

# Massachusetts Premier Soccer Youth Development Academy

## U8 Coaching Manual 2005



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## U8 Coaching Guidelines

**Aim:** To allow players to develop in a **SAFE, FUN** and **EDUCATIONAL** environment.

### **Objectives:**

- 1.) Keep things brief and simple! Remember players at this level have a very short attention span. Be careful with the language you use when communicating with young players – always be as positive as possible and include all players.
- 2.) Make things FUN! Your energy and enthusiasm need to come through in every practice. Allow players as much active time with a ball each as possible.
- 3.) Use your imagination! A successful coach with this age range is one who can make his/her session relate to how the young player views the world.
- 4.) **ALL** players should be given plenty of opportunities to succeed and **ALL** players need to be kept motivated and challenged. Come down to their level and be part of their world.

To succeed in coaching players in this age range, you must have:

- **Patience** – they will not understand things right away. Although young they want and need you to be in charge. Be firm with what your expectations are but remember you are dealing with young children.
- **Flexibility** – recognize when something is not working and change it.
- **A sense of humor** – laugh with your players.



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- **A very positive attitude** – give generous praise often.
- **And lots and lots of energy** – participate in practice.



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## Training Session Breakdown

### **1.) WARM-UP 10mins**

Begin with a **FUN** activity. This should prepare the players mentally and physically for the rest of the practice.

### **2.) TECHNICAL EXERCISES 30mins**

Use two technical exercises to promote handling the ball with both feet. These games are designed to be high energy, fun activities that reinforce the basic techniques.

### **3.) SMALL-SIDED GAMES 30mins**

Each practice should conclude with a small-sided game. The size of the field should be about 40x30 and the teams should be 4v4 with a keeper/sweeper.

### **4.) COOL DOWN 5mins**

Spend five minutes at the end of each session making sure that all of your players enjoyed themselves. Do a fun cool down, reinforce basic technical points, have a group huddle and say goodbye.



# MASS PREMIER SOCCER LESSON PLAN

<b>Age Group:</b>	<b>U8</b>
<b>Theme of Session:</b>	<b>Dribbling (Pirates of Soccer Island) – Week 1.</b>

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><b><u>Soccer Island</u></b> - The players all dribble within Soccer Island, 30x20 yard area. When the coach (Head Pirate) calls out a part of the body the players need to stop the ball and put that part of the body onto the ball e.g. foot, knee, nose etc. You can add into the equation the 1<sup>st</sup> player to put the body part on the ball earns a point. Start off with one body part then you can add in two, three, four parts at the same time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small touches on the ball</li> <li>• Have players look for the biggest space to control the ball in – heads up!</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Sailing the 7 seas</u></b> – The coach introduces the players to three different ships. The 1<sup>st</sup> pirate ship is the Jolly Rodger (slow ship), 2<sup>nd</sup> ship is the Sloop (medium ship) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ship is the Black Pearl (fast ship). There are therefore three speeds that the players need to work at and the coach should continue to change the working speeds. Introduce the Drag back Move to change direction if the ‘sea police’ come and chase them!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the ball the ‘ships wheel’ and all pirates want to keep the wheel close to them</li> <li>• Drag back – place the sole of the foot on the ball, drag the ball back behind you, turn to follow the ball</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Black Beard the Pirate</u></b> – We have the coach, initially, as the catcher – Black Beard. Before the game show all the players the Big Toe Little Toe move. If Black Beard places their cone (sword) on top of a player’s ball then they must go to the side of the area and complete 5 Drag backs and 5 Big Toes Little Toes (walk the plank) If the player can complete a move in front of Black Beard then you will freeze Black Beard for 3 fast seconds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big Toe Little Toe – soft touch with the Big Toe, harder touch with the Little Toe. Same foot.</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p><b><u>4 v 4</u></b> – Play in 40x30 with a GK/Sweeper. Only one player should be allowed to use their hands BUT encourage them to play in a more forward role as a sweeper. Have a supply of balls at the side to keep the game flowing, and to try and limit stoppages</p>	
5 minutes	<p><b><u>Cool Down</u></b> – <b>Follow the leader.</b> Bring all the players in and discuss the session on what they learnt. Finish off with a big group huddle.</p>	

<b>EVALUATION:</b>	
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# MASS PREMIER SOCCER LESSON PLAN

