



NYS ACADEMY PROGRAM

Coach Manual

Dear Coaches,

We would like to thank you for volunteering to coach a Naperville Youth Soccer Academy team! The next several weeks will be an incredibly rewarding experience for both you and your players. As you coach, please keep in mind that the Academy soccer program is based upon providing the opportunity for kids to learn new skills, socialize, be active and have fun. If at the end of the season you can say that every player had fun and possibly learned a little soccer, you have had a successful season!

Many of you are first time coaches and may or may not know anything about the game of soccer-and that's OK! This manual was developed to assist you with running your practices this season. Please note this is simply a guide; you are welcome and encouraged to bring your own ideas. The drills were designed with the age group in mind, but some variations may be needed based on the overall skill level of your team. Ultimately you will best know your team's needs and abilities.

This age group has a short attention span. Make sure to keep activities short, and pay attention to the behavior of the players. No one listening? Players starting to act up? Time to switch it up! Make sure to have a back-up plan for each practice. Red light, green light and relay races are great fall backs. At the end of each practice, have a quick debrief on what was learned during that session to help players retain the knowledge.

If at any point during your season you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your coordinator- we are here to help. Thank you again for your commitment to helping enrich the lives of our soccer participants, we could not run this program without you!

Sincerely,

Naperville Park District Soccer Staff

Week One

Main Skills: following directions, running, kicking the soccer ball

Bring participants and players together for introductions. Take attendance and give a quick introductions of the coaching staff and what you will be working on this season. Use the first practice to develop a “baseline” for your team’s skills and abilities.

Warm-Up:

The goal of warm-up is to get the participants’ bodies moving, ears listening, and “giggles” out. Static stretching is not recommended for this age group. Instead, incorporate dynamic movements such as those found in Appendix A.

Activity One: Red Light Green Light

Following Directions

1. Start with everyone along the starting line
2. When you say ‘Green Light’ everyone will move towards the finish line
3. When you say ‘Red Light’ everyone must immediately stop
4. Start a new round when everyone gets across the finish line or when most players make it across the finish line.

Activity Two: Kicking the ball

Allow participants the opportunity to “free play” with their ball. Let parents know the importance of this activity is to be able to get a starting point of each player’s abilities. Participants will also be eager to kick the ball, therefore this time will help to “get it out of their system”.

Activity Three: Correctly Practicing Kicking the Ball

1. Without a ball, practice “sweeping” the ground with participant’s dominant foot
 - a. Participant moves their leg back and forth, keeping balance on one leg
2. Once participants are able to get the sweeping motion, have them practice the sweeping motion with the ball, having the instep of their foot hit the ball

Activity Four: Mr. Fox

1. Mr. Fox starts out at one end of a field
2. The group at the other end yells out “Mr. Fox, Mr. Fox, What time is it?”
3. Mr. Fox calls out a time that is on the even hour (1 o’clock – 12 o’clock)
4. The group then takes that many steps
5. When the group gets to where the fox is, but not past him, and asks the time, the fox yells “Midnight!”
6. The fox turns and chases the group, who must run back to the end line
7. Those that he catches are recruited to be additional foxes

Modifications: Players can dribble a ball. Mr. Fox can have a ball, and kick the ball at the player’s feet to “tag” them.

Week Two

Main Skills: Following Directions, Taking Turns, Dribbling/Kicking

Warm-Up: Running Races

Taking turns, following directions

1. Pair players up and have them stand approximately 10 yards apart, with an adult
2. On “go” player one runs over to player two’s spot
3. During this time, encourage player two to “wait, and cheer on their team mate”
4. Once player one reaches player two, player two races to player one’s spot

Modifications: Players can skip, “run slow (baby steps)”, “run fast (big steps)” spin in circles, do high knees, or add a ball and dribble after they have mastered running and understand the activity.

Activity One: Kick the Cone

Dribbling/Kicking

1. Scatter cones throughout the penalty box area
2. Have participants kick the ball at the cones, trying to knock the cones over

Modifications: Participants can be stationary across from a cone, or dribbling around the area attempting to knock the cones over. If participants are unable to kick the ball at the cone, they can simply kick the cone over with their foot.

