



DSYSA-DS Stars

Soccer Coaching Booklet

U4-U8

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## **1. Welcome to Coaching.**

DSYSA is delighted that you have decided to become a coach this season.

With in this manual there is basic information required to coach youth soccer in an easy to follow format. This format will help you design your own philosophy to coaching soccer. This manual represents the Philosophy of United States Youth Soccer and Dynamo Juniors of Central Texas.

The Manual is a guide to Coach the U4-U8 player at DSYSA.

- Remember  
Soccer is FUN and Kids want to have FUN!!!!!!!

GOOD LUCK, ENJOY COACHING, HAVE FUN

## **2. Coaching Philosophy**

Create an environment of development as child athletes, in the world's most popular sport.

To provide a situation, which imparts appropriate athletic skills, improving self-esteem. Through guidance and Support, with age appropriate coaching, promotion of self-learning with a love of the game of soccer.

## **3. Your Coaching Philosophy**

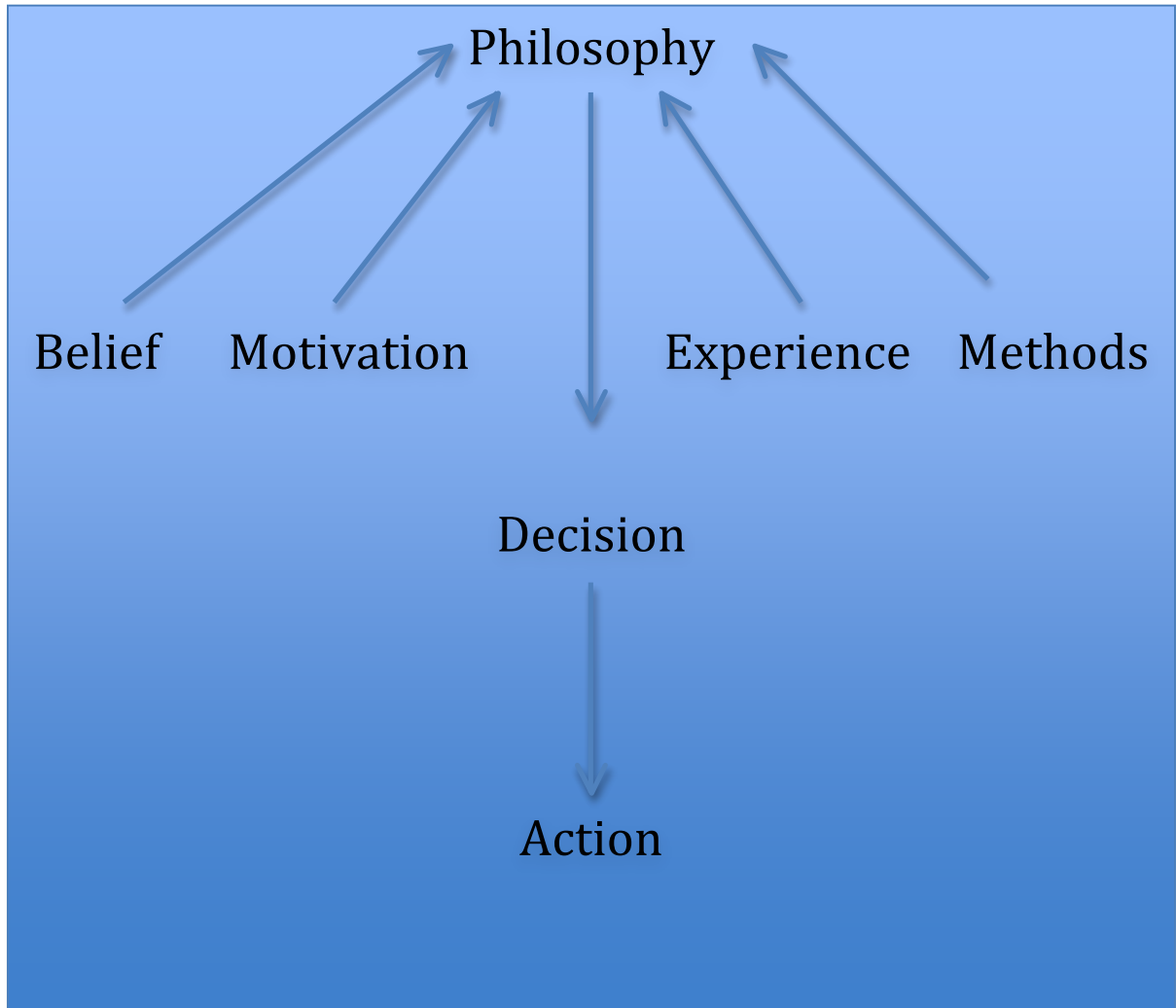
"I am a Responsible Coach, which means..."

