

Elkhorn Soccer Club
Micro Soccer – Spring 2007
U5-U6-U7-U8

www.elkhornsoccer.org

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Source: "Coaching 6, 7 and 8 year olds", Tony Waiters and Bobby Howe

What is Micro Soccer? Small-sided soccer game, 3 to 4 players per team, where the emphasis is on playing. It allows for more touches and discourages the "swarm" mentality.

Advantages...

- A six year old relates too and co-operates with one or two friends (accepted educational psychology).
- One ball amongst 6 to 8 players guarantees opportunities for all players to kick, dribble and score.
- Three makes a triangle...the basic team unit in Soccer.
- Small-sided teams promote skills development just by playing.

Source: "Coach Primer", edited by Bobby Howe, USSF National Coaching Director

Coaching Tips

Do not be afraid to ask for help from parent. Especially when coaching U7's and U8's, designate an assistant coach or parent team administrator. This will take much of the logistical responsibility off of you.

Parent Meeting

This is very important for yourself and the parents of each of the children on your team.

- Introduce yourself and your expectations
- Have parents introduce themselves and their children
- Confirm practice and game times & sites
- Discuss equipment needed
 - a. Shoes
 - b. Shingaurds
 - c. Ball – size 3
 - d. Water bottle
 - e. Proper Clothing
- Distribute Team Roster / Refreshment Schedule
- Other League Information

Coaches Safety Checklist

- Carry Medical Release forms.
- Notify Parents of even the slightest injury to their child, especially head injuries.
- Never leave children unattended before, during or after practice – do not leave the field until all children have been picked up.
- Ask parents to get out of their vehicles and make contact with you or another parent when picking up children.
- Always use buddy system for trips to the restroom or drinking fountain. An adult should accompany very young players.
- Be cognitive of people who do not belong near the field or players.
- Inspect the field for possible hazards such as holes, sprinkler heads, rocks, glass, mud or standing water.
- Only players on your team should be allowed to practice – only they are covered by your leagues insurance provider – otherwise you might be liable.
- Allow for frequent rest / water breaks, especially for very young children...they do not know when to “turn it off.”
- No roughhousing should be permitted.
- Carry a cell phone – know how to get a hold of parents
- Notify club President or Micro Coordinator of any serious injuries after notifying parents.

Practice Planning

Maintaining a positive, safe and productive learning environment is crucial for the development of the team. 5-7 year old kids just want to have fun. There will be children who are both physically and mentally more adept to the game of soccer and have developed a “knack” for the game quicker than others. The key is that everyone has **FUN!!!** Finding a balance between the children can be difficult. Plan practices that are “organized playtimes” where the kids can learn the skills that will teach them the game of soccer. The guidelines listed below are more applicable to U7 and U8 players since they will have organized practices. The U5’s and U6’s might just cover one aspect per meeting, however, at all times it must always be fun for the kids.

- Free Play (five minutes)
- Introduction
- Warm-up Activities
- Break
- Soccer Skill and Knowledge Activities
- Break

- Soccer Practice Match
- Cool Down

Player Discipline

Sometimes, as a coach, you will discover that children, ages 5-7 can get a little “wound-up.” It seems that no matter what you do, keeping the children focused and on-task is impossible.

Here are a few guidelines that should help you avoid discipline problems during practices:

- Keep players active and involved at all times.
- Have plenty of adults available to help supervise players.
- Be patient! Emphasize effort more than performance.
- Be positive! Tell players what they should do, instead of what they just did wrong.
- Be calm! Have fun with the children and show them that you like them.
- Make direct personal contact with each child during every practice.
- Try to avoid yelling at players from a distance. Whenever possible, go over and speak to them directly.
- If you do find it necessary to raise your voice, be sure it’s clear that you are yelling to them to be heard, not at them because you are angry.
- Get down on their level when addressing players. Sitting or kneeling with them is less intimidating, and will put them more at ease.

If preventative measures are unsuccessful and a problem does arise:

- Try to remain calm! Your anger will only make the situation worse.
- Never embarrass, criticize or otherwise demean a child. It is best to take them aside to discipline them.
- Avoid having to touch a player to restrain them or otherwise.
- Make it clear that it is a child’s actions that are “bad”, not the child.
- Any correction should be a logical consequence of their actions.
- Brief “time-outs” are the most effective correction for young children.
- Proper supervision must always be maintained, even during “time-outs.”
- Avoid running laps or calisthenics as corrections.
- Try to provide a means for the child to return to favor.
- Notify the child’s parents of any serious incident or persistent problem.

