

An aerial night-time photograph of a soccer field. The field is illuminated by bright stadium lights, creating a high-contrast scene. The green grass is marked with white lines for the field boundaries, center circle, and goal areas. Several players in dark and light uniforms are visible on the field, some in motion. The text "HAVERFORD SC" is overlaid in the center of the field in a large, black, serif font. Below it, "Coaching Education Series" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, and "Presented by: Ross Liberati" is written in a white, sans-serif font.

**HAVERFORD SC**

**Coaching Education Series**

Presented by: Ross Liberati



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Ross Liberati. My journey with soccer began in my youth, playing for clubs in Delaware and Pennsylvania, including the founding team for Pennsylvania Classics, known for producing national stars like Christian Pulisic. These early experiences instilled a deep appreciation for the sport and laid the foundation for my soccer career.

Transitioning into my collegiate journey at Bucknell University, I was privileged to participate in multiple NCAA Tournaments and secure Patriot League titles. These experiences not only equipped me with a profound understanding of the sport, but also kindled my passion for youth development through soccer, a passion that has guided my professional trajectory.

Throughout my diverse club coaching career, I have worked with Pennsylvania clubs across the region, including Lower Merion SC, Radnor SC, 1776 United, FC Delco, North Union and Penn Fusion. As a coach and an education resource, I have had the opportunity to nurture talent and contribute to the soccer community widely.

Today, as the head coach at Widener University and the coordinator of the Athletic Leadership Initiative, I am committed to developing essential life skills among student-athletes. I believe in the transformative power of sport, both on and off the field.

Dedicated to coaching education, I have completed all the United Soccer Coaches Licensing Courses, including National, Advanced National, Premier, and Youth Premier. This commitment to continuous learning was recognized in 2018 when I was honored to be named to the United Soccer Coaches' Top 30 Coaches Under 30 list.

Away from the soccer field, I am a proud resident of Havertown, Pennsylvania, where I live with my wife and two young children. The joys and challenges of fatherhood have further deepened my commitment to youth development, giving me a unique perspective on the influential role of sports in shaping young lives.

In conclusion, I am eager to bring my passion for soccer, wealth of experience, and commitment to holistic youth development to your club. I believe that together, we can create an environment where young athletes excel in soccer skills and personal growth. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the success of your club and look forward to supporting the development of its players.

Sincerely,

Ross Liberati

## II. UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF A YOUTH SOCCER COACH

### DEFINING A YOUTH SOCCER COACH'S ROLE:

The role of a youth soccer coach is multi-faceted and profound, encompassing a range of responsibilities that extend far beyond the soccer pitch. As a coach, you're not merely teaching children how to pass, shoot, or defend; you're assuming several key roles that have a significant impact on their overall development.

One of the most vital roles you'll undertake is that of a mentor. Here, you guide your players through the complexities of the game, offering insights that enable them to better comprehend and appreciate the intricacies of soccer. But your mentorship isn't confined to the sport alone. You help players navigate the broader challenges they encounter, bolstering their problem-solving abilities, resilience, and confidence.

Moreover, as a coach, you serve as a pivotal motivator. Young players often grapple with self-doubt, fear of failure, or lack of motivation. It's your role to inspire them continually, pushing them to reach their potential, and encouraging them to strive for excellence regardless of obstacles. Your belief in their capabilities can fuel their perseverance and determination, driving them towards not just better soccer performance, but also personal growth.

Education, too, is an integral component of your role. You're entrusted with imparting knowledge and teaching skills that extend beyond soccer techniques and tactics. Your players look up to you to learn essential life skills such as discipline, teamwork, and respect for others. You help them understand that winning isn't everything, and how they play the game, how they treat their teammates and opponents, are lessons that will serve them well beyond the field.

Finally, a youth soccer coach acts as a role model. Children are highly perceptive and often emulate behaviors they observe. Therefore, the way you conduct yourself, your demeanor under pressure, your attitude towards winning and losing, and how you interact with others - all contribute to shaping the values and attitudes of your players. By demonstrating high ethical standards, respect, and integrity, you can mold not just better players, but better individuals.

### CREATING A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

One of the cornerstones of successful coaching is the creation of a supportive, inclusive environment. As a coach, it's your responsibility to ensure every player feels valued, respected, and included, regardless of their skill level, background, or individual differences.

Inclusive coaching entails making every player feel they belong and are an integral part of the team. It involves recognizing and valuing the diverse abilities, experiences, and perspectives that each player brings. An inclusive coach fosters a sense of unity and camaraderie, encourages positive interactions among players, and promotes a team spirit that transcends individual differences.

Establishing a supportive environment goes hand in hand with inclusivity. As a coach, your players should feel comfortable approaching you with their concerns, challenges, or ideas. They should feel supported in their endeavors, knowing they have a coach who believes in their abilities, celebrates their successes, and helps them learn and grow from their failures.

Creating such an environment requires conscious effort and continual reinforcement. It means setting clear expectations about respectful behavior, stepping in when necessary to address negative interactions, and facilitating activities that promote team bonding and mutual understanding. This environment not only improves players' performance and enjoyment of the sport but also cultivates respect for diversity and a sense of belonging - invaluable life skills that they carry with them beyond the soccer field.

### BALANCING PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AND FUN

Balancing player development with fun is one of the key challenges that youth soccer coaches face. Soccer, after all, is a game, and games are meant to be enjoyed. However, as a coach, you're also tasked with enhancing your players' skills, fostering their competitive spirit, and preparing them for higher levels of play.

Achieving this balance requires thoughtful planning and implementation. Your training sessions should be structured in a way that promotes skill development through engaging, fun-filled activities. You need to create a learning environment where players look forward to training sessions, enjoy the activities, and simultaneously develop their soccer skills.

One of the ways to ensure this balance is to design age-appropriate drills and games that are both challenging and enjoyable. For example, small-sided games are a great way to improve skills and understanding of the game while having fun. Similarly, incorporating games and competitions that focus on specific skills can make the learning process exciting.

Another key aspect is to recognize and celebrate effort and improvement, not just wins or standout performances. This approach helps to instill a love for the game and encourages players to enjoy the process of learning and improvement, rather than solely focusing on outcomes.

Lastly, it's crucial to create a positive, supportive environment where players feel comfortable trying new things and making mistakes. This approach encourages them to experiment, take risks, and learn from their mistakes, without the fear of criticism or negative consequences.

Balancing player development with fun isn't always easy, but it's absolutely essential. After all, a child who enjoys playing soccer is more likely to stay engaged, put forth their best effort, and continue playing the sport in the long run.

In the next sections, we'll delve deeper into the specifics of creating effective practice sessions and managing games, but always remember: as a youth soccer coach, you have the power to make a significant difference in the lives of your players. Use this power wisely and responsibly.

## III. BASIC RULES AND TERMINOLOGY

### DISCUSSING KEY SOCCER RULES

Understanding and communicating the fundamental rules of soccer is paramount to your role as a coach. Your players look up to you for guidance, and it is your responsibility to ensure they grasp the rules that govern the sport.

