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CHAPTER 1

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility you have assumed by accepting a volunteer coaching or referee job requires you to devote some time to prepare yourself to adequately perform your role.

As a coach, there are several areas that you become knowledgeable in to effectively manage your team. Primarily, it is necessary to acquire a fundamental knowledge of the basic skills and rules of the game. This can be done through attending clinics, participating in the sport, and through available literature. Ideally it is best if you can perform the skills you are teaching; however, it is not an absolute requirement. If you are well informed of the techniques needed for a skill, you may verbally instruct your team while a skilled player demonstrates your instructions. It is also necessary to learn how to effectively hold a practice. This aspect of coaching is presented in detail in a separate section of this booklet.

In addition to this aspect of coaching, it is also necessary that you be aware of your role as a coach in a child's life. Coaches frequently become the focal point of a child's attention on and off the field. Therefore it is necessary that you set an example in behavior that would be beneficial to your player's mental and physical development. It is important to always remember that you are working with children, not little adults. Their ideas about competition, winning, participation, and play are different from adults. There is not adequate space for an in-depth look at child psychology in this manual. You, as a coach, would receive considerable benefit from making an effort to spend at least 1 or 2 hours reading from the many available books on coaching and teaching methodology for children. Specific responsibilities also include:

1. Making players aware of game and practice times, locations, and dates.
2. Checking with the Parks & Recreation Department concerning cancellations of games in bad weather.
3. Informing players of game cancellations.
4. Either yourself or an assistant coach (parent) attend every practice and game.
5. Keeping your team's practice balls for the season.
6. Check-in of the balls at the end of the season.

LIABILITY

When you have agreed to coach a team, the City will cover you and your assistant coach with liability insurance. However, if it can be proven that there was negligence involved, you may still be sued personally for punitive damages.

It is therefore important to remember these few basic principles in an emergency situation:

1. Always remain calm. Sometimes this is not easy since an injury can be somewhat upsetting to look at. However, keeping an injured player calm can be the best thing you can do.
2. Never assume the role of a physician.
3. Never move anyone who appears to have a serious injury.
4. Always stop to think before taking any type of action.

REMINDERS TO COACHES

- Remember the game belongs to the kids; let them enjoy it.
- Every child must play at least one half of the game.

- Remember the responsibility that you have in teaching your players. Sportsmanship and fair play must be foremost in this teaching process. We strongly urge coaches not to smoke or to use tobacco at practices or games.
- Abusive actions or language towards players, coaches, referees, or spectators will not be tolerated.
- Remember, the referee is in complete control of the game. The referee has the authority to end a game at any point the/she may consider it necessary to maintain control of the situation.
- Please remember that we are devoting time and energy to this program so the children can participate in this wholesome athletic activity. Let each and every person involved (officials, coaches, spectators) do their best to assure that every participant receives a valuable experience from this activity.
- Persons in violation of this code of conduct are subject to dismissal from the Young America Soccer Program. All final decisions concerning dismissal of an individual shall rest with the Parks & Recreation Department.
- Your behavior on the sidelines during the game situation must also be an example of good sportsmanship. Do not question the integrity of the officials. Remember, they are volunteers also. They are attempting to do the best job possible -- even occasionally under uncomfortable situations. Do not make the officials' job any more difficult by your conduct along the sidelines. You may be asked to leave the field, if necessary, to control the game.
- Do not move along the sideline the entire length of the field. You are allowed 10 yards either direction from your team area. Let the kids play during the game! Instruct them before the game and during the breaks.

As a coach, develop objectives for your team such as the learning of:

- Basic individual and team skills
- Conditioning
- Rules
- Respect for the officials
- Officials' signals
- Teamwork
- Respect for the opponents
- Maximum effort to play well

In regards to the learning of your objectives, remember that:

1. All children do not learn at the same rate.
2. All children do not respond to the same instructional approach the same way.
3. Personal limitations can be compensated for example:(hustle can overcome certain deficits in size or skill.
4. Children have different motives, values and interests.
5. Children come from different types of families and various types of influences and pressures.
6. Children have different experiences and dissimilar potential for athletic success.
7. Children mature at different rates, thus producing a dissimilar potential for learning and performance.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

- Soccer is a game and games should be fun.
- The program is for the kids -- for their recreation enjoyment.
- Winning is not important -- playing is.
- Everyone must have equal playing time.
- Stress sportsmanship and teamwork.
- Learn to lose graciously as well as win.
- Developing superstars is not our objective.
- Strive to teach each child the fundamentals of the game.
- Attempt to develop each individual's skills to the fullest potential.
- Promote the importance of team unity and effort during practice and games.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL PROGRAM RULES

AGE DIVISIONS

The age divisions used by the City of Greeley are as follows: Mighty Mites (4 & 5 year olds), 6 & 7, 8 & 9, 10 & 11, 12 & 13. Greeley Parks & Recreation Department will allow younger players to play up a division if they meet Young America Soccer requirements.

GAME DURATION

The game duration will vary according to age groups. Following is a list of each age group:

- Mighty Mites - four 8 minute quarters
- 6 & 7 Year Olds - four 10 minute quarters
- 8 & 9 Year Olds - Two 25 minute halves
- 10 - 13 Year Olds - two 30 minute halves

The clock will not stop unless there is an injury or unnecessary delay in retrieving the ball. There are no time-outs.

Game time is forfeit time. If a previous game runs long, the next scheduled game will start immediately afterwards.

SUBSTITUTION

Substitution may be done only at the end of the quarters, halftime, yellow card, injury or when the ball goes out of play over the end-line or on your possession throw-in. Substitutes must enter the game without delay from the midfield stripe.

There will be no substitution for an ejected player.

Goalkeeper substitutions must report to the referee.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

The City of Greeley will allow differing age groups to play on team sizes that allow for many touches of the ball per game, in accordance to age. Following is a list of each age and their respective team playing size:

- 10 - 13 Year Olds play 11 vs 11
- 8 & 9 Year Olds play 9 vs 9
- 6 & 7 Year Olds play 7 vs 7
- Mighty Mites play 3 vs 3

ELIGIBILITY

All children between and including 4 - 13 years of age are eligible to participate. Players that compete in any type of competitive league are also eligible to participate in the City program. However, no more than 4 competitive league players will be allowed to play on one City league team.

Any player ejected from a game will not be eligible to play in the next scheduled game.

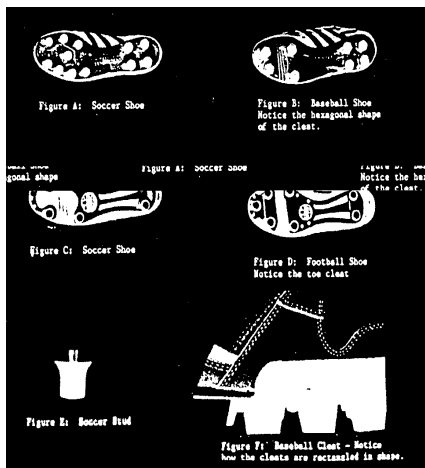
EQUIPMENT

Soccer or tennis shoes only with rubber or plastic soles and cleats may be worn in all divisions. No bare feet will be allowed during scheduled games.

A Young America Soccer jersey must be worn for each scheduled game. The goalkeeper must wear a shirt of a different color from either team.

No hats may be worn during a game. No hard or potentially dangerous equipment can be worn. A player may participate with a cast only if, in the opinion of the field supervisor and the referees, the cast is sufficiently wrapped and padded to prevent any possibility of injury to any players.

The Recreation Department requires shin guards. Shin guards must be covered by an athletic sock.



