



U7/U8/U9 Coaching Guide

Thank you for coming forward to coach this upcoming season! Without you this season would not be possible. This guide is to provide you everything you need to coach your team.

Getting Started:

Call or email your players **as soon as possible** to let them know your name and phone number/email, their team sponsor and jersey colour, and place and time of the first session. You may want to set up a meet and greet to hand out uniforms prior to the first game.

Field Map:

The U7, U8, and U9 divisions play on Fields 3C and 3D.

Kiwanis Soccer Complex Map - <https://www.owensoundminorsoccer.ca/facilities>

Session Structure:

A 20-minute skills session followed by a 5-minute water break, then a game with two 15-minute halves and a 5-minute halftime break.

- 6v6, (5 players plus 1 goalie)
- Coaches are allowed on the field and they act as game leaders instead of having referees.
- Kick ins, not throw ins

The retreat line is used. All opposing players must “retreat” behind this line anytime the goalie makes a save or is taking a goal kick. This allows the goalie to throw or pass the ball successfully to their teammate and allows that player to make a pass or dribble the ball while not under pressure. Once the teammate receives the ball from the goalie, opposing players move forward past the center line and apply pressure.

What to Expect When You Run Your Sessions

As players start arriving, give them a ball and have them dribble the ball in the playing area and/or shoot on the nets until most of the team arrives. Once most players have arrived, gather them in a circle and have an initial talk with them:

1. For the 1st few weeks while you are getting to know them, go around the circle and have them say their name and another fun fact (ex: favourite color, who brought them, what they did at school, etc.)
2. Let them know some of the activities you may be doing that week
3. Ask the players if they remember some of the rules such as:
 - a. Don't use your hands
 - b. Where are the boundaries of the field
 - c. Review the retreat line with them

Our goal for this age is to work on ball mastery (as many touches on the ball as possible), introduce passing and increased competition, whether it be 1v1, 2v2, etc. As such, week 4 guideline is an excellent plan for these ages but you can mix and match if there are drills kids really enjoy.

There are only 20 minutes that you have for your talk and skills/drills. Generally you can do 2 or 3 different activities during that time. We have prepared a coaching guide for the first 4 weeks that you can choose to follow or mix/match for drills you may wish to have the kids do (if something works really well one week you may want to go back to it the following week). After the 4 weeks you can start again or reach out to get some other suggestions.

We also have links to many other weekly plans on the Coaches -> Coaching Resources page of our website.

<https://www.owensoundminorsoccer.ca/coaching-resources>

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out!

Helpful Tips:

If you don't have an assistant coach, try to recruit another parent to assist with the substitutions of players during the game. It could be a different parent each week.

During the game the coaches/players should be on the opposite side of the field of the parents. You should ask your players to bring their water bottles with them to that side of the field so they don't need to run back to their parents during the game.

Week 1

1) Freeze Tag - Players run around an area of the field with the coach being “it”. The coach tags a player and they need to freeze with their hand out in a high five position. If another player high fives them they are unfrozen. Continue on until all players are frozen.

Variations: Allow different players to be “it”. Players need to dribble around the area with their ball and when they get caught put foot on top of the ball and hand out for a high five.

Summary: Gets kids to find space on the field and not bunch up. When using balls, gets the kids dribbling fast and in different directions.

2) Sharks & Minnows - Players (minnows) dribble soccer balls from one end-line to another while 1–2 defenders (sharks) in the middle try to steal the balls or kick them out of bounds. When players get caught they get added to the middle as sharks.

Variations: rather than dribbling the soccer ball from one end-line to the other, players (minnows) dribble within a defined area while the sharks try to steal or kick the balls out of bounds.

Youtube Video: Cal South Soccer - U6 Sharks and Minnows Activity

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_4T1DMBy1A

Summary: Gets the kids used to controlling the ball while trying to move quickly.

3) Finishing Drills - Have one player be goalie (the player who will start the game as goalie). Have players line up beside the net. Yell “GO” and have the players run out 10 yards around a pylon and back towards the net. As they are heading back to the net, the coach passes the ball and the players try to score on the game based on who gets to the ball first.

Summary: You can do this short drill a few times as a great way to end off on a high note before the water break then game. It gets kids striking a moving ball into the net and celebrating their successes.

Week 2

1) Ball Mastery - Each child has their own soccer ball. They dribble around their area working on different turns. There are 4 different turns they should be working on:

1. The Drag Back (Sole Turn): Players dribble forward, place the sole of their foot on top of the ball, and drag it back to change direction.
2. Inside/Outside Turns: While running, players use the inside or outside of their foot to change direction. Can also call these Big Toe (inside) and Little Toe (outside) to make it easier for kids while dribbling.
3. Stop-Turn (Sole Stop): Dribble fast, then step on top of the ball to stop it completely with the sole before turning.
4. V-Pull (V-Turn): A more advanced move where players pull the ball back with sole and push it out at a 45 degree angle.

