) Over the goal line, last touched by attacking team – restart with a goal kick. All opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.
 - c) Over the goal line, last touched by the defending team – restart with a corner kick. All opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.
 - d) After a goal is scored – restart with a kick-off. All opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.
 - e) After an injury – restart with a drop ball.
8. Fouls and Misconduct.

At this level penalty kicks will be both direct and indirect kicks depending on the infraction. A player who INTENTIONALLY commits any of the following fouls shall be penalized by the awarding of a direct kick to be taken by the opposing team from the place where the offense occurred.

 - a) Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
 - b) Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.
 - c) Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.

- d) Pushing an opponent if it is careless, reckless or done with excessive force.
- e) Holding an opponent.
- f) Jumping at an opponent. (A player's feet leave the ground but he is not jumping straight up and they make contact with an opponent.)
- g) Handling the ball. i.e. carrying, striking or propelling the ball with the hand or arm. The key judgment for this rule is whether the contact was "hand to ball" (foul) or "ball to hand" (no foul).

A player who **INTENTIONALLY** commits any of the following fouls shall be penalized by the awarding of an indirect kick to be taken by the opposing team from the place where the offense occurred.

- a) Obstruction. (This occurs when a player is not playing the ball but is preventing someone else from moving toward the ball.)
- b) Dangerous play. (This occurs when the play is dangerous to the opponent or the player himself and the action denies an opponent the fair opportunity to play. An example would be a player kicking near the face or torso of an opponent.)

9. Coaches are not permitted on the field during games.

SPECIFIC RULES OF SYSAP

1. Playing time.

All players are entitled to play at least on half of each game. The SYSAP understands that failure to practice, disciplinary action, sickness or injury might be cause for an individual to play less than one half.

2. Equipment.

All players must wear shin guards. Soccer shoes with rounded, molded plastic cleats are recommended however regular sneakers are permissible. All players on the field must be attired in matching jerseys, goalenders are to wear a pinnny.

Characteristics of Under 10 Players

- Gross and small motor skills are becoming more refined and reliable. Boys and girls begin to develop separately.
- Ability to stay on task is lengthened. They have the ability to sequence thought and actions.
- Greater diversity in playing ability and physical maturity.
- Skills are emerging. Becoming more predictable and recognizable.
- Some children are beginning to move from concrete thinking to abstract thinking.
- They are able to pace themselves, to plan ahead.
- Increased self-responsibility. They remember to bring their own equipment.
- Starting to recognize basic tactical concepts, but not exactly sure why certain decisions are better.

- Continued positive reinforcement needed.
- Explanations must be brief and mention "why".
- Becoming more "serious". Openly, intensively competitive, without intention of fouling.
- Peer pressure starting to be a factor.
- Prefer identification with a team. Like to have good uniforms, equipment, balls.
- More inclined towards wanting to play instead of being told to play. Will initiate play more.

Things You Can Expect

Some coaches say that players at this level are beginning to "turn the corner" and starting to look like real soccer players. However, games are still frantically paced and unpredictable. These players are starting to find out how much fun it is to play the game skillfully. Some other things you can expect from players at this level are:

- They will really beat up on each other during practice.
- They might cry after the game if they lose, but will forget it if you ask them if they want to go for ice cream.
- You might actually catch them practicing on their own.
- Their parents are telling them to do one thing during the game, you are telling them to do another, but what they end up doing is what their friend is telling them to do.
- You will see a pass that is deliberate. You might even see a back pass.
- They will call the other team bad names. Really bad names.

Coaching Rationale

Emphasis should still be placed on having players learn how to control the ball with his/her body, but now, they need to find themselves in more game-like situations. Training should be more dynamic and should start having players make simple decisions such as "Which way is there more space?" or "Who should I pass to?".

The following are some more items that a coach of Under 10 players should consider:

- Use small sided games as the main teaching vehicle. That way they will get more touches on the ball.
- How you group players during training takes on added significance because of the wide margins of ability. You will need to mix players up more often.
- Stretching is becoming more important, along with a good warm-up. Since the game is faster at this level, make sure they have a good pair of shinguards. Safety and preventative measures take on added significance.
- Training twice a week is plenty. Practices don't need to go longer than one hour, fifteen minutes.

