

Ed & Ruth Lehman
YMCA
LONGMONT ®
Soccer Coaches Handbook
Spring 2009

“I pledge to play the game the best I can. To be a team player. To respect my opponents, the rules, and officials, and to improve myself in Spirit, Mind, and Body.”

Dear Coach,

Volunteers are the backbone of the sport and recreation industry. Across Longmont and the surrounding area there are hundreds of coaches, officials and volunteers that give of their time each week ensuring that people of all ages have an opportunity to participate in the activities they enjoy.

Thanks again for your time and involvement. It means a great deal to me, the Longmont YMCA, the community and I know it means a great deal to the children.

So Coaches, thank you for...

**helping, training, cheering, teaching,
motivating, inspiring, developing responsibility,
respecting, caring, being there, giving your time.**



Sincerely,

Patrick Soldan
Sports Director
720-652-4736
psoldan@longmontymca.org

If you ever need anything, don't hesitate to call or e-mail.

Tips for a Successful Practice

1. Never end a drill artificially. Teach your players to play every drill out, regardless of the drill's objective.
2. Create a competitive environment. Players can compete with themselves to raise a new standard for individual drills. That competitive element makes the players comfortable with winning, losing, and scoring points and it fosters a head-in-the-game attitude right up to the end.
3. Try not to talk too much. Coach effectively in a concise manner. Most coaches talk too much. When you coach, don't stop the exercise or drill unless it's absolutely necessary. Coach while the activity continues by talking directly to an individual or a small group. On those rare occasions when you must stop the entire activity and bring something to the attention of the team, do it quickly and succinctly. Then get back into action immediately.
4. Positive feedback elicits a better response than negative feedback. Praise when it's warranted; otherwise say nothing.
5. Give your drills names that your players will remember. The next time you do a specific drill, you won't need to waste time explaining it. Just name it and run it.
6. Make sure the players understand the objective of each drill. Tell them what they are trying to accomplish.
7. Adjust and modify the scoring system of a drill to increase the complexity of drills that your players particularly enjoy. Doing this will keep the drill effective. Move gradually.
8. Give your players simple practice rules to follow consistently at every training session, perhaps nothing more than starting on time with a certain sequence of events, using a particular method of receiving instruction, and taking breaks at predetermined times. Rules of practice should provide structure and create a comfortable environment for your athletes.
9. Normally, practice is not the best environment in which to do physical training. You can accomplish that more effectively outside practice, when physical training can be the first priority.
10. Be sensitive to the moods and flow of a practice. If things aren't going well, it may be better to end practice prematurely than continue to practice poorly. On the other hand, abbreviating practice too often is not the way to develop a high-caliber team

Soccer Clinic Practice Outline for YMCA Coaches

Explain dribbling (both legs kick the ball on the inside of the foot...take off shoe and demo) to kids. Have them dribble the ball on a "slow" jog. Regroup them and have them race down the hill dribbling while you chase them. Have them kick their ball into the goal to be safe. You can also position your assistant about 25 yards away and see who can dribble their ball thru this coach's legs first, then they will sprint back to you and try to do the same thru your legs.

Warmup Run: All kids are in one line and jogging very slowly around the soccer field. The leader or first runner yells "Go" and the last runner sprints and passes all runners to be first in line. He runs for 5 – 10 jogging steps and then yells "Go" and the last runner sprints to be first. This continues until all players have sprinted to be first. You can also have the last runner weave thru all the players.

Teach Fast Footwork:

- i. Teach the kids how to do "toe taps". Start very slow and speed up.
- ii. Teach toe taps in a circle.
- iii. Teach juggling by just dropping ball on thigh, then dropping on foot. Try to get two or even three in the air.
- iv. Teach "boxing"
- v. Teach how to do a reverse or pull-back.
- vi. Do a sideways toe tap...
- vii. Teach triangle

Stretch: Have kids stretch to the sky. *"Reach your fingers high, and try to touch the sky"*
Stretchway up high, then have them stretch to the ground. *"Reach your fingers low and try to touch your toe."*

Dynamic Stretching (10 yd run, say "Ouhh Ahh" and then jog back):

- a. Do Russian walks (high straight leg marching...i.e. German)goose-stepping, then jog back
- b. Do "kick-butt", then walk back
- c. Do "high-knees", then walk back
- d. Do "bunny-hop-broad jump", then walk back
- e. Do "skip" trying to get as high as possible, then walk back
- f. Do "backwards" jogging
- g. Hop on one leg
- h. Do "Spider

Teach trapping the ball. Have kids run out to a cone and as they round the cone to come back roll them a ball to trap on the inside of their foot. Additionally, have them

raise their hand that they are open. Don't teach trapping ball by lifting and stepping on top of ball.

Teach them "Reverse" or "Pull-back". Have kids dribble in one direction and then place their foot on top of the ball and pull it back. Have kids watch the ball with their eyes and they will spin in the proper direction (same side as the leg placed on top of the ball).