The coach has them dribble around the area and then yells out what turn they should be making. (Drag Back, Big Toe, Little Toe, Stop-Turn, or V-Turn)

Youtube Video Demonstrating Turns: KS Performance - 5 Turns to Improve Ball Control

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88Ph3d-dp-8>

Variations: You can change the game into King of the Court; when players are dribbling around they can kick away the ball of the other players. Gets players used to keeping their head up and shielding the ball from others. If players get knocked out they have to do 10 Toe Taps (placing their toe on top of the ball alternating feet) or 10 Tick Tocks (see youtube below) to get back in.

Toe Taps: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqXUuxM2aDM>

Tick Tocks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vcprQj3oAM>

2) Passing - Players work in pairs with 1 ball between them. Players stand 5 yards apart and begin with passing the ball between them, control it upon receiving it, and pass it back. They should get the ball to the other player.

- Try to get them to do it 10 times in a row.
- Once they have done a few sets of 10 you can add another variation.

Variations: Transition into a 1v1 - players continue to pass the ball back and forth, but when the coach yells "Play", the child with the ball dribbles away and towards the goal while the other child tries to catch them.

3) Finishing Drills - 1v1 - Split the group into 2 and give each a number. Have players lie on their stomachs at the half way line. Call a number and then throw the ball to a certain part of the field and the players whose number is called both go after the ball and go 1v1 to see who can score first.

Ex: if there are 10 players and a goalie, you would give each group a number 1-5. When you yell "3", the players who are number 3 go after the ball and try to score.

Week 3

1) Hit the Coach - This is a fun dribbling game to switch it up a bit. The objective is for players to dribble around a defined area trying to hit the coach with their ball as the coach moves around. Teaches "small touches" when dribbling and keeping their heads up to follow the coach, then kick the ball. It encourages switching directions/making turns. You can have another parent/older sibling act as the "coach" to give yourself a break.

Summary: Great dribbling drill as they are focused on getting the coach and the coach can control how often they have to switch directions or run by how often they move locations.

2) Passing - Make a square with pylons. There are players at each pylon and they have to pass the ball to the person at the next pylon and follow their pass. They should see how fast they can go without the ball getting too far away from the square. If you have 8 players or more, you should split the team into 2 groups or you can make a triangle instead of a square.

Variations: To get ready for the game you can have a player to be goalie. As the players pass the balls around the pylons, the player at the final pylon takes a shot.

3) Layoffs - Have one player be goalie (the player who will start the game as goalie). All players have a ball and line up in single file near the halfline facing your goal. The players take turns passing the ball to the coach who passes it back into the space in front of the player who runs up to it and either one time kicks the ball or takes a touch and then kicks the ball trying to score on the goalie.

If the player scores or the goalie makes a save, the ball gets thrown off to the side for the kicking player to retrieve and dribble it to the back of the line. If the player misses the net, they must run after the ball and dribble it to the back of the line.

Week 4

1) Ball Mastery - Each child has their own soccer ball. They dribble around their area working on different turns. There are 4 different turns they should be working on:

5. The Drag Back (Sole Turn): Players dribble forward, place the sole of their foot on top of the ball, and drag it back to change direction.
6. Inside/Outside Turns: While running, players use the inside or outside of their foot to change direction. Can also call these Big Toe (inside) and Little Toe (outside) to make it easier for kids while dribbling.
7. Stop-Turn (Sole Stop): Dribble fast, then step on top of the ball to stop it completely with the sole before turning.
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Variations: You can change the game into King of the Court; when players are dribbling around they can kick away the ball of the other players. Gets players used to keeping their head up and shielding the ball from others. If players get knocked out they have to do 10 Toe Taps (placing their toe on top of the ball alternating feet) or 10 Tick Tocks (see youtube below) to get back in.

Toe Taps: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqXUuxM2aDM>

Tick Tocks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vcprQj3oAM>

2) Passing - Make a square with pylons. There are players at each pylon (corners) and they have to pass the ball to the person at the next pylon and follow their pass. They should see how fast they can go without the ball getting too far away from the square. Depending on how many players there are (multiple of 4 or 3), you can form squares or triangles, or have players rotate through positions (see video below).

YouTube Video: Swedcoach1 - Passing Drills for Kids U7 U8 U9 U10

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cun5X-4qZdY>

3) Finishing Drills - Split the group into 2 and give each a number. Have players lie on their stomachs at the half way line. Call a number and then throw the ball to a certain part of the field and the players whose number is called both go after the ball and go 1v1 to see who can score first.

Summary: Great way to have competition and match players of similar ability. You can do this drill varying ways:

- Start at the net and run around a pylon
- Start laying flat on stomach
- Call multiple numbers to add more people and turn into a 2v2 or 3v3