

Sporting Columbia U12 Rec Coaches Guide (9v9)

Our Core Values

- **Respect** – For teammates, opponents, referees, and the game itself
- **Community** – Work for the success of the whole team, not just yourself
- **Growth Mindset** – Every challenge is an opportunity to improve
- **Teamwork** – We rise together, win together, and learn together
- **Passion** – Play with drive and joy every time you step on the field

Our Recreational Philosophy

At U12, the *soccer IQ* really starts to kick in. Players are ready for **more demanding training sessions** that blend **high-level technical work** with **realistic game scenarios**. We still value development over results, but now there's a bigger focus on **competing well** and **understanding the bigger tactical picture**.

What to Expect from U12 Players

- Improved technical consistency — first touch, passing, and dribbling
- Ability to sustain higher work rates during games
- Developing positional discipline but still need reminders
- Stronger game sense — can anticipate play and make quicker decisions
- Increasing emotional investment — both excitement and frustration can run high

What to Work On

- Controlling the ball with different surfaces under pressure
- Passing and receiving in tight spaces and on the move
- Switching the point of attack and using width
- Defending as a unit — pressing triggers, cover, and recovery

- Supporting runs, overlaps, and underlaps
- Building out from the back into controlled attacks
- Shooting from different ranges and angles
- Basic set-piece organization (corners, free kicks)

Parent Expectations

- Support the whole team, not just individual performance
- Focus on effort, growth, and sportsmanship
- Let players solve problems on the field — avoid sideline coaching
- Encourage resilience and a positive response to challenges
- Keep feedback post-game constructive and uplifting

Practice 1 (60–90 Minutes)

Warm-Up: Rondo with Direction (10 min)

4v2 in a square — to score a point, pass through a specific gate. Adds decision-making to possession.

Technical: Dribbling + Turning Under Pressure (15 min)

1v1 in small grids. Winner stays on, loser rotates. Emphasize ball shielding and quick changes of direction.

Tactical: Building from the Back (15 min)

Goalkeeper, defenders, and midfielders work on playing out of pressure to create attacks.

Finishing Drill: Combination into Shot (10 min)

Pass into striker, lay-off, third man run, and finish. Quick tempo.

Scrimmage with Build-Up Rules (15–20 min)

Teams must connect 3–5 passes before going forward to reinforce patience and control.

Practice 2 (60–90 Minutes)

Warm-Up: Dynamic Stretch & Passing Gates (10 min)

Pairs pass through gates at different angles and distances. Move quickly after each pass.

Defensive Shape Game (15 min)

Work on back line + midfield shifting together, closing passing lanes.

Attacking Overloads (15 min)

4v3 or 5v4 to goal — attackers work on quick ball movement and finishing; defenders focus on compactness.

Crossing & Finishing (10 min)

Wide players cross, central players time runs. Rotate positions.

Scrimmage (15–20 min)

Coach from the sidelines, stop briefly to highlight shape and transition.

Practice 3 (60–90 Minutes)

Warm-Up: Ball Mastery Relay (10 min)

Teams dribble through cones, perform skill moves, and race back. High tempo.

1v1 to 2v2 Progression (15 min)

Start with 1v1, then add supporting players. Encourages decision-making when to dribble vs. pass.

Midfield Switching Drill (15 min)

Players work to move the ball side-to-side, using width to stretch defense.

Finishing Under Pressure (10 min)

Quick-fire shooting with a chasing defender. Focus on composure.

Full-Field Scrimmage (15–20 min)

Play with minimal stoppages; evaluate positioning, support, and communication.

Coach Tip: This is the perfect age to **introduce mini tactical challenges** in scrimmages — e.g., “score after switching the field,” or “win the ball back in under 6 seconds.” It makes training more game-like and engaging.