One of the most commonly misunderstood rules is the offside rule. The concept of offside can be tricky to understand for young players, but as a coach, you can simplify it for them. Explain that a player is in an offside position if they are nearer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last opponent when the ball is played to them, except when they are in their own half of the field.

Another key rule to explain is the handball rule. A handball occurs when a player deliberately touches the ball with their hand or arm. The operative word here is 'deliberately'. It's important to illustrate that not all contact of the ball with the hand or arm is considered a handball.

Lastly, discussing free-kick and penalty rules is vital. Explain the difference between direct and indirect free kicks, and ensure your players understand what actions can lead to these outcomes. Similarly, explain when and why penalties are given, and how they are taken.

These are just a few examples of the rules that govern the sport. Your job as a coach is to break down these and other rules into simple, understandable terms, reinforcing them through practice sessions and games.

### DEFINING COMMON SOCCER TERMINOLOGY

Communication in soccer, like any sport, is enhanced by a shared understanding of common terminology. As a coach, you need to familiarize your players with terms they will frequently encounter in matches and practice sessions.

## IV. AGE-APPROPRIATE COACHING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

### RECOGNIZING DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES IN YOUTH SOCCER

When coaching youth soccer, understanding the developmental stages of young players is crucial. It allows you to create training programs that are developmentally appropriate, which enhances learning, reduces the risk of injury, and makes soccer more enjoyable for your players.

Recognizing these stages is not just about knowing the physical capabilities of your players, like their strength, speed, or endurance. It also involves understanding their cognitive and emotional development. For instance, younger players might struggle with complex tactical instructions but thrive in environments that allow for exploration and creativity. Similarly, players' emotional maturity will influence how they handle competition, respond to feedback, and interact with their teammates.

As a coach, you need to tailor your coaching style and strategies to align with these stages. This might mean focusing more on basic motor skills, fun, and participation for younger players, and gradually introducing more complex technical and tactical elements as your players grow and mature. Being attuned to your players' developmental stages can help you provide them with the most suitable, beneficial, and enjoyable soccer experience.

### DESIGNING AGE-APPROPRIATE DRILLS AND ACTIVITIES

Designing age-appropriate drills and activities is another crucial aspect of coaching youth soccer. It's important to create sessions that meet the players' developmental needs while keeping them engaged and enthusiastic about the game.

For younger players, activities should focus on basic motor skills like running, jumping, and ball manipulation. Drills should be simple, fun, and game-based, with lots of touches on the ball. As players get older and their motor skills and cognitive abilities develop, you can introduce more complex drills focusing on specific technical skills like passing, shooting, and defending.

Also, consider the physical safety of your players. Ensure that the activities are not too physically demanding for the players' age and development, and always prioritize safety. In a safe and age-appropriate environment, players are more likely to enjoy soccer, stay motivated to participate, and develop their skills.

Remember, the main goal is to help the players fall in love with the game while developing their skills. Every drill and activity should bring them closer to this goal.

### INCORPORATING MOTOR SKILLS, COORDINATION, AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

The importance of incorporating motor skills, coordination, and technical training into your coaching sessions cannot be overstated. These elements form the foundation upon which all soccer skills are built.

Motor skills like running, jumping, and balance are fundamental to the game. Activities that promote these skills help players become more agile and capable on the field. For example, a simple game of tag can be an effective way to develop agility, speed, and spatial awareness.

Coordination is another critical aspect. Soccer is a sport that requires coordinated movements of the entire body. Therefore, exercises that improve coordination, such as dribbling through cones or juggling the ball, should be a staple of your training sessions.

Lastly, technical training is what most people typically think of when they envision soccer practice. This involves teaching players the correct techniques for skills such as passing, shooting, dribbling, and tackling. It's important to introduce these skills early and provide plenty of opportunities for players to practice and improve.



The key is to incorporate these elements in an age-appropriate manner. For young players, this might involve a lot of games and activities that naturally develop these skills in a fun and engaging way. As players get older, you can progressively introduce more structured and focused technical training. Always remember, however, that youth soccer is not just about producing the next soccer superstar. It's about promoting a lifelong love for the game, physical fitness, and personal development.

## V. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION

### IMPORTANCE OF CLEAR COMMUNICATION WITH PLAYERS AND PARENTS

Clear communication is one of the most important tools you have as a coach. It allows you to establish expectations, provide feedback, and create an open and transparent environment.

Communication with players is crucial to their development. Your instructions, feedback, and motivational messages help guide their learning and progress. It's essential to communicate clearly and positively, and in a way that is appropriate for the age and understanding of your players.

For instance, 'marking' refers to a defensive strategy where players are assigned to guard specific opponents. 'Checking in' is a term often used to instruct a player to come towards the ball, usually to receive a pass. 'Clearing' is a defensive action where a player kicks the ball away from their own goal, typically to prevent an opponent's scoring attempt.

These terms, and many others, are part of the language of soccer. They serve to create a common understanding and efficient communication on the pitch. Therefore, it's vital for you as a coach to explain these terms to your players and use them consistently during training sessions and matches. Doing so will not only help players understand the game better, but it will also equip them to communicate more effectively with their teammates and other players as they progress in the sport.

But players aren't your only audience. Parents also play a critical role in youth soccer, and maintaining open lines of communication with them is equally important. Parents need to understand your coaching philosophy, expectations, and the process of player development. Regular updates about their child's progress, upcoming events, and any issues that arise are key to building trust and collaborative relationships.

One effective strategy is to establish regular communication channels, such as pre- or post-game briefings, weekly emails, or even a team website or social media group. Regardless of the method, your goal should be to create a two-way communication channel where both players and parents feel comfortable discussing any concerns or questions they may have.

### PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK AND POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Feedback is a vital part of player development. As a coach, you're in a unique position to observe your players' strengths and weaknesses, and your feedback can guide them towards improvement. However, the key lies in delivering feedback constructively.

When providing feedback, always strive to be specific, balanced, and solution-focused. Rather than merely pointing out a mistake, explain why it was a mistake, and provide specific tips on how to improve. Always pair criticism with positive feedback - this will motivate players to improve while maintaining their self-esteem and enthusiasm for the game.

Positive reinforcement is a powerful motivator. Acknowledging good effort, improvement, and success, no matter how small, can have a significant impact on players' motivation and self-confidence. This doesn't mean you should praise everything, but rather, look for moments of genuine effort or improvement to highlight.

## TECHNIQUES FOR MOTIVATING YOUNG PLAYERS

Motivation is a critical component of successful coaching. A motivated player is more likely to engage fully, work hard, and enjoy the game.

Inspiring through personal passion is one effective way to motivate young players. When you show enthusiasm and love for the game, it's contagious. Show players how much you enjoy coaching them and how much you believe in their potential. This kind of authentic passion can inspire players to push themselves and share in your love for the sport.

