VIRGINIA LEGACY SOCCER

RECREATIONAL COACHES HANDBOOK

Coach Expectations • Positive Feedback • Adaptable Activities • 10-Week Training Programs

U8 • U10 • U12 • U14 • U16

Built for Virginia Legacy Recreational Soccer volunteer coaches

Fun. Development. Confidence. Respect. Love of the Game.

WELCOME, COACH

Thank you for volunteering. Virginia Legacy's recreational program is designed to provide players of all skill levels a safe, progressive, fun and instructional soccer experience. The coach's job is not to create a professional team in ten weeks; it is to create an environment where every player is involved, improves, feels valued, and wants to come back.

This handbook expands the prior 8-week handbook into a complete 10-week curriculum for U8, U10, U12, U14 and U16. The plans are intentionally simple enough for a first-time volunteer coach to run, while giving experienced coaches progressions and coaching points to raise the challenge.

THE LEGACY RECREATIONAL STANDARD

- Fun and player development come before the score.
- Every player receives fair and meaningful playing time regardless of ability.
- Practices should keep players moving, thinking and touching the ball — avoid long lines, laps and lectures.
- Coach the player in front of you. Adjust space, numbers, pressure and rules to create the right challenge.
- Praise effort, courage, teamwork, creativity and improvement — not only goals and wins.
- Model respect toward players, families, opponents, fellow coaches and referees at all times.

COACH EXPECTATIONS & CONDUCT

DO	DON'T
• Prioritize fun, effort, learning and development over winning.	• Bench or under-play a child because of skill level.
• Provide fair and meaningful playing time.	• Argue with, intimidate or publicly criticize referees.
• Arrive prepared and create a safe training area.	• Use sarcasm, humiliation, profanity or harsh criticism toward players.
• Use positive, age-appropriate instruction.	• Run fitness as punishment.
• Communicate schedule changes as early as possible.	• Allow long lines or extended standing during practice.
• Teach players to respect the referee's decisions.	• Coach every touch from the sideline; allow players to solve problems.
• Rotate younger players through positions and opportunities.	• Discuss playing-time complaints during a match.
• Complete all club-required clearances/training before participating.	• Make the recreational result more important than the player experience.

SAFETY, COMMUNICATION & GAME-DAY EXPECTATIONS

- Inspect the playing area before practice. Move players away from unsafe goals, holes, standing water, debris or other hazards.
- Players should have shin guards, appropriate footwear and water. Jewelry must be handled in accordance with league/game rules.
- Never pressure an injured player to continue. Follow club procedures for injuries, suspected concussion, incidents and emergencies.
- Keep player pickup/release organized. Do not leave a child unattended after training.
- Set the parent sideline tone early: positive encouragement only; no coaching the referee or opposing players.
- On game day, keep your technical comments short. Let the game be the teacher and save longer instruction for practice.

OUR TRAINING PHILOSOPHY: PLAY ● PRACTICE ● PLAY

These plans use a player-centered, game-based structure. Players begin with a small game, move into a focused activity that creates repeated decisions around the week's topic, and finish by playing again. The final game is the coach's chance to observe whether the learning appears without constant instruction.

PLAY 1 — Get players playing quickly as they arrive. Use 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 or another small-sided game. Coach lightly and observe.

PRACTICE — Create repetition of the day's problem using realistic soccer decisions. Adjust the field, numbers, targets or rules instead of giving a long speech.

PLAY 2 — Remove most restrictions and let them play. Reinforce the theme with brief questions or praise, but avoid stopping every mistake.

The 30-Second Coaching Rule

If your explanation takes longer than about 30 seconds, demonstrate it or start playing and coach within the activity. Recreational players learn far more by doing than by standing and listening.

POSITIVE COACHING & CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

A recreational coach should guide players toward solutions instead of focusing only on mistakes. Use short questions, specific praise and demonstrations. The goal is to help players understand what success looks like and then give them another chance to try it.

Good - Better - Best Feedback

Use a positive progression when giving feedback: first identify what is working, then ask how the action could improve, and finally challenge the player or group to describe or demonstrate their best version. This keeps feedback constructive and invites players to think.

GOOD	BETTER	BEST
"What did you do well there?"	"What could make that pass even better?"	"What would your best option look like?"
Recognize effort or a successful detail.	Add one clear improvement or question.	Let the player describe, demonstrate and try again.
"Good job getting your head up."	"Can you scan before the ball arrives?"	"Show me your best first touch into space."

