



DCFC 7U/8U REC COACHING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering your time and effort to be a rec coach! This coaching guide is designed to make it as easy as possible for you to deliver a fun-filled soccer experience for your players. Please use the games inside to prepare for your practices. We hope you'll enjoy coaching soccer and being a role model for the kids on your team. Always encourage your players to tell their parents about the skills they learn in your session and to practice them at home.

FUN, FUN FUN!

Your players are extremely young, but by participating in your practices, they will learn new social *and* soccer skills, develop their mobility, and get a small taste of competition. Most important of all is that our players have lots and lots of fun! With this in mind, create a positive environment in your practices by considering the following:

- Getting the players touching the ball as much as possible.
- Being super-positive and projecting your voice and personality.
- Always emphasizing the things your players did well.
- Praising the team as a whole for their effort.
- Talking to your players individually about how they are improving by practicing.
- Encouraging your players to help their teammates and communicate in a positive way.
- Insisting your players be respectful toward you, the opposition, referees, and parents.

COACHING YOUR OWN CHILD

It's a great thing to be able to coach your own child in soccer. Parent volunteers are essential to youth sports, and soccer is no exception! There are a couple things to think about that make it easy to avoid any potential problems coaching your own child:

- Treat your child in the same way as any other player.
- Don't ask any more or any less than you would another player on the team.
- Ask your child to treat you as their coach like any other player. If they call you 'coach' during practice and games you've made a great start!

HOW TO USE THE PRACTICE PLANS

You can make games last about 10 minutes before giving the kids a quick drink break. However, feel free to resume the game after the break if it's going well. Really let yourself go with the kids, use your imagination, and enjoy the practices—the kids will definitely respond! Don't worry if not all of your players give you their full attention the whole time: as long as your players are safe in the coaching area or are with their parents on the sideline. Setup dimensions at the top of each game are just a guide and can always be adjusted. "Progressions" are simply ways to vary the game or make them more challenging.

Thanks again, and best wishes for this season!

DCFC REC COACHING BEST PRACTICE

COACHING MANNER

- Arrive early to practice: try to always be the first to arrive and last to leave
- Be really encouraging and project your voice
- Look like a coach! Looking and sounding like a coach goes a long way for kids.

COACHING RULES

- Please deliver the session plans provided in this guide
- Enforce DCFC's golden rules during practice: no using hands, and no kicking with toes!
- No conditioning exercises. The session should be demanding.
- Each player should touch the ball over 150 times during your session.
- Enforce the rules of soccer at all times, e.g. call fouls, handballs etc.
- Always encourage your players to show sportsmanship.
- Do not play! Every touch for you is one touch fewer for your players.

MATCH DAYS

DURING MATCH

- Having fun is far more important than winning. Winning can be fun, but it should definitely not be the focus of recreational soccer.
- Do your best to give your players equal playing time
- Don't coach too much: allow your players to think for themselves and make mistakes. It's all part of the fun and learning!
- Do not coach the player while they are in possession of the ball. Allow them to make their own decisions.

HALF-TIME

- Keep team talk brief; highlight 1 aspect your players did well and 1 aspect the team can improve on in the second half.
- Ensure your players drink lots of water.

POST MATCH

- Congratulate your players for their performance or effort.
- Keep team talk brief; highlight 1 aspect your players did well and 1 aspect the team can improve on during the next practices.

WEEK 1: DRIBBLING

KEY COACHING POINTS FOR THE SESSION:

- Keep the ball close and under control — *between 2-3' away.*
- Use both feet and all parts of the foot — *except the toe! Use the inside, outside, sole, top.*
- Get your head up! Players should look up as much as possible while dribbling.
- Change speed, change direction.

1. DYNAMIC WARM-UP

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid

- Players jog around the inside of the grid without ball.
- Call out simple instructions and keep players on the move! *E.g. sidesteps, skipping, high knees, sprinting, dancing, high kicks, star jumps, touch the ground, touch the sky.*
- If players seem tired let them walk and shake out their limbs to catch their breath.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

2. BODY ROCK

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- All players dribble their ball around the inside of the grid.
- Call out a body part e.g. "Head!" Players must stop the ball using the sole of their foot and then put their head on the ball.