When discussing discipline problems with parents:

- Objectively describe what you have observed – don’t be judgmental.
- Elicit the parent’s help; try not to put them on the defensive.

- Since they know the child better than you, ask for their suggestions on how to deal with the situation before you give them advice.
- Try to establish a workable plan of action in case the problem reoccurs.

Parents

Almost every coach has encountered the overly competitive parent who tries to live vicariously through his or her six-year-old child. Parents can become extremely sensitive about their child's participation.

Here are a few suggestions that may help you deal with a concerned parent:

- Remember that you are discussing their child and the parent is likely to be hypersensitive when discussing such a tender subject.
- Be patient and listen objectively to their concerns, try not to be defensive or judgmental.
- Assigning blame for the problem is unproductive, discovering the cause is more relevant.
- Explain that you have heard and now understand their concerns.
- Remind them that you are all on the same team and want to do what is best for every child including theirs.
- You might want to swallow your pride a bit and admit that you may have been unaware of, or misjudged the situation. They will probably respect your candor.
- Ask the parent for their suggestions on how to deal with the situation in the future before you offer your recommendations.
- Be specific about your plan to remedy the situation and assure them that you will work with them to solve the problem.
- Keep the parent involved as to your progress toward resolving the problem and ask for their assessment as well.
- Always consult the club President or Micro Coordinator when dealing with a situation that you are uncomfortable with.

Elkhorn Soccer Club Micro Soccer

Age Appropriate Skills

Recommended Instruction

Source: Colorado Soccer Net

U5

Throw-in's – both feet on the ground, both hands on the ball
Dribbling (Basics) – with inside of foot, coming to a stop
Scoring Goals – the general concept
Trapping – stopping ball with inside of foot

U6

Goal Kicks / Corner Kicks – after ball has crossed end line
Throw-ins – with purpose, to a teammate, down field
Dribbling – with laces / introduction
Turning – inside of foot
Passing / Shooting – inside of foot

U7

Dribbling – using outside of foot
Turning – outside of foot
Turning – top of foot
Passing / Shooting – with laces
Drop Pass
Square Ball
Throw-ins – set plays

U8

Ball Delivery – one touch
Positional Responsibilities – strikers, defenders, keeper (1st year)

Tackling Techniques Shielding Trapping – Thigh & Chest Dribbling Under Pressure
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“Keeping It Fun”

Dr. Ronald Quinn, The Peak Performance

The following are simple soccer games for player development. Remember, Micro Soccer is **FUN!!!**

U5 & U6

1. Body Part Dribble

Organization: Each player with a ball

Structure: Random formation within a confined area

Procedures: Players dribble to keep control while avoiding touching others. While they dribble, coach calls out a body part; player immediately stops the ball with that body part. You can call “right elbow”, “chin”, “left knee”, etc. Can also play Simon Says. This drill promotes dribbling in a confined area, close control, changing direction, changing speed.

2. Math Dribble

Organization: Each Player with a ball

Structure: Random formation within a confined area.

Procedure: Same as Body Part Dribble except coach calls out a math problem. The players immediately solve the problem by forming the appropriately sized group. This activity organizes groups without asking players to choose a partner or counting off.

3. Shadow Dribbling

Organization: One ball for two people

Structure: Open area

Procedure: Player with the ball follows the player without the ball and attempts to stay within partners’ shadow. At the end of one minute the players switch roles.

4. Everybody's It

Organization: One ball per person

Structure: Random formation in a confined area.

Procedure: Each player dribbles within area attempting to tag anyone while maintaining control of the ball. Each time you tag someone, player receives point.

5. Cross Over

Organization: One ball for each player.

Structure: Circle formation.

Procedure: Players dribble around the circle. On the coach's signal, the players attempt to cross through the circle without touching each other. If group is large, have players count off by two. When the coach calls number one or two, players quickly turn and dribble across the circle without touching other players or their soccer balls.