Check for Understanding

Do not assume that silence means players understand. After a brief explanation, ask one player to show the setup, ask another to explain the scoring rule, or use a quick question such as "Where can we score?" or "What are we trying to improve?" Then start the activity and observe. If the behavior does not appear, simplify the task or demonstrate again.

Common Legacy Coaching Language

WHEN ATTACKING	WHEN DEFENDING
Can we go forward?	Can we win it back or slow them down?
Can we help the player on the ball?	Can we help the first defender?
Can we make the field wide?	Can we protect the middle and weak side?
Can we create depth - an option ahead and behind?	Can we stay connected and compact?

HOW TO ADJUST ANY ACTIVITY

Use STEP to Change the Challenge

Rather than replacing an activity every time players need a new challenge, change one variable and replay it. Familiarity reduces setup time and lets players focus on the soccer problem.

S - SPACE	T - TIME	E - EQUIPMENT	P - PROCESS

Make the area wider, narrower, longer, shorter or a different shape.	Change work periods, game length, urgency or time allowed to score.	Add/remove goals, balls, cones, targets or neutral markers.	Change a rule, player number, challenge, scoring method or choice.

A SIMPLE RECREATIONAL SESSION RHYTHM: BAGS

The U.S. Club Soccer foundational playbook uses a memorable BAGS rhythm. In this handbook, it is adapted as an optional organizational tool that complements Play-Practice-Play rather than replacing it. It is especially useful for volunteer coaches who want a repeatable routine every week.

B	A	G	S
BELONG	ACTIVITY	GAMES	SHOUTOUTS
Welcome players with an instant familiar game; make everyone feel included.	Use the week's core soccer problem and give players repeated chances to solve it.	Play several short small-sided games and connect only brief questions to the theme.	Finish with recognition: effort, bravery, teamwork, improvement and fun.

Legacy application: PLAY 1 can serve as BELONG; the PRACTICE phase is the ACTIVITY; PLAY 2 supplies the GAMES; and the final 2-5 minutes become SHOUTOUTS. For younger groups, a 30-45 second preview of the day's theme is plenty.

IF...	TRY...
Too easy?	Make the space smaller, add a defender, reduce time, require a decision, or add a directional target.
Too hard?	Increase the space, remove a defender, add a neutral player, allow more touches, or simplify the scoring target.
Too much standing?	Create a second field/station, use smaller teams, or put a ball at every player's feet.
Not game-like?	Add direction, opponents, goals/end zones and a transition when possession changes.
Players frustrated?	Restore success first, then build the challenge back gradually.

AGE-GROUP DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

AGE	TYPICAL SESSION	PRIMARY EMPHASIS
U8	60 min	Individual ball confidence; dribbling; turning; 1v1; basic passing/finishing; lots of 1v1/2v2/3v3; imagination and fun.
U10	60–70 min	Ball mastery; first touch; passing/receiving; dribbling; 1v1/2v1; finishing; basic defending; support and transition.
U12	70–75 min	Technique under pressure; combination play; possession; 1v1/2v2; defending in pairs; width/depth; transition; decision-making.
U14	75–90 min	Technical speed; support angles; team principles; pressing/cover; switching play; final-third decisions; transition and restarts.
U16	80–90 min	Quality at game speed; possession with purpose; tactical roles; pressing/compactness; counterattack; finishing; game management and

		leadership.

Players within the same recreational age group can be at very different stages. Use three levels of challenge inside the same activity: NOVICE (more space/time and simple technique), CHALLENGE (pressure, choices or reduced space), and ADVANCED (game-speed pressure, disguise, combination play or a harder scoring condition). Players can move between levels during the same practice.

COACH THE LEVEL, NOT JUST THE AGE

U8 — 10-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

Recommended session: 60 min. Individual ball confidence; dribbling; turning; 1v1; basic passing/finishing; lots of 1v1/2v2/3v3; imagination and fun.

At U8, the individual player and the ball come first. Avoid complex team tactics. Use imagination, races, tag games and 1v1/2v2/3v3 formats. Players should spend very little time waiting.