**Age Group:**

**U8**

**Theme of Session:**

**Dribbling (Lucky Numbers) – Week 2.**

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><b>Number Cruncher</b> – Players all dribble around in a 20x20 area. On the Coaches command of 'Kick out' the coach goes into the square and attempts to kick out all of the players balls from the square. Once your ball has been kicked out of the square you become a catcher as well. The last person in the square with their ball is the winner and starts the next game as the catcher. Progression to only use one foot to dribble.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can they use the Drag back to avoid having their ball kicked out</li> <li>• Keep the ball close</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b>9 Lives</b> – All players have a ball and start off with 9 Lives. They will lose two of those Lives if they are dribbling too slow, collide with someone else or go outside of the 20 x20 square. They must attempt to perform a turn or move every five touches. Progression is to introduce the Inside Cut and Outside Cut. The Coach can also deduct a point if when he freezes the game the players are able to touch each other. Reward players by giving them Lives if they work hard, do a move well, or are in the biggest space when you freeze the game.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inside Cut – place the non-kicking foot by the side of the ball, pivot on the non-kicking foot, until facing the other way, use the inside of the foot to take the ball away</li> <li>• Outside Cut – Place the non-kicking foot away from the ball, with the kicking foot flick the ball in the opposite direction with the outside of the foot, pivot is on the kicking foot.</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b>The Lottery</b> – Players are moving around inside the 30x25 yard area, and when the Coach calls out a number they have 5 seconds to get into a group of that number. If they are not in a group of that number by the time the Coach gets to zero then those players have to do a FUN activity. Ensure the players are still trying to complete a turn or move every five touches. Progression: Add other fun actions such as piggy-backs or lying on their backs/stomachs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage width and length by explaining the diamond shape.</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p><b>4 v 4</b> – Play in 40x30 area with a GK/Sweeper. Only one player should be allowed to use their hands BUT encourage them to play in a more forward role as a sweeper. Have a supply of balls at the side to keep the game flowing, and to try and limit stoppages</p>	
5 minutes	<p><b>Cool Down – Follow the leader</b> Have a question and answer session with the players about the days session and then finish off with a group huddle.</p>	

**EVALUATION:**



# MASS PREMIER SOCCER LESSON PLAN

<b>Age Group:</b>	<b>U8</b>
<b>Theme of Session:</b>	<b>Dribbling (Animania) – Week 3.</b>

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><b><u>The Zoo</u></b> – Have your 30x30 yard area covered with different colored cones (if possible). Each cone is a different area of the zoo. All the players have a ball each (a camera) and start off by dribbling anywhere in the area <u>without</u> their ball touching any of the cones.</p> <p>Have the players then dribble to the cones (i.e. the monkeys, the lions etc), touch them (take a picture) and then change direction.</p> <p>Then progress it so players must do a specific turn/move when they approach the cones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light touches, keeping the ball under control</li> <li>• Dribble with their head up</li> <li>• Don't go to the same cones, use the whole area</li> <li>• Complete the move about 1 yard before the cones</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Lion King</u></b> – Each player has a ball and also a pinney. The pinney is used as a tail and is tucked into the back of the player's shorts. Players are lions with a tail. On the Coaches command the game begins and all players are allowed to steal any other player's pinney/tail. Once the tail has been stolen they must then put it in beside there other tail. At the end of the game the winner is the lion with the most tails in the back of their shorts – the Lion King. They may only steal a tail if they have control of their soccer ball. If a player loses their tail, they can still word hard to get one back – play for two minutes at a time. Progression: use one foot only to dribble, if player performs turns they are safe for 3 seconds...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head up to look for tails to steal and to stop your tail being stole</li> <li>• Soft touches on the ball</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Dog Catcher</u></b> – With a partner and a ball each. Name the players e.g. Dog and Dog Catcher. On the Coaches command the first player dribbles and on his second command the second player dribbles and their job is to try and catch their partner and stay beside them. When the Coach freezes the game, if player No.2 can touch their partner then they win a point, if they can't touch them then their partner wins the point. Change positions. After five games, change partners – keep your record. Progression: use specific turns each go, only use one foot when dribbling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running at pace with the ball under control</li> <li>• Head up to find and follow partner</li> <li>• Use moves/turns to change direction and lose your partner</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p><b><u>4 v 4</u></b> - Small sided game with a goalkeeper/sweeper. Have a supply of balls to limit the stoppages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A successful turn or move gains your team an extra goal.</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p><b><u>Cool Down</u></b> – <b>Follow the leader.</b> Bring all the players in and discuss the session on what they learnt. Finish off with a big group huddle.</p>	