Goal setting is another powerful motivational tool. Encourage players to set both individual and team goals. These could range from skill-based goals (like mastering a new technique) to character goals (like demonstrating good sportsmanship). Celebrate when these goals are achieved, reinforcing the sense of accomplishment and motivating them to set and achieve new goals.

Finally, remember to celebrate progress and achievements. Whether it's mastering a new skill, winning a match, or simply showing great attitude, acknowledging these moments can boost players' motivation and confidence. But also remember that the focus should be on effort and personal improvement rather than just results.

## VI. PRACTICE PLANNING AND SESSION ORGANIZATION

### COACHING SESSION STRUCTURE

Organizing your coaching sessions effectively is key to maximizing player development and enjoyment. A well-structured session keeps players engaged, helps them learn more effectively, and reduces downtime.

Each session should start with a warm-up. Warm-ups prepare the players physically and mentally for the session. They increase heart rate, warm up the muscles, and help prevent injuries. Warm-ups can be simple and fun activities that get players moving and touching the ball.

The main part of the session should consist of drills and activities related to the session's objectives. This could involve skill drills, tactical exercises, or match-like scenarios. Always ensure the activities align with the players' age and development stage.

Finish the session with cool-down exercises. These help players recover from the session and reduce the risk of post-exercise soreness and injuries. Cool-downs can be light jogging, stretching, or even a quiet game of keep-away.

### DESIGNING SUITABLE TRAINING EXERCISES

Designing suitable training exercises is critical to player development. The exercises should be age-appropriate, focus on the desired learning outcomes, and be engaging for the players.

Create drills that are suitable for the players' skill level. For young or novice players, focus on basic motor skills and simple soccer skills like dribbling and shooting. As players get older and more experienced, introduce more complex drills focusing on specific technical skills, tactical understanding, and game scenarios.

It's also crucial to focus on skill development rather than just results. Ensure the drills provide plenty of opportunities for each player to practice the desired skill. For example, small-sided games can be a great way to give players more touches on the ball and involve them in more decision-making situations.

Above all, remember that soccer should be fun. Try to create drills and activities that the players enjoy. A player who enjoys training is more likely to engage fully, learn effectively, and develop a love for the sport.

## ORGANIZING GAME-LIKE DRILLS

Incorporating game-like drills into your sessions is an effective way to develop players' skills and understanding of the game. These drills simulate match scenarios, helping players transfer the skills they've learned in training to actual games.

Small-sided games are a great way to create these scenarios. With fewer players on each team, players get more touches on the ball, have more involvement in the game, and face more varied situations. They are a great way to develop technical skills, decision-making abilities, and game understanding.

You can adjust these games to focus on specific aspects of the game. For instance, you can play a game where only goals scored from a cross count, to focus on crossing and finishing skills. Or a game where players get extra points for completing a certain number of passes, to encourage teamwork and passing skills.

Remember, the goal of these drills is not just to win, but to develop skills and understanding. Encourage players to try the skills they've learned, make their own decisions, and learn from their mistakes. In this supportive and challenging environment, players can improve rapidly and gain confidence in their abilities.

## TIME MANAGEMENT AND MAXIMIZING PLAYER INVOLVEMENT:

Efficient time management is a fundamental aspect of successful coaching. Your ability to utilize time effectively ensures that your players receive the maximum benefits from each practice session.

Firstly, it's crucial to have a clear plan for each session. Know what you want to achieve, and how you plan to do it. This will help you allocate appropriate amounts of time to each part of the session - warm-up, main activities, cool-down - and prevent you from spending too much or too little time on any one aspect.

Player involvement is another critical factor in session planning. Active participation is key to learning and development, so strive to minimize idle time and maximize ball-in-play time. Look for ways to involve all players as much as possible - for example, instead of having players wait in line for a drill, can you set up multiple stations or add elements to the drill that keep more players active?

Finally, remember to be flexible. You might need to adjust your plan based on how the session is going, or if you see a teaching opportunity that wasn't in your original plan. The goal is always to provide the best possible learning experience for your players, even if that means deviating from your plan.

## VII. CREATING A POSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE TEAM ENVIRONMENT

### PROMOTING SPORTSMANSHIP, RESPECT, AND FAIR PLAY

As a coach, you are in a powerful position to shape the culture of your team. Promoting sportsmanship, respect, and fair play should be at the heart of this culture.

Sportsmanship involves playing the game in a fair and respectful manner. Encourage players to respect opponents, officials, and each other. Teach them to handle both success and failure with grace, and to put the good of the team ahead of personal glory.

Respect goes beyond the game itself. A good coach promotes a culture of respect in all interactions - among players, between players and coaches, and between players and others. This creates a positive and inclusive environment where all players feel valued and comfortable.

Fair play is the essence of soccer. Teach players to play by the rules, respect the referee's decisions, and play honestly. Remember, the way you behave sets the example for your players, so always demonstrate fair play in your own actions.

## BUILDING TEAMWORK AND CAMARADERIE

Creating a strong sense of teamwork and camaraderie among your players can greatly enhance their soccer experience and performance. A team that works well together and supports each other can achieve more than a collection of individuals.

Foster a team-first mentality. Encourage players to work together, support each other, and celebrate each other's successes. Make it clear that every player, regardless of their role or skill level, is important to the team's success.

Plan team-building activities. These can be soccer-related activities or non-soccer activities. The goal is to get players working together, learning about each other, and building relationships. This can enhance teamwork on the field and create a more enjoyable and supportive team environment.

Recognize the importance of each player. Every player on your team is important and has a role to play, whether they're the star striker or the last substitute. Make sure every player feels valued and included, and that their contributions are recognized.

## HANDLING CONFLICTS AND CHALLENGES

No team is without conflicts or challenges. How you handle these can greatly impact the team environment and the players' experiences. Conflict resolution skills are crucial. When conflicts arise - whether between players, or between a player and coach - address them in a fair and respectful manner. Listen to all sides, facilitate a constructive discussion, and guide the parties towards a resolution. Always emphasize the importance of respect, understanding, and forgiveness in resolving conflicts.

Address team challenges head-on. Whether it's a string of poor results, a difficult player, or a problem with team dynamics, don't ignore the problem and hope it goes away. Acknowledge the challenge, involve the team in finding a solution, and take decisive action. This shows your players that you're committed to creating a positive team environment, and gives them the tools to handle challenges themselves.

Manage player issues proactively. If a player is struggling - whether with their performance, behavior, or outside issues - address the issue promptly and supportively. Show the player that you care about them as a person, not just as a player, and that you're there to support them. This not only helps the player, but also strengthens the team by demonstrating that you care about every player's well-being.

## VIII. GAME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### UNDERSTANDING GAME MANAGEMENT

Game management refers to the decisions and actions you take during a game to help your team perform at its best. This includes strategic decisions, tactical adjustments, player substitutions, and communication with players. Effective game management can greatly enhance your team's performance and enjoyment of the game.