WEEK 1 | Welcome to the Ball

SESSION GOAL: Ball confidence, turning and comfort in traffic

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	Free Dribble Tag. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Skill Game	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to ball confidence, turning and comfort in traffic. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	PRACTICE	Sharks & Minnows with a ball. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	PLAY 2	3v3 to small goals. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Keep a ball close; use both feet; head up when space appears.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 2 | Dribble into Space

SESSION GOAL: Changing speed and direction

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	2v2 free play. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Skill Game	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to changing speed and direction. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	PRACTICE	Traffic Lights + Gates. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	PLAY 2	3v3 dribble-through-gates. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Small touches in traffic; bigger touch into open space; accelerate after a turn.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 3 | 1v1 Courage

SESSION GOAL: **Taking on a defender**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	1v1 end-line game. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Skill Game	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to taking on a defender. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	PRACTICE	1v1 Ladder to two gates. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	PLAY 2	2v2/3v3 to goals. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Attack space; use a fake; change direction; celebrate attempts, not just success.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 4 | Passing to a Friend

SESSION GOAL: **Inside-foot passing and receiving**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	2v2 to targets. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Skill Game	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to inside-foot passing and receiving. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	PRACTICE	Partner Gate Passing. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	PLAY 2	3v3 — bonus for 2-player combination. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Plant foot beside ball; pass with inside; move after the pass; receive into space.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 5 | Score Goals!

SESSION GOAL: **Finishing from dribble and short pass**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	2v2 to goals. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Skill Game	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to finishing from dribble and short pass. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	PRACTICE	Dribble-and-Shoot Race. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	PLAY 2	3v3 to goals. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
55–60	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Look up before shooting; plant foot; choose accuracy before power; follow rebounds.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 6 | Protect & Win the Ball

SESSION GOAL: **Shielding and basic defending**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	1v1 keep-ball. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Skill Game	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to shielding and basic defending. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	PRACTICE	Protect the Cone / Shield & Turn. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	PLAY 2	3v3 to goals. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Body between defender and ball; defender slows down, stays balanced and waits for a poor touch.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 7 | Play Together

SESSION GOAL: **Spacing and simple support**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	3v3 free play. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Skill Game	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to spacing and simple support. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	PRACTICE	3v1 Keep-Away. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	PLAY 2	3v3/4v4 — wide field. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Make the field big when your team has the ball; find a new space after passing.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 8 | Transition!

SESSION GOAL: **Reacting when possession changes**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	2v2 continuous. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
10–20	**Skill Game**	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to reacting when possession changes. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	Two-Goal Transition Game. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	**PLAY 2**	3v3/4v4. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: When we win it: find space and go. When we lose it: nearest player pressures, others recover.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 9 | Soccer Challenge Day

SESSION GOAL: Review of dribble, pass, finish and 1v1

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	**PLAY 1**	Player-choice small game. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	**Skill Game**	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to review of dribble, pass, finish and 1v1. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	Four-Station Challenge Circuit. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	**PLAY 2**	4v4 festival games. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Short stations, lots of repetitions, team encouragement, players demonstrate favorite skills.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 10 | Play & Celebrate

SESSION GOAL: Apply the season's learning

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	**PLAY 1**	3v3 arrival games. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	**Skill Game**	Quick individual/small-group ball activity connected to apply the season's learning. Keep instructions visual and simple; every player should be active.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	Favorite activity voted by players. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–55	**PLAY 2**	Extended 4v4/5v5. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
55–60	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Coach less, observe more; rotate roles; recognize effort, bravery, teamwork and improvement.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

U10 — 10-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

Recommended session: 60–70 min. Ball mastery; first touch; passing/receiving; dribbling; 1v1/2v1; finishing; basic defending; support and transition.

At U10, continue to build strong individual technique while introducing simple cooperation with one or two teammates. Keep combinations short, decisions clear and games small-sided.