SOCCER CLEATS

In the past there has been some confusion on what is, and what is not a soccer shoe. The Greeley Parks & Recreation Department has set some guidelines on this issue. Below is the average cleat configuration of a soccer, baseball and football shoe. Please compare the soccer cleat to that of a baseball cleat, and a soccer shoe to that of a football shoe. The guidelines for all of the Greeley Recreation Department's soccer programs are as follows:

1. The cleat configuration must consist of all rounded cleats (Figure A).
2. A soccer shoe cannot have a cleat on the toe of the shoe (Figure #).
3. The surface of the cleat may not be a shape other than a smooth rounded surface.

CHAPTER 3

GAME RULES

FIELD OF PLAY

SOCCER FIELD

Here is a diagram of a common soccer field. Our program will use these guidelines for field layout. Field size, goal size, and interior markings are adjusted proportionally for younger age groups and available land area.

Field Size:

- 10 - 13 Year Olds – 100' X 50'
- 8 & 9 Year Olds - 80' X 50'
- 6 & 7 Year Olds - 55' X 35'
- Mighty Mites - 25' X 15'

BALL IN/OUT OF PLAY

START OF PLAY

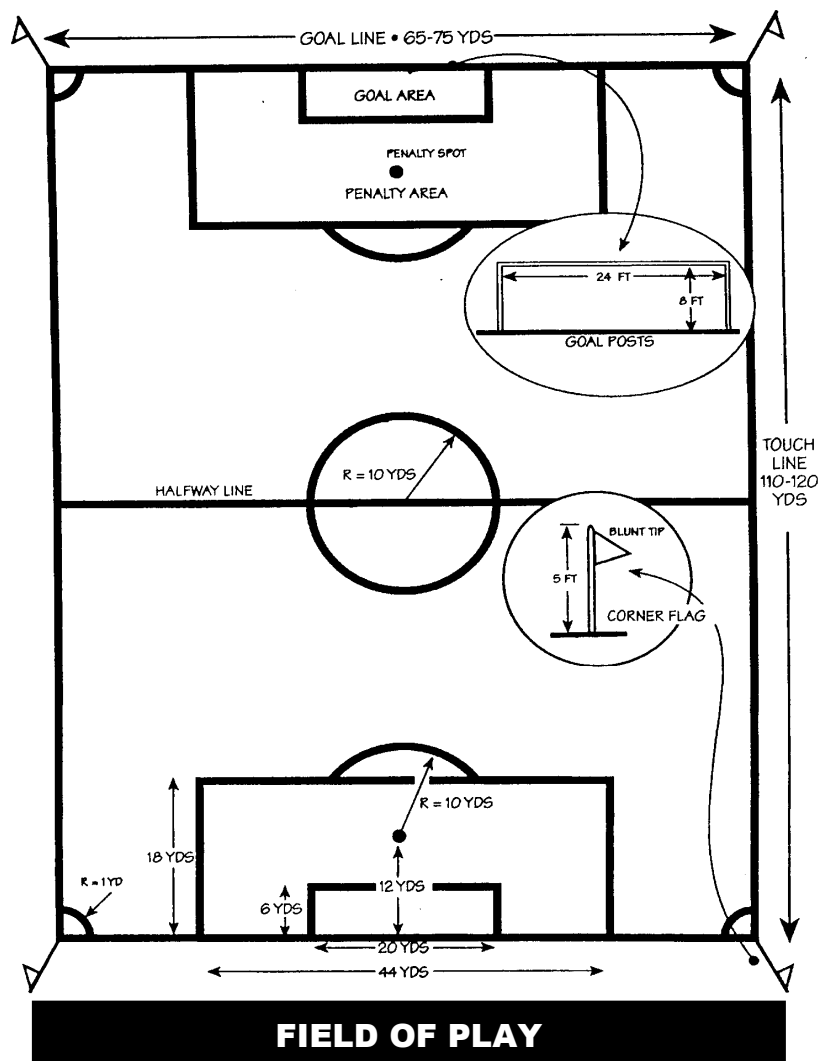
A coin toss by the referee shall decide the choice of ends and the kickoff at the start of the game.

The game will begin with a kickoff after each period or after a goal being scored.

All divisions will switch sides of the field after the halftime break.

Divisions playing quarters will alternate kickoff at halftime.

The number of players allowed on the field during play is determined by the age group. Of that number, a team must have no more than four players missing to begin a game (i.e. 11 year olds play 11 vs 11) therefore, they may begin play with 7 players. Match time is forfeit time, unless the proceeding game has delayed the start. In that eventuality, there will be a five minute intermission between matches.



On the kickoff, the ball must roll forward into the opponents half of the field the circumference of the ball (about 18 inches) before it is in play. In the event the kickoff is not properly taken (i.e. kicked backward, not kicked far enough, the kicker touching the ball a second time prior to another player touching the ball) the kicking team shall be verbally warned and allowed to retake the kick. If there is a second kickoff offense the ball is given to the other team at the point of the infraction for an indirect free kick. A goal may not be scored directly from a kickoff.

BALL OUT OF PLAY

The ball is in play unless it has completely crossed over the touch line or goal-line (see Goal Kick or Corner Kick) whether on the ground, or in the air, or when the game has been stopped by the referee for any reason. NOTE: The ball is in play even when it rebounds from the goal posts, corner flags, and referee -- provided he is within the field of play. A player may also run outside the field of play and not be penalized. The vital factor is the position of the ball alone.

THROW-IN

When the whole of the ball crosses over the whole of the touch line, play is restarted with a throw-in from the point where it crossed the line. The following points are important.

1. The throw-in is awarded to the opposing team of the player who last touched the ball.
2. The thrower must a) face the field of play, b) have both feet on the ground either on or behind the touch line, c) use both hands equally, d) throw the ball from behind and over the head.
3. The thrower must not play the ball a second time until it has been played by another player.
4. A goal cannot be scored direct from a throw-in. A second contact must be made before the ball enters the goal.
5. When the ball is incorrectly thrown-in, the "throw-in" is retaken by a player of the opposing team.

GOAL KICK

When the ball completely crosses the goal-line without entering the goal, and is last played by a member of the attacking side, play is restarted with a goal kick by the defending side. The ball must leave the penalty area prior to being touched by any player of either side.

CORNER KICK

When the ball completely crosses the goal-line without entering the goal, and is last played by a member of the defending side, play is restarted with a corner kick. The ball is placed within the one-yard arc in the corner of the playing area nearest to where it crossed the goal-line. The ball is kicked by a member of the attacking team, and a goal may be scored directly from this corner kick.

DROP BALL

After a temporary suspension of play (injury, etc.) the game will start with a drop ball by the referee. A drop ball must contact the ground before it can be kicked. A goal can be scored directly from a drop ball. If play was stopped in the penalty area, the drop ball shall occur at the nearest point outside the area.

GOAL SCORING

A goal (one point) is scored when:

1. The whole of the ball has passed over the whole of the goal line between the posts and under the crossbar (the only way points are scored).
2. A goal is not allowed if the ball has been thrown, carried, or propelled by the hand or arms of an attacking player, or when any other infringement of the rules has been committed by the attacking team.

OFFSIDE

The intent of this rule is to prohibit players from taking up advanced attacking positions when their own team is defending. Briefly, an offensive player is offside unless: (Offside, will not be called for Mighty Mites or 6-7's.)

1. There are at least two defenders between the player and the opponent's goal line at the time the ball is played.
2. The player is in their own half of the field.
3. The ball was last intentionally played by an opponent.
4. The player is behind the ball when it is played.
5. The initial action of a throw-in is being taken.

IMPORTANT

It is the position of the receiving player when the ball is kicked, and not the position of where the ball was received, that decides whether or not the receiver is offside.

