

Recreational Curriculum for U4 Ages



#1City1Club

3v3

Developed For Players Ranging Between the Ages of 3 & 4

U4



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Philosophy

The primary goal at this age is that players enjoy their time PLAYING at the soccer fields. Game days are filled with fun activities for the players because the most important thing is that they become comfortable with the environment. This is the foundation for generating a desire to learn more about the game in future stages of development. The focus is on creating a relaxed atmosphere that resembles players coming together to play soccer in their own backyards - not competition.

Goals

1. Foster a love for the game.
2. Help players gain comfortability in their soccer environment (social development).

Structure

The Pre-Academy program is co-educational. Game days are offered approximately once per week on average for the duration of the season (target 8 game days each season). The program is designed for there to be at least one coach or assistant for approximately every 4-6 players on the field. Game day sessions are designed to be FUN about all else and create an environment that allows players to PLAY (not compete or perform). At this age, kids have a wide range of what fun is to them - they may enjoy competing, being "near the herd", or just watching from a distance. PLEASE do not mistake their lack of direct participation as a lack of enjoyment. At this age, much of their development comes in the form of social development and not soccer development where insisting they challenge for the ball can do more damage than good.

Game day sessions consist of 30 minutes of fun soccer activities and exercises and are always finished with approx. 15 minutes of scrimmaging. Scrimmages are a maximum of 3v3 with no keepers or throw-ins. A new ball method is recommended, where a coach restarts play from near midfield during 3v3 games. Players may be asked to "spread out" and a coach will pass the ball out to help ensure all players have an opportunity to touch the ball during the games. Players can also be asked to restart with a kickoff after a goal has been scored.

Coaches are allowed on the playing field to help players as necessary.

Standards

Field Size: 15 x 20 yards

Number of Players: 3 on each side (6 total) 3v3

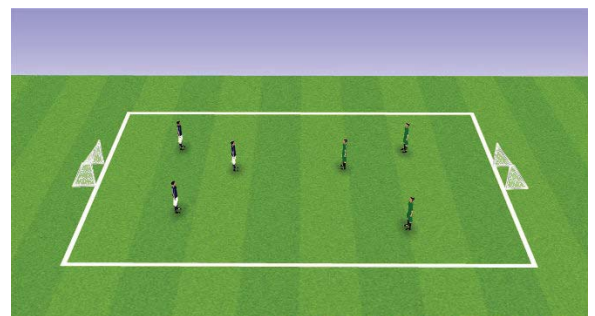
Goal Keeper: No Goal Keepers

Game Length: 15 minutes of game time

Ball Size: 3

Goal Size: 4x6 feet

Restarts: No throw-ins. All restarts are with the foot (pass-in).





Lesson 1 U4 - 3v3

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Activity 1 (5min): Follow the Leader

Setup: This is the first game day of the season, so take a few minutes for introductions and help the players warm up to the new environment. Expect there to be a few players to be hesitant to step out on the field without a parent. That's OK! Ask parents to help out when needed.

Instructions: No soccer balls are used in this activity. The coach helps the players form a line behind the leader. Assistants help players by joining in the activity throughout the line. Now the coach explains that everyone must "follow the leader" and do whatever they do. The coach has the players mimic the following actions: soar like an eagle/plane around the playing area, waddle like a duck/penguin, hop or skip along the sideline, tippy-toe on the sideline without falling off.

Coaching points: Encourage the players to jump in and have fun.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 2 (15 min): Can You Try This?

Setup: 1/2 of game field. All players have their own soccer ball.

Instructions: Coach asks the players if they can "copy" various things the coach is doing. Be creative. A few examples of things to say:

1. Pickup your ball and pretend it's a hot potato - can you toss it in the air and try to catch it?
2. Can you toss your hot potato in the air while walking and try to catch it again? (They will probably not be successful at it, but still challenge them to at least try.)
3. Now put your ball on the ground. Can you run around it super-fast like a race car? Or hop over their ball like a bunny rabbit?
4. Can you dribble your ball and give the coach (or your parent) a big high five? (Use baby dribble!)
5. Can you dribble your ball all around and give each other a big high five? How many can you get?
6. Can you dribble your ball to the edges of the field and touch each of the lines with your hand?
7. Can you dribble your ball around the field but don't let the coach get you? (chase them for maybe a minute, but don't instruct them where to run to get away from you! But just say something like: "don't let me get you!" and "keep the ball within the lines!")