Games:

a. Cat and Mouse or Sharks and Minnows: Mark a field size about 10 yards wide by 10-12 yards long. It will be necessary to mark the end lines as well as the sidelines. Place one child at mid-field and call them the cat (shark). Tell the other kids they are mice (minnows) and have them go to the end line. The goal for the mice is to dribble their soccer ball all the way to the other end line without any "cats" stealing their ball and kicking it out of the playing field. The goal of the cats is to steal the ball, without any use of hands, away from the mice and then kick the ball off the field. If a cat successfully steals the ball away from a mouse, then the mouse is converted into a cat. All of the cats should start at mid-field and then when the coach blows the whistle they can try to steal a ball. It also might be necessary to adjust the field size with the abilities of the players as well as counting out loud to ten seconds. If you don't count out loud the game can last too long and the players will play without any urgency. The game continues until there are no more mice left. An airplane ride/piggy back ride can be given to the last mouse. Before the game starts demonstrate how to go around a shark or cat by going sideways around the defense and not just straight at the defender.

b. Bee Sting: Lay out cones in a 7 yard by 7 yard square, adjust as necessary depending on the skill level. All the kids will have a ball and all the parents will not have a soccer ball. The kids are the bees and the parents are themselves. At the whistle, the parents walk slowly in the playing field and the kids dribble their balls and try to kick them into the parent. When a ball hits a parent they will dramatically fall to the ground. The game will continue until all parents are "dead". At the start, ask the kids, "Let me hear you buzz", then say you are ready and let them go. Play several "Nintendo" levels, as in four, and have the parents keep increasing their activity each level.

c. Reverse Bee Sting: Have the kids run anywhere they want....no boundaries and have the parents try to catch them dribbling the ball. Sometimes it may be necessary to give the kids boundaries.

d. Play "Red Light – Green Light": At red light, have all the kids stop their ball by placing a foot on top of the ball and maintaining their balance.

e. Race Track: Place about 10 cones in a circle with a diameter of 6 to 10 yards. Select three to four kids of equal ability and have the rest sit inside the circle. Have the four

players do toe touches on the ball to simulate filling their cars with gas. Tell them to say “vroom...vroom” as they do toe touches. Say “go” and the players must dribble their ball around the outside of the cones and back to the start to win the race. Select four new players and continue again. At the end have the whole team race.

f. Soccer Dodgeball: Divide both teams into equal teams and place on each side of a U-6 soccer field. Place about 15 balls on the center line and have kids line up about 10 yards back. Say “go” and instruct kids to run up to the center and kick the balls to the other side. Players are not allowed to go to the other’s team side. Go for about 30 to 45 sec and then stop the game and see who had the most balls on the other team’s side. Count out loud to give them a sense of urgency to finish. Teach them to do reverse pull backs as the run up and retrieve a ball on their side.

g. Eggs in the Nest: Divide both teams into equal teams and place each group in front of the soccer net on a U-6 field. Place about 15 – 20 balls in the center circle. Say “go” and instruct the kids to run to the center and grab a ball with their feet and dribble it back into their net. They should do a reverse pull back to get a ball out of the center. They can return to the center as often as they can until all the balls are taken. To increase the difficulty, take yellow cones (call them “bombs”) and randomly place them in front of the goal. Tell the players that if they hit a “yellow-mine” they have to return that ball to the center and pick another one.

h. Stuck in the Mud...: Place 1-3 pennies on kids and instruct them that they are the “thunderstorms”. Give a ball to every other child and tell them they are the race cars and they have to dribble the ball and keep away from the thunderstorms. If a player is tagged by a thunderstorm they are “stuck in the mud” and must pick up their ball with their hands and hold it in the air while spreading their legs. Other race cars can free “stuck in the mud” players by dribbling their ball thru the legs of the “stuck in the mud” players. The game continues for about one minute or until all of the players are frozen.

i. Musical Chairs: Using round cones, randomly place about 20 cones (turned over) in the field. Tell the kids they have 20 to 30 sec to get their ball safely into the cone before the counselors come and scoop them up. After the first game, have the parents toss their ball away and repeat having the kids “park” their ball into the cone. If the kids can tolerate, then reduce the number of cones to less than the number of kids.

j. One on One: Place half of your team on one sideline of a U-6 field and the other half on the other sideline. Number the kids from 1-4 making sure that both ones, twos, etc...are at the same skill level. Place one ball in the center and have both teams sit on their sidelines at the center. You will call out “ones” and then both ones from both teams will run out and try to score. After a score or too much time reset the ball in the middle and maybe call two or three numbers.

k. Throw-In Target Practice: Place the kids in different lines of two or three. Place a cone about 10 feet away. Kick the ball out of bounds and tell them to run and get the ball and quickly get set at the edge of the line and try to throw the ball in without jumping and knock the cone over. Grade them like a diver and be stingy on giving perfect 10s....they will work harder to do it perfect.

l. Soccer Bowling: Place one cone on the ground and about 15 to 30 feet away (determined by ability) place three circular cones in the shape of a triangle. On top of each cone place a soccer ball.

