

Sporting Columbia U8 Rec Coaches Guide

Our Core Values

- **Respect** – Treat everyone with dignity, on and off the field
- **Community** – Build each other up
- **Growth Mindset** – Mistakes are part of learning
- **Teamwork** – Work together and support your teammates
- **Passion** – Love the game and play with joy

Our Recreational Philosophy

At U8, players begin to understand positional play, build confidence in small combinations, and enjoy more of the “real game” with goalkeepers and larger spaces. We want to foster creativity, effort, and decision-making without fear of mistakes.

What to Expect from U8 Players

Starting to understand space and basic positioning

Can begin learning roles like defender, midfielder, forward, and keeper

Enjoy competitive situations, but still need encouragement and praise

Developing coordination and physical literacy

Learning to communicate and pass more consistently

What to Work On

- Dribbling under pressure
- Simple passing and receiving techniques
- 1v1 attacking and defending
- Shooting technique and composure
- Introduction to team shape (spreading out, support angles)
- Basic goalkeeper rules and confidence-building

Player Expectations

- Be a great teammate: support, share, include
- Work hard and try new things
- Respect the coaches, referees, and the game
- Play with heart and joy — every day is a chance to improve

Parent Expectations

- Encourage players to think and make their own decisions
- Be supportive from the sidelines — avoid coaching
- Applaud sportsmanship, teamwork, and hustle
- Be positive about every player and every outcome
- Reinforce club values at home

Practice 1 (60–75 Minutes)

Warm-Up: Gates Dribbling (10 min)

Set up cone gates around the field. Players dribble through as many as they can in 1-minute rounds. Add turns and speed challenges.

1v1 Ladder (15 min)

Players rotate through 1v1 stations. Attackers try to score on small goals while defenders try to stop them. Keep games short and energetic.

Passing Pairs with Movement (10 min)

Players pass and move into space (give-and-go). Encourage communication and accuracy.

Shooting: Dribble & Finish (10 min)

Dribble around a cone and finish on goal. Add a passive defender or pressure if players are ready.

Small-Sided Games (15–20 min)

Play 4v4 or 5v5. Focus on spacing, passing, and supporting teammates.

Practice 2 (60–75 Minutes)

Warm-Up: Freeze Dribble (10 min)

Players dribble freely. Coach calls out “freeze,” and they stop the ball. Add turns, toe taps, and tricks for variety.

1v1 to Gates (15 min)

Set up cone gates as goals. Players try to dribble through them in 1v1 matchups. Rotate frequently.

Team Shape Game (10 min)

In groups of 4–5, players spread out and pass while maintaining a diamond or triangle shape. Introduce width and support.

Shooting Relay (10 min)

Players dribble and shoot from different spots. Emphasize toe down, ankle locked, eyes on the ball.

Scrimmage with Coaching Points (15–20 min)

Play 7v7 if numbers allow. Coach from the sideline — focus on shape and effort, not over-instruction.

Practice 3 (60–75 Minutes)

Warm-Up: Number Dribble Challenge (10 min)

Assign each player a number. Call numbers to race or perform turns. Encourages focus and listening.

2v2 Transition Game (15 min)

Set up two goals. When a team scores, they quickly transition to defend against the next pair. High energy and decision-making!

Passing Through the Zones (10 min)

Create 3 zones. Players must pass from one zone to the next, moving off the ball and using support players.

Shooting Under Pressure (10 min)

Add a defender or goalkeeper. Players learn to shoot quickly, avoid hesitation, and stay composed.

Scrimmage (15–20 min)

Let them play! Reinforce spacing, effort, and having fun together.

✅ *Coach Tip: Teach kids to recognize when to pass, when to dribble, and when to shoot — without telling them every time. Give them the tools, then let them play.*