6. Crows and Cranes

Organization: Two equal teams, one ball for every two players.

Structure: Two lines of players facing each other with an end line 20-30 yards away from each group.

Procedures: The coach stands at the end between the two lines. The balls are on a line between the two teams. The coach designates one team as the crows and one as the cranes. The coach then calls out "crows or cranes". The team whose name is called tries to pass or dribble the ball to hit the other team. The other team turns and runs / sprints toward their own end line. If they cross the end line without getting hit, they go back to the center for the next round. The players, who were hit, now join the other team and assume the new name. The game is played until all players are on one team. Who wins the game? EVERYBODY!!!

7. Zen Dribble

Organization: Groups of two with one ball per group.

Structure: Players holding hands with one player in possession of the ball.

Procedures: Player with the ball closes his eyes while his partner begins to walk them around the field. Player must keep eyes closed and dribble the ball while walking.

U7 & U8

1. Hospital Tag

Organization: One ball per person.

Structure: Random formation in a confined area.

Procedure: Same as Everybody's It, except each time a player is tagged; the spot touched is now injured. The player must hold that spot and continue dribbling. The second time they are touched, they hold that spot, but do not release the first spot. The third time they are touched, the player goes to a designated place (hospital) and now must do some minimum activity to get healed and rejoin the game. Example: 5-10 ball touches with feet.

2. Pac Man

Organization: Each player with a ball.

Structure: Confined area approximately 20 x 20 yards. Could use a larger space if numbers dictate.

Procedure: One player with ball, (Pac Man), all others run freely in area. Player with ball dribbles and attempts to hit the other players below the waist by passing the ball at them. Players try to avoid getting hit with the ball. Once a player is hit, he or she gets their ball and becomes the second Pac Man. Game continues until all players have been hit and have their ball.

3. Knockout

Organization: Each player with a ball.

Structure: Random formation within a confined area.

Procedure: This game is often played when teaching shielding. Each player dribbles under control and attempts to kick opponents ball away. Traditionally, when a player loses their ball they are knocked out of the game. This makes no sense if you are trying to develop soccer skills. The new approach says that when the players ball gets kicked away, give immediate chase. If they can get to the call before it stops, permit them to rejoin the game. If, however, their ball has stopped, give them anywhere from 4-10 alternating ball taps. After a few minutes, you may want to say there are 30 seconds left. If players ball is kicked out now, they must stay out. In this way, the most anyone stays out is 30 seconds.

4. Marbles

Organization: One ball per person with players in pairs.

Structure: Large open space for maximum opportunity to move.

Procedures: This is a passing game where players take turns trying to hit each others ball through passing. The exercise begins with one player playing his or her ball away 5-10 yards. The second player then attempts to pass his or her ball to hit their partners ball. For a hit, score one point. For a miss, the movement of the passed ball moves completely passed the other ball, that player's turn begins. They now try to hit their partner's ball. There is an advantage to immediately chasing your ball after passing so that in the event your partner misses you can be right there to strike your ball. There is also a fairness component; should a player score a point and their ball is now only inches away from the other one, the player restarts the game with a new pass away from the area.

5. Draw

Organization: One ball between two players.

Structure: Players are facing each other with the ball between at a distance of one step away. Both players stand with feet parallel so that a strait line is across their toes.

Procedures: On the signal "draw" from either the coach or players themselves, they try to be the first one to pull the ball back with the sole of

their foot. Players then repeat taking turns calling “draw.” Can also be used to start small-sided games or as a lead up to one v. one exercises.

6. Frantic Ball

Organization: Two groups with at least one ball for every two players.

Structure: Circle formation with one group acting as the boundary of the circle. They form the circle. The other group, each with a ball, at their feet is inside the circle.

Procedures: On the starting signal “Frantic Ball”, players in the circle begin passing their ball within the circle. However, players are only allowed to touch a ball once, then they must pass another ball. It is like team juggle where the team tries to keep all the balls rolling. The players on the outside act as a wall and are allowed to one-touch balls back into the circle. They try not to let any balls out of the circle. The coach is looking for balls that have stopped rolling inside the circle. Every time they see one, call out “Frantic 1” and so on until “Frantic 10”. Time to see how long it takes to get to ten. Then the groups switch roles.