



BPAA Soccer Coach Handbook

Summer 2021

Welcome to BPAA Soccer Season 2021 and THANK YOU for coaching this year!

BPAA Soccer coaches are an important part of the success of the soccer organization. Being a positive role model and by doing what is best for the players is something we take pride in. We want the players to have a good platform to express their love of the game. We want coaches to have a love of creating a positive environment for all these young players to play the game. We look forward to having you onboard to take these young players on a fun soccer journey this year.

BPAA Soccer Website – Soccer Page.

On the “Coaches Corner” page of the website there will be links to session plans for your practices and also how to set up your players for games.

Role Model

As a role model, the coach needs to be aware that players will look up to you and are influenced by your behavior. This pertains to all behaviors done in a player's presence. Players will observe your language, treatment of your peers, their peers, officials and parents. Players learn by watching.

Teacher of Soccer

Teaching requires the coach to know who they are teaching, what they are teaching, and methods to teach. The U6 -U16 Soccer Coach needs to narrow their focus to ten topics. Five of these topics are technical and five are tactical.

Technical Skills to be developed:

Ball Mastery, Dribbling, Passing, Controlling, Shooting, Building confidence with the ball and playing small, sided games.

Tactics to be developed:

Transition, Spatial Awareness, Risk Taking/No Fear of Failure, Directional Possession and Team Shape/Connection. Each player must be introduced to all of these topics and have time on task to improve in all tactical areas of the game. As the players move up in age, these topics will form the building blocks of player development.

Facilitator of Fun

Players participate in sports to have fun. The game of soccer is the most popular youth sport in the world because it offers young players of all ability's excitement. The coach needs to be enthusiastic and conduct all activities in the spirit of enjoyment. Each training session needs to have the game as the largest portion of the session as this is the reason player's play.

NO Lines, No Laps, No Lectures

The three "L's" in coaching will only disrupt your coaching session. So, to stay away from them and keep the players busy would be a path to success. While players are in **Lines** they are not on task and behavioral things can happen. Try to eliminate by having multiple groups. **Laps** may develop fitness but at the expense of time with the ball. Eliminate laps by using activities in the warmup and throughout the training session that require movement. **Lectures** bore players. These players were lectured in school and have come to training to play. Eliminate lectures by limiting yourself to giving 20-30 seconds of information at a time. (Snippets of Soccer Information)

Development vs. Winning

The emphasis must be on player enjoyment and player learning. Winning cannot sacrifice player development. Coaches must create an environment that allows for experimentation. U7 -U16 players will not get every, or even most situations correctly. We need to allow for players to learn through trial and error. A guided discovery approach allows for players to enjoy their soccer and learning experience. The most important factor in player development is the use of age-appropriate activities and teaching methods. The characteristics of the age group needs to be understood and all activities used with players must adhere to the characteristics of the age group.

Coaching a Training Session

Each practice session needs to meet two objectives that lead to player development. The first goal is to make the session enjoyable. When players enjoy their soccer practice, they look forward to coming back, are more likely to practice on their own. The second goal of the practice session is to challenge the players to become better. Your goal is to make every practice session a model session.

Equipment

In order to run a model session, the coach will need at least 10 cones, Pinnies, and some extra soccer balls. The coach will also need to have a pump and medical kit. Players need to bring an appropriate size soccer ball depending on their age. Use the pump to make sure all balls are inflated properly. BPAA Soccer uses only size 4 and size 5 balls (U6-U11 - Size 4 Ball / U12-U18 - Size 5 Bal).

Play – Practice – Play

This is set up, so the players have a great chance to play the game as most of the practice sessions. Play = Play small, sided games. Practice = Take a certain part of the game out like, passing, dribbling, shooting and do some skills. Then play again and see how the skills are transferred from a skills environment to a game environment.

Individual Activities - Individual activities allow for repetition as every player has plenty of time with the ball. These activities need to be structured so that players are moving and making decisions. Opposition does not need to be present.

Small Group Activities - These activities include opposition. The groups do not need to be even. 2v1, 3v2 and 1v3 are three examples of small group activities.