Here are some examples of ways to end that sentence:

- [endif]"...our season is about more than wins and losses; it's about

- learning and improving on our skills in every practice and game and adding new skills all the time."
- "...it's important to me that we all are safe, so please check all of your equipment to make sure it's in good working order."
  - [endif] "...we are going to Honor the Game today, so I'd like to see each one of you shake the official's hand when the game is over."
  - "...I also want you to learn life lessons from our sport; as we learned from our last game, we can overcome major obstacles, including bouncing back from mistakes in the first period, as long we persist and believe in ourselves, and that is true for most anything you try to accomplish in school, your jobs or any other aspect of your lives."

[usyouthsoccer.com](http://usyouthsoccer.com)



“Coaching decisions are based on your philosophy. Your philosophy is based on your beliefs, motivation’s, experiences and methods.”

You must have a clear-cut idea of what you want to achieve as a coach. This need is basically your personal philosophy of coaching. You must decide what’s important and then use your attributes to achieve these goals. Consider ideas like:

Winning vs. Losing

Teaching the skills, even though you are likely to lose games to teams that rely on playing physically. The skilled players will be better in the long run.

Total development vs. single position improvement

Relation of parents and spectators to players, referees and opponents.

Playing Soccer vs. "Kick and Run".

Development of all players on your team.

These ideas and many more will be part of your philosophy. As you form these ideas you must have the ability to communicate them to everyone involved with your team (players and parents alike).w

Any coaching action you take is preceded by a certain decision. Any decision you make is based on your philosophy. A person's philosophy encompasses personal beliefs, motivation, experience and methods.

To develop your own personal coaching philosophy completes the questions within this framework. It will provide you a philosophical foundation as well as act as a sounding board before, during and after the season.

Coaching is a profession and an ongoing process. This is the beginning of that process which will carry through a successful coaching career.ww

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wTom Fleck, Ed.D. and John Cossaboon; Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer (Frisco, TX : US Youth Soccer, revised edition 2002), p. 33

ww Ron Quinn, Ed.D.; The Peak Performance – soccer games for player development (Cincinnati, OH: QSM Consultants, 1990), pp. 7-9; (out of print, please refer to *The Baffled Parents Guide to Great Soccer Drills*, by Ron Quinn and Tom Fleck, 2002, McGraw-Hill, pub.).

## 4. Coaching Philosophy Questionnaire

### Questionnaire

#### 1. Beliefs

1. Why do you want to be a youth coach?
2. Why do we have youth soccer?
3. What are your responsibilities? To each player, to the team, to yourself and to the community?
4. Define a successful season?

#### 2. Motivation

1. I am interested in coaching because...
2. What do you enjoy most about coaching?
3. What do you like least about coaching?

#### 3. Experiences

1. PAST – what were your personal childhood experiences in soccer? Was it enriching or inhibiting?
2. PRESENT: Self Evaluation – What are you doing now?
3. FUTURE – What experiences will I seek to improve my coaching?

#### 4. Methods

1. What is my coaching style?
2. At what point will I involve the players in the decision making process? Pre-, During, Post-Practice?

## 5. Design a Soccer Practice.

“FAILING TO PLAN IS PLANNING TO FAIL”

To get the most out of your session, the coach must be prepared. Thinking and writing are inextricably bound together-“think it and ink it”.

WRITE OUT YOUR SOCCER PRACTICE PLAN EVERY TIME.

U4-U10-30-45 min Session

- i. Have a plan, a curriculum, for what you want to cover in the season.
- ii. Lesson plan for every session.

- Warm-up. 5-10mins.

A Fun Activity or game, which is related to the topic of the session, prepares the body and the mind for the soccer practice. The warm-up must set the tone for the rest of the practice.