Now ask the players "what can you do?" Let the other players try to mimic....end with asking them to mimic kicking the ball into the goal.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 3 (15 min): Small Sided Games 3v3

Setup: Entire soccer field, divide players up to form teams of 3.

Instructions: Tell the players which direction they are going and which goal they are trying to score on. Play 3v3 soccer. No goal keepers, no throw-ins, no keeping score! Keep the ball in field of play with quick restarts. Coaches and assistants should minimize instruction to a player while the ball is at their feet, but give lots of praise for their attempts to dribble /control the ball. Parents should conduct themselves similar to when the kids are playing on the playground - observe and enjoy but refrain from instructing players from the sidelines or shouting silly things to the players like "Big Kick!"

Coaching Points: Let the kids PLAY and have FUN!



Lesson 2 U4 - 3v3

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Activity 1 (5min): Goofy Stop and Go

Setup: Area of game field.

Instructions: Coach demonstrates to the players how to dribble around the soccer ball with their feet. Each player has a ball and begins to mimic the coach and dribble around inside the field. When the coach says "Stop like a statue!" the players freeze with their ball and make a goofy face. Point out 1 or 2 funny ones, then tell them to begin dribbling again. Play several minutes with different ways to stop.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 2 (15 min): Tiger in the Jungle

Setup: Game field. All players have their own soccer ball.

Instructions: The coach paints a fantasy for the players:

1. Everyone imagine we are in a jungle! We must stay inside the jungle! (boundary of soccer field)
2. What kinds of animals live in the jungle? What kinds of sounds do they make?
3. Ask all of the players to show you how each of those animals might dribble the soccer ball (point out a good example and let the other players mimic). Do this for 4-5 different animals and let them have fun with it for a few minutes.
4. Now the coach pretends to be a Tiger in the Jungle. Since the coach doesn't have a ball to play with, it wants to come and steal theirs. (No rules about dribbling with feet yet - allow scheming)
5. After 30-45 seconds, freeze the game and tell them they can only use their feet now to keep the ball away from the Tiger. (Tiger only slightly pokes the ball away. Be sensitive to players that may be afraid of "mean" tigers. Let them use imaginations.
6. After 30-45 seconds, coach can ask a few low-order questions like: Should you keep the ball close when you dribble? Should you dribble away from the Tiger into space?
7. Let them play for another 30-45 seconds. Add to the imagery: Now pretend we are all surrounded by a big swamp full of alligators (parents). Don't want to go outside the jungle because if we do, the alligators will get you.
8. Let them play for another 30-45 seconds. If ball goes into swamp, player must retrieve quickly!
9. Now pretend you can "shoot" the Tigers with your soccer ball! (Can later encourage them to be tricky by sneaking up behind the Tiger, who will be moving around as necessary to make it challenging.) When the Tiger gets "shot" of course they fall down and the game is over.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 3 (15 min): Small Sided Games 3v3

Setup: Entire soccer field, divide players up to form teams of 3.

Instructions: Tell the players which direction they are going and which goal they are trying to score on. Play 3v3 soccer. No goal keepers, no throw-ins, no keeping score! Keep the ball in field of play with quick restarts. Coaches and assistants should minimize instruction to a player while the ball is at their feet, but give lots of praise for their attempts to dribble /control the ball. Parents should conduct themselves similar to when the kids are playing on the playground - observe and enjoy but refrain from instructing players from the sidelines or shouting silly things to the players like "Big Kick!"

Coaching Points: Let the kids PLAY and have FUN!



Lesson 3

U4 - 3v3

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Activity 1 (5 min): Body Parts Dribbling

Setup: Game field

Instructions: Coach demonstrates to the players how to dribble around the soccer ball with their feet. Each player has a ball and begins to mimic the coach and dribble around inside the field. The coach yells out a body part that each player must stop the ball with (ex. bottom of foot, knee, elbow, forehead, belly button, bottom, ear, etc.) Play several rounds while changing body parts.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 2 (15 min): Elephant Soccer

Setup: Game field.

Instructions: Players bring all their soccer balls to the coach in the middle of the playing area. Coach quickly explains (in 30 seconds or less) that he is actually a BIG ELEPHANT. Coach's arm is really a big elephant trunk. It can scoop the ball up with it and roll it away in all directions. This is the elephant's favorite game.