Your role as a coach during games is to guide and support your team. You're there to help them implement the game plan, make adjustments as necessary, and respond to the flow of the game. Your calm and confident presence can give your team confidence and help them focus on their performance.

In-game decision making is a critical part of game management. This includes decisions about tactics, player roles, and substitutions. These decisions should be based on your understanding of the game, your team, and the specific circumstances of the game. They require a deep understanding of the game, the ability to think on your feet, and the courage to make tough decisions.

## MANAGING GAME SITUATIONS, SUBSTITUTIONS, AND TACTICAL ADJUSTMENTS

Handling game situations is a crucial part of game management. This involves responding to the flow of the game, making strategic decisions, and helping your team adapt to changing circumstances. Whether it's responding to a red card, adjusting to an opponent's tactics, or managing the final minutes of a close game, your ability to handle these situations can have a big impact on the outcome of the game.

Making effective substitutions is another key aspect of game management. Substitutions can be used to change your team's tactics, respond to an opponent's changes, manage player fatigue, or address a player injury. Each substitution should be carefully considered and clearly communicated to the player coming off and the player going on.

Tactical adjustments are a critical part of game management. Soccer is a dynamic game, and the ability to adjust your team's tactics based on the flow of the game can be a decisive factor. This might involve changing your formation, adjusting player roles, or changing your attacking or defensive approach. These adjustments should be based on your understanding of the game and your team, and clearly communicated to your players.

## IDENTIFYING AND UTILIZING PLAYER STRENGTHS

A successful coach understands each player's strengths and how to best utilize them in the game. This involves recognizing each player's skills and attributes, assigning roles based on these strengths, and creating opportunities for each player to shine.

Recognizing player skills and attributes requires observation and understanding. Look for each player's unique strengths - whether it's a defender's ability to read the game, a midfielder's passing ability, or a forward's finishing skills. Also consider their physical attributes, such as speed, strength, and endurance, and their mental and emotional qualities, such as leadership, determination, and composure.

Assigning roles based on strengths is a key part of game strategy. Each player should have a role that suits their strengths and contributes to the team's performance. This might involve assigning a fast player to a wing position, a player with good decision-making skills to a central midfield role, or a player with strong leadership skills to a captain's role.

Capitalizing on player abilities during games is a crucial part of game management. Look for opportunities to create situations where players can use their strengths, such as creating one-on-one situations for a skillful attacker, or playing a high defensive line to take advantage of a fast defender's speed.

## PROMOTING ON-FIELD COMMUNICATION, GAME PLANS IMPLEMENTATION, SPORTSMANSHIP, AND FAIR PLAY

Communication is a vital part of soccer. Encourage your players to communicate with each other on the field - to call for the ball, coordinate their movements, and support each other. Provide them with the tools and vocabulary to communicate effectively, and model good communication in your own interactions with the team.

Implementing game plans is a key part of game management. Develop a game plan for each match based on your understanding of your team, the opponent, and the game conditions. Communicate this plan clearly to your players, and help them understand their roles in implementing it. During the game, guide your team in implementing the plan, and make adjustments as necessary based on the flow of the game.

Promoting sportsmanship and fair play is a critical part of your role as a coach. Encourage your players to play fairly, respect opponents and officials, and handle both success and failure with grace. Model these values in your own behavior, and hold your players accountable for upholding them. Remember, you're not just coaching soccer skills - you're also helping to shape character.



## IX. RESOURCES AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

### SHARING COACHING RESOURCES:

A successful coach is always learning and seeking out new resources. Share with your fellow coaches the resources that you've found helpful - books, websites, coaching organizations, and more. This not only helps your fellow coaches, but also strengthens the coaching community and enhances the game.

There are countless books available on soccer coaching, from technical manuals to biographies of successful coaches. Share the books that have influenced your coaching philosophy, helped you understand the game better, or inspired you to be a better coach.

Websites are another great resource. There are many sites offering coaching tips, drill ideas, discussion forums, and more. Share the sites you've found most helpful, and encourage your fellow coaches to do the same.

Coaching organizations are a valuable resource for education, networking, and advocacy. Encourage your fellow coaches to join local, national, and international coaching organizations. This can provide them with a wealth of resources, opportunities for professional development, and a voice in the broader coaching community.

### EMPHASIZING CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

A commitment to continuous learning and development is a mark of a successful coach. Strive to stay updated with soccer trends, pursue further coaching education, and learn from each coaching experience. Encourage your fellow coaches to do the same.

Soccer is a constantly evolving game. New tactics, training methods, and philosophies emerge regularly, and it's important to stay updated. This can involve reading, watching games, attending coaching seminars, or simply discussing the game with fellow coaches.

Further coaching education is a valuable tool for professional development. This might involve attending coaching courses, seminars, or workshops, earning coaching certifications, or pursuing a degree in coaching or a related field. These opportunities not only expand your knowledge and skills, but also enhance your credibility and open up new opportunities.

Every coaching experience is an opportunity to learn. Reflect on each session, each game, each interaction with a player. What went well? What could have been better? How can you improve next time? Encourage your fellow coaches to adopt this reflective approach - it's one of the most powerful tools for learning and development.

### ENCOURAGING FURTHER COACHING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES:

Coaching education shouldn't stop once you've earned your first coaching certificate or degree. Encourage your fellow coaches to seek out further education opportunities - whether it's earning higher coaching certifications, attending specialized coaching courses, or pursuing further academic studies.

Coaching certifications are a mark of your professional expertise and commitment. They involve structured learning, practical experience, and assessment, and provide a solid foundation of coaching knowledge and skills. Encourage your fellow coaches to seek out higher coaching certifications, and to maintain their existing certifications through ongoing education.

Specialized coaching courses offer in-depth knowledge and skills in specific areas of coaching, such as goalkeeping, fitness training, or youth development. These courses can enhance your coaching practice and open up new coaching opportunities.

Further academic studies, such as a degree in sports science or a master's in coaching, provide an in-depth understanding of the broader context of coaching, such as physiology, psychology, and pedagogy. These studies can greatly enhance your coaching practice and open up new career opportunities.

