

## Game Day Coaching Guide

for the parent/volunteer coach

### General Principles

Topic	Action
Positioning	Don't keep defenders/backers behind the halfway line! If the ball travels into the attacking half, have EVERYONE (except GK) get up into the half.  Likewise, make the forwards get back and defend!
Spacing	Don't yell "spread out." Remind specific players of their specific positions.
Goalkeepers	Rotate players to play GK. If they are uncomfortable, spend a practice or two on it. And even if they want to play GK exclusively, they need to try the field.
Player Positions	Players should play more than one position throughout the season to maximize learning and opportunity for success. Rotate either within the games or from one game to another.
Player Feedback	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Praise effort and ideas, not just results. The right idea to pass is as important as actually executing it.</li> <li>2. Give praise for more than goals – who assisted it? Did other make the right kinds of runs? What about the player who stole the ball?</li> <li>3. Make sure everyone is getting some sort of positive praise throughout the game.</li> </ol>

### Before the Game

Topic	Action	Example(s)
Game Strategy	Have a focus/goal for the day based on practice themes	Execute a move as many times as possible, make 10 accurate passes, find space (with or without ball), shoot as soon as possible, etc.
Substitutions	Have a pre-determined lineup and rotation of players (adjustments might be necessary)	Subs will rotate every 5 mins; players will switch positions/spots after a period of time
Formation & Positions	Suggested Formations: 4v4: diamond (1-2-1) 6v6: Two backs, one midfielder, two forwards (2-1-2) 7v7: Two backs, three midfielders, one forward (2-3-1) 8v8: Two backs, three midfielders, two forwards (2-3-2) 9v9: Three backs, three midfielders, two forwards (3-3-2) 11v11: Three backs, four midfielders, three forwards (3-4-3)	Illustrate the formation/position to players & explain/review roles before entering/beginning the game
Warm-up	Do an activity or two that gets the kids active and reinforces your practice themes and/or game's strategic focus/goal	Tag, dribbling, and/or passing games that involve significant movement
Pre-game Talk	Set the lineup and go over the 1 <sup>st</sup> half focus/goal	Player rotations (see above), which player(s) are playing GK, attempt a skill a certain amount of time (see above)

### During the Game

Topic	Action	Example(s)
Game Strategy	Stay focused on the goal and season themes	We cannot fix everything – take it a step at a time and positively reinforce the focus/goal
Substitutions	Stick to the planned rotation, despite the score (unless extenuating circumstances occur)	Extenuating circumstances: injuries, absences, behavioral issues – NOT mistakes or score of the game
Coaching	Be selective, don't try to fix everything – DON'T MAKE DECISIONS for the players (it is distracting, deters learning)	Stick to reminders of strategy, positive praise, positional reminders – more info can be shared when the player is off the field
Teaching Positions	Use a visual and consistently reinforce – before game, before subbing in, when coaching player on bench	Draw on white board, point to areas of field, use cones/objects in shape of team
Half-time Talk	Review how strategic focus/goal went – adjust for second half; set new lineup & rotation if necessary	Accomplished goal = make new one or make existing one more difficult  Did not accomplish goal = discuss how to accomplish and try again
Lopsided Scores	Shift the focus from the score – DISCREETLY, without embarrassing losing team	<b>Winning by a lot:</b> create a condition before scoring (must make 6 passes before shooting, can only shoot from distance, must beat someone with a specific move before shooting, can only score from a cross, etc.)  <b>Losing by a lot:</b> focus on what team did positively, turn into life lesson about resilience and bouncing back from setbacks

### After the Game

Topic	Action	Example(s)
Post-game Talk	Keep it short – 2 minutes or less!	Review how strategic focus/goal went, praise/comment on effort/work ethic, remind of next practice