PROGRESSIONS:

- Can players dribble faster and still keep the ball close?
- Can players use only their weaker foot and still dribble fast?
- Link body parts together- who can put their body parts on the ball the fastest? For example, "Head, left knee, stomach, right ear, pinky toe!"

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

Week 1 plan continued on following page...

3. KING OF THE RING

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- All players dribble their ball round the inside of the grid
- Must protect their ball and attempt to kick other players' balls out of the grid
- Once knocked out of the game, players wait on the outside
- Optional: send in a player or two from the outside to steal balls and speed up the game
- The King (or Queen!) is the last player in the grid with their ball. Play this game at least twice because the kids will soon get the hang of it and want to win the next time!

ADDITIONAL COACHING POINTS:

- Dribble into space.
- Use your body to shield the ball.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

4. DRIBBLE AND SCORE

Setup: 20 x 20yd field, two big goals 10 yards wide. Divide your players in half and number each team 1-5. Players line up just off the field on opposite ends. Coach has all the balls. Coach plays ball into the middle and calls a number between 1 and 5.

- Called players must try and get the ball and then score by dribbling over the opposition goal line.
- If ball goes out of bounds, there is no score; another ball is played in, and a new number is called.
- Team that first scores 5 goals wins.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

5. SCRIMMAGE

Setup: 25 x 20yd field. Divide players into two even teams

- Encourage your players to dribble into space and around defenders.
- Ask your players when and where they should dribble on the field. *Answer: when they are 1-on-1 with a defender and in attacking positions.*

COOLDOWN

Slow jog (no more than 50 yards) followed by some brief static leg stretches — *team in circle; allow for unscripted social moments among the players.*

End of session. Thank your players for their effort and briefly reinforce key coaching points through Q&A.

WEEK 2: PASSING & RECEIVING

KEY COACHING POINTS FOR THE SESSION:

- Be on your toes and ready to receive the ball — *stand on front part of feet, with very light bounce.*
- Use the inside of the foot to pass and receive; focus on accuracy of the pass.

1. DYNAMIC WARM-UP

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid

- Players jog around the inside of the grid without ball.
- Call out simple instructions and keep players on the move! *E.g. sidesteps, skipping, high knees, sprinting, dancing, high kicks, star jumps, touch the ground, touch the sky.*
- If players seem tired let them walk and shake out their limbs to catch their breath.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

2. PASSING AND RECEIVING TECHNIQUE

Setup: Players in pairs with one ball standing 10 yards apart. Pass and receive.

- Maximum two touches per player: one to receive the ball, one to pass.
- Player's first touch should maneuver the ball so their pass is easy to perform: ball not stuck under their feet, but also not too far away.

PROGRESSIONS:

- Can players pass and receive with their weaker foot?
- Can players pass accurately when their partner is 15 or even 20 yards away?

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

3. GET THE COACH!

Setup: 25 x 25yd grid. At least five 2yd gates scattered inside the grid. Players in pairs with one ball

- Pairs must pass the ball through a gate 10 times. Players must go to a different gate each time.
- After 10 successful passes through the gates, pairs try and pass their ball so it hits the coach below the knee
- First pair to hit the coach scores a point.

ADDITIONAL COACHING POINTS:

- Pass and move.
- Communication — *encourage players to tell their partners where to go next.*

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

4. DOCTOR, DOCTOR!

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid with (2) 2 x 2yd boxes in opposite corners. Divide players into two even teams. All players have a ball except a “Doctor” on each team who stands in the small box.

- Players dribble around the inside of the grid and try to pass the ball so it hits an opponent below the knee.
- Once hit below the knee with a ball, the ‘sick’ player goes down on one knee, puts their hand up and calls for the doctor: “Doctor, Doctor!”
- The Doctor must now leave the safety of their box and attempt to heal their teammate by tagging them.
- A team scores a point by hitting the opposing team’s Doctor below the knee when they are out of their box.
- Change Doctor every time a point is scored Repeat game until most/all players have been Doctor.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

5. SCRIMMAGE

Setup: 25 x 20yd field. Divide players into two even teams

- Encourage your players to pass to their teammates and then move to receive the ball.
- Ask your players when and where they should pass on the field. Answer: always be thinking about passing or dribbling unless a shot is available.