1. Ask the players: Can you help bring the balls back? (don't say dribble the ball back. Let them be creative in whatever way they want to bring it back. Point out all the different creative ways the kids are returning the ball like using their hands or their feet.)
2. Coach scoops the ball up with its trunk and rolls it a distance away. Roll it further or closer to try and limit their time standing around waiting on their turn.
3. Coach call out different types of animals, and the players must return their ball to the coach while pretending to be that animal (ex. making hissing sound like a snake, hopping back with the ball in their kangaroo pouch, holding the ball on their back like it's a camel hump, or dribbling back while oo-oo-oo-ee-ee-ee'ing like a monkey).
4. Coach can now give them more challenging ways to return the soccer ball to the elephant, such as using their hands, knees elbows, heads, shoelaces of feet, bottom of feet, etc.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 3 (15 min): Small Sided Games 3v3

Setup: Entire soccer field, divide players up to form teams of 3.

Instructions: Tell the players which direction they are going and which goal they are trying to score on. Play 3v3 soccer. No goal keepers, no throw-ins, no keeping score! Keep the ball in field of play with quick restarts. Coaches and assistants should minimize instruction to a player while the ball is at their feet, but give lots of praise for their attempts to dribble /control the ball. Parents should conduct themselves similar to when the kids are playing on the playground - observe and enjoy but refrain from instructing players from the sidelines or shouting silly things to the players like "Big Kick!"

Coaching Points: Let the kids PLAY and have FUN!



Lesson 4 U4 - 3v3

#1City1Club

Activity 1 (5 min): Simon Says

Setup: Game field.

Instructions: Coach demonstrates to the players how to dribble around the soccer ball with their feet. Each player has a ball and begins to mimic the coach and dribble around inside the field. The coach yells out an instruction that Simon says: (jump high off the ground, sit on your ball, hop like a bunny around the ball, stop the ball and make a goofy face, dribble as fast as they can, etc.) Play several rounds of Simon Says.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 2 (15 min): The Soccer Blob

Setup: Game field.

Instructions: Players start this game without their soccer ball. Paint a fantasy for them:

1. Imagine we are all in a big dark cave! We have to stay inside the cave! (the field)
2. Its dark inside this cave! We can't see anything!
3. Now pretend everyone has a flashlight with them! (hold your arms up like you're shining a flashlight). In order to see inside the cave, where do you point your flashlight?
4. Now....inside this dark cave there lives a silly SOCCER BLOB (the coach)!!! When you turn your flashlight on, the Blob might try and get you.....is everyone ready to play?
5. Ok....turn your flashlights ON! (The Blob begins to chase the players for 30-45 seconds to tag them. Some may intentionally let the Blob get them. Remind them to not get caught!
6. Ok....turn your flashlights OFF! (This should help them all to stop. Use guided discovery with low-order questions like: What can you do to stay away from the Blob? Guide them to say things like "See the Blob" and "Turn and go somewhere else FAST!")
7. Now they understand the game, have each of them get their soccer balls. Play the same game except... Do you know what the Blob likes to eat? Soccer Balls!
8. Ok....turn your flashlights ON! (Chase for another 30-45 seconds. The game will move much slower now because they'll be trying to control their soccer ball.) Don't let the Blob get your ball! If the Blob gets it, try to steal it back!....Ok, turn your flashlights OFF!
9. Kids still with their balls, but change the image: Now, pretend that you are the Blobs! What kind of sounds would a Blob make? When I turn on my flashlight, do you think you can get my ball? (Let the players chase you for 30-45 seconds.)

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 3 (15 min): Small Sided Games 3v3

Setup: Entire soccer field, divide players up to form teams of 3.

Instructions: Tell the players which direction they are going and which goal they are trying to score on. Play 3v3 soccer. No goal keepers, no throw-ins, no keeping score! Keep the ball in field of play with quick restarts. Coaches and assistants should minimize instruction to a player while the ball is at their feet, but give lots of praise for their attempts to dribble /control the ball. Parents should conduct themselves similar to when the kids are playing on the playground - observe and enjoy but refrain from instructing players from the sidelines or shouting silly things to the players like "Big Kick!"

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Lesson 5

U4 - 3v3

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Activity 1 (5 min): Lights

Setup: Game field

Instructions: All players are in the field of play with their soccer balls. When the coach says “Green!” all the players start to dribble their ball....When the coach shouts “Red!” players must try to stop the ball using the bottom of the foot (or other parts of the body as directed). Coach can also add another task and when another color is yelled out (ex. “Yellow!” means they turn into a monkey.) Play several rounds of Lights.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 2 (15 min): Race Car Soccer

Setup: Game field.