WEEK 1 | Ball Mastery & First Touch

SESSION GOAL: Comfort on both feet and receiving into space

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	3v3 arrival game. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: comfort on both feet and receiving into space. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	PRACTICE	First-Touch Gates. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	PLAY 2	4v4/5v5. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Receive away from pressure; first touch has a purpose; scan before ball arrives.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 2 | Passing & Moving

SESSION GOAL: Accurate pass and immediate support

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	3v3 to end zones. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: accurate pass and immediate support. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	PRACTICE	Pass-and-Move Gates. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	PLAY 2	4v4 — bonus for give-and-go. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Inside foot; pace of pass; move after passing; create an angle.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 3 | Dribbling & 1v1

SESSION GOAL: Beat or escape an opponent

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	2v2 free play. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
		spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: beat or escape an opponent. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	1v1 Four-Gate Game. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	**PLAY 2**	4v4 to goals. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Attack at speed; sell the fake; protect after the move; recognize when to pass instead.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 4 | 2v1 Decisions

SESSION GOAL: Combine with a teammate

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	**PLAY 1**	2v2+neutral. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: combine with a teammate. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	2v1 to Goal. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	**PLAY 2**	4v4 with wide channels. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Draw defender; pass at the right moment; support at an angle; ball carrier may dribble if defender protects pass.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 5 | Finishing

SESSION GOAL: Create and finish chances

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	**PLAY 1**	3v3 to goals. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: create and finish chances. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	Pass-Set-Shoot / Dribble-Shoot. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	**PLAY 2**	5v5. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Accuracy, quick setup touch, follow rebounds, finish with either foot when possible.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 6 | Defending 1v1

SESSION GOAL: **Pressure, delay and win the ball**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	1v1 end zones. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: pressure, delay and win the ball. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	PRACTICE	Channel Defending. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	PLAY 2	4v4. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Close quickly, slow down under control, side-on body, show away from goal, tackle on poor touch.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 7 | Possession & Support

SESSION GOAL: **Create triangles and passing options**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	3v3+1 neutral. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: create triangles and passing options. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	PRACTICE	4v2 Rondo. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	PLAY 2	5v5. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Move while ball travels; give ball carrier two options; open body; play away from pressure.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 8 | Transition

SESSION GOAL: **Immediate reaction after turnover**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	PLAY 1	3v3 continuous. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: immediate reaction after turnover. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	PRACTICE	4v4 Two-Goal Transition. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
40–60	**PLAY 2**	5v5. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: First 3 seconds matter: attack space after winning; pressure/recover after losing.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 9 | Width & Switching

SESSION GOAL: Use the whole field

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	**PLAY 1**	4v4 to four goals. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: use the whole field. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	Wide-Gate Possession. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	**PLAY 2**	5v5. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Spread out in possession; look away from pressure; switch when one side is crowded.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 10 | Match Play & Review

SESSION GOAL: Independent decisions

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–10	**PLAY 1**	3v3 player-led. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
10–20	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: independent decisions. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
20–40	**PRACTICE**	Team review challenge. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
40–60	**PLAY 2**	Extended 5v5/6v6. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
60–65	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Players identify solutions; coach with questions; celebrate development and sportsmanship.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

U12 — 10-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

Recommended session: 70–75 min. Technique under pressure; combination play; possession; 1v1/2v2; defending in pairs; width/depth; transition; decision-making.

At U12, technique should increasingly be performed under realistic pressure. Introduce team principles through small-sided games rather than long tactical lectures.

WEEK 1 | First Touch Under Pressure

SESSION GOAL: Receive to keep possession or go forward

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	PLAY 1	4v4 arrival game. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: receive to keep possession or go forward. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	PRACTICE	Receive-Turn-Play Gates. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	PLAY 2	6v6. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Scan early; receive on back foot when possible; first touch away from pressure.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 2 | Passing Combinations

SESSION GOAL: Give-and-go and third-player support

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	PLAY 1	4v4+2. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: give-and-go and third-player support. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	PRACTICE	Wall Pass to Goal. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	PLAY 2	6v6 — bonus combination goal. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Pass and move; timing of return run; supporting player arrives, not stands.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 3 | 1v1 & 2v1 Attacking

SESSION GOAL: Recognize dribble vs pass

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	PLAY 1	3v3 to end zones. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
		spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: recognize dribble vs pass. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	**PRACTICE**	2v1 Wave to Goal. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	**PLAY 2**	6v6. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Commit defender; create width; final pass at right time; attack quickly when advantage appears.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 4 | Defending in Pairs

SESSION GOAL: Pressure and cover

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	**PLAY 1**	3v3. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: pressure and cover. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	**PRACTICE**	2v2 Channel Defending. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	**PLAY 2**	6v6. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: First defender pressures; second covers; communicate; protect central route.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 5 | Possession