## TOP 10 ATTRIBUTES OF A GREAT YOUTH SOCCER COACH

1. **Player Development Focus:** Great coaches prioritize player development over winning. They focus on improving the technical, tactical, physical, and psychological abilities of the players, instead of emphasizing winning games at all costs. For instance, they might allocate extra time during practice sessions to enhance the weak foot skills of their players instead of solely focusing on match tactics.
2. **Positive Reinforcement:** Outstanding coaches regularly use positive reinforcement to boost player confidence. For example, when a player makes a good pass or scores a goal, they are quickly acknowledged and praised. This can significantly enhance the player's motivation and commitment to the sport.
3. **Good Communication:** An effective coach should be an excellent communicator. This involves speaking clearly, listening actively, and providing constructive feedback. An example could be explaining the purpose of a particular drill in simple terms, taking time to answer players' questions, and providing positive and helpful critiques after a game.
4. **Creates a Safe and Inclusive Environment:** Successful coaches ensure all players feel valued, accepted, and safe. This involves making all participants feel comfortable, regardless of their skill level, background, or personality. For instance, a coach could foster inclusivity by rotating positions, allowing everyone to play in different roles.
5. **Teaches Respect and Sportsmanship:** Respect for teammates, opposition, and referees is a crucial value that good coaches instill in their players. This can be done by setting strict guidelines for behavior and reinforcing the consequences of unsportsmanlike conduct, such as time-outs for aggressive behavior or inappropriate language.
6. **Emphasizes Fun:** A great youth coach makes sure that the players are having fun. This might involve creating enjoyable drills, playing small-sided games, and organizing team activities outside of soccer. For example, a coach could conclude each practice with a fun and exciting scrimmage to promote enjoyment and camaraderie.
7. **Goal Setting:** Coaches who set achievable, yet challenging, goals for their players help foster a sense of accomplishment and drive. These could range from personal objectives like "improve passing accuracy" to team goals like "score more from set pieces".
8. **Patience and Flexibility:** Children's skills develop at different rates. An excellent coach understands this and is patient, providing extra help to those who need it. Also, flexibility is key when dealing with unpredictable situations like last-minute cancellations or unexpected injuries.
9. **Stays Updated and Continues Learning:** Just like players, top coaches are always learning and adapting. They stay updated with the latest coaching techniques, drills, and theories. Attending coaching seminars, reading soccer coaching literature, and actively seeking feedback from peers are ways to continue learning.
10. **Role Model:** Finally, great coaches act as role models. They exhibit the qualities they want to instill in their players such as discipline, respect, dedication, and enthusiasm. For example, arriving on time, showing respect to officials, or demonstrating good sportsmanship regardless of the game's outcome sets a positive example for the players.

## TOP 10 ATTRIBUTES OF A POOR YOUTH SOCCER COACH

1. **Overemphasis on Winning:** While competitiveness is part of sports, overemphasizing winning can hinder player development and enjoyment. Avoid using winning as the sole measure of success. Instead, focus on individual improvements, teamwork, and overall player development.

Example: *A coach who berates their team for losing a match, despite the team's noticeable improvement in ball control and passing, exemplifies an unhealthy focus on winning rather than development.*

2. **Negative Criticism:** Coaches should avoid personal and negative criticism that can erode player confidence. Demeaning comments, sarcasm, or public criticism are counterproductive. Constructive feedback, on the other hand, is useful and beneficial when delivered correctly.

Example: *A coach who publicly singles out a player for missing a goal, labeling them as a "failure," is practicing negative criticism. Instead, they should privately discuss how to improve shooting accuracy with the player.*

3. **Ignoring the Less Skilled Players:** Every player, regardless of skill level, deserves equal attention and opportunity to develop. Avoid the tendency to focus only on the 'star' players. Remember, late bloomers are quite common in sports.

Example: *If a coach consistently gives more playing time in matches to skilled players while less skilled players remain on the bench, they're effectively ignoring those who might need more guidance and exposure to improve.*

4. **Inflexibility:** Rigid coaching styles can hinder player growth and enjoyment. Being unyielding in terms of tactics, player positions, or training methodologies can limit player exposure and hamper creativity. Flexibility is key in youth coaching.

Example: *A coach who insists on always playing a 4-4-2 formation, despite the players struggling with it, is demonstrating inflexibility. Adapting the formation to suit the team's abilities would be a more beneficial approach.*

5. **Poor Communication:** Avoid using overly technical jargon or unclear instructions, which can confuse players. Similarly, failing to listen to player feedback or concerns can lead to misunderstandings and dissatisfaction.

Example: *A coach who uses complex technical terms to instruct 10-year-olds, leading to confusion and poor performance, is exhibiting poor communication. Explaining strategies in simple, age-appropriate language is essential.*

6. **Failing to Teach Sportsmanship:** Avoiding the lesson of respect and sportsmanship does a disservice to your players. Coaches should not condone or ignore unsportsmanlike behavior, including disrespect toward teammates, opponents, or officials.

Example: *If a coach ignores or fails to address a player who consistently argues with referees or taunts opponents, they're neglecting to teach sportsmanship.*

7. **Overtraining:** Pushing players to the point of exhaustion, or failing to recognize when a player needs a break, can lead to burnout and injuries. It's crucial to balance training intensity and ensure adequate rest and recovery.

Example: *A coach who insists on intensive training sessions every day without adequate rest periods, resulting in fatigued players and increased injuries, is overtraining the team.*

8. **Neglecting Safety:** Avoid neglecting safety guidelines and protocols. This includes making sure equipment is safe, providing sufficient hydration breaks, and taking immediate action in case of injuries.

Example: *If a coach proceeds with practice during a thunderstorm or when the field is covered in debris, they're neglecting player safety. Pausing practice until conditions are safe is the responsible course of action.*

9. **Ignoring Personal Development:** Focusing solely on soccer skills while neglecting life skills is a missed opportunity. Coaches should also help players develop qualities such as teamwork, responsibility, and discipline.

Example: *A coach who doesn't address a player's consistent tardiness for practice, focusing only on their on-field performance, is ignoring an important aspect of personal development: punctuality and responsibility.*

10. **Not Being a Positive Role Model:** Coaches should avoid any behavior that they wouldn't want their players to emulate. This includes losing one's temper, engaging in disputes with officials, or displaying poor sportsmanship.

Example: *A coach who frequently argues with match officials or uses offensive language sets a poor example for their players. Maintaining a level-headed and respectful demeanor is crucial for setting a positive example.*

## PRACTICE STRUCTURE BY AGE GROUP

### U8-U10 TEAM - 7V7 PRACTICE STRUCTURE

#### **Warm-up (15 mins):**

Engage the young players in fun-based activities that promote dribbling and familiarize themselves with ball control. Consider games such as "Knockout" or "Tag" with the ball. This not only warms up the muscles but also hones their ball control skills. Here's a list of some fun warm-up games you can use.

#### **Skills Development (20 mins):**

Focus on passing, receiving, and dribbling in a game-like scenario. The "Give and Go" drill is particularly effective for this age group. A comprehensive guide to executing this drill is available [here](#).

#### **Small-sided Game (20 mins):**

Play a 4v4 or 5v5 game, encouraging the players to apply the skills they've just practiced. The small-sided game scenario encourages more player interaction and thus provides more opportunities for skill application.

#### **Cool-down (5 mins):**

Engage the team in gentle stretches to prevent muscle injury. Finish the session with positive feedback, highlighting each player's improvement areas.

### U11-U12 TEAM - 9V9 PRACTICE STRUCTURE

#### **Warm-up (15 mins):**

Warm-up games should be a bit more advanced than the U8-U10 age group, promoting quick thinking, ball control, and short passing. Here's a list of warm-up games suitable for this age group.