NOTE: The referee must decide whether this attacking player is intentionally interfering with play or seeking to gain advantage by taking up this advantage position; therefore, the official may not always make an offside ruling even though the player may be in an offside position.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

AWARDED KICKS

When players do not play strictly according to prescribed rules, the referee awards a free kick against the offending team. These fall into two categories:

1. For nine penal offenses - four with the hand, three with the feet, and two with the body -- DIRECT free kicks are awarded at the spot where the offense occurred. If the offense takes place in the penalty area by a defending player, the DIRECT free kick takes the form of a penalty kick from the 12 yard penalty spot.
2. For technical offenses -- that is all those outside the nine penal offenses -- an INDIRECT free kick is awarded at the spot where the offense occurred, excluding an offense by a defending player within the penalty area. This kick shall be taken at the nearest point outside the penalty area.

DIRECT FREE KICK

These are awarded when the penal offenses are committed intentionally. A goal can be scored with a direct shot from the point where the offense was committed, except when the offense takes place within the penalty area - in which case the kick is taken from the penalty spot. The nine penal offenses are:

1. Holding an opponent.
2. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.
3. Pushing an opponent.
4. Intentionally handling the ball.
5. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
6. Jumping at an opponent.
7. Tripping an opponent.
8. Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
9. Charging an opponent from behind.

INDIRECT FREE KICK

For technical offenses the referee will award an indirect free kick from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played by any two players. Some examples of these technical offenses are:

1. The goalkeeper carrying the ball more than four paces without bouncing it on the ground, generally not enforced unless keeper is intentionally delaying the game.
2. Intentionally obstructing an opponent without attempting to play the ball.
3. Offside decision awarded by the referee.
4. When a player plays the ball a second time from a kickoff, throw-in, free kick, corner kick, or goal kick.
5. "Ungentlemanly conduct" such as offensive language to officials or to other players.
6. For persistently infringing on the rules.
7. For constantly dissenting with the referees' decisions.

All of these kicks are taken from the point of infraction.

Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball if the team taking the free kick so desires.

There is no whistle from the referee to take the kick (exception: penalty kick). It is to the advantage of a team to place the ball at the point of infraction and take the kick as quickly as possible.

The kicking team may ask the referee to enforce the 10 yard rule. The officials will then stop play with a whistle, establish a 10 yard buffer and then restart play with a whistle.

PENALTY KICK

A free kick awarded the attacking team after a defending player commits a foul within the penalty area. The kick is taken from a spot 12 yards in front of the goal and no player except the kicker and the goalkeeper, who must be stationary with both feet on the goal line, may be within the penalty area until the kick is taken. A goal can be scored directly on a penalty kick. The defending goalkeeper must not move until the ball has been kicked.

The ball must be kicked forward; the kicker cannot play the ball a second time until someone else has touched the ball, and the ball must travel the distance of its circumference before it is in play.

If the penalty kicker touches the ball a second time after the kick, before it is touched by another player, an indirect free kick is awarded the defending team.

If the attacking team violates a rule while taking a penalty kick and a goal results, the penalty kick shall be taken over.

If the defending team violates a rule while a penalty kick is being taken, the penalty kick shall be retaken, unless a goal results.

The referee will whistle for the start of this free kick.

ADVANTAGE RULE

A referee may not whistle a foul if the play and the free kick would result in a disadvantage to the team whose player was fouled. For example, a player is on a breakaway run and an opponent trips him, yet he retains his balance and control of the ball, thus having a good opportunity to score. The calling of the foul would actually benefit the defending team, thus the referee uses the advantage rule to allow play to continue.

CHAPTER 4

BASIC SKILLS

Each player on a soccer team must attempt to develop individual ball handling skills that will contribute to a team's effort to play the game well. This section will briefly present the proper method of execution of the fundamental skills.

KICKING

Kicking is the whole basis of the game, and although many players may be able to kick a ball several yards, this does not make them accomplished soccer players. The kicking must be controlled and have purpose. The purpose and the situation determine the kind of kick to be used. Therefore, it is essential that all players are able to execute the following basic kicks, which will allow them to face any game situation with confidence.

CLEARING

Lofted Kick - This kick is used when kicking a stationary ball on a goal kick or free kick, and when kicking a moving ball on a clearance or centering kick from the wing.

- Non-kicking foot to the rear of the ball.
- Lean backward on contact. Follow through toward target.

Volley - To volley a ball, a player kicks the ball out of the air. Since there is no ground friction, the volley is a powerful kick and an excellent way to score goals.

- Non-kicking foot beside position of ball when struck.
- Keep your eyes on the ball.
- Ankle must be locked with the toes down.
- Strike the ball on the laces.

Half-Volley - The half volley is used in the same situations as the volley, but it allows the player to kick the ball either a little sooner or a little later, depending on the situation. It differs from the volley in that you allow the ball to bounce and immediately contact it with the kicking foot on the short hop. You should kick the ball when it is 6 to 8 inches off the ground. The technique is the same as for the volley kick.

Clearing Practice Hints:

1. Make sure you place the non-kicking foot according to the kick that you are going to use.
2. Have a purpose in mind for the kick and see that it is fulfilled (i.e. instep drive).
3. Vary the strength of the kick so that you learn control.
4. Keep your eye on the ball until it is contacted. Watch the ball leave your foot.
5. When kicking a moving ball, try to get into the same position as when kicking a stationary ball.
6. Try to make the ball go where you intend it to go, and if it does not analyze why it did not.
7. Remember that the ball will go in the opposite direction from where contact is made on its surface.

PASSING

The object of passing is to strike the ball and propel it toward a particular player or area on the field. This is generally done with either foot or the head. The ball must be played in such a manner that the receiver of the pass can quickly control the ball and select an appropriate action to take with it.

Passes may be made with the following parts of the foot: the inside, outside, instep and heel. The inside-of-the-foot pass is the most accurate of these, but it is not as powerful as the others and is therefore not recommended for long distances. The most common pass is the push pass, which is performed with the inside of the foot. In general, for a long pass the instep is used. When a player wants to send the ball backward, he can do so with his heel (this is called the heel pass).

In all passes, the point at which the player's foot makes contact with the ball determines how high and straight the ball will travel. If contact is made at or above the midpoint of the ball, a low pass will result. If the foot strikes the ball lower, the pass will be higher. When the ball is struck left or right of center, it will tend to "bend" in the opposite direction, creating a curving, or bending pass (also called a "banana pass"). It is crucial in teaching passing skills to stress the importance of the knee flex action, which gives the ball its power and speed.

There are many other kinds of passes, including the chip, or lob pass, in which the ball is kicked steeply over the heads of a number of opponents; the half volley pass, in which the ball is kicked just as it bounces up from the ground; and the volley pass, in which the ball is kicked before it touches the ground.

The wall, cross and through passes are tactical plays involving other passing skills. In the wall pass, or give-and-go, the receiver is used as a "wall" to redirect the path of the ball. The player in danger of being tackled makes a short pass to a nearby teammate, then sprints into open space to receive a return pass. In a cross, the ball is sent from one side of the field to the other or toward the center, usually to set a teammate up for a shot on goal. A through or penetrating pass (also called the "killer pass"), involves kicking the ball between or over the defending players to a teammate who is in a good position to shoot. Combination passes occur when two or more players use short, low, quick passes to keep possession of the ball as they move toward the opponent's goal.

Passes right on target help your team keep possession of the ball. Your team cannot score unless it has the ball, and the longer it has possession, the better the scoring chances. Have players practice both long and short passes. Training should include pinpoint passing with the inside of the foot, the outside, the instep, and the heel. As soon as possible, introduce passing on the run so players can learn how to pass the ball in a game like situation.

Inside of the Foot Pass - The inside of the foot pass is most effective for short distances. Although highly accurate, it is not very powerful.

Plant the non-kicking foot next to the ball, pointing it in the direction of the target. Bend your knees and bring the kicking foot back keeping your eyes on the ball. Turn the kicking foot sideways with the toes pointing up and out. Lock the ankle. Swing forward striking the ball with the inside of the foot, between the big toe and the heel. As the kick is completed, keep the knees bent and the ankle locked. Follow through toward the target. Watch the ball leave your foot.