SESSION GOAL: Triangles, support and patience

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	**PLAY 1**	4v2 rondo. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: triangles, support and patience. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	**PRACTICE**	5v3 / 6v3 Possession. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	**PLAY 2**	6v6. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Open passing lanes; scan; move while ball travels; play one/two touch when picture is clear.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 6 | Width & Depth

SESSION GOAL: Create space as a team

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	PLAY 1	4v4 to four corner goals. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: create space as a team. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	PRACTICE	Directional Possession with End Players. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	PLAY 2	6v6. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Stretch field in possession; support underneath and beyond; avoid everyone coming to the ball.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 7 | Transition & Counterattack

SESSION GOAL: Play forward quickly after regaining

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	PLAY 1	4v4+2 neutrals. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: play forward quickly after regaining. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	PRACTICE	4v4 to Counter Goals. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	PLAY 2	6v6. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: First look forward; support the counter; if forward is closed, secure possession.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 8 | Build from the Back

SESSION GOAL: Create safe options from goalkeeper/defenders

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	PLAY 1	5v5+GK. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: create safe options from goalkeeper/defenders. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	PRACTICE	Build-Out vs 3 Pressers. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
50–70	**PLAY 2**	7v7/8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Create width; central support checks shoulders; goalkeeper is a passing option; don't force the first pass.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 9 | Final Third

SESSION GOAL: Combination play and finishing decisions

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	**PLAY 1**	4v4 to goals. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: combination play and finishing decisions. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	**PRACTICE**	3v2 to Goal. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	**PLAY 2**	6v6/7v7. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Attack with speed; use overlap/wall pass; choose shot, pass or dribble based on defender.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 10 | Game Understanding & Review

SESSION GOAL: Apply principles with less coaching

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–12	**PLAY 1**	4v4 player-led. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
12–25	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: apply principles with less coaching. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
25–50	**PRACTICE**	Scenario Games. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
50–70	**PLAY 2**	Extended match. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
70–75	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Use short scenarios: protecting lead, needing a goal, restart, transition. Players discuss solutions.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

U14 — 10-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

Recommended session: 75–90 min. Technical speed; support angles; team principles; pressing/cover; switching play; final-third decisions; transition and restarts.

At U14, connect individual technique to group and team decisions. Players can handle more tactical information, but the ball and game should still dominate training.

WEEK 1 | Technical Speed

SESSION GOAL: First touch and passing at match tempo

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4+2. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: first touch and passing at match tempo. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Passing Diamond with Pressure. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	PLAY 2	7v7. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Scan before receiving; body shape; quality and speed of pass; support immediately.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 2 | Possession with Purpose

SESSION GOAL: Keep it to go somewhere

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v2 rondo. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: keep it to go somewhere. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	6v3 Directional Possession. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	PLAY 2	7v7. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Create angles; play through or around pressure; recognize when to penetrate.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 3 | Combination Play

SESSION GOAL: Wall passes, overlaps and third-player runs

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4+3. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
		around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: wall passes, overlaps and third-player runs. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	**PRACTICE**	Combination to End Zone. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	**PLAY 2**	7v7. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Timing, disguise, movement after pass, runners attack space rather than the ball.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 4 | Defensive Unit

SESSION GOAL: **Pressure, cover and balance**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	**PLAY 1**	4v4. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: pressure, cover and balance. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	**PRACTICE**	4v4+GK Defending Zones. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	**PLAY 2**	7v7. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Nearest pressures; cover protects inside; weak side tucks in; team moves together.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 5 | Pressing & Winning It Back

SESSION GOAL: **Recognize pressing cues**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	**PLAY 1**	5v5 transition. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: recognize pressing cues. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	**PRACTICE**	6v6 Pressing Game. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	**PLAY 2**	7v7. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Press on poor touch/backward pass/sideline; teammates squeeze space; don't press alone.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 6 | Switching the Point

SESSION GOAL: **Escape pressure and attack weak side**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4+4 outside. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: escape pressure and attack weak side. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Three-Zone Switch Game. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	PLAY 2	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Scan far side; support behind ball; circulate quickly; accelerate after switch.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 7 | Transition to Attack

SESSION GOAL: **Counter quickly when numbers favor us**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4+2. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: counter quickly when numbers favor us. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	5v4 Wave Counterattack. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	PLAY 2	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: First pass/touch forward if available; wide runners sprint; finish before defense recovers.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 8 | Final Third & Finishing