Instructions: Players start this game without their soccer ball. Paint a fantasy for them:

1. So imagine we are all driving our race cars (dribbling the soccer ball) around inside the big parking lot (within the boundary of the game field).
2. Show me what happens when you drive CRAZY? Do you get into crashes? What sound does the car make if it (the ball) crashes into another one (someone else's ball)? (Let them “drive crazy” for a few seconds - they'll immediately clump together and crash.)
3. Is it more fun to go FAST or SLOW in our race cars? (of course, they'll all say fast) But can you go fast when you're getting into crashes all the time? (Encourage them to find space where nobody else is driving - still making crash noises if they wreck.)
4. Now.....What sound does a car make when it's going FAST? Vroom! Let them demonstrate the difference sounds for 15-30 seconds.
5. What sound does a car make when it stops? Screech! (Let them demonstrate)
6. What sound does a car make when you're going SLOW? Putt-Putt! (Again let them demonstrate)
7. Re-introduce red light/green light. When the coach says “Green Light!” then their cars go FAST. When the coach says “Red Light!” then they must stop their cars (foot on top of the ball) and make the stop sound. (Play for 1 minute.)
8. If your car crashes, then you have to go slow (making putt-putt sounds). Take your car over to one of the coaches to get your car fixed up, so you can go fast again!
9. Play for 1 minute then ask some guided discovery questions: How can you not crash your car? Is it harder to control your car (the ball) when it is far away or nice and close?
10. Play 1 minute. Encourage them to drive FAST (making car sounds) but under control.
11. Option: Add policemen who can give tickets for speeding (ex. not controlling the ball).

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 3 (15 min): Small Sided Games 3v3

Setup: Entire soccer field, divide players up to form teams of 3.

Instructions: Tell the players which direction they are going and which goal they are trying to score on. Play 3v3 soccer. No goal keepers, no throw-ins, no keeping score! Keep the ball in field of play with quick restarts. Coaches and assistants should minimize instruction to a player while the ball is at their feet, but give lots of praise for their attempts to dribble /control the ball. Parents should conduct themselves similar to when the kids are playing on the playground - observe and enjoy but refrain from instructing players from the sidelines or shouting silly things to the players like “Big Kick!”

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Lesson 6

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Activity 1 (5 min): Speed Limit

Setup: 1/2 of game field

Instructions: All players are in the field of play with their soccer balls. Players are asked to dribble their ball around the space going at different speeds: 0 miles per hour = STOP, 25 mph = walking, and 100 mph = go as fast as you can! Coach calls out various speed limits for the players to dribble their ball and still maintain control without leaving the field or colliding with another player. Play several rounds of Speed Limit.

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 2 (15 min): Gingerbread Men

Setup: Game field.

Instructions: Players start this game without their soccer ball. Use the boundaries of the game field for the activity, then create a small box with cones near the middle of the field and call it the “oven”.....Paint a fantasy for them:

1. Imagine you are a gingerbread man! What kinds of decorations do we put on gingerbread men?
2. With all those decorations, what would happen to your icing and candy if it went in an oven? I'm going to pretend that I'm a Baker Man, and if I get you then I'm going to put you in the oven!....Ready or not, here I come!
3. Play for about 30-45 seconds then ask some low-order guided discovery questions like: Do you want the Baker Man to get you? How do you get away from the Baker Man? (Get your head up to look for the Baker Man, be tricky and run away from the Baker Man, etc.)
4. Next round: If you have to go in the oven, any other gingerbread men can come and tag your hand to help you get out!Ready or not, here I come!
5. Next round. Does anyone want to pretend to be the Baker Man with me and wear this cool apron (a vest)?
6. Next rounds. Now let's play the game with our soccer balls! (Play the game the same way except they now must also control their ball while trying to tag the gingerbread men or avoid being tagged by the Baker Men.)

Water Break (2-3 min)

Activity 3 (15 min): Small Sided Games 3v3

Setup: Entire soccer field, divide players up to form teams of 3.

Instructions: Tell the players which direction they are going and which goal they are trying to score on. Play 3v3 soccer. No goal keepers, no throw-ins, no keeping score! Keep the ball in field of play with quick restarts. Coaches and assistants should minimize instruction to a player while the ball is at their feet, but give lots of praise for their attempts to dribble /control the ball. Parents should conduct themselves similar to when the kids are playing on the playground - observe and enjoy but refrain from instructing players from the sidelines or shouting silly things to the players like “Big Kick!”

Coaching Points: Let the kids PLAY and have FUN!