#### **Skills Development (25 mins):**

The drills should focus on attacking, keeping possession, and introducing basic defensive principles. A good list of soccer drills can be found [here](#).

#### **Small-sided Game (25 mins):**

A 7v7 game to practice the newly learned skills in a match-like setting. Encourage players to apply the offensive and defensive strategies they've practiced.

#### **Cool-down (5 mins):**

Debrief, stretching, and feedback. Review the performance of the team and the individual players. Offer constructive feedback and encourage players to reflect on their performance.

### U13-U19 TEAM - 11V11 PRACTICE STRUCTURE

#### **Warm-up (15 mins):**

Warm-up exercises with an emphasis on passing, receiving, and movement off the ball. Here are some warm-up exercises focused on these skills.

#### **Skills Development (30 mins):**

Drills to develop advanced techniques like crossing, finishing, advanced defensive principles, set pieces, and more. Utilize the "Functional 4 Goal Game" for attacking training and the "Midfield Blocking In a 4-3-3 VS Opposition Back Four and Two CMF's" for defensive training. A comprehensive list of advanced soccer drills can be found [here](#).

#### **Small Sided Games/Full-sided Game Principles (30 mins):**

Play a full 11v11 scrimmage where players can apply what they've learned in a game-like situation. This type of play is crucial for developing teamwork and understanding tactical aspects of soccer. Adjust the scrimmage as necessary to focus on certain areas, such as defensive organization or attacking transitions.

#### **Cool-down (10 mins):**

End with a cool-down period consisting of light jogging and stretching to help reduce muscle soreness and injury risk. Here are some recommended cool-down exercises. Use this time to review the practice, discuss what was learned, and provide feedback.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR EACH PRACTICE STRUCTURE TO MAXIMIZE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

### 1. WARM-UP:

#### U5-U11 (FOUNDATION PHASE):

- Make warm-ups fun and engaging, like a game to motivate the young players.
- Focus on simple movements that promote flexibility, balance, and agility.
- Introduce basic ball control skills.
- Encourage individual creativity and decision-making.
- Foster a positive and supportive environment for every player.

#### U12-U19 (YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE):

- Warm-ups should be more structured and incorporate more complex motor skills.
- Focus on enhancing technical skills such as ball control and passing accuracy.
- Encourage mental preparation for the upcoming session.
- Highlight the importance of injury prevention techniques.
- Promote teamwork and communication skills.

### 2. SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

#### U5-U11:

- Teach basic soccer techniques such as passing, dribbling, and shooting.
- Encourage "Me and My Ball" philosophy, emphasizing individual possession and control of the ball
- Encourage trial and error, allowing kids to learn from mistakes.
- Encourage creativity and problem-solving through gameplay.
- Incorporate mini-games and fun activities that teach soccer skills in an enjoyable manner.

#### U12-U19:

- Progress to more complex technical drills and exercises.
- Encourage players to improve their tactical understanding of the game
- Develop physical fitness and endurance, emphasizing the importance of a balanced approach to health and sport.
- Develop a positive mindset and resilience under pressure
- Encourage players to set individual and team goals.

### 3. FULL-SIDED GAMES:

#### U5-U11:



- Keep games short and engaging to maintain attention.
- Don't rush towards the 11v11 game; small-sided games offer more touch of the ball and boost player development.
- Keep the focus on enjoyment and learning, not winning.
- Encourage fair play and good sportsmanship.
- Provide constructive feedback, highlighting the positives and areas for improvement.

## U12-U19:

- Make game simulations as realistic as possible.
- Focus on developing tactical awareness, such as positioning, attacking transitions, and defensive organization.
- Encourage players to analyze their performance and make strategy adjustments.
- Foster leadership among players, allowing them to take responsibility.
- Use games to assess players' progress and adapt training plans accordingly.

## 4. COOL-DOWN:

### U5-U11:

- Use fun activities to gradually lower heart rates and ensure kids associate enjoyment with the whole session.
- Explain the importance of cool-down and its benefits.
- Promote basic stretching and recovery techniques.
- Review the session, discuss what was learned, and provide constructive feedback.
- Encourage kids to practice skills learned at home.

### U12-U19:

- Introduce more comprehensive cool-down techniques including proper stretching and recovery strategies.
- Discuss the importance of proper nutrition and rest for muscle recovery.
- Encourage players to share their feelings and thoughts about the session.
- Provide constructive feedback and discuss how to apply lessons learned in future matches.
- Reinforce the importance of self-improvement and continuous learning.

Remember, as a coach, your role isn't just about winning matches, but developing young people's character, resilience, and love for the game. Always lead by example and create a supportive and positive environment for every player.

This comprehensive guide is designed to assist volunteer parent coaches in developing a structured curriculum and effective coaching methodology. Throughout the season, we aim to nurture the growth and passion of our young players while providing a positive and enjoyable experience.

## COACHING PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY:

At Haverford Soccer Club, we believe in fostering a holistic approach to player development. Our coaching philosophy centers around the following principles:

- Creating a positive and inclusive environment
- Focusing on individual player growth and team dynamics
- Emphasizing skill development, tactical understanding, and sportsmanship
- Encouraging creativity, problem-solving, and a love for the game

Our coaching methodology incorporates age-appropriate training sessions, small-sided games, and gradual progressions. We strive to strike a balance between challenging players and ensuring they have fun while learning.

The season at Haverford Soccer Club runs from August to November, providing a duration of approximately 12-14 weeks. The curriculum is designed to gradually introduce and reinforce fundamental skills, tactical concepts, and team cohesion.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR ALL AGE GROUPS:

- Technical Skills: Dribbling, passing, shooting, ball control, and heading.
- Tactical Understanding: Positioning, team shape, movement off the ball, and game strategies.
- Physical Development: Agility, coordination, speed, endurance, and injury prevention.
- Psychological Aspects: Confidence-building, teamwork, decision-making, and resilience.
- Practice Plan Progression: This section outlines a suggested practice plan progression for each month of the season. The plan is adaptable and can be modified based on the specific needs of your team. It is important to ensure that the practice sessions are engaging, age-appropriate, and align with the curriculum overview.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF TRAINING PROGRESSION

### PRE-SEASON (AUGUST):

- Player assessments and team formation
- Introduction to basic technical skills
- Fun warm-up games and team-building activities
- Emphasis on ball mastery and individual skill development
- Small-sided games to encourage teamwork and decision-making

### EARLY SEASON (SEPTEMBER):

- Review and reinforcement of technical skills
- Introduction to basic tactical concepts
- Progress to larger-sided games with modified rules
- Individual and team drills to improve passing, shooting, and defending
- Focus on improving communication and spatial awareness

### MID-SEASON (OCTOBER):

- Advanced technical training and skill refinement
- Introduction to more complex tactical concepts
- Position-specific training for players
- Increased focus on teamwork and combination play
- Simulated match scenarios and game understanding exercises

## LATE SEASON (NOVEMBER):

- Integration of technical and tactical aspects in game-like situations
- Continued skill development and refinement
- Team building and cohesive play
- Strategies for set pieces and game management
- Friendly matches and scrimmages to assess progress

## SUGGESTED PRACTICE TOPICS WEEK BY WEEK

### U8-U10 TEAMS (7V7 BASED)

*Week 1: Ball Mastery* Key Coaching Points: Encourage players to keep the ball close and use both feet. Remind them about the importance of looking up while dribbling.