Activity Two: Ball Master

Dribbling/Following Directions

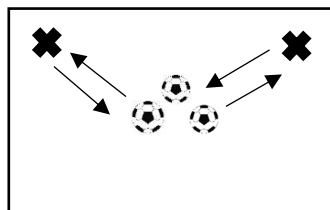
1. Players dribble to the coach and hand him/her the ball
2. The coach tosses away the ball and the players retrieve the ball and dribble it back to the coach

Modifications: Use all adults as coaches. If players are unable to dribble, have them pick-up the ball with their hands and tell them they are “goalies”.

Activity Three: Hungry, Hungry Hippos

Dribbling, Taking Turns, Following Directions

1. Divide group into teams of two
2. Spread each group out around the penalty box and place a cone for each team as their “home base”
3. Place a group of balls in the middle of all the groups
4. On “go” one player from each group runs to the middle, retrieves a ball, and dribbles back to their home base
5. Repeat until all balls are gone





Week Three

Main Skills: Shooting, Stopping

Warm-Up

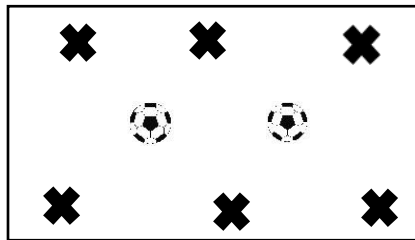
Shooting

1. Demonstrate the proper way for shooting the ball (striking the ball with the shoe laces of the shoe or instep)
2. Scatter the balls around half of the field
3. Have players run around to each ball, practicing striking the ball with their laces or instep

Activity One: Marbles

Accuracy Shooting

1. Divide group into two
2. Put each group in a horizontal line (each player 6 feet apart) facing the other group
3. Each player starts with a ball, put any extra balls in the middle
4. Players kick their ball, trying to hit the ball in the middle



Activity Two: Pack Man

Stopping, Field Awareness, Dribbling

1. Players stand spread-out on the goal box
2. On “go” players begin to walk/run around the box, staying on the line
3. On “switch” player turn and go the other direction
4. Once players understand the game, balls on the lines
5. When players get to a ball, they must place their foot on top of it before they can move on

Modifications: Place a “ghost” (coach) on the line, and have “packman” (players) try to catch the ghost by tagging them. A soccer ball can also be introduced at any point in the activity instead of just running/walking.

Activity Three: Cone Shooting

Shooting

1. Place players in pairs, standing 5-10 feet apart (based on kicking ability)
2. Create a “goal” by placing two cones 3 feet apart, in between both players
3. Have players practice kicking the balls through the cones to “score” a goal

Modification: Scatter the “goals” around the penalty box area and have the participants dribble and shoot through each goal.

Debrief: Discuss the parts of the foot you shoot with (laces, instep).

Week Four

Main Skill: Passing, Dribbling

Warm-Up

Pick an option from Appendix A, or a warm-up that was popular a previous week.

Activity One: Line Pass

Passing, Stopping

1. Line players up opposite each other in pairs
2. Players then kick the ball to the other player, passing back and forth
3. Have players focus on hitting the ball with the inside of their foot, and not the toe

Activity Two: Busy Bees

1. Have the players "BUZZ" around like a bunch of bees
2. Pretend to hear the bees and begin saying that you don't like bees
3. Have one of the assistant coaches kick you with the ball and yell "Ouch the bee stung me!" Be very dramatic and the kids will begin stinging you with their ball make sure you move around and stop frequently.

Activity Three: Tunnel Pass

1. Adults spread out around the field with their legs spread apart
2. Participant stands across from each adult and kicks the ball through their legs

Modification: Participants can dribble around the field, kicking the ball through any adult's legs.

Activity Four: Pirates of the Caribbean

1. To begin, get the kids excited about playing
2. Tell the players that this game is "...a fun game called pirates of the Caribbean. What noise do pirates make?"
3. Have the kids repeat an 'arghhh' noise.
4. Tell them that pirates love treasure and the treasure is down the other end of the island (field)
5. The kids will need to go one at a time and pick up **one** piece of treasure (cone/pinny) and bring it back to the pirate ship
6. Play the first round without soccer balls
7. Once they've understood the game, have them dribble a ball while they go get the treasure

Week Five

Main Skills: Dribbling, Ball Control, Defense

Warm-Up: Body Dribbling

Dribbling, Following Directions

1. Participants dribble the ball around a set area
2. While dribbling, coach yells out a body part (head, elbow, knee, etc)
3. Participants must stop, and place that body part on the ball

Activity One: Juggling

Ball Control

1. Each player has a ball
2. Practice juggling from the ball from the hands
 - a. Hold the ball in front of your body
 - b. Bring knees up one at a time to hit the ball
3. Once players are able to hit the ball while holding it, allow them to drop the ball, trying to hit it with their knee or foot.