COOLDOWN

Slow jog (no more than 50 yards) followed by some brief static leg stretches — *team in circle; allow for unscripted social moments among the players.*

End of session. Thank your players for their effort and briefly reinforce key coaching points through Q&A.

WEEK 3: SHOOTING

KEY COACHING POINTS FOR THE SESSION: A-B-C, 1-2-3

- Angle — *45° angle run-up.*
- Body — *head and knee over ball. Hips and shoulders square to target. Locked ankle.*
- Contact — *strike center of ball with instep (bone on top of foot coming from the big toe; but NEVER the toe itself!)*
- 1-2-3 — *3 steps forward immediately after striking the ball (this momentum adds POWER).*

1. DYNAMIC WARM-UP

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid

- Players jog around the inside of the grid without ball.
- Call out simple instructions and keep players on the move! *E.g. sidesteps, skipping, high knees, sprinting, dancing, high kicks, star jumps, touch the ground, touch the sky.*
- If players seem tired let them walk and shake out their limbs to catch their breath.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

2. SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

Setup: Divide players into groups of 3. Each group has one ball and a 5-yd goal. There is one goalkeeper and two strikers who stand 15 yds either side of goal and take turns to shoot.

- Take 10 shots each and change goalkeeper.
- Players should focus on accuracy and A-B-C, 1-2-3.

PROGRESSIONS:

- Can players shoot with correct technique using their weaker foot?
- Can players use one touch to control the ball and shoot quickly with the ball moving?
- Strikers compete with each other: 1 point for a shot on target, 3 points for a goal. First player to 10 points challenges goalkeeper, and losing player goes in goal.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

Week 3 plan continued on following page...

3. GO FOR GOAL

Setup: 30 x 20yd field with wide goals. Divide players into two even teams. Goalkeeper in each goal. Teams stand by their own goal.

- Take turns dribbling and shooting at opposition goal.
- Should not get closer than 10 yds to goal before shooting.
- First team to score 5 goals wins.

PROGRESSION:

- Opposing team sends a defender who tries to steal the ball or block shot
- Send 2 players to attack against one defender
- Can players can now combine their dribbling and passing skills from weeks 1 and 2 and finish with a shot on goal?

ADDITIONAL COACHING POINT:

- Can we shoot away from goalkeeper and in the corner of the goal?

2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

4. SCRIMMAGE

Set up: 30 x 25yd field. Divide players into two even teams.

- Encourage your players to shoot with power and accuracy.
- Ask your players when and where they should shoot on the field? *Answer: whenever they think they can score a goal.*

5. COOLDOWN

Slow jog (no more than 50 yards) followed by some brief static leg stretches — *team in circle; allow for unscripted social moments among the players.*

End of session. Thank your players for their effort and briefly reinforce key coaching points through Q&A.

WEEK 4: VOLLEYS

KEY COACHING POINTS FOR THE SESSION:

- Keep your eye on the ball.
- Inside of the foot to volley with accuracy.
- Use the instep of foot to volley with power — *bone on top of foot coming down from big toe, not the toe itself!*

1. DYNAMIC WARM-UP

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid.

- Players jog around the inside of the grid without ball.
- Call out simple instructions and keep players on the move! E.g. sidesteps, skipping, high knees, sprinting, dancing, high kicks, star jumps, touch the ground, touch the sky.
- If players seem tired let them walk and shake out their limbs to catch their breath.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

2. BALL JUGGLING

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- Players try to keep the ball in the air.
- Can use every part of the body except arms and hands.
- May start by dropping ball from hands onto thighs.

PROGRESSIONS:

- Can players start with the ball on the floor and flick it up?
- Can players beat their own personal best score?

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

3. VOLLEY TECHNIQUE

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid. Divide players into pairs, each pair has a ball. Partners stand 3 yards apart.

- Player starts with ball in their hand and drops it onto their foot.
- Before ball hits the ground player volleys to partner using inside of foot.
- Partner must catch the ball.
- 10 volleys on the right foot, 10 on the left foot.

PROGRESSIONS:

- Partners gently serve the ball to each other.
- After more practice with inside, players should try with instep.
- First touch with thigh, then volley back.
- First touch with chest, then volley back.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

4. JACKPOT, BABY!

Setup: Circle with 15-yard radius with a target ball in the center. Put players in pairs, each pair has ball. Mark 4/5/6 points (depending on number of players) around the edge of the circle.