<b>EVALUATION:</b>	
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# MASS PREMIER SOCCER LESSON PLAN

<b>Age Group:</b>	<b>U8</b>
<b>Theme of Session:</b>	<b>Dribbling (Scary....)– Week 4.</b>

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><b><u>Fungus the Bogeyman</u></b> – All the players (sleepy kids) have a ball except the two Bogeymen (catchers). The Bogeymen have 2 cones which act as teeth. If the Bogeymen manage to put their teeth around the ball then the sleepy kids have to go to monster land (separate area to the side) and balance the ball on their foot for 3 seconds to get themselves back into dreamland (the coned area).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the ball close</li> <li>• Head up to see the Sharks</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Alien Attack</u></b> – Each player has a ball. Coach shall show the Cruyff Turn. Give the players a couple of minutes to practice the move.</p> <p>Alien Attack - Have two catchers (Aliens) who must put their foot on top of the ball to catch the players. If the players are caught they need to go to the outside of the square and do three Cruyff turns to get back in. Progression: If the players do a Cruyff turn in front of the Aliens then they freeze the aliens for 3 quick seconds. Change the catchers after every couple of minutes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cruyff Turn – Place the non-kicking foot at the side of the ball, the kicking foot is placed at 90 degrees to the non-kicking foot, using the inside of the kicking foot to push the ball back in the opposite direction, pivot on the non-kicking foot.</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Ghost Alleys</u></b> – Work in groups of 3 or 4 maximum.. Start off with the players dribbling straight up the side and round the top cone, then in and out the cones on the way up and finally in and out both on the way up and back (cones act as ghosts which players must avoid!) Progression: vary types of dribbling, inside of foot/outside of foot, sole of foot, vary dribbling speeds...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use both feet</li> <li>• Use all parts of both feet</li> <li>• Keep the ball close to the body with small touches</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p><b><u>4 v 4</u></b> – Small sided game with a goalkeeper/sweeper. Only the one player is allowed to use their hands. Have a supply of balls to limit the stoppages. Players should be able to set themselves up in the diamond formation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must beat a player before they can pass or shoot</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p><b><u>Cool Down</u></b> - Bring all the players in and discuss the session on what they learnt. Finish off with a big group huddle.</p>	

<b>EVALUATION:</b>
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# MASS PREMIER SOCCER LESSON PLAN

<b>Age Group:</b>	<b>U8</b>
<b>Theme of Session:</b>	<b>Passing (The Simpson's)– Week 5.</b>

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><b><u>Mr Burns and the puppies</u></b> – All players are puppies, use pinnies as tails. All puppies have a ball and are dribbling around inside the area (Springfield). Coach starts as the Mr Burns. Whenever Mr. Burns passes his ball and it hits a puppy's ball the puppy becomes Mr Burns helper. Last two to survive start the next game as Mr Burns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep head up at all time</li> <li>• Look for space when running</li> <li>• Keep ball close when dribbling</li> <li>• Accuracy of pass</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Bart slingshot</u></b> – Standing approx 10 yards apart with one ball between two. The player without the ball opens their legs, shoulder width apart, and the player with the ball (Bart) attempts to pass the ball through their legs (with his slingshot – foot). If they are successful then they call out “Aye-Carumba” if they miss then they shout ‘Doh’. They take a shot each and the player with the most ‘Aye Carumba’s” at the end of the game wins. Progression: can only pass with one foot, pass with the other foot, stand further apart.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass with the inside of the foot</li> <li>• Strike the ball in the centre</li> <li>• Place the non-kicking foot to the side of the ball</li> <li>• Correct weight of the pass</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Bart and Millhouse</u></b>– In pairs with a ball each. One player (Bart) passes their ball to an open space and their partner (Millhouse) attempts to pass their ball off of it. If they hit the ball then they get 1 point. Change after each shot. Have the players vary the length of pass required. First player to five points wins the game. Progression: Once they have completed the game change and have them play with their weak foot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct weight of pass</li> <li>• Accuracy of the pass</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p><b>4 v 4</b> – Inside an area 40 x 30 yards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• must pass the ball once before they can shoot at goal</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p><b><u>Cool Down – Team Jog</u></b> Have a question and answer session with the players about the days session and then finish off with a group huddle.</p>	