- 'Gates Dribbling'
- 'Cone Weave to Shot'
- 'Figure 8 Dribbling'
- 'Solo Ball Mastery'
- 'Dribble and Turn'

*Week 2: Passing and Receiving* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce accuracy and weight of pass. Highlight the importance of the first touch and body position when receiving.

- 'Four Corners Passing Game'
- 'Pass and Move Relay'
- 'Triangle Passing'
- 'Y-Passing Drill'
- 'Pass and Follow'

*Week 3: Turns and Shielding* Key Coaching Points: Teach them different turns and when to use them. Show how to use their body to protect the ball.

- 'Inside-Outside Turns'
- 'Protect the Ball Drill'
- 'Turning Races'
- '1v1 Turns and Shielding'
- 'Shield and Pass'

*Week 4: Basic Spacing and Support* Key Coaching Points: Emphasize the concept of space. Encourage players to spread out and not bunch around the ball.

- 'Possession to Target'
- '4v4 to Four Goals'
- 'Diamond Passing Drill'
- '5v2 Rondo'
- 'Keep Away Game'

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*Week 5: Introduction to Shooting* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce striking the ball with the laces. Encourage shooting with both feet.

- 'Shooting from a Pass'
- 'Knockdown Shooting Drill'
- 'Dribble and Shoot'
- 'Target Shooting Game'
- 'Shooting Relay'

*Week 6: Basic Defending Principles* Key Coaching Points: Teach players about positioning and the importance of keeping their body between the ball and the goal.

- '1v1 Defending'
- 'Defend the Gate'
- 'Defensive Shadowing'
- '2v2 to Goal'
- '4v4 Small-Sided Game'

*Week 7: Advanced Ball Control* Key Coaching Points: Introduce more complex moves and changes of direction. Encourage creativity and flair.

- 'Advanced Gates Dribbling'
- 'Control and Pass Relay'
- 'Obstacle Course Dribbling'
- '1v1 Dribbling Duels'
- 'Cut and Turn Race'

*Week 8: Positioning and Triangles* Key Coaching Points: Explain how triangles provide options for the player with the ball. Emphasize communication and anticipation.

- 'Triangle Passing'
- '4v4 End Zone Game'
- '3v3 Positioning Game'
- '5v5 to Mini Goals'
- '7v7 Scrimmage'

*Week 9: Dribbling at Speed* Key Coaching Points: Encourage control even when running at full speed. Discuss the importance of recognizing when to accelerate with the ball.

- 'Speed Dribbling Race'
- 'Dribble and Shoot Relay'
- 'Dribble Through Gates'
- 'Beat the Defender'
- '1v1 to Small Goals'

*Week 10: Introduction to Transition* Key Coaching Points: Discuss the importance of quick transitions from attack to defense and vice versa. Teach players to recognize when they have lost or gained possession.

- '4v4 Transition Game'
- '6v6 Small-Sided Game'
- 'End Zone Transition Drill'
- 'Attack vs Defense Scrimmage'
- '4v4 to 4 Goals'

*Weeks 11-14: Reinforcement and More Complex Game Scenarios* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce learned skills. Introduce more complex game situations, encouraging problem-solving and decision-making.

- 'Attacking vs Defensive Scrimmage'
- 'Small-Sided Game with Conditions'
- 'Passing Relay Race'
- '4v4+2 Rondo'
- '7v7 Full Game'

## U11-U12 TEAMS (9V9 BASED)

*Week 1: Ball Control under Pressure* Key Coaching Points: Teach players to protect the ball under pressure. Reinforce the importance of a good first touch.

- 'Pressure Passing Drill'
- 'Possession Game with Neutral Players'
- '1v1 to Goal under Pressure'
- 'First Touch to Control and Pass'
- '4v4+3 Rondo'

*Week 2: Width and Depth in Formation* Key Coaching Points: Discuss the importance of using the whole field. Reinforce maintaining shape in different phases of play.

- '9v9 Scrimmage'
- 'Position Specific Training'
- 'Width and Depth Game'
- '7v7 with Wide Players'
- '9v9 Scrimmage with Pause and Reflect'

*Week 3: 1v1 Attacking* Key Coaching Points: Teach players to take on defenders confidently. Encourage creativity and unpredictability in 1v1 situations.

- '1v1 Duels'
- 'Attacking the Dribbler'
- '1v1 to Mini Goals'
- '1v1 to Goal'
- 'Pressure Dribbling Drill'

*Week 4: Midfield Control* Key Coaching Points: Teach midfielders about controlling the game through possession. Emphasize the importance of their role in linking defense and attack.

- 'Possession to Advance'
- 'Midfield Overload Game'
- '5v5 with Midfield Third'
- '9v9 Scrimmage with Midfield Focus'
- 'Possession with Purpose'

*Week 5: Advanced Shooting and Finishing* Key Coaching Points: Teach players to shoot accurately under pressure. Reinforce shooting with both feet.

- 'Shooting from Distance'
- 'Finishing under Pressure'
- 'Cross and Finish Drill'
- '1v1 to Goal with Finishing'
- '9v9 Scrimmage with Shooting Focus'



*Week 6: Wide Play and Crossing* Key Coaching Points: Highlight the importance of wide players and crosses in creating goal-scoring opportunities. Reinforce good crossing techniques.

- 'Crossing and Finishing Drill'
- 'Wide Play Game'
- '9v9 Scrimmage with Wide Play Focus'
- 'Cross, Control and Finish'
- 'Overload Wide Areas Drill'

*Week 7: Strength Training and Balance* Key Coaching Points: Introduce basic strength training exercises suitable for their age. Discuss the importance of balance in soccer.

- 'Balance and Coordination Drills'
- 'Soccer Strength Workout'
- 'Resistance Running'
- 'Circuit Training'
- 'Plyometric Drills'

*Week 8: Defending as a Unit* Key Coaching Points: Teach players about pressure, cover, and balance in defending. Reinforce the importance of communication in defense.

- 'Defensive Shape and Coordination'
- 'Team Pressing Drill'
- '9v9 Scrimmage Focusing on Defense'
- 'Backline Cohesion Drill'
- 'Defensive Shadowing'

*Week 9: 2v1 Attacking and Defending* Key Coaching Points: Teach players about creating and exploiting numerical advantages. Reinforce the principles of cooperation in attack and cover in defense.