Outside of the Foot Pass - The outside of the foot pass is used primarily to deflect or change direction of the ball. The pass has little power and will only be effective over a short distance. It is often used when a pass is being made for the first time without the ball being brought under control. The contact area is smaller than that for the inside of the foot pass and, therefore accuracy is limited. The non-kicking foot does not have to be pointing along the intended line of flight, and, in fact, it can be several inches to the rear or immediately to the side of the ball.

Bend our knees. Point the toes of the kicking foot down and in. Hold the ankle locked. Kick with the outside of the foot through the center of the ball.

Keep your eyes on the ball and follow through with the kicking foot. Watch the ball leave your foot.

Instep Drive - This pass is generally used for long distance passing or clearing the ball from your defensive area of the field. Place the non-kicking foot beside the ball, pointing towards your target. Bend your knees. Bring the kicking foot back keeping your eyes on the ball. Body weight over the ball. Lean into the kick.

Hold the ankle of the kicking foot locked and point the toes down and slightly outward so that the ball is hit by the top, inside of the laces.

Kick through the center of the ball and follow through with the toes pointed down. Watch the ball leave your foot.

Chip Pass - This pass is generally used to put the ball over the heads of one or two defenders. This pass allows an offensive player to spring past the defenders and gain control of the ball to press an attack.

Place the balance foot close to the ball. Flex the knee of the kicking leg as high as possible. Straighten the kicking leg and strike directly underneath the ball with the top of the instep. Do not follow through. Watch the ball leave your foot.

Passing Tips

1. Practice, first of all, with a stationary ball.
2. Learn to control the ball with one foot and pass with the other.
3. Remember that the ball will always travel faster than you can run, so pass the ball when it is more productive than dribbling.
4. When passing a moving ball, try to get into the same position used for passing a stationary ball when contact is made.
5. Always have a target to pass to, since this will give you an idea of the accuracy of your passes.
6. When you pass, pass the ball to your teammate's feet.
7. Do not pass too hard or too soft. (The distance you want the ball to travel will determine how hard you hit it.)
8. Pick a spot on the ball where you want your foot to make contact. Keep your eyes on this spot until after you have kicked the ball. Watch the ball leave your foot.
9. Place your non-kicking foot next to the ball pointing in the direction you want your pass to go.
10. Hold your ankle locked when you strike the ball. If your ankle is loose when you make contact, your pass will be weak and off target.
11. The receiver of the pass should always move to the ball rather than wait for the pass to arrive.
12. Look for open space to pass toward. A teammate should be moving into the space to collect the ball.

SHOOTING

Shooting on a goal, with the intent of scoring, requires a hard kick or a powerfully headed ball (see section on heading). Coaching emphasis should be placed on timing, accuracy or power, pacing and deceptive moves. As with passing, a player should be able to use either foot. Because power is an essential factor in shooting (the harder the ball is struck, the more difficult it is to intercept), the following surfaces of the foot should be used: the inside or outside of the instep, the full top of the instep, and the outside of the foot. For added force, players should be trained to put maximum body weight behind their shots at the goal. The ability to bend, or curve the ball and to control its loft makes the goalkeepers job harder and increases the chances of scoring.

Shooting Tips for Players

1. Don't waste time. Scoring chances often last no more than a split second. When you have a chance, shoot.
2. It is best to be in balance when you shoot, but if you are off-balance and have a scoring opportunity, shoot anyway.
3. Don't shoot blindly into the goal. Try to put the ball out of the goalkeepers reach. Fixing a target in your mind before shooting helps you to direct the ball away for the goalie.

4. Before the kick, fix your eyes on the center of the ball and keep them there during the kick. After the kick, follow with your foot. Watch the ball leave your foot.

BALL CONTROL SKILLS

DRIBBLING

Dribbling is one of the most exciting and creative elements of soccer. Its purpose is to advance the ball from one part of the field to another without the help of teammates. The ball is propelled in various directions by soft touches of the foot so that a rhythm and harmony develop between the individual and the ball. Countless hours of practice are required to teach a player the sensitive touch needed for effective dribbling.

In the fundamental stage of dribbling practice, players should be allowed to run with the ball while free and unchallenged. But close control should be stressed because it is crucial to maintaining possession of the ball under normal game conditions. However, if there are not other players close by, the dribbler may roll the ball out farther, having ample time to regain control of it.

Effective dribbling technique utilizes many feints, or deceptive moves. These are intended to upset the balance of the challenging defender and enable the attacker to dribble past him. Feints, in all cases, should be so convincing that they force the defender to commit himself prematurely, thus allowing the attacker to control the situation. The dribbler also must be able to change speed and direction quickly and smoothly to avoid tacklers and move the ball toward the opponent's goal. "Shielding," or "screening," is another way of keeping the ball from an opponent while dribbling. The player does this by putting his body between the opponent and the ball.

Dribbling can be used both to move the ball into advantageous field positions and to "beat," or avoid, opposing players. If a safe pass to a teammate is not possible, the player should be able to maintain possession of the ball until a teammate is open, or free. And if the player's path is blocked by an opponent, it is up to him to fake the opponent out in order to avoid his tackle.

Dribbling With the Instep

Look up and around you while pushing the ball with the instep, toes pointing down.

Push the ball with the top of the instep. Do not let the ball get more than 1 or 2 feet in front of the dribbling foot if opposing players are near.

Dribbling With the Outside of the Foot

Look up and around while pushing the ball with the outside of the foot, toes pointing down.

Do not let the ball get more than 1 or 2 feet ahead of the dribbling foot if opposing players are near.

Dribbling With the Inside of the Foot

Look up and around while pushing the ball with the inside of the foot, toes pointed down.

Contact the ball midway between the big toe and the heel. Keep it close to the foot.

Do not let the ball get more than 1 or 2 feet in front of the dribbling foot if opposing players are near.

DRIBBLING WITH THE SOLE OF THE FOOT (BOTTOM)

Put the sole of the foot on the top of the ball. Keep your body weight on the other foot. Pull in any direction desired. This is a great technique for an instant change of pace or direction.

Dribbling Exercises

1. Practice creative dribbling in a restricted area, with the emphasis on change of pace and direction.
2. Slalom dribbling (dribbling around or between cones or flags).

3. Shadow dribbling (using a partner who does not attempt to gain possession but trails the dribbler and imitates the dribbler's moves).
4. Passive-resistance dribbling, that is, with minimum pressure from an opponent without losing the ball.
5. Dribbling with dispossession, that is, losing the ball to a partner.
6. Shielding the ball, with a partner acting as the opponent.
7. Dribbling with convincing feints.
8. Dribbling around a circuit.
9. A repetition of all these exercises at a faster pace.

Dribbling Tips for Players

Dribbling to Beat on Opponent

1. Always keep the ball close to your feet if opposing players are near. To deceive your opponent, dribble slowly and straight toward him.
2. Keep your eyes on your opponent's hips to see which way he is leaning.
3. Try to fake out your opponent by suddenly dropping your shoulder or leaning to one side.
4. As soon as your opponent makes his move, take the ball the other way and sprint right past him.
5. When you have beaten, or successfully avoided, your opponent, look up to determine what to do with the ball. If a teammate is open in a more advantageous position than you, pass immediately. Don't give the player you just beat a chance to get back at the ball.

Dribbling to Keep the Ball

1. Dribble in a natural way. Use the instep, the inside of the foot, outside of the foot or the sole of the foot -- whichever is easiest and fastest.
2. Run with control and be ready to stop at any time.
3. Vary your pace.
4. Learn to use both feet with equal facility.
5. Keep the ball close to your feet. Don't chase it if opposing players are near.
6. Look up and around while you are dribbling. Keep your eyes on where you are going, where your teammates are, and where your opponents are.
7. Do not try to dribble the ball out of your defensive third of the field. If the ball is lost, the defense will not have adequate time to organize.

