

Madison Area Youth Soccer Association Age Groups Curriculum: Developing Players Within the Team Concept

Age Group	Technical/Skill Emphasis	Tactical Considerations	Psychological Emphasis	Physical Considerations
U5/6 – 3v3 no GK, 20x30 field, sz 3 ball, 45-60 min trainings, 30-45 min games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dribble with all sides of both feet ● Dribble out of trouble & with head-up ● Dribble past someone ● Soft first touch <p><u>At practice, ensure that there is one ball (properly inflated) per player</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoid tactical considerations at this age ● No emphasis on positions ● Limited instruction on rules – just get them going in the right direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>FUN! FUN! FUN!</u> ● Exciting & positive intro to the game. Use parents to help ● No emphasis on winning ● Encourage trying over performing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay active! Any fitness should be as a result of playing the game ● Fun, interactive activities which incorporate a ball will improve balance & agility ● Approx 8-15 games per year
U7/8 – 4v4 no GK, 25x40, sz 3 ball, 45-60 min trainings, 40-50 min games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue with U6 foci ● Shielding ● Introduce proper shooting technique ● Introduce passing ● Encourage players to, on their own, juggle a soccer ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic attacking & defending principles ● No emphasis on positions ● Rules of the game should not take over the game ● Take restarts quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>FUN! FUN! FUN!</u> ● No emphasis on winning ● Acknowledgement & respect for coaches, teammates & officials ● Limit travel & <u>no tournies</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Players in this age group are naturally active – encourage that ● Soccer-related activities which incorporate the element of competition will improve balance & agility ● Approx 15-20 games per year
U9/10 – 7v7 with GK, 45x60 field, sz 4 ball, 60-75 min trainings, 50 min games <u>Coach guided</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue with foci from U8 ● Passing with inside & outside of both feet ● Shooting with both feet; using laces ● Receiving the ball with all parts of body ● Turning with the ball ● No heading per US Soccer ● Players should have a goal of juggling ball 10-20 touches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic attacking & defending principles ● Comprehend 1v1, 2v1 & 2v2 concepts ● Comprehend roles of 1st and 2nd defenders ● Comprehend roles of 1st and 2nd attackers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balance <u>competitive</u> with <u>cooperative</u> ● Differentiation between Boys & Girls may become more obvious ● Encourage teamwork ● “Courage” & not being afraid of the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changes of direction & pace ● Coordination & balance while running ● Short sprints with & without the ball ● Incorporate dynamic stretching ● Approx 20 games per year ● Soccer festivals are preferred over tournaments <p><u>Encourage sound nutritional choices</u></p>
U11/12 – 9v9 with GK, 50x80 field, sz 4 ball, 75-90 min trainings, 60 min games <u>The ‘Golden Age’ of Learning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue with all U-10 foci ● Speed Dribbling in Traffic ● Ability to chip the ball ● Accurately play long passes ● Introduce offensive/defensive heading ● Power/accuracy shooting <p>Dribbling to beat an opponent Intro to GK training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage experimentation with the ball ● Juggling – 30-50 touches <p><u>Simple techniques must be executed perfectly!</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication – verbal & visual ● Angles & distance of support ● Receiving the ball away from pressure ● Combination play ● How and when to switch the point of attack ● Pressure vs containing ● Proper 2v2 roles ● Introduction to on-field roles rather than positions ● Possession with a purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage players to practice on their own & amongst peers ● Encourage players to see & experience higher-level play (i.e., college or pro) ● Okay to start to instill a sense of discipline & commitment to the game ● Quality of performance should be more important than results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage & facilitate stretching ● Anticipate the movement of the ball & reading the flight of a ball while in the air ● Approx 30 games per year ● Tournaments present a risk of burnout. They are okay but emphasize equal play for all players, limit travel distance & look for quality in matches rather than quantity of matches <p><u>At this age, start to allow for a break from “organized” soccer</u></p>
U13/14 – 11v11, 60x105 field, sz 5 ball, 75-90 min trainings, 70 min games <u>Transitioning to the Adult Game</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue with all U11/12 foci ● Ball mastery at higher speed ● Receiving balls out of the air ● Defensive tackling ● Using deception in dribbling & passing ● Execution of skills in a dynamic manner ● Continuing GK training <p><u>Sound technique enables tactics</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speed of play ● Counter-attacking ● Offensive/defensive transition ● Zonal defending ● Penetrating dribbling & passing ● Systems of play ● Team shape ● Attacking & defending set pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self motivation ● Challenge players to solve problems presented within the game ● Encourage healthy lifestyle choices ● Emotional & physical growth may not match 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agility and balance under pressure ● Fluid running style ● Application of power and use of leverage ● Approx 30 games per year ● State-wide travel may be considered ● Playing against older players may be an option for more advanced teams/players
U15-18 – 11v11, 65x110 field, sz 5 ball, 75-90 min trainings <u>Thinking & feeling The Game</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall ball mastery/“fine tuning” of skills ● Dribbling for possession ● Receiving & dealing with balls out of the air under pressure ● Strikers playing with back to goal ● Advanced GK training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speed of play & rhythm of play ● Risk vs reward in 1/3s of the field ● Game management ● Zonal defending ● Thinking ahead more than one or passes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instill competition within training activities ● Avoid social cliques within the team ● Team rules & discipline are important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approx 30 games per year ● State & regional travel may be considered ● Post- event recovery is important ● At tournaments, have a sufficient roster size so that no player is “over played”

Curriculum adapted from United States Soccer Federation’s “Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the United States” and with assistance from WYSA Directors of Coaching