SESSION GOAL: **Create high-quality chances**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4 to goal. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: create high-quality chances. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	4v3 + GK to Goal. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
60–82	PLAY 2	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Width, combination, cutback, far-post run, attack rebounds.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 9 | Restarts & Game Management

SESSION GOAL: Corners, free kicks, throw-ins and organization

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4 restart game. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: corners, free kicks, throw-ins and organization. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Restart Circuit. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	PLAY 2	8v8 scenario game. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Keep routines simple; know roles; restart quickly when advantage exists; communicate.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 10 | Competitive Match Play

SESSION GOAL: Apply principles independently

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v5 tournament. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: apply principles independently. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Scenario Challenge. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–82	PLAY 2	Extended 8v8/9v9. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
82–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Players solve game problems; coach between rounds; reinforce respect, leadership and team standards.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

U16 — 10-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

Recommended session: 80–90 min. Quality at game speed; possession with purpose; tactical roles; pressing/compactness; counterattack; finishing; game management and leadership.

At U16, demand technical quality and decision-making at game speed. Tactical concepts should be trained through realistic games, transitions and scenarios rather than isolated running.

WEEK 1 | Technical Quality at Speed

SESSION GOAL: Passing, receiving and scanning under pressure

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v5+2. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: passing, receiving and scanning under pressure. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Rondo to Directional Target. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	PLAY 2	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Scan early; receive across body; play at match speed; communicate before ball arrives.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 2 | Possession & Penetration

SESSION GOAL: Keep possession with intent to break lines

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v2/6v3. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: keep possession with intent to break lines. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	7v4 Directional Possession. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	PLAY 2	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Create overloads; recognize third-player option; break a line when picture is on.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 3 | Playing Through Pressure

SESSION GOAL: Support, rotation and escape routes

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v5+3. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
		around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: support, rotation and escape routes. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	**PRACTICE**	Three-Zone Build Game. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	**PLAY 2**	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Offer high/low/wide options; rotate without crowding; use goalkeeper/back pass when needed.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 4 | Defensive Compactness

SESSION GOAL: Pressure, cover, balance and line movement

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	**PLAY 1**	5v5. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: pressure, cover, balance and line movement. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	**PRACTICE**	7v6 Defensive Block. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	**PLAY 2**	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Protect central space; distances between lines; press together; recover goal-side.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 5 | Pressing Triggers

SESSION GOAL: Coordinated high/mid press

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	**PLAY 1**	5v5 transition. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	**Technical Activation**	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: coordinated high/mid press. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	**PRACTICE**	6v6+GK Pressing Game. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	**PLAY 2**	9v9. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	**Wrap**	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Trigger on poor touch, square/back pass, isolated receiver; cover behind pressure; force predictable play.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 6 | Counterattack & Counterpress

SESSION GOAL: **First actions after turnover**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4+4. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: first actions after turnover. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	6v5 Transition Waves. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	PLAY 2	8v8. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Win it: first look forward. Lose it: immediate pressure if compact; otherwise recover shape.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 7 | Final Third Combination

SESSION GOAL: **Create and finish against organized defense**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	4v4 to goal. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: create and finish against organized defense. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	6v5 + GK Final-Third Game. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	PLAY 2	9v9. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Width to stretch; runners between/behind; third-man movement; cutbacks; attack second balls.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 8 | Switching & Changing Tempo

SESSION GOAL: **Move opponent, then exploit space**

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v5+4 outside. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: move opponent, then exploit space. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Three-Zone Switch & Attack. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
60–85	PLAY 2	9v9. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Patient circulation can create the moment to accelerate; recognize weak-side opportunity.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 9 | Restarts & Match Scenarios

SESSION GOAL: Set pieces and game management

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v5 restart game. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: set pieces and game management. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Corner/Free-Kick/Throw-In Circuit. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	PLAY 2	9v9 scenarios. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Simple roles, clear communication, quick vs slow restart decisions, protect transitions.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

WEEK 10 | Competitive Match & Leadership

SESSION GOAL: Independent execution and reflection

TIME	PHASE	WHAT TO RUN / COACHING DETAIL
0–15	PLAY 1	5v5 player-led. Set up a small field and get players playing immediately. Use balanced teams and spare balls around the field. Avoid stoppages unless safety requires it.
15–30	Technical Activation	Ball/passing activation connected to the theme: independent execution and reflection. Keep players moving and use both feet. Add passive then active pressure as players succeed.
30–60	PRACTICE	Captain-Led Scenario Blocks. Organize the activity so players repeatedly face the week's soccer problem. Start simple, then progress by changing space, numbers, direction or pressure.
60–85	PLAY 2	Extended 9v9/11v11 if numbers allow. Play toward goals/targets with normal soccer decisions. Remove most restrictions. Use brief praise or questions tied to the theme rather than constant stoppages.
85–90	Wrap	Water, quick check-in and team cheer. Ask one player to name something the team learned or improved. End with a positive recognition.