- They should all have their own size #4 ball. They need to be encouraged to play with it themselves.
- Put them into competitive situations as much as possible. This will keep them focused as well as allow the game itself to teach them. It will also keep things fun for them and allow you to deal with issues such as "winning" and "losing" which is now a very big concern for them.
- Now it is possible to teach them positional play with the expectation they will understand this concept some of the time. However, do not allow players to specialize in any one position. They need to learn the basic principles of the game first and having them play all the positions is one of the best ways to accomplish this. Remember that your first responsibility is to develop players and let them have fun.
- Whenever possible, allow them to solve their own problems. Don't immediately give them solutions on how they can play better.

Common Soccer Injuries and their Care

Whenever a player is injured, be certain to inform the parents or guardians of the injury, even if it seems minor and the athlete is able to continue with the practice or game.

PREVENTING DISEASE TRANSMISSION

Place an effective barrier between you and the victim's blood when you give first aid. Examples of such barriers are: the victim's hand, a piece of plastic wrap, clean folded cloth, rubber or latex gloves.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after providing care.

HEAT EMERGENCIES

Heat Cramps

- Have athlete rest in a cool place.
- Give cool water.
- Stretch muscle and massage area.

Heat Exhaustion – Player's skin will appear pale and clammy, perspiration is profuse, may experience nausea, weakness, dizziness, headache, cramps.

- Have athlete lie down in a cool place with feet elevated 8 to 12 inches.
- Give cool water.
- Loosen tight clothing.
- Remove clothing soaked with perspiration.
- Apply cool wet cloths (such as towels) or ice packs (wrapped) to the skin.
- Call 911 if player refuses water, vomits or if level of consciousness changes.

Heat Stroke – Player will appear hot, red, will not be sweating (although skin may be wet from previous sweating), pulse will be rapid and strong, body temperature will be high (105 degrees or more). This is an immediate and life threatening emergency.

- Send someone to get emergency medical help (call 911).
- Get the athlete out of the heat and into a cooler place.
- Cool the player fast – immerse in a cool bath, or wrap with wet towels and fan him/her.
- Give nothing by mouth.

Preventing Heat Emergencies

- Avoid being outdoors during the hottest part of the day, if possible.
- Change the activity level according to the temperature.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Drink large amounts of fluid.

- Wear light colored clothing, if possible.

ANKLE INJURIES

An injury to an ankle can take the form of a sprain or a break and may have different degrees of severity. Sprains are stretched or torn tendons, ligaments, and blood vessels around joints.

First Aid: Assume the injury could be severe.
 Immobilize the player (avoid any movement that causes pain).
 Begin the ICE routine (Ice, Compression, Elevation – elevation helps slow the flow of blood, thus reducing swelling).
 Have the player see a physician before returning to practice.

DON'T: Remove athlete's shoe and sock until ice is available.
 Have the player try to "walk it off".

Knee Injuries

The knee is the most complicated joint in the body, as well as the joint most frequently injured. It requires a specialist to treat knee injuries properly. Your job is to limit further injury and to get the player to the hospital.

First Aid: Help the player off the field.
 Apply ice to the injured area.
 Elevate the leg without moving the knee, if possible.
 Take the player to the hospital immediately.

DON'T: Move the knee to examine the injury.
 Allow the player to get up and "walk it off".
 Allow the knee to move freely.
 Allow the athlete to continue participating until he/she has seen a physician.

DISLOCATIONS

Dislocations and broken bones (fractures) are treated similarly. A dislocation is a displacement of a bone end from the joint. Dislocated joints will have pain, swelling, irregularity, or deformity over the injured area.

First Aid: Leave dislocated joint in the position found.
 Immobilize joint in the exact position it was in at the time of injury.
 Apply ice and elevate to minimize swelling.
 Have the player see a doctor immediately.