Shielding While Dribbling

1. Keep your head up and look around for chances to pass or dribble away from your opponent.
2. The referee will call you for obstruction unless you keep the ball within playing (touching) distance and your body in a normal upright position.
3. Keep the ball as far from your opponent as possible. Watch both your opponent and the ball so that you know where to move.

4. If your opponent tries to challenge you or to go around you, move so that you are between him and the ball.
5. Don't fight back if you think your opponent is getting rough. In a fair game of soccer, you play the ball, not your opponent.

HEADING

Heading, or using the head to propel and direct the ball, is unique to soccer. It is an essential technique to learn, for it can be used both to send balls to a teammate and to strike on goal. The forehead, specifically the surface between the eyebrows and the hairline, is the proper area to use. The ball should be struck with the head, not allowed simply to strike the head and bounce off.

Contact area in heading. Lock the neck and keep your eyes open at the moment of impact. Hit the ball with the upper forehead between the eyebrows and the hairline.

Stationary Heading

Keep the feet shoulder width apart. Bend the knees and arch back from the hips. Lock the neck and whip your body forward so that the ball is hit with the forehead. As contact is made, release the chin and follow through with the forehead.

Jump Heading

Keep your eyes on the ball while jumping up to meet it. Arch the back slightly. At the high point of the jump, meet the ball with the upper part of the forehead. Follow through with the head and the upper body in the direction the ball is to go.

Heading Tips

1. Get into the path of the ball.
2. Keep your eyes on the ball as it comes toward you. Arch your upper body backward and prepare to head the ball.
3. Don't be afraid of the ball. You won't get hurt if you head the ball properly.
4. Watch the ball as it approaches, and watch where it goes after you head it.
5. Hit it with the upper part of your forehead.
6. Attack the ball. You won't get hurt if you head the ball properly.
7. Don't be satisfied with being able to head the ball, but work to head it where you want it to go.
8. When the hands are held out at shoulder level, pull them back vigorously to help the body "snap" forward.
9. Keep the tongue in and your mouth closed.

TRAPPING (COLLECTING THE BALL)

Collecting in soccer is the technique of bringing the ball under control after it has been received from a teammate's pass, intercepted from an opponent's pass, or gained by tackling. Various parts of the body are used, depending on whether the ball is being collected on the ground or in the air. The player should be taught to control the ball using the inside of the foot, the outside of the foot, the instep, the thigh, the abdomen, the chest, and the head. The most important aspect of collecting is to prevent any rebound so that the ball can be played to a teammate or dribbled immediately. The player's body should give with contact, cushioning the ball and redirecting it. Ideally, the ball is received, redirected, and propelled toward the desired location in one smooth efficient movement. The first touch a player has on the ball should prepare the ball for either a pass or dribble in the direction desired for the second touch.

Inside of the Foot Trap - The inside of the foot trap is used basically for receiving a rolling ball or a low bouncing ball either from the front or from the side. The area of contact is the same as that for the inside of

the foot pass.

Move the leg forward and meet the ball with the inside of the foot. Move the foot back as contact is made to slow the ball down. Redirect the ball in the direction the second touch will go.

Collecting high balls -- with the instep. Lift the foot off the ground to meet the ball with the instep. Cushion the ball by pulling the foot back quickly.

Thigh Trap - The thigh trap is used to collect balls in the air or bouncing higher than the waist.

Cushion the ball in mid-air with the thigh. Let the ball contact midway between the knee and the top of the thigh. Withdraw the thigh on contact so that the ball drops to the ground.

Abdominal Trap - The principal use of the abdominal trap is to stop a ball on the fly or after it has bounced about waist high to the receiver. The ball, while in the air, is stopped against the abdominal area.

Chest Trap - This trap is used to collect a ball on the fly at chest height.

Prepare to meet the ball with the center of the chest. Arch your body backward to cushion the ball. Bend the knees to aid in cushioning the ball. When contact is made, straighten the chest immediately so that the ball drops directly down.

Practice Tips

1. Always move into the area where you think the ball is going to land.
2. Be ready to make minor adjustments.
3. Do not have a predetermined trap in mind, but be ready to use the one most appropriate for the situation.
4. Always relax the body segment involved to take the force off the ball.
5. Practice using both feet in the foot traps for greater versatility.
6. Before the ball comes to you, look around. You must know what to do with it and where to pass it after you have control of it.
7. Keep your eyes on the ball as it comes to you.
8. Always meet the ball and cushion it by withdrawing slightly at the moment of contact.
9. After gaining possession of the ball, be sure to control it on the ground. Do not let it bounce away from you.
10. Once you have controlled the ball, make a quick decision as to what to do with the ball.

THROWING-IN

A throw-in is the method of restarting play when the ball has passed over the sideline. The rules state that the player making the throw shall face the field of play and that both feet must be on or outside of the touch line in contact with the ground. The feet may be together or spread. The ball must be thrown with both hands equally. The hands can be placed either behind or on the sides of the ball with the fingers spread. The thrower may run up to the touch line when making the throw, but in all cases, the ball must be delivered from over the head.

Throwing-In Practice Tips

1. On long throws, try to throw the ball beyond your partner.
2. After the throw, move forward, ready for a teammate to pass it back to you.
3. Feint the throw.

TACKLING AND CHARGING

Tackling is a defensive maneuver designed to dispossess an opponent of the ball. It may result either in ball possession or simply in setting the ball free and making it available to the first player who reaches it. But, as a means of gaining possession of the ball, tackling is a technique of last resort.

An important principle of defensive play is to delay an opponent in possession of the ball in order to concentrate numerical superiority in the danger area -- the defensive third of the field. This done, and the defensive players in good position, the tackler must wait for the right moment to attack the man with the ball.

The dribbler will fake, feint, and otherwise try to induce the tackler to commit himself to a false move. The tackler must learn to reject fake information and wait for the opportunity to steal the ball or move it out of the attacker's reach. Tactical sense and good timing are essential, and good tackling requires discipline and practice.

There are four basic types of tackles: the block tackle, the poke tackle, the slide tackle, and the shoulder charge. In the "block tackle" the defensive player blocks the ball with the inside of the foot at the same time the attacking player strikes it. The defender and the attacker kick in opposite directions; thus the tackler is attempting to block the ball's path. The "poke tackle" requires the defender to poke the ball away with his toe.

It is known as a destructive tackle, as it is used to prevent a score or the development of an attacking play. Poke tackling can be executed from the side of an opponent. In a "slide tackle" the tackler actually slides into the ball, staying low to the ground and kicking the ball away. For a slide tackle, a defender approaches his opponent from the front or side. In the "shoulder charge" a defending player uses his shoulder to charge into an opponent's shoulder in order to dispossess him of the ball. The contact stops the offensive player's momentum and may put him off balance, making it easier for the tackler to take the ball away. The shoulder charge is allowed when both players are within playing distance of the ball.

Tackling skills should be taught in the following progression:

1. Just before the opponent receives the ball.
2. At the moment the opponent receives the ball.
3. Immediately after the opponent receives the ball.
4. After the opponent has received the ball and has advanced into the danger area.
5. Shoulder-to-shoulder contact.

Shoulder Charge

Charge with the upper shoulder area only. Push with the shoulder to get the ball away from your opponent or upset his balance.