COACHING POINTS: Players lead organization and halftime discussion; coach observes, asks questions and gives concise feedback.

COACH TOOL: Start with the activity as written. If success is too high or too low, change one STEP variable. Finish by asking one Good-Better-Best question and recognizing one player/team behavior connected to the theme.

QUICK DRILL LIBRARY

Sharks & Minnows With a Ball

Best for: U8–U10

15x20-yard grid. Every player except 1–2 sharks has a ball. Dribblers cross the grid while sharks try to win/kick balls out. Eliminated players can become sharks or perform a quick ball task and re-enter.

Coach it: Close control in traffic; change speed/direction; protect the ball; head up.

1v1 Four-Gate Game

Best for: U8–U12

Place four small cone gates around a grid. Two players compete for one ball and score by dribbling through any gate. Restart quickly with a new pair/ball.

Coach it: Attack open gate; disguise; accelerate; defender stays balanced.

Pass-and-Move Gates

Best for: U8–U12

Pairs pass through scattered cone gates. After a successful pass through a gate, both players move to a new gate. Progress to a time challenge or passive defender.

Coach it: Accurate inside-foot pass; receive into next action; move after pass; communication.

2v1 to Goal

Best for: U10–U14

Two attackers go to goal against one defender. Start from 20–30 yards depending on age. Rotate defender. Progress by adding a recovering defender.

Coach it: Commit defender; support angle; timing/weight of pass; finish decisively.

4v2 Rondo

Best for: U10–U16

Four attackers around a square keep the ball from two defenders. Adjust grid size to level. Rotate defenders after a win, time period or set number of passes.

Coach it: Scan; open body; support angles; quick play; defenders work together.

Directional Possession

Best for: U12–U16

Teams keep possession but score by playing into an end player/end zone. Direction makes the activity resemble the game. Add neutrals if possession is too difficult.

Coach it: Possession with purpose; play through/around pressure; movement beyond the ball.

Transition to Two Goals

Best for: U10–U16

Two teams play to goals. When a team scores or loses the ball, a new ball can enter quickly from coach/keeper to create an immediate transition.

Coach it: React first; attack space after winning; pressure/recover after losing.

Three-Zone Switch Game

Best for: U12–U16

Divide field into three vertical channels. Team keeps possession and earns a point for moving the ball from one outside channel to the other before attacking goal.

Coach it: Width; support behind ball; scan weak side; change tempo after switch.

Pressing Game

Best for: **U14–U16**

Directional 5v5/6v6. Award a bonus point for winning the ball in the attacking half and scoring quickly. Remove bonus if players chase individually.

Coach it: Recognize trigger; first defender presses; teammates squeeze and cover; stay compact.

Scenario Game

Best for: **U12–U16**

Play a normal game but give teams a situation: one goal down with five minutes, protecting a lead, restart from throw-in, or playing with a temporary numerical advantage.

Coach it: Communication; decision-making; tempo; game management; player leadership.

GAME-DAY COACHING CHECKLIST

- Arrive early enough to identify your field, inspect safety and organize substitutes.
- Use a short ball-based warm-up; avoid exhausting players before kickoff.
- Confirm goalkeeper/position plan and substitutions before the game when possible.
- Give players one or two simple team reminders — not a pregame tactical lecture.
- Track playing time so all players receive fair and meaningful minutes.
- Coach your own team; do not address opposing players or challenge the referee.
- At halftime: water first, ask players what they see, then give 1–2 actionable points.
- After the game: thank the referee and opponent, recognize effort and sportsmanship, then move on from the score.

