

*This article was written for new U6 and U8 coaches,
but many of the same principles apply to new coaches in any league...*

HELP! I Volunteered to Coach...What do I do?

Many first time coaches volunteer or are volunteered to the job. First things first...Relax. Relax and think about how much fun you are going to have with these little Under-6 and Under-8 soccer players.

Goal: Create a fun, learning soccer environment for your players in training and in games.

How?

- Contact the [Program Director](#) and request helpful coaching materials and coaching aids.
- Review the [Harleysville Soccer Association](#) web site, especially the **Intramural** pages and **Coaches Corner** area.
- Talk to other Soccer Coaches in the program or in your community who have worked with these age groups before.
- Contact your [State Youth Soccer Association](#) and request helpful coaching materials and coaching aids.
- Contact either the [Program Director](#) or [State Director of Coaching](#) about specific age-appropriate coaching courses and age-appropriate training materials.
- Call US Youth Soccer at 1.800.4SOCCER or visit their web site at www.USYouthSoccer.org and request and/or order helpful coaching materials and coaching aids.

Team Management:

Prepare a list of simple and clear rules for your players and their parents. Conduct a pre-season meeting or send a letter or e-mail to parents discussing these rules and go over other important information.

Consider the following:

- ▶ Schedules and locations for training sessions and games.
- ▶ Drop off and pick up times for training sessions and games.

- ▶ Player responsibilities and behavior at training sessions and games.
- ▶ Parent responsibilities and behavior at training sessions and games.
- ▶ Player equipment (#3 soccer ball, shin pads, soccer shoes or sneakers, water); team uniform provided by club.
- ▶ Coaching equipment (#3 soccer balls, cones, vests/pinnies, basic first aid kit / ice pack) – provided by club.
- ▶ Fill out required coaching form(s).
- ▶ Discuss the procedure for canceling training sessions and games.
- ▶ Discuss your philosophy of coaching...Remember: It's about player development and having fun, not winning and losing!

Risk Management:

Provide proper age appropriate activities at training sessions and games.

Assure that training and playing areas are safe.

Make sure that all players are wearing the correct equipment and that it is appropriately sized.

Make sure that you are assisted by another adult when coaching the players (This includes the time when players arrive and when they depart from training sessions and games).

Create a plan for any medical emergencies/injuries.

The Training Session - Under-6 Format

Duration is 60-75 minutes.

Every child has a ball.

Individual activities.

Warm-up activities include movement education approach...with and without a ball (10 minutes).

Fun games & activities with and with out a ball (25-30 minutes).

Intersperse with frequent water breaks.

Conclude with 3v3 games to two goals, with no goalkeepers and no fixed player positions (25-30 minutes with breaks).

The Training Session - Under-8 Format

Duration is 90 minutes.

Every child has a ball.

Individual and partner activities.

Warm-up activities with and without the ball – dribbling and passing (15 minutes).

Maze games and target games (25 minutes).

Intersperse with frequent water breaks.

Conclude with 4v4 games to two goals, with no goalkeepers; do not restrict players to fixed positions, using diamonds & triangles as points of reference (up to 45 minutes with breaks).

Sample Lesson Plans, courtesy of the [Coaches Connection](#) (click the link below)

[Under-6 Lesson Plans](#)

[Under-8 Lesson Plans](#)