Tackling and Charging Practice Hints

1. Be determined to get the ball.
2. Keep your eyes on the ball when tackling.
3. A feint tackle can be as effective as a tackle.
4. Keep your eyes on the man when charging.
5. Keep your elbows down when charging.
6. Keep your eyes on the ball.
7. Maintain a playing distance from the attacker so that he cannot accelerate past you.
8. Do not commit yourself too early. Your opponent may be feinting.
9. Time your execution carefully.
10. Rely on footwork rather than force to gain ball possession in executing a shoulder charge.

GOALKEEPING

The skills for goalkeeping are different from those for any other position because the hands may be used to field a ball. This is an added advantage that no other player has.

Goalkeeper Ready Position - The first skill of goalkeeping is the "ready" position. This is the position assumed by the goalkeeper as play approaches the penalty area.

To take the "ready" position, stand in front of your goal-line. Spread the feet, shoulder width apart, with the weight evenly balanced on the feet. Bend the knees so that you are ready to move in any direction. Learn slightly forward. Flex the arms and hold them at waist level with the palms facing to the rear and fingers pointed outward. Keep your eyes on the ball and remain alert.

As play approaches from the wings, move to the side of the goal threatened, to cut down the angle of possibility for a score. You do this so as to present a smaller area of the goal for the shooter to aim at. From this position, if he wishes to shoot at the opposite corner of the goal, the ball has to pass you first, giving you the chance to make the save. At no time in the lateral movement should your legs be crossed, as this increases the chance of you tripping over your own feet, and also gives you less maneuverability.

Fielding a Low Ball - From the ready position, bring your feet closer together and bend your back. At the same time, extend your arms so that they are parallel, with your fingers touching the ground. Allow the ball to roll onto your fingers and scoop it up. An alternative is to kneel down on one knee so that the knee and foot are at 90 degrees to the approaching ball. Again, extend your hands to the ground in front of the foot that is pointing to the side. Scoop the ball up in your hands and cradle it against your chest.

Fielding a Ball Between Waist and Chest Height - From the ready position, move sideways to get your body in line with the flight of the ball. Your body will be more upright, elbows closer to the body, with your forearms rotated so that your palms face the ball with fingers pointed down. Reach out for the ball as it contacts your palms, pull it in and cradle it against your chest and cover it with your forearms.

Fielding a Ball Head High or Higher - From the ready position, raise your hands to the height of the oncoming ball. Face your palms to the line of flight and point your fingers up. Catch the ball with your hands behind, and pull them down to cradle the ball against your chest and cover it with your forearms.

Tipping the Ball Over the Crossbar - This technique is used in emergencies when a shot may be coming too high or too hard to catch, or may hit the crossbar and rebound into play. From the ready position, swing both the hands up above the head, at the same time jumping from both feet. In this extended position, contact the ball with both your palms underneath and guide it over the bar. As a last resort, one hand may be used, but it may prove to be less effective.

CLEARING THE BALL

Once the goalkeeper has possession of the ball, he must assess the situation to decide which of four possibilities he shall use to clear the ball. Two of the alternatives are to punt or drop-kick the ball to the forwards. The other two alternatives are to use a baseball style throw or roll the ball along the ground.

Baseball Throw - The advantage of using this throw is the fact that it is more accurate and direct than the other two kicks. You can throw the ball almost as far as you can kick it. Hold the ball at head height in two hands with the palm of the throwing hand behind the ball. At this point, most of your weight is on your rear leg.

The non-throwing hand is removed from the ball, as it is taken behind the head, and held out to point in the direction of the throw. As the ball starts to come forward, your body weight is transferred onto your front foot. At the same time, the hips and shoulders are rotated forward. Your arm extends vigorously and the ball is released with a final flick and inward rotation of the wrist.

Rolling the Ball - The advantage of this method is that the receiving player has less difficulty in controlling the ball because it is already on the ground. Distance and speed are sacrificed for accuracy.

The ball is held in both hands at about thigh height with the throwing hand underneath the ball. As you pull the throwing hand back, your other hand releases the ball. Take a step forward on the leg opposite your throwing hand, and at the same time swing the throwing arm forward in a pendulum swing. Place the ball, rather than bounce it, on the ground, and roll it off your hand. Follow through pointing in the direction of the intended line of the ball.

GOALKEEPING DRILLS

The following drills can be used without a goal. In these, get a partner to kick the ball at you from a distance of 10 to 15 yards. Have your partner roll the ball along the ground so that you may practice fielding it, bending down and kneeling down. Next, have him kick it to you at waist and chest height, so that you may catch it. Lastly, let him throw the ball above your head so that you may practice catching it and pulling it into your chest.

To make the drills more game-like, have him kick the ball to the side of you, so that you may practice the same skills together with the lateral movement.

Goal-mouth practices are aimed at making you aware of the size of the area you are defending and at making you position yourself accordingly.

1. Let your partner throw the ball to you at crossbar height for you to practice tipping it over the crossbar.
2. Ask your partner to kick the ball on the ground or in the air from various positions along a 15 yard arc from the center of the goal. You will then execute the appropriate save and also get practice in narrowing the angle.

Goalkeeping Practice Hints

1. Always be "in-the-game". React to all situations.
2. Be determined and decisive in all your decisions, especially when moving out to the ball. Once you have moved toward the ball, do not retreat.
3. Always try to clear the ball to a teammate who is in the open.
4. Know where the goal is behind you.
5. Always have a second line of defense (another part of your body) behind your hands when fielding the ball. Attempt to get your body in front of the ball.
6. Make saves simple by good positioning. Do not rely on spectacular diving.

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO CONDUCT A PRACTICE

On the first day of practice with your team, it is important to establish the relationship that will exist between the coach and players. You should inform the players of the type of behavior you expect throughout the season. Make rules concerning attendance, behavior, and anything else you feel might affect your coaching. There should be some type of penalty (sit out for 5 minutes, etc.) for failure to follow the rules. It is important to enforce all your rules equally and consistently for all players. Do not allow any player to break the rules without being disciplined. It is a good procedure to write the rules down and give every player a copy so that there are no misunderstandings.

As you start practice, a good method to maintain control of the players is to use a whistle to gain their attention. If there is a team member(s) that disrupts your coaching talks, be it talking, fighting, etc., just stop talking and wait. Once the team realizes that you are not going to continue until everyone is listening, there will be peer pressure that will help you control the situation.

The actual practice should be organized by you prior to going to the field. This preparation will enable you to more effectively use the time available at the field. The more organized the practice schedule, the better the results achieved. There are four components to the game of soccer that you need to address every practice. They are technique, tactics, fitness and the mental/emotional component. Every practice should strive to combine these four within the activities you have chosen. You should have a specific theme for your practice, i.e. inside of the foot pass. Start at the technique level and build to a tactical level eventually ending with a small sided game or a scrimmage.

A typical practice schedule could look like the following:

1. Warm-Up (5-10 minutes) - Warm-ups should be fun and exciting, not boring and routine. They are used to gradually bring the players heart rates up in order to warm the players' muscles. Warm-ups also set the tone for the rest of your session. The players should break a sweat!
2. Review (5 minutes) - Briefly review skills from previous practices. Minimal instruction, maximal practice.
3. Technique (15-20 minutes) - Technique without opposition gradually leading to technique with full opposition.

The coach should determine the level of defensive pressure by limiting the amount of space a player has to work with in the activity.

Practice technique of these skills: dribbling, passing, trapping, heading, kicking, shooting, tackling, throw-in, etc.
4. Scrimmage Play (Should Constitute at Least One Third of Practice Time) - Use 1 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 3, etc., situations to develop skills under game-like situations. Using new skills in game situations is crucial.
5. Warm Down/Stretch - Make sure the players heart rate gets down to normal. Stretch all the muscle groups. Use this time for questions and answers

As a coach, you will need to evaluate the needs of your team. Younger age groups will need more time spent in the technique section and again more within small sided games. A player cannot implement tactical knowledge without a technical foundation.