DON'T: Attempt to relocate a dislocation or correct any deformity near a joint (movement may cause further injury).

Assume the injury is minor.
Assume there is no broken bone.

BLISTERS

Blisters typically appear as a raised bubble of skin with fluid beneath; the fluid may be clear or bloody. The blister may be torn with new skin exposed. Generally painful.

First Aid: Rub ice over the area.
Place small moleskin doughnut over the outside edges of the blister and tape to prevent further friction.
If the blister is torn, wash area with soap and water; put ointment over the blister and cover with a protective dressing.

DON'T: Treat a blister lightly; infection can result, causing serious problems.
Puncture the blister – let a physician do so.

PREVENTATIVE STEPS: Properly fitting shoes and socks are essential.
Proper conditioning is necessary to allow the skin to become accustomed to the activity load.
Wear two pairs of socks if friction is extremely bad.

BLEEDING

In most cases, placing direct pressure over the wound can control bleeding. To reduce risk of infection, whenever possible wear latex gloves and wash hands before (and after) treating an open wound.

First Aid: Apply **DIRECT PRESSURE** to the wound with a clean compress (use clothing if a clean compress is not available).
Elevate the wound above the level of the heart.
Keep the player lying down.
If the bleeding is sufficient to soak through the compress, apply additional compresses as necessary directly over the others. Do not remove the compress.
Call for emergency help if bleeding is severe or persistent.

DON'T: Remove old compresses; this may cause more bleeding.
Treat any bleeding lightly.
Let dirt get into the wound.
Panic. Call for help if you are unsure.

NOSE BLEEDS

A bloody nose is a common occurrence following a blow to the face, or in association with high blood pressure, infection, strenuous activity or dry nasal passages. Although usually more annoying than serious, any bloody nose resulting from an injury to the face should be considered as a potential fracture. If you suspect a head, neck, or back injury, do not try to control a nosebleed; instead, keep the player from moving and stabilize the head and neck.

First Aid: Place the player in a sitting position leaning slightly forward.
Apply a cold compress to the athlete's nose and face.
Apply direct pressure by having the player pinch the nostrils with the fingers.
Take the athlete to the doctor if bleeding persists.

DON'T: Allow the player to blow his/her nose for several hours.
Stick anything up the nose to stop the bleeding without assistance of a medical professional or emergency personnel.
Lean head backwards (player may choke on blood running down throat).

HEAD AND NECK INJURIES

These injuries can be the most devastating of all injuries. Permanent paralysis may result from any neck injury, so these injuries **MUST** be handled with extreme care.

Signs & Symptoms: Headache, dizziness.
Unconsciousness (immediate or delayed).
Unequal pupils.
Tingling sensation or numbness in arms and/or legs.
Inability to move fingers, toes, or extremities.
Difficulty breathing.
Athlete not alert.

First Aid: Call for paramedic or other help immediately.
Make sure the athlete is able to breathe.
Keep the player still (stabilize head and neck as you found them).
Maintain body temperature.
Call parents or guardian immediately.
Pass all important information on to doctors.

DON'T: Move the athlete.
Leave the player unattended.
Overstep the limits of your knowledge. **GET HELP IMMEDIATELY!**

BROKEN BONES

Fractures come in a variety of forms and may occur any place in the body where there is a bone. Remember, you are not a trained medical professional qualified to handle these many different situations. Your job is to recognize the injury (or possible injury) and to limit further injury.

Signs & Symptoms: May have heard a pop or snap, or received a direct blow to the area.
A closed fracture will have pain, swelling, irregularity, or deformity over the injured area. An open fracture will have bone protruding.

First Aid: Leave fractured bone in position found.
Immobilize the joints above and below the suspected injury.
Cover an open fracture wound with a large clean dressing; control bleeding.
Apply ice to a closed fracture (not to an open fracture).
Transport the player to the hospital or call for an ambulance if you are unsure about moving the player.

DON'T: Attempt to straighten injured limb or push back protruding bones.
Allow player to move the injured area.
Allow dirt into any injured area with protruding bones.