<b>EVALUATION:</b>
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# MASS PREMIER SOCCER LESSON PLAN

**Age Group:**

**U8**

**Theme of Session:**

**Passing (Under the Sea) – Week 6.**

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><b><u>The Seal Show</u></b> – In 2's, passing and moving freely around the sea. When the Coach (seal trainer) calls out a number the players (seals) need to play that amount of passes between themselves while making seal noises. Progression: It is a race and you are looking for the first team to complete it. Lifts the tempo instantly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small, accurate passes needed</li> <li>• Play with Inside of your foot</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Going Fishing</u></b>– Players are in twos around 10 yards apart. Have all the group lined up on the same line. Each player has a goal 1 yard wide which their partner has to try and pass the ball through, they <u>cannot</u> stop the ball from going through the goal. Progressions: At the end of the game have the player with the most 'bites' (goals) move on to play another winner. Vary foot, can only use right/left.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass with the side of the foot</li> <li>• Use a locked ankle</li> <li>• Follow through in the direction of the pass</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Shark Attack</u></b> – All players (fish) start on the end line with a ball. Coach (Shark) starts on the side with a ball. Players must dribble from one end of the sea to the other without being hit below the knee with the Shark's ball. When a player gets hit with the ball they join the coach on the side and become a Shark as well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the non-kicking foot pointing in the direction of the pass</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p><b><u>4 v 4</u></b> – Inside an area 40 x 30 yards with goals three yards wide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must make two passes before they can score</li> <li>• Four complete passes also counts as a goal</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p><b><u>Cool Down</u></b> – <b>Team Jog</b> Bring the players in and have a question and answer session on the things learnt during the session and set their homework for the next week. Finish off with a group huddle.</p>	

**EVALUATION:**





# MASS PREMIER SOCCER LESSON PLAN

<b>Age Group:</b>	<b>U8</b>
<b>Theme of Session:</b>	<b>Shooting (Boston Sports) – Week 8.</b>

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><b><u>Go Red Sox -</u></b> Have players in pairs, standing opposite each other with one ball between 2. Each player is standing in a small goal. Have players striking the ball back and forwards towards each other trying to score past their partner. Use Red Sox pitchers as different stikes of the ball</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Curt Schilling – fast ball, strike with laces</li> <li>2. Derek Lowe – accurate, strike with inside</li> <li>3. Tim Wakefield – curve ball, strike with outside</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strike the ball with the laces</li> <li>• Various shooting techniques</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>Bulldogs Shoot Out -</u></b> players are split into 2 groups. 2 goals are set up about 20 yds away from each other. One team starts at one end, one at the other. 5 balls are lined up on one side of the half way point and 5 on the other. When coach shouts 'Go' player 1 from team 1 runs to one line of balls and shoots towards the oppositions goal, player 1 from team 2 is the GK for that go. As soon as player 1 from team 1 has had a shot the GK (player 1 from team 2) runs and strikes a ball from the other line towards the oppositions goal (with player 1 from team 1 the GK in the other goal). This continues until all the balls have gone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look to shoot early</li> <li>• Various techniques</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p><b><u>NE Patriots Challenge -</u></b> Inside a 40x30 area, 5 cones with a ball balanced on top at each end of the field. Players play regular soccer inside the area but instead of shooting towards a goal they try and knock the balls off the cones. Every time they do this they get a touchdown for their team!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strike with the Laces</li> <li>• Keep your head down over the ball</li> <li>• Shooting Accuracy</li> <li>• Follow through the shot</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p><b><u>4 v 4 –</u></b> Inside an area 40 x 30 yards with goals three yards wide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoot as early as possible</li> <li>• 2 goals for a goal shot from their own half</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p><b><u>Cool Down – Team Jog</u></b> Bring the players in and have a question and answer session on the things learnt during the session and set their homework for the next week. Finish off with a group huddle.</p>	

<b>EVALUATION:</b>	
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## ADDENDUM

### **Small-sided Games – 4v4**

Every practice should conclude with a small-sided game. Remember that the game is the best teacher of all. Your main aim is to create a **SAFE, FUN, EDUCATIONAL** environment in which your players can develop. This should be the largest portion of your practice – about thirty minutes in length.