The initial drills and individual practices of techniques represent a very critical stage of the learning process particularly with the younger kids. It is crucial during this early period that the skills are executed correctly. Incorrectly learned technique at this point could develop bad habits that would be difficult to break in later years.

While conducting a practice, attempt to have the players in contact with a ball as much as possible. Encourage players to bring their own soccer balls (marked with their name) to practice. Ideally, a team should have one ball for every player. Finally, remember to allow the players to have as much fun as possible while practicing and playing.

Hints to Coaches

1. Establish your authority from the beginning.
2. Be firm and fair with disciplinary action.
3. Organize your practice to most effectively cover specific aspects of the game in the allotted practice time.
4. Get to know the names of all your players.
5. Instruct players to bring a soccer ball, shin guards, and water to every practice.
6. Work on individual skills and build to team skills at every practice. Stress the learning of fundamental skills correctly.
7. Teach all aspects of the game to every player.
8. Assign one child to bring water or drinks for games; assign one child to bring sliced oranges; rotate the assignments on a weekly basis.
9. Prior to the game, prepare a written lineup of players and positions for each quarter or half.
10. Everyone should have the opportunity to play as many different positions as possible (including goalkeeper).

CHAPTER 6

BASIC TACTICS & POSITIONS

PLAYER POSITIONS

THE GOALKEEPER

The primary task of the goalkeeper is to act as the team's last line of defense. The Keeper's job is to prevent opposing players from scoring goals. The goalkeeper must have good hands to catch the ball, quick reflexes, courage and a sound working knowledge of the game in order to anticipate opponent's attacks and to know when to come out of a goal to attempt winning the ball. The goalkeeper controls the penalty area in front of the goal. The first duty is to intercept and win as many balls as possible in the penalty area in order to reduce the number of shots taken at the goal.

However, some shots are bound to be taken no matter how capable the goalkeeper. Therefore, the goalkeeper must be so positioned for every shot that the maximum area of the goal may be covered to make the save. Whenever the goalkeeper must leave a portion of the goal open, make certain the keeper has all the space between themselves and the nearer goal post covered, leaving open space by the far goal post which is a more difficult shot for the attacker.

Goalkeepers must learn how to narrow the area of shooting space. If an opposing player with the ball were coming at the goal and the goalkeeper stayed in the goal line, the opponent would enjoy the maximum shooting area. However, if the goalkeeper moves toward the opponent, the area of space available for goal attempt is reduced.

THE DEFENDERS (FULLBACKS)

The main role of the defenders is to prevent the other team from gaining scoring opportunities. Thus, they must be adept primarily at marking players, jockeying and tackling, although in modern soccer all players should be able to perform the skills required by every position. When unchallenged, a defender should take the opportunity to move forward to assist in the team's attack. When a fullback moves past a teammate, that player should assume the role to assist in defense if the ball changes possession. There is no specific area of the field where a certain player must or should remain for the entire game. However, someone must cover a given area for a teammate if a player moves up the field in attack.

- I. Passing
 - A. Passing short distances
 - 1. Inside of the foot
 - 2. Outside of the foot
 - 3. Instep
 - 4. Heel
 - B. Passing for distance
 - C. Volley and half-volley
 - D. Bending the ball
 - E. Chipping the ball
- II. Shooting
 - A. Inside of the foot
 - B. Instep
 - C. Outside of the foot
 - D. Volley and half-volley
 - E. Bending the ball
- III. Dribbling
 - A. Basic technique
 - 1. Protect the ball
 - 2. Use the inside, outside, & sole of the foot
 - B. Points without the ball
 - 1. Change of speed
 - 2. Change of direction
 - 3. Body points
 - C. Pointing with the ball

- IV. Heading
 - A. Two forms
 - 1. Feet on the ground
 - 2. Jumping in the air
 - B. Placement
 - 1. Short
 - 2. Long
 - C. Changing directions
 - D. Power heading
 - E. Diving Headers
- V. Trapping
 - A. Controlling rolling balls
 - 1. Inside of the foot
 - 2. Outside of the foot
 - B. Controlling balls from the air
 - 1. Instep
 - 2. Inside of the foot
 - 3. Outside of the foot
 - 4. Thigh
 - 5. Chest
 - 6. Head
- VI. Throw Ins
 - A. Hand positioning
 - B. Stationary throws
 - C. Running throws
 - D. short throws
 - E. Long throws

- VII. Tackling
 - A. Jockeying
 - 1. Footwork
 - 2. Body position
 - 3. When to tackle (proper time to challenge)
 - B. From the side
 - C. From behind
 - D. Sliding
- VIII. Rules Demonstration
 - A. Offside
 - B. Drop ball
 - C. Goal kick
 - D. Corner kick
 - E. Direct kick
 - F. Indirect kick
 - G. Dangerous play
 - H. Fouls
 - I. Penalty kick
 - J. Throw-in
 - K. Tackling (proper)
 - L. Goalkeeper play

THE MIDFIELDERS (HALFBACKS)

The midfield position generally requires the greatest amount of endurance, since the midfielder's role is to link the team's defense and attack. More so than any of their teammates, they are involved in defending their own goal as well as attacking the goal of the opposition. As a result, they must master both defending and attacking skills.

FORWARDS (STRIKERS, WINGS)

The primary task of all forwards is attempting to score goals for their team. However, all players must help defend when opponents have the ball. It is small consolation to have scored three goals if your team concedes four and loses the game. Forwards must be adept dribblers, as they will sometimes need to beat defenders in some one-on-one situations and must be good, accurate shooters in order to score goals.

TEAM PLAY

In selecting a system, the formation must be compatible with the players. A coach should never attempt to force a particular formation on his players. Also, a formation is not rigidly held throughout the game. It is only a framework through which different plays are worked. After each play has terminated, the players move back into formation.

Soccer is often played with the players positioned in a series of interlocking triangles which add depth to both the offense and defense. This means that forwards and defenders must not attack or defend on a "flat front." In a situation where three backs stand in a straight line across the field, none of the three can cover the space behind each of the other players during a through pass. Furthermore, four forwards attacking in a straight line across the field limit the passing possibilities and open themselves up to an offside trap.

As in any team game, the more that the players practice together, the better the system works. Each player must completely understand their role in the formation. Also, the players must have knowledge of the duties of all the teammates. Only then can a player be expected to function effectively as a member of the team.

SYSTEMS OF PLAY (PLAYER POSITIONING)

Choosing a particular type of system (lineup) will vary from team to team depending upon available talent and skill level. Each coach must adapt to the particular players assigned to the team.

Systems of play are used to give greater definition to the specific responsibilities of each player within the team network.

Regardless of the system, players must develop necessary skills and be able to apply basic principles of attack and defense in order to develop a successful team effort.

DEVELOPMENTAL PLAYER FORMATIONS

Mighty Mites do not need player formations. The emphasis should be on skill and spacing. 6 & 7's should play 2 forwards, 2 midfielders and 2 backs. 8's & 9's play 9 v 9 and 10 & 11's and 12 & 13's play 11 v 11. In all three age groups, coaches should look to the eleven player formations and improvise according to the number of players they put on the field.

International and national soccer organizations have recommended this system for younger players because:

1. Individual players get more time with the ball (very crucial in initial exposure to soccer).
2. More open space to encourage development of passing skills.
3. Fewer players bunching around the ball.
4. Less confusion about field position.

The adaptation to the 11-player game is made relatively easy due to the older divisions playing on larger fields, thus spreading out the additional players.

ELEVEN PLAYER FORMATIONS

4-4-2 - The 4-4-2 uses two central midfielders in order to control midfield play. The two strikers are pushed forward in an attempt to stretch the defense giving the attacker depth and pulling the opponents defense apart. The two strikers are used as central targets. Typically they play with their back to the goal they are attacking. The outside midfielders are used to attack the flanks. Wing play will only be effective if the forwards maintain a central position leaving the space for the outside midfielders. Typically the 4-4-2 utilizes 3 marking backs and a sweeper.