The Game - Starting and ending each practice session with a soccer game is vital to the players development. The game needs to be the largest part of the practice session and can be as much as half of the training time. The game is the best teacher and players come to training to play. Again, teams do not need to be even. Coaches are also encouraged to vary the size of the field and use conditions to challenge the players.

Recognizing Coaching Moments

Coaches that do not find opportunities to give feedback to their players are leaving all learning up to trial and error. Your ability to recognize coaching moments gives players a shortcut to learning. It is important to note that the best coaches recognize that players can not only learn from corrections but also learn from good examples. Make corrections but also highlight positive play. Pick a good coaching position to allow you to see your entire team. Coaches that position themselves with their back to players cannot evaluate the entire team. Once your position has been established give the players some time to acclimate to the activity. Use this time to recognize patterns that can be corrected or publicized. After a few moments have passed, you can begin to act on coaching moments. Catch the players doing something right and praise it!

Coaching During Natural Stoppages

Natural stoppages occur throughout a practice. Every time players switch roles, the ball goes out of play, and a goal is scored a natural stoppage occurs. You can use this time to give the players information. Coaching the Individual- Every player can be given information during the activity. You as a coach can enter the field during practices and give specific information to players that pertain to their play. Timing is important as this tool disrupts the play for the individual player.

Stop/Freeze Coaching Method

This tool is most often used in the small group and game portion of the practice. The coach projects his/her voice with the command stop and freeze. Once the players have frozen the coach shows the players the coaching moment. Players must be trained to stop and freeze as their attention is on the soccer activity. Once the information has been given the play can be rehearsed to check and see if the players gained the information.

Terms to use for soccer

Push up - Move towards the goal your team is attacking

Drop - Move towards the goal your team is defending

Shift - Move across the field closer to the ball

Dribble - Advance the ball with short kicks

Goal Side - Positioning body between the opponent and goal your team is defending

Recover - Get back in a position to help your team gain possession of the ball.

Each player needs to be introduced to the terms and concepts. We do not expect all players to understand or master the terms, but by introducing the concepts with common terminology the player will be more prepared to learn in future soccer seasons.

Technical

Technical is the player's own individual technique and is defined as the ability to manipulate the ball. The U5-U8 soccer player will not master the ability to manipulate the ball but must be introduced to five technical topics so that their ability begins to progress. These technical topics include, dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting, and shots.

Dribbling

Dribbling is the most important technique for U7 and U8 soccer players. Every player needs to spend plenty of time on dribbling. Players at this age are selfish and are not as open to passing the ball to teammates as they will be later. Do not attempt to change this, instead embrace their selfishness and show them ways to keep the ball.

Keys to Dribbling:

Change Direction- The foot can be compared to a steering wheel. When kicking the middle of the ball with the shoelaces the ball will go straight. When kicking the side of the ball with the inside and outside of the foot the ball goes to the side. The bottom of the foot can be used to change directions as well. Encourage players to use different parts of the foot. They can be challenged to repeat patterns and make up their own patterns. Change Speed- Players need to be encouraged to change speeds. Changing speeds creates problems for opponents that must adjust to the change in rhythm. The bottom of the foot can be used to stop the ball. Players also need to be aware that every time they change direction, they should increase their speed. Refer to this as 'get away speed'. The use of opposite feet can be used to get players to change speeds. Stop/Go and slow/fast are good examples of opposites that can be used. Body Position- Players can be shown that keeping the body between the ball and opponent helps in maintaining possession. Players will need some spatial awareness to master the use of their body to protect the ball. Spatial Awareness is addressed under tactics.

Passing

The concept of passing the ball to a teammate needs to be introduced. Players can pass the ball with their shoelaces and outside of the foot while in natural running motion. These are the two types of passes coaches can highlight to the remainder of the team when a good example is found. The inside of the foot pass is not natural to the young soccer player and will be introduced at a larger stage in their development.

Keys to Passing

Accuracy - An accurate pass can go to either a teammate's feet or to space the teammate is moving into. Accuracy comes from the point the ball is struck with and the follow through, allows for deception.