- Technical Activity. 5-10mins

Technical demonstration of skill, keep it simple, no pressure, learning at own speed.

- Fun Game Activity. 10-15min.

U5-U6 fun games with pressure, to create a challenging environment for the player to learn in. Coach or parents can be the pressure.

- Controlled Scrimmage. 10-15mins.

Play the game they play on a Saturday 3v3 U4-U6. Conditions if you want but make sure the kids know the boundaries of the field and which goal they are defending and which they need to score in. Stop the

game at the appropriate time. Deliver the coaching points at the stoppage.

“Water breaks are critical”

Take a break in-between each change in the soccer practice.

Warm-up/Water break/Technical/Water break/Fun Game  
Activity/Water break/Controlled Scrimmage.

## **6. Coaching the Age Group.**

Youth soccer coaches need to bear in mind the physical and mental age of their players when planning their training sessions.

This might seem like stating the obvious but many coaches experience discipline problems simply because their plans are too ambitious or too easy for their players.

Also, some coaches expect their players to master skills or techniques that they are simply not capable of at their age. Coaches whose players are aged up to six or seven years old should also bear in mind that young children are very egocentric; they see the world only from their perspective. As a result, they are not going to want to pass the ball to their teammates.

So.... when designing practices coaches need to take into consideration the age characteristics of their players. Activities should be picked that fit the developmental needs of the children, rather than trying to make the children participate in activities that are developmentally inappropriate for them.

Principles of Youth Coaching.

- i. Developmentally Appropriate Activities
- ii. Clear, Concise, and Correct Information  
Brevity-Clarity-Relevance.
- iii. Simple to Complex
- iv. Safe and appropriate practice Area.
- v. Decision making by the Players.
- vi. Implications of the Game.

## Drills vs. Game Activities.

Drills: Static, Military, Lines, Boring, No thought, Age Inappropriate.

Game Activities: Dynamic, Organized but unstructured, Free Movement, Decision Making, Age Appropriate.

What do I coach all season?

Season Structure should be as US Youth Soccer advises for the U4-U10 Player.

### Technical Aspects

1. Playing the ball (KICKING THE BALL)
2. Dribbling.

### Tactical Aspects.

1. Defend which Goal.
2. Attack which Goal.

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I will Remember. Involve me and I learn”.

Benjamin Franklin

## 7. Coaching Without Playing Experience

One major problem that typically faces the volunteer Coach of today is the lack of an extensive playing background. Most individuals who are beginner Coaches, feel that the absence of playing experience is a severe handicap when coaching a team. They often feel inadequate to handle the job at hand. The lack of playing experience is a liability when related to the coaching of highly competitive, mature players. In relation to young players (U10, U8, U6 & U4), however, a playing background is not a necessity.

A key to being a successful (and I don't mean winning) youth soccer Coach, is to draw upon your experience. If you grew up playing sports of any kind, you possess some knowledge of good and bad coaching techniques.

### **DON'T:**

- Become frustrated,
- Yell and intimidate,
- Be afraid to adjust your training activities if the children are not enjoying them.

### **DO:**

- Keep players active with a ball,
- Vary the activities based on attention span,
- Enjoy yourself,
- Spread positive reinforcement to all players, not just the stars.

Do not place yourself above your players or you will never be approached for assistance. Be organized, but be aware of the problem related to over-organization, (i.e. boredom). We must understand that every child has needs, which become apparent over a period of time during practice. The needs range from attention to the development of self-confidence. They include love, discipline, the desire to improve, friendship, etc. Try to determine each child's need, and then attempt to fill at least part of it. Your discipline problems will be greatly reduced as these needs are taken care of.

The area of childrearing sheds a lot of light on proper youth coaching. Many of the general techniques used in guiding children into adulthood can be used successfully. Use what worked for you in this area and lose what did not work.

To get the most out of your soccer experience, utilize all of your assets. The characteristics that make you a success in relationships in business or with people are all useful.