COACHING LANGUAGE THAT HELPS

LESS HELPFUL	PLAYER-CENTERED ALTERNATIVE
Instead of: “BOOT IT!”	Try: “Can you find space or a teammate?”
Instead of: “DON’T LOSE IT!”	Try: “Scan — what options do you have?”
Instead of: “YOU HAVE TO PASS!”	Try: “What did the defender give you?”
Instead of: “GET RID OF IT!”	Try: “Can you play away from pressure?”
Instead of: “WHY DID YOU DO THAT?”	Try: “What did you see? What could you try next time?”
Instead of constant instructions	Try: praise, a short cue, or a question — then let the player play.

5-MINUTE COACH REFLECTION

After practice or a game, take five minutes before moving on. This is not a report card; it is a quick way to make the next session better.

ASK YOURSELF	QUICK NOTE
Did the players spend most of the session playing or actively working with the ball?	Yes / Needs improvement
Was the challenge appropriate - enough success without making it automatic?	Too easy / About right / Too hard
Did I ask useful questions and give players time to solve problems?	One example:
Did every player feel included and receive positive feedback?	Who needs more connection next time?
What is one thing I will keep and one thing I will change next week?	Keep: ____ Change: ____

RESOURCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

US Club Soccer - Foundational Playbook 9-10 (2025). Source supplied by Virginia Legacy. Concepts adapted; proprietary pages, illustrations and wording are not reproduced.

This handbook was developed for Virginia Legacy Recreational Soccer using the club’s existing recreational handbook and public club philosophy as its foundation. It also adapts coaching concepts from the US Club Soccer Foundational Playbook for 9-10 year-olds - including positive Good-Better-Best feedback, checking for understanding, a Belong-Activity-Games-Shoutouts session rhythm, familiar core activities, and STEP activity modification - into original Virginia Legacy language and a broader U8-U16 recreational curriculum. Public U.S. Soccer and SoccerDrive resources informed the player-centered, game-based session design and age-appropriate activity selection.

Virginia Legacy Soccer Club — Recreational Soccer — Program philosophy: safe, non-competitive, progressive, fun and instructional; age-appropriate progression.

https://www.valegacysoccer.com/rec

Virginia Legacy Soccer Club — Advanced Development Program — Player-centric development, creative thinking, problem solving, fundamental skills and small-sided games.

https://www.valegacysoccer.com/advanced-development-program

U.S. Soccer — Play-Practice-Play — Player-centered session structure emphasizing game-like learning and player problem solving.

U.S. Soccer: Five Things to Know About Play-Practice-Play (ussoccer.com)

U.S. Soccer Learning Center — Plan and Create a Training Session — Age-appropriate, game-based activity design and adjustment of space/numbers.

U.S. Soccer Learning Center: Plan and Create a Training Session (learning.ussoccer.com)

U.S. Soccer — Player Development Initiatives — Small-sided standards and development-first approach.

https://www.ussoccer.com/stories/2017/08/five-things-to-know-about-us-soccer-player-development-initiatives

SoccerDrive — U8 Soccer Drills — Individual ball skills, 1v1/2v2 and fun-focused activity ideas.

SoccerDrive: U8 Soccer Drills and Practice Plans (soccerdrive.com)

SoccerDrive — U10 Soccer Drills — Ball control, passing, receiving, shooting and small-group play.

SoccerDrive: U10 Soccer Drills and Practice Plans (soccerdrive.com)

SoccerDrive — U12 Soccer Drills — Rondos, possession, transition and small-sided activity library.

SoccerDrive: U12 Soccer Drills and Practice Plans (soccerdrive.com)

SoccerDrive — U14 Soccer Drills — Possession, combination play, transition, defending and finishing ideas.

SoccerDrive: U14 Soccer Drills and Practice Plans (soccerdrive.com)

SoccerDrive — U16 Soccer Drills — Technical fundamentals at speed, tactical play, possession and competitive small-sided games.

SoccerDrive: U16 Soccer Drills and Practice Plans (soccerdrive.com)

FINAL REMINDER

Players may forget the score. They will remember how soccer felt.

Create a safe place to compete, learn, make mistakes, solve problems and have fun.

Thank you for coaching — you make the recreational program possible.

Source note: US Club Soccer Foundational Playbook 9-10 supplied by the user; U.S. Soccer Coaching Education / Learning Center; SoccerDrive age-level drill and practice-plan libraries. All session plans in this handbook are adapted and rewritten for Virginia Legacy recreational use.