Receiving - Receiving needs to be seen as a means to an end and not an end in itself. That is to say receiving the ball is done to get the ball under control so that the ball can be passed, dribble, or shot.

It is also noted that receiving is the #1 reason why possession is lost in the game. Players that have a poor first touch never get the opportunity to dribble, pass, or shoot the ball.

Pace

The pace of the ball needs to allow for the ball to get to the intended target quickly but not too fast that the player receiving the ball cannot get the ball under control. Deception Trickery in passing needs to be encouraged. Passing in natural running motion.

Shooting

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Keys to Shooting

LOW: Players need to understand that shooting the ball low eliminates one way of missing. The ball cannot be shot too low. It is also difficult for the goalkeeper to get their hands down to stop a ball lower than the knees. Early: Time is at a premium around the goal area. Players that are looking for the perfect shot will not find it as the ball will be lost. Players need to shoot a moving ball often while they are not balanced.

ON TARGET: Shots on target have a chance to go in. Shots off target have no chance to go in. Goalkeeping error and deflections are some of the reasons why goals are scored.

Shot Stopping

This is the only part of goalkeeping you need to introduce to your players. It is not recommended much time is spent on the position of goalkeeping as the addition of a goalkeeper to the games is done to improve a player's ability to score goals against an opponent as an alternative to passing the ball into an open goal. As BPAA Soccer encourages all players to play in goal throughout the season, it is a good idea to have one practice geared towards shot stopping.

Keys to Shot Stopping: Alignment - Players need to not only get their hands in the path of the ball but need to get their entire body in the path of the ball whether the ball is in the air or on the ground. Soft Hands - Players need to relax their hands when attempting to catch the ball.

Tactics

Tactics are defined as decisions players make. For the U7 and U8 age group coaches need to build a foundation that allows players to use their technical abilities while setting up the players to be ready to progress to older levels. Not all players will master the topics, but by introducing the players to these concepts we are planting seeds that will eventually grow. The tactics that need to be introduced at the U8 and U9 age group are spatial awareness, transition, splitting, team shape, risk taking, and possession with a purpose.

Spatial Awareness

While watching a high-level soccer game we sometimes notice a player looking over their shoulder before they receive the ball. This player is trying to gain information to allow him/her to make a good decision in regard to playing the ball. Checking while the ball is almost in possession is late. The player needs to be aware of the space around him/her prior to the ball being played. **Scanning** the field needs to be a constant at the highest level throughout the entire game. The requirements of the top-level show that the best players have the ability to scan the entire field. When players are aware of their position on the field relative to the ball, opposition, teammates, and the goal they have all of the information in hand to put themselves in a position to help their team.

Coaching with conditions: Activity or game has an objective, but players are required to meet the demands of an additional rule within the game or activity. When using conditions at the U8 group it is important to note that not all players will be able to meet the demands of the additional rule. Do not make unrealistic demands of players that are not able to play by with the conditions. Find positive coaching moments that can highlight players that have been able to meet the conditions and point out the benefit they received by being able to recognize the space around them.

Directional Possession

Possession in soccer comes in two varieties. The first variety is for a team to keep the ball while gaining territory in an effort to create a scoring opportunity. The second variety can be divided into two categories both of which should lead to the variety to gain territory in an effort to create a scoring opportunity. These two categories include passing the ball for the sole purpose of relieving pressure and passing the ball because a forward option is deemed too risky and the player receiving this pass will have a better chance to play a forward ball. With this in mind, coaches must avoid having their team possess the ball for the sole purpose of possessing the ball. The best way a coach can avoid possession for the sake of possession is to put players in activities that have a direction to attack and a direction to defend. Reasons for directional possession include:

Transition

The game of soccer has been divided into attacking and defending by many coaches. Coaches can use a variety of coaching methods to introduce transition into existing activities in an effort to include the transition state. When transition is incorporated into an activity is more game like and players develop transition qualities in a habitual manner.