Activity Two: Egg Hunt

Dribbling, Ball Control

1. Scatter the balls at the mid line of the field
2. Have the players line up along the end line of the opposite end
3. On "GO" they run and find their egg (ball), then dribble back and place the ball in their basket (cone)

Modifications: If participants are unable to dribble, they can grab the ball with their hands and carry it back to the cone. The "basket" can also be the goal, and participants must kick the ball in the goal after they've retrieved it.

Activity Three: Keep Away

Defending

1. Have each adult dribble a ball around the field, while their participant runs after them trying to kick the ball away
2. Switch, and have the participants try to keep the ball away from the adult

Week Six

Main Skills: Dribbling, Shooting, Understanding the Game of Soccer

Warm-Up

Choose an activity from Appendix A, or any popular warm-up from previous weeks.

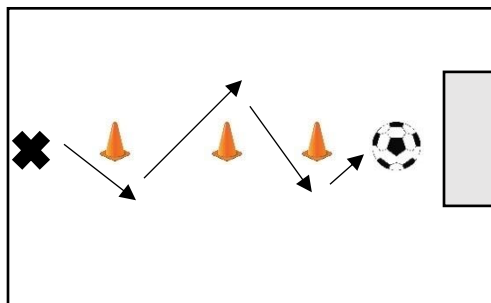
Activity One: Follow the Leader

1. The coach dribbles a ball and the players follow while dribbling their ball
2. The coach does both dribbling moves and goofy things for the children to mimic (chicken wings, sit on the ball, toe taps, etc.)

Modification: Have players start without the ball to understand the game, then introduce the ball later in the activity.

Activity Two: Zig Zag Shooting

1. Create several lines of cones approaching the goal, with a soccer ball stationed at the last cone
2. Split players in equal groups and line up in front of each cone
3. Player weave through the cones and kick the soccer ball into goal



Activity Three: Scrimmage

1. Split the team into two, pinnies and non-pinnies
2. Hang a pinny on the goal that the “pinny” team will be attacking
3. Explain to each team which goal they are trying to get their ball into
4. Use multiple soccer balls so that it isn’t 10 players on one
5. Let them play and figure it out!

Note: Be prepared for this to be chaos! The object here is for the players to have the opportunity to problem solve, and go through the motions of a soccer game. Provide simple instructions throughout such as “kick the ball that way”, “go get the ball”, “stay in the lines”. Do your best to not stop play at any time.

Week Seven

Last practice!

Pick activities that were “hits” thought the season, trying to incorporate all that was learned including dribbling, stopping, passing and shooting.

End the practice with a scrimmage of adults vs. players or find another team to partner with.

High Knees

1. Place both hands out in front of your body, palms facing the ground
2. Raise up one knee at a time and try to touch the corresponding hand

Heel Kicks

1. Place both hands down near your side, palms facing backwards
2. Bend your knee backwards, one at a time, and bring your foot to your hand

Jumping Jacks

1. Stand upright with your legs together and your arms at your side
2. Slightly bend your knees and jump from the balls of your feet
3. Spread your legs and bring your arms from your waist to over your head
4. Jump back to the starting position
5. Repeat the steps above

Mountain Climbers

1. Put yourself in a plank position with your body straight, glutes squeezed, and your abs pulled in. Your shoulders should line up with your hands, and weight should be put on your feet for complete balance
2. Bring one of your knees forward under your chest, and keep your foot just above the ground.
3. Keep your body in the plank by squeezing your abs tighter, and then return to the basic plank position
4. Switch to the other leg and pull that knee in. Straighten the leg you started with

Toe Taps

1. Players stand stationary with the ball
2. Raise one foot at a time and touch the top of the ball
3. As participants begin to understand the activity, add a hop in between touches

Resources

Warm-Ups

<https://www.mondaycampaigns.org/move-it-monday>

<http://competitorspot.com/soccer-warm-up-guide/>

Drills

<https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/lesson-plans/>

<http://www.freeyouthsoccerdrills.com/coaching-youth-soccer.html>