- Player A plays inside foot volley pass to Player B.
- Player B dribbles all the way around the edge of the circle back to their home base.
- Player B shoots for target ball.
- Player A retrieves ball and can take another shot at target ball from anywhere outside.
- First team to hit target must sit down and shout “Jackpot, Baby!” to score a point.

PROGRESSIONS:

- Players must make 2/3 consecutive volleys before starting the lap of the circle.
- Can players dribble round and shoot using just their weaker foot?
- Can both players maneuver ball round with one touch each?
- Increase size of circle if players find hitting the target ball is too easy.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

5. SCRIMMAGE

Setup: 30 x 25yd field. Divide players into two even teams.

- Encourage your players to volley the ball.
- Ask your players when and where they should volley on the field. *Answer: whenever the ball is in the air, there is a chance to make an accurate volley.*

6. COOLDOWN

Slow jog (no more than 50 yards) followed by some brief static leg stretches — *team in circle; allow for unscripted social moments among the players.*

End of session. Thank your players for their effort and briefly reinforce key coaching points through Q&A.

WEEK 5: ALL SKILLS, FUN GAMES, PARENTS PLAY!

KEY COACHING POINTS FOR THE SESSION:

- Practice the skills we've learned this season.
- "Go easy on your parents!"

1. DYNAMIC WARM-UP

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid.

- Players jog round the inside of the grid without ball
- Call out simple instructions and keep players on the move — *e.g. sidesteps, skipping, high knees, sprinting, dancing, high kicks, star jumps, touch the ground, touch the sky.*
- If players seem tired let them walk and shake out their limbs to catch their breath.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

2. BALL JUGGLING

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- Players try to keep the ball in the air.
- Can use every part of the body except arms and hands.
- May start by dropping ball from hands onto thighs.

PROGRESSIONS:

- Can players start with the ball on the floor and flick it up?
- Can players beat their own personal best score?
- Can players out-juggle their parents?

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

3. GO FOR GOAL

Setup: 30 x 20yd field with wide goals. Divide players into two even teams. Goalkeeper in each goal. Teams stand by their own goal.

- Take turns dribbling and shooting at opposition goal.
- Should not get closer than 10 yards to goal before shooting.
- First team to score 5 goals wins.

PROGRESSION:

- Opposing team sends a defender who tries to steal the ball or block shot.
- Send 2 players to attack against one defender
- Can players now combine their dribbling and passing skills from weeks 1 and 2 and finish with a shot on goal? Can players shoot and score past their parents?

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

4. DOCTOR, DOCTOR!

Setup: 20 x 20yd grid with two 2 x 2yd boxes in opposite corners. Divide players into two even teams. All players have a ball except a “Doctor” on each team who stands in the small box.

- Players dribble around the inside of the grid and try to pass the ball so it hits an opposition player below the knee.
- Once hit below the knee with a ball, the “sick” player goes down on one knee, puts their hand up and calls for the doctor: “Doctor, Doctor!”
- The Doctor must now leave the safety of their box and attempt to heal their teammate by tagging them.
- A team scores a point by hitting the opposition Doctor below the knee when they are out of their box.
- Change Doctor every time a point is scored. Repeat game until most/all players have been Doctor.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

5. SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

Setup: 15 x 25yd grid. SpongeBobs line up on 15yd line. Squidward (coach) lines up lasers (soccer balls) along 25-yard line.

- “SpongeBobs, are you ready? Squidwards, are you ready? Fire the lasers!”
- SpongeBobs must run the gauntlet multiple times dodging the lasers fired by Squidward.
- If a laser hits a SpongeBob below the knee, they become a Squidward.
- SpongeBobs are safe when they reach the end line.
- Winner is the last surviving SpongeBob.
- Keep balls low, ask players to use correct passing technique.
- Ask parents to join in and run and dodge the lasers.

1-2 MINUTE DRINK AND REST

6. SCRIMMAGE

Setup: 30 x 25yd field. Divide players into two even teams.

- Players should play and show off their skills to their parents

End of session. Thank your players for their effort over the course of the season and ask them to say thank-you to their parents.