Coaching in a Game

Coaching during the league games is the most difficult challenge you will face. Your expectation combined with parent and player expectations often conflict with the developmental approach that is needed for players to thrive and play in a risk-free environment. Many of the issues addressed in the Problems of Youth Coaching section are found in game coaching. Over coaching is a major problem. The game of soccer is different from most American sports in the fact that the role of the coach is extremely limited. You will not have time to call plays and do not have the option of calling a time out. Soccer is a game for the players. The players need to be able to play in the game without directions on the decisions they face. Do not tell the player to pass, dribble or shoot. By the time they have received the information the situation has changed. As a general rule, coach within your personality.

Restarts

Prior to the first game you will need to rehearse restarts. Restarts occur every time the ball goes out of play and when the referee blows the whistle to make a call. You need to encourage your players to get the ball back into play as quickly as possible.

Restarts are Kick offs, Throw Inns, Corners Kicks, Goal Kicks. Instruct the player closest to the ball when the restart occurs to get the ball back into play immediately. For Example, show the players the correct method of throwing the ball back into play. A throw in occurs every time the ball goes over a sideline. The ball is always kicked back into play when it goes over an end line. When the attacking team plays the ball over an end line a goal kick is taken by the defending team from inside the goal box. When the defensive team plays the ball over the end line a corner kick is taken by the attacking team from the corner of the side the ball.

Pre-Game Warm-Up

The purpose of the warm-up is to prepare the players physically and mentally for the game. It is not advisable to have your players stand in line waiting to take a shot during the warmup. The demands of the game are that players are moving while the ball is in play. Standing does not prepare the players for the match. A proper warm-p puts the player in situations similar to the game. You can use directional possession games or even a small, sided game.

During Play

Be calm, respect the referee, and measure your words. Each player must play half of each game, and you should prepare a substitution pattern before the game. This pattern may have to be adjusted for players that you planned on attending that failed to show. It is appropriate to give players information on improving their play when they come off the field, but keep in mind they may have a short memory and might not be able to relate to the specific situation you refer to. This brief conversation can establish a good relationship between player and coach when the information is positive in nature.

Halftime

Make sure all the players have time to get a drink. Ask the players their thoughts on the game. The first few times these questions are asked you will not receive much feedback, but as the season progresses the players will get better at communicating their thoughts. It is also a good idea to ask specific questions to help in the dialog. Limit your feedback to one or two areas that can be improved and be sure to always be positive.

Post-Game

Focus on the process and not the result. Give your team a positive greeting after the game regardless of the outcome. Focus on positives and areas the team can improve upon. Keep the "team talk" brief as the children have a short attention span to listen at the end of the game.

BPAA Coaching Professionalism

BPAA believes that there are seven vital ingredients for the success of each soccer coach.

Preparation

Coaches should be prepared for practices with their very own lesson plan. Be planned for games with your lineup. This will demonstrate a high quality of team coaching. Prepare to plan or Plan to fail.

Punctuality

Coaches arrive 15-20 minutes before practices and 30 minutes before games. This will give adequate time for the coach to warm up the players and to get them physically and mentally ready. The players need to be properly advised on the game and the coach turning up late, shows that there is a lack of professionalism.

Enthusiasm

Every soccer coach is a highly motivated individual, selected because of their genuine love of coaching soccer. Enthusiasm comes easy when you love the subject.

Appearance

All coaches are required to wear appropriate coaching apparel and be in a neutral color so they can be seen amongst the players. Coaches are expected to have clean equipment for practices and games and provide soccer balls for players.

Positive/Constructive Instruction

Like all sports, soccer players encounter mistakes and errors, therefore, it is imperative those players are encouraged and not discouraged. Mistakes, if learned from and understood, are an important part of a player's development. Players need to be confident and not risk isolated criticism in order to continue learning enjoyment and self- belief.

Role Models

Coaches provide players with an example of respect, and manners that the coach wants the players to carry all season long. Coaches should strive to recognize and accept the responsibility of being positive role models for youth soccer players in Minnesota.

The Big Picture

Coaches should accept that in reality they will probably not coach a player that will make a living from the game. But it is imperative that the Coaching Staff emphasize the importance of moral/social values which are used in adult life.