- '2v1 Attacking Scenarios'
- 'Overload Attacking Game'
- 'Defending Outnumbered'
- '2v1 to Goal'
- '9v9 Scrimmage with Overload Situations'

*Week 10: Attacking Transitions* Key Coaching Points: Emphasize the importance of quick transitions to catch the opponent off guard. Teach players to recognize the moment of transition.

- '4v4 Transition Game'
- 'Counter Attack Drill'
- 'Quick Transition Game'
- '7v7 Small-Sided Game with Transitions'
- '9v9 Scrimmage Focusing on Transitions'

*Week 11: Advanced Heading* Key Coaching Points: Teach proper heading technique. Discuss the importance of heading in both attack and defense.

- 'Heading Control Drill'
- 'Heading to Goal'
- 'Defensive Heading'
- 'Cross and Head Drill'
- 'Jumping Heading Drill'

*Week 12: Goalkeeper Involvement* Key Coaching Points: Discuss the role of the goalkeeper in starting attacks. Reinforce different types of distribution for goalkeepers.

- 'Goalkeeper Distribution Drill'
- 'Goalkeeper Shot Stopping'
- 'Goalkeeper Reflex Drills'
- 'Goalkeeper High Ball Drills'
- '9v9 Scrimmage Focusing on Goalkeeper Play'

*Week 13: Set Pieces* Key Coaching Points: Explain different set piece strategies. Teach players about the importance of each role in a set piece.

- 'Free Kick Scenarios'
- 'Corner Kick Practice'
- 'Penalty Kick Practice'
- 'Defending Set Pieces Drill'
- '9v9 Scrimmage Focusing on Set Pieces'

*Week 14: Reinforcement and Game Simulations* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce learned skills. Run full game simulations, pausing to point out teaching moments.

- '9v9 Full Match'
- 'Small-Sided Games with Constraints'
- 'Position Specific Training Games'
- 'Scrimmage with Conditioned Restarts'
- 'Set Piece Scenarios Game'

## U13-U19 TEAMS (11V11 BASED)

*Week 1: Ball Control and First Touch* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce control and first touch under pressure. Teach players to use their first touch to set up their next move.

- 'First Touch Control Drill'
- 'Turning Under Pressure'
- '1v1 Control and Dribble'
- 'Pass, Control and Play'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Control Emphasis'

*Week 2: Formation Understanding* Key Coaching Points: Discuss different formations and the roles within them. Encourage players to understand their duties within the team structure.

- 'Positional Roles Game'
- 'Formation Shadow Play'
- '11v11 Formation Practice Game'
- 'Positional Switching Drill'
- 'Backline Positioning and Communication Drill'

*Week 3: Advanced 1v1 Skills* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce advanced moves and changes of direction. Encourage players to express themselves and take on opponents.

- '1v1 Skill Moves Drill'
- 'Advanced 1v1 Duel'
- 'Beat the Defender'
- '1v1 Attacking Races'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with 1v1 Emphasis'

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*Week 4: Game Intelligence and Decision Making* Key Coaching Points: Discuss different game situations and the best decisions to make in each one. Encourage players to think ahead and anticipate the play.

- 'Small-Sided Game with Conditions'
- 'Decision Making Drill'
- '3v3 Positional Game'
- 'Game Scenario Practice'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Decision-Making Emphasis'

*Week 5: Advanced Shooting and Long Passing* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce shooting techniques for power and accuracy. Teach players to judge distance and weight in long passes.

- 'Long Distance Shooting'
- 'Long Pass Accuracy Drill'
- 'Cross and Finish'
- 'Long Passing Game'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Shooting Emphasis'

*Week 6: Position-Specific Training* Key Coaching Points: Discuss the responsibilities and skills needed for each position. Teach players to understand and fulfill their role on the team.

- 'Positional Role Play'
- 'Position-Specific Drills (vary based on position)'
- 'Backline Communication Drill'
- 'Midfield Dominance Game'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Positional Emphasis'

*Week 7: Advanced Defensive Organization* Key Coaching Points: Teach about defensive shape and offside traps. Encourage communication and cooperation in defense.

- 'Defensive Shape Drill'
- 'Offside Trap Practice'
- 'Backline Communication Game'
- 'Defensive Transition Drill'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Defensive Emphasis'

*Week 8: Speed and Reaction Time* Key Coaching Points: Run drills to improve speed and reaction time. Discuss the importance of these skills in soccer.

- 'Reaction Speed Drill'
- 'Agility Ladder Drills'
- 'Quick Feet Cone Drills'
- 'Sprint Races'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Speed Emphasis'

*Week 9: Advanced Attacking Patterns* Key Coaching Points: Discuss different attacking strategies and combinations. Encourage players to recognize and exploit spaces in attack.

- 'Overlapping Run Drill'
- 'Give and Go Practice'
- 'Creating Space Drill'
- 'Wide Play and Crossing Drill'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Attacking Emphasis'

*Week 10: Set Pieces and Game Scenarios* Key Coaching Points: Discuss different set piece strategies. Run simulations of late game scenarios, discussing decision-making and time management.

- 'Free Kick Practice'
- 'Corner Kick Scenarios'
- 'Late Game Scenarios Practice'
- 'Defending Set Pieces Drill'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Set Pieces'

*Week 11: Game Tempo Control* Key Coaching Points: Discuss how to control the game tempo through possession. Teach players about when to slow down or speed up the game.

- 'Keep Ball Drill'
- 'Tempo Control Game'
- 'Possession to Control Tempo'
- 'Small-Sided Game with Tempo Changes'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Tempo Emphasis'

*Week 12: Fitness and Stamina* Key Coaching Points: Run fitness drills, discussing the importance of fitness in soccer. Teach players about the importance of recovery and nutrition.

- 'Soccer Conditioning Drills'
- 'Stamina Building Running Drills'
- 'High Intensity Interval Training'
- 'Plyometric Conditioning'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Fitness Emphasis'

*Week 13: Transition and Counter Attacking* Key Coaching Points: Teach players about quick transitions and counter attacking. Discuss recognizing and exploiting opportunities in transition.

- '4v4 Transition Game'
- 'Counter Attacking Drill'
- 'Quick Transition Game'
- 'Defending to Attacking Drill'
- '11v11 Scrimmage with Transition Emphasis'

*Week 14: Reinforcement and Game Simulations* Key Coaching Points: Reinforce learned skills. Run full game simulations, pausing to point out teaching moments.

- '11v11 Full Match'
- 'Small-Sided Games with Constraints'
- 'Position Specific Training Games'
- 'Scrimmage with Conditioned Restarts'
- 'Set Piece Scenarios Game'

As a volunteer parent coach at Haverford Soccer Club, your dedication and support are invaluable in shaping the future of our young athletes. This guidebook provides you with a comprehensive framework to enhance player development, foster a love for the game, and create a positive team culture. Remember, the journey is just as important as the destination, and together, we can inspire greatness on and off the field. Good luck, and have a fantastic season!

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