4-4-3 - The 4-4-3 is an attacking minded formation. With 3 forwards, the team has greater opportunity to attack quickly with greater number of players and to apply greater pressure to the opponent in it's own defensive third. The central attacker is used as a target and the wings attack on the flanks. The draw back to the 4-4-3 is the absolute necessity for a strong central midfielder. Without one, the opponent is given the opportunity to attack down the middle thus giving them optimal shooting angles and a short path to goal.

4-5-1 - This formation was popular coming away from the 1990 World Cup. It gave underdogs an opportunity to play for a tie. With five players in midfield, it is difficult for an opponent to play through balls in midfield. The opponents best chance comes in playing balls over midfield. With 3 marking backs and a sweeper, the 4-5-1 allows defensive cover for the long ball. In order to score while using the 4-5-1, the team must have a lone forward who can either win and hold the ball allowing teammates time to advance into attacking positions, or be able to turn and beat at least two opponents to goal.

3-4-3 - This formation is a popular response to an opponent playing a 4-4-2. Since the opponent is attacking with 2 forwards, your team needs only 2 marking backs. This allows a third attacker to join the offensive. This formation also maintains 4 midfielders to dominate play in the middle third.

These are basic formations. There is no best formation or worst. Nor must a coach do what has already been done. Choosing a formation is best determined by the abilities of your players and your imagination.

TEAM DEFENSE

There are several types of defensive strategy. Coaches can choose to 1.) zone defense, 2.) man-for-man defense, or 3.) A combination of both.

In the "zone defense" each defender is assigned a given area of the field and is responsible for preventing successful attacking plays by the opposition in this area. This does not mean that one particular individual must stay in that one area the entire game. Players on the field may and should overlap (change positions) periodically throughout the game to allow different individuals to press the attack. This not only allows a brief rest for some players, but also frequently confuses the defense. In "man-to-man defense" each defender is assigned an opponent to mark and contain regardless of where the opponent may go on the playing field. When using this kind of defense, it is usually a good idea to position a free defender behind his teammates to provide them with cover and support.

A "combination of zone and man-for-man defense" incorporates some principles of both types. Generally the use of diagonal cover and support is used in this form of defensive structure.

When the ball is on the attacker's right wing, the left back marks the man with the ball while the other backs drop back in a diagonal line to provide support and cover. This prevents the player with the ball from being able to come on to goal uncontested in the event he gets by the left back, and prevents the ball from being passed behind the left back to another attacker to best the entire defense.

The following basic principles are essential for all defensive play:

1. Delay your opponent's attack when your team first loses the possession of the ball to permit the defense to regroup and organize.
2. Provide support for one another as is done for instance in diagonal covering.
3. As the ball approaches the goal concentrate the defense in front of the goal, thus limiting the space available for goal attempts.
4. Maintain defensive balance. Never position all the defenders on one side of the field at the same time -- the opponents may manage to switch the field of play.

5. Pressure the attacking player in position of the ball. Force him to make errors by limiting the time and space he has to play the ball.
6. Control yourself. Do not make rash commitments that lead you away from a good defensive position or challenge for the ball during an inopportune moment.

TEAM ATTACK

The following basic principles are essential for all offensive play:

1. It is most important of course, to maintain possession of the ball. You cannot score unless you have the ball and while you retain it, the other team cannot score.
2. Always support the player who has the ball. Ideally, there should be two or three teammates with 15 yards to whom a pass can be necessary.
3. Maintain as much width as possible into the defense of the opposition without undue risk of losing possession.
4. Every pass should penetrate as deeply as possible into the defense of the opposition without undue risk of losing possession.
5. After passing the ball, a player should move to a more advantageous position to receive the ball (forward if possible).
6. Attacking players should move about and interchange positions frequently to find space for passing opportunities and to make up defending against them more difficult.
7. Soccer is a quick reaction game and all players should be encouraged to improvise according to the momentary game situation.
8. Scoring goals often requires quickness and first-time shooting. To win the game, you must finish your attacks with shots on goal.

INDIVIDUAL PLAY

Players should always be making an effort to anticipate the opponent's actions in order to successfully defend or attack.

When a teammate has the ball, there should be at least two players moving into open space to receive a possible pass. One player should follow the ball carrier to allow for back passing. Passing backwards allows attacking players to move up the field more rapidly thus gaining a better position to receive a pass.

Players should not wait for the ball to come to them. Every loose ball should be collected as quickly as possible by moving to lay the ball.

DEFENSIVE PLAY

Three crucial elements of defensive play:

1. Delay the ball carrier by forcing play towards the sidelines. This allows teammates to organize for total defense.
2. Deny the opponents easy access to the middle area of the field, particularly around the penalty box area. Concentrate defenders by decreasing the space between teammates. Centralize the defense in order to take away good shooting angles.
3. Destroy the attack by forcing errors that allow your team to take possession of the ball. Court attack quickly!

OFFENSIVE PLAY

Control the ball as much as possible. Move the entire team (except the goalkeeper) up the field as a unit. Passing creates a much quicker attack than running with the ball. Passes should penetrate a defense as deep as possible where:

1. Attackers have at least numerical equivalence.
2. Space to operate.
3. Support is available.

Shoot at every possible opportunity. Players should begin by shooting when they near the penalty area. Shots on goal should always be followed in by the attacking team. The keeper might make an error that would allow a second chance to score.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GAME SITUATIONS

KICKOFF

A kickoff in soccer should be done in such a manner that your team maintains possession of the ball. This can be done by having two teammates with the ball together at the kickoff. One player pushes the ball forward about one foot. The other player takes possession of the ball and attempts to move it up field through dribbling or a pass.

POSITIONING

After assigning field position (forward, midfield, fullback) stress that your players stay spread out over the field. While defending, players should decrease the spacing between themselves. On attack, the players should increase the spacing between themselves. Move the entire team up and down the field as a unit (in their respective positions). When on the attack, fullbacks should move past midfield, while halfbacks and forwards move towards the opponent's goal. When on the defense, forwards and halfbacks move back to aid the fullbacks. Do not allow gaps to open up between the forward and midfielders or the midfielders and the backs. This allows the opposition space to attack into.

Players should work in triangle patterns for passing. These groups should always be in motion with individual players rotating positions to confuse the opponents.

COMMON RULE VIOLATIONS

There are many common violations that hinder your team's performance. During each practice, time should be given to correct these obvious infractions.

THROW-IN

1. Ball is not thrown from over and behind the head.
2. Ball not thrown with equal pressure from both hands (side spin is a frequent result of this illegal throw).
3. Ball dropped rather than thrown.
4. Player lifts foot before completing throw.

OFFSIDE

Offensive player not keeping two defenders between the goal and themselves prior to a pass.

HANDBALL

Player touching the ball with any part of the hand or arm. Only an infraction if the individual intentionally plays the ball as opposed to the ball striking the player.

JUMPING IN OR AT

Player leaving the ground toward an opponent with one or both feet. Generally the player is out of position and is therefore attempting a desperate tackle.

CHARGING

Player attempting to steal the ball hits the opponent prior to the ball.

These are the most common infractions. There are many other violations that occur frequently, however they are so obvious in nature (tripping, holding, pushing) as to not warrant explanation in this section.

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

Players should be worked during practice in situations that are game-like in varying degrees to help familiarize them with the actual game. Practices should be full of life. Repetition is necessary, but does not need to be boring.

The shortcomings that your team displays in game situations should determine the theme of your practices. Your imagination should then be your guide in developing the activities that help the players improve through learning. There are several books that are good resources for practice activities, but the resources you have are fellow coaches and your own creative ability.

NOTES