- 1.) Field Size: 40x30yds
- 2.) Play with a keeper/sweeper who may use both hands and feet. Encourage this player to be an active part of the game.
- 3.) Equipment: Use cones to clearly mark out the area of the field.
- 4.) Use upright cones or flags as goals and place them about 6 feet apart.
- 5.) Use pinneys to avoid confusion amongst players.
- 6.) Play with a SIZE 3 ball.
- 7.) Be flexible with your playing time– your main aim is that all players have a positive experience. You can vary the playing periods and make sure to allow time for substitutions and water breaks.
- 8.) Use the parents – have the parents stand around the perimeter of the field and stop the ball.

- 4v4 will promote players touching the ball and being involved as much as possible.
- Keep instructions clear and to a minimum and use your enthusiasm to keep all players motivated.
- Give the teams names and generate excitement without putting emphasis on outcome.
- Always stress the importance of fair play and sportsmanship and have the players shake hands/high five at the end of each game.

By the end of your session make sure that all your players have Achieved some measure of success. Call the team in for a group huddle to say goodbye.



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## COACHING GUIDELINES

There are four main pillars of soccer, which are evident at every level of the game – **TECHNICAL, TACTICAL, PHYSICAL and PSYCHOLOGICAL.**

Clearly there will be different emphasis placed on each one depending on the age and ability of the player.

**It is important that a coach has clear goals for himself/herself and for his/her team prior to working with any age group.**

### **1.) Technical**

Scheme of work	-	8 week program
Themes	-	
Weeks 1-4	-	Dribbling
Weeks 5-7	-	Passing
Week 8	-	Shooting

**Week 1** - Small, soft touches on the ball. Keep their head up while dribbling. The drag back – place sole of foot on ball and drag ball back behind you, turn to follow ball.

**Week 2** – Keep the ball close to them using small touches on the ball. Dribbling with their head up. Inside Cut – place the non-kicking foot by the side of the ball, pivot on the non-kicking foot, until facing the other way, use the inside of the foot to take the ball away Outside Cut – Place the non-kicking foot away from the ball, with the kicking foot flick the ball in the opposite direction with the outside of the foot, pivot is on the kicking foot.

**Week 3** – Use both feet, keep the ball close to them and dribble with their head up. Running at pace with the ball, maintaining control and keeping head up. Use of previous moves learnt.



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**Week 4** – Using both feet and all parts of feet with small touches and dribbling with their head up. Introduce Cruyff turn – place the non-kicking foot at the side of the ball, the kicking foot is placed at 90 degrees to the non-kicking foot, using the inside of the kicking foot to push the ball back in the opposite directions, pivot the non-kicking foot.

**Week 5** – Introduce passing. Basics including using the inside of the foot, keeping non-kicking foot by the side of the ball. Correct weight of pass also introduced.

**Week 6** – Passing the ball with the side of the foot, locking your ankle and keeping your eye on the ball. Follow through in the direction of the pass, also having non-kicking foot pointed in the direction of the pass. Introduce using all parts of foot to control the ball.

**Week 7** – Pass with the side of the foot, get close to the ball AND watch the foot making contact with the ball and strike the centre of the ball.

**Week 8** – Strike the ball with the Laces and have your head over the top of the ball. Looking to shoot early, following through the shot to add power. Practice all the moves taught and all the top tips given over the eight weeks.

## 2.) Tactical

- Basic principles of attack/defense. When attacking we want field to be as big as possible and when defending we want it as small as possible.



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- There should be no emphasis on playing set positions at this age range.
- The rules of the game should not take over the game. Restarts should be done quickly with players encouraged to get the ball in play quickly with their feet.

### 3.) Psychological

- The main psychological goal for players at this stage of their development is to have **FUN**.
- Coaches need to ensure that their players receive an exciting and positive introduction to the game of soccer to ensure future participation.
- There should be absolutely no emphasis placed on winning games.

### 4.) Physical

- Players at this age find it fun to be active. Keep them moving with a ball as much as possible.
- Any fitness that they receive should be as a result of playing the game of soccer. Use soccer games to improve balance and coordination.