

TOP CORNER

Coaches Guide

Hey all, just a few notes for you to take into your first couple of games with your teams.

Warm-up

For warm ups it is important to 'rehearse' individual moments that will occur in a game.

This is the routine I use when warming up a U8 team:

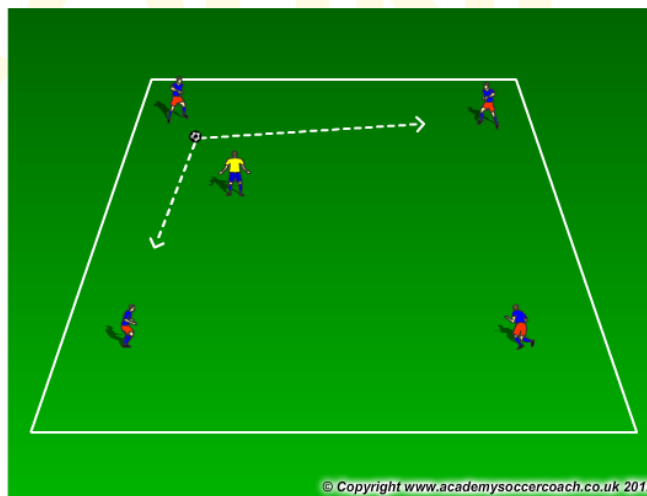
Dribbling: Every player has a ball and dribbles in an area. Every 3 touches they must change speed and direction and rehearse moves they have learnt in practice. Intermittently shout foundation moves – toe taps, inside-inside, squeeze & inside-outside, they perform the move for a 5 sec burst and carry on dribbling.

Juggles: Laces only and then head only

Short Passing in pairs

Long Passing in pairs

Possession work: 4v1's



Check In

The referee will then want to check the players. They must all line up in front of the referee. It's important that they are all quiet and well behaved for the referee. He will check to make sure they all have correct equipment on: Shin guards UNDER socks, Cleats are on and the players aren't wearing any jewelry.

Starting line up

We play a 3-2 formation.

This is done to provide the team with balance and is the foundation for every formation they will need to learn as they get older.

1 Gk (Must wear a different colour (– and yes colour has a 'u' in it!) to the rest of the players),

1 Center Defense, 1 Left Defense, 1 Right Defense,

2 Center Midfielders.

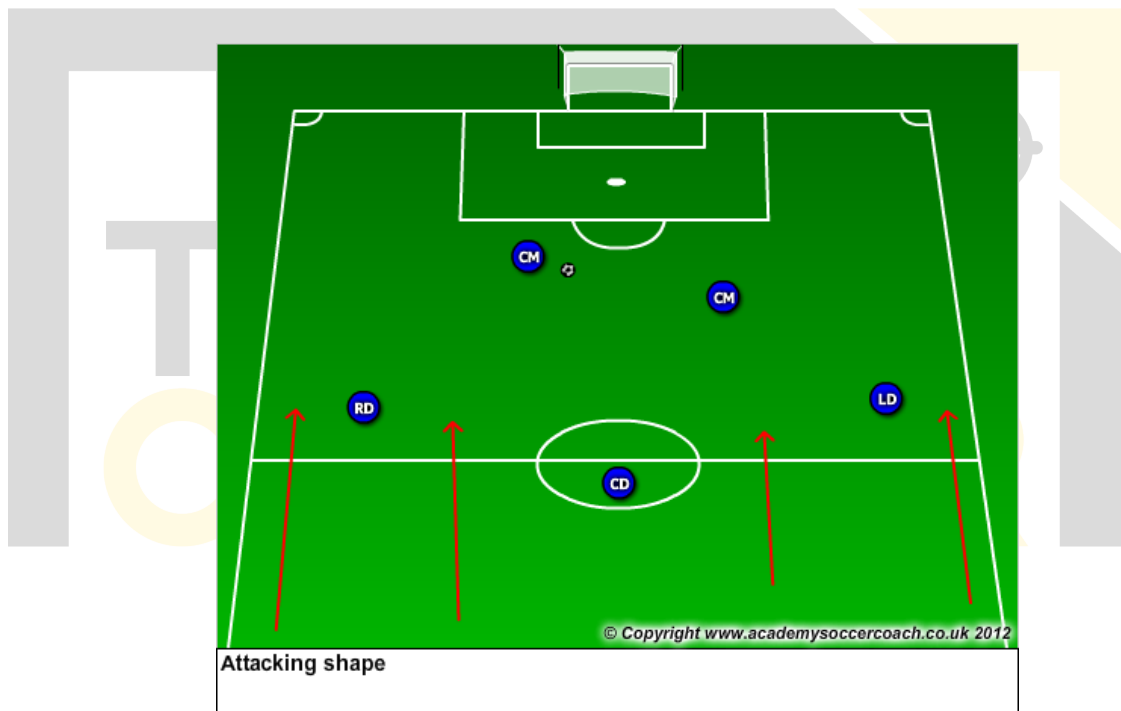
It is important to note that the way the modern game of soccer is played that, defenders don't just defend and attackers don't just attack. Everyone does everything!!!



Game Plan

Each week we focus on 3 things. For the majority of the first season it may be the same 3 things for a number of weeks.

- 1) At this stage in development the players will be encouraged to dribble up the field rather than pass it and use individual moves to beat players as much as possible. We want them to 'master' the ball.
- 2) Defensively we work on Pressure/Patience/wait for a mistake. The defender closest to the ball must pressure the ball as soon as possible. Then they are patient – they don't dive straight in. Then they try to win the ball when the opposing player makes a mistake.
- 3) We defend AS A TEAM and we attack AS A TEAM. When we lose the ball, we ALL get back behind it to win it back. When we attack with the ball we move up the field as a team to support the player in possession.



Players Positions

It is important at this stage that players play EVERY position. Even if you think a player is better in a certain role than others.

Players develop physically at different rates, just because a player maybe faster and stronger than the others right now doesn't mean he still will be in 5 years' time.

We want to avoid a situation where, in 5 years' time when asked to play a different position because his physical characteristics have changed, the player is lost and has to start over. I always give my players this scenario. You are playing for a big college, it's the championship

final, you've played forward your entire life but the coach has recruited another forward who has scored in the last 5 games. Coach wants to play the other forward ahead of you. Your choice is

- a) Sit on the bench because you can't play any other position (your coaches never taught you any) or
- b) Play in your second best position and have a chance at scoring the winning goal from that position (thankfully you played in Manhasset as a kid and your coaches did what they were supposed to do)

Substitutions

EVERYONE GETS EQUAL PLAYING TIME REGARDLESS OF SCORE OR WHO YOUR 'BEST PLAYERS' ARE!

Goal Kicks

I don't normally go over set pieces with the players this early but out of necessity I will talk about goal kicks.

Goal kicks at this level are ridiculous. It's a chance for the opposing team to 'camp' around your area and pounce on the ball. Players at this age are unable to 'clear' that defensive line so we end up conceding possession almost all of the time.

Our suggestion is this:

We use the scenario to our advantage to develop players.

We want our players to play quickly

Take the goal kick before the other team sets up. In order to do this 2 things need to happen.

- 1) The player taking the kick (we like to let the goalkeeper take it as it works on his decision making and speed of play initially) quickly assesses which side has the fewest opponents and places the ball on that side of his area.
- 2) The outside defenders – or whoever is closest at the time pulls wide to receive the pass.

Now can we find a way out? Can the player on the ball dribble his way out of trouble? We like to embrace the chaos of youth soccer and turn it to our advantage in developing the best players possible. Let them make mistakes and learn by them.