If you are going to put some time into the development of young soccer players, you are also going to have to put some time into developing yourself. You will have to gain insight into teaching methods, dealing with children, coaching developments, etc. The following are some suggestions:

**Attend Coaching Clinics:**

**Read Soccer Books:**

**Watch Higher Levels of Play:**

**Ask and Take Advice of Experienced Coaches:**

Finally, and this may be the most important concept to grasp as a novice Coach, improve at what we practice. This is not a profound statement, but it is fact. Therefore, let's all accept that the game itself is the best teacher of all and when we rehearse the game in a fun filled environment, we will improve. This is where the love of the game begins. As they approach maturity, they have all of the tools necessary to go on to higher levels of play. In the back streets, these young players do not learn about positions, restarts, and systems, they learn about dribbling, shooting, passing, and Fun! Give these children the game, and you will be a fine Coach.

## 8. Do's and Don'ts For Parents

1. Stay in spectator area during games
2. Do Not advise coach on how to coach
3. Do Not coach your child or other players from the sidelines during games or practice
4. Do Not make derogatory remarks to officials, coaches, players, or opposition
5. Cheers for both teams
6. Provide positive feedback to the players at all times
7. Control your emotions
8. Thank coaches, officials and volunteers who conduct events

Are you asking the right questions?

When your child returns home from a soccer game what is the **first** question you ask them about the game?

If you have ever asked, what was the score today Johnny? Or, Did you win Johnny? Then you are asking the WRONG questions.

The first question when a child tells you they have been playing soccer should always be.

Did you have FUN today?

Followed by...

What did you do?

What did you learn?

Can you show me?

Can you tell me about it?

## **9. Guidelines to Being A 'Soccer Mon/Dad'**

1. In competition, someone always has to lose. If you win do it gracefully, not boastfully. If you lose do not allow yourselves or your children to become negative.
2. Too much competition and too many expectations at an early age will slow your child's progression down.
3. Make fun and development of technique your first priority and keep it simple.
4. Be available to help your teams coach in any way, they will need your support. Make yourself available as a volunteer whenever possible.
5. Disagreements with coaches and officials do NOT belong on the soccer field. Questions, input, feedback, and opinions can all be voiced through the associations' representatives or the Director of Coaching. Never in front of the players!
6. Remember why you are here!

## **10. WHAT SHOULD I COACH !!!!!**

### **U4-U6:** Initial Phase

- Dribbling
- Turning
- Direction of play (Which Goal do I Score in?)

## **TYPICAL U4/U6 TRAINING SESSION**

- Should not exceed 60 minutes
- Focus on not more than two topics per practice
- Warm up, every child should have a ball, stretching and soccerastics (approx. 20 minutes.).
- Every child should be involved in all activities.
- Game activities, mostly of body awareness type along with some maze games (20 min).
- Finish with 3v3 game to small goals, no Goalkeepers (20 min).
- Note: De-emphasize tactics and fitness training at this age  
**!!!! ALL LEARNING THROUGH FUN GAMES !!!!!**

All have a ball Dribbling (Head-up, Ball Close, Good Touches, Using Both Feet)

### Types of Activities

1. Body Parts (you name a body part the kids touch the ball with that body part.)
2. Red light/ Green Light
3. Fall Down/ Get up (when you blow you whistle or say fall down they fall over and then have to pop up quickly and run to a predetermined area with out a ball with a ball)
4. Sharks and Minnows (Classic game)
5. Dribbling through Gates.
6. Follow the leader

**THERE ARE MANY MORE FUN GAMES OUT THERE**

U7-U8:

**“Partner and the ball”**

- Dribbling
- Passing
- Receiving
- Shooting

1. **TYPICAL U7/U8 TRAINING SESSION**

2. Should not exceed 60 minutes
3. Warm up; every child should have a ball, stretching and soccerastics (approx. 15 min.).
4. Introduce partner activities with balls.
5. A mixture of individual and partner activities. Add more maze-type games; introduce target games (25 min.).
6. Conclude with small-sided game 4v4 to two goals, no GK's (20 min.).
7. Note: De-emphasize tactics and fitness training at this age

ALL LEARNING THROUGH GAMES/ACTIVITIES NO DRILLS STILL

1. NUTMEG
2. FREZE TAG
3. JAIL BREAK
4. MULTI GOAL GAME
5. OPEN THE GATE
6. MOVING GOALS-THREAD THE NEEDLE
7. HANDBALL
8. COWBOYS AND INDIANS
9. ENDLINE
10. CLEAN YOUR ROOM
11. ENDZONE GAME
12. TEAM BATTLESHIP
13. ISLAND TO ISLAND