So there should be three cones with balls on top of the cones and a player with a ball at the starting cone. The player gets one shot to knock the balls off of the cones. If the player misses or knocks a ball off, they retrieve the ball using only their feet. They must dribble (not pass) the ball back to the start and stop the ball for the next player. Break up your team into groups and have them compete against each other. The losing groups have to do pushups or coffee grinders. If another group's ball knocks off another group's ball....so be it. Play stops after a group wins three times.

m. GOLF: Place one cone for a group of two to four players or if you have enough cones then place one for each player about 10 yards away (adjust as necessary). Using only one kick see who is able to knock the cone down or get their ball closest to the cone.

n. Numbers or One on One: Split kids up in even amounts on both sidelines and then number the kids from one to the amount required. Make sure that the kids labeled as "one" are matched up evenly in skill. Have all the kids sit on the sideline and when you call out "Ones" the two players labeled as "one", run out and try to kick the ball in their goal. The next time you can yell out "threes" and both players labeled as "three" compete against each other and try to score. After awhile you can mix it up and yell "ones and fours" and two sets of players will jump up and try to score.

o. SUBS & SHIPS: Randomly place several cones in a 20 yard by 20 yard area. Divide the players into two groups: one group will be the subs and the other will be the ships. The subs mission is to sink ships so this group of players will be dribbling their ball towards a cone and then kicking their ball into a cone to knock it over. The ships will dribble their ball over to a knocked over cone and after having placed one foot on top of their ball or doing two toe touches on top of their ball, then they will replace the knocked over cone into a vertical position and go find another cone knocked over cone. If the kids are very young, then you might want to let the ships not use a ball and just run around and fix knocked over cones. After about 2 to 3 minutes the coach will blow his whistle and remind kids to freeze and then count the number of cones knocked over. The kids will then switch sides and the game will start again.

p. The BIG SWITCH: Mark two boxes that are 10 yards by 10 yards and that are about 10 to 15 yards apart from each other. Give each player their own ball and divide them into two teams. Place each team in a separate box. Name each team or one captain for each team. At the whistle, both teams will quickly try and dribble their balls into the other team's box. Once the entire team reaches the opponent's box they shout their captain's name. Players must try to avoid making contact with other players and their balls. The first team with all players in the opponent's box wins that round. Randomly place several cones in the playing field and call these "mines". Players must avoid mines or their ball will be "destroyed".

q. Four Cats: Mark out a 15 yard by 15 yard area and place four players "cats" in each corner. All of the remaining players are mice. At the coach's whistle, the "cats" try to get as many mice as possible by touching players with their ball below the waist. Mice must stay inside the playing area and avoid the cats. Mice touched below the waist by a cat must go to the corner of the appropriate cat. The "cat" who catches the most mice wins.

r. BLOB Tag: This is a more advanced drill, but could still work for U-6. There will be one group of kids (2 to four players) that will be the "glob". The players in the blob must hold hands, but don't have to form a circle. The other group of players (three to six) has one ball between them. Mark out a playing area about 10 yards by 10 yards, which can be adjusted to the skill of the players. At the whistle, the "glob" group chases after the ball and tries to kick it out of the marked off area. The non blob group tries to see how many passes they can make before the blob kicks the ball out of the marked-off area.

s. Jaws: One player is designated as "Jaws" and they enter the playing field (about 15 yards by 15 yards but larger for more skilled players) and attempt to kick the other players' balls out. The last player in possession of the ball is the winner and is the next "Jaws".

Remind players how to shield a defender away from the ball instead of just trying to dribble away. As a variation have more than one player as "Jaws".

t. Musical Soccer Ball: All players have a ball at their feet inside a playing field of about 15 yards by 15 yards (larger for more skilled players). One player starts the game without a ball. At the coach's whistle, the one player without a ball enters the playing field and tries to steal a ball from another player. Players who lose their ball must try to steal a ball from a different player who took their ball. Allow this game to go for about one minute and the winners are everybody who has a ball. *Variation:* Time one person and see how long it takes them to steal the ball from everyone. Once a ball is stolen (kicked out of the playing area) then that player leaves the playing area.

u. KING of Dribblers: Mark out a 10 yard by 10 yard area with cones. All players have a ball at their feet. Each player protects their own ball and attempts to kick any other player's ball out of the playing area. Once a player is eliminated they practice juggling

outside the playing area. You can set a high juggling level (10 juggles) and the player can reenter the game. The last player with a ball in the circle is “King” of the dribblers.

v. Traffic Exchange: Mark out two “parking areas” with cones that are a minimum of 10 yards apart. Divide the players into two groups and have them go to their respective parking area with a ball. At the coach’s signal, players run and dribble their ball to the other team’s parking area. Players may not touch each other or the ball when the exchange is taking place...offending players go back to their starting area and try again. Winners are the first group to park (toe on top of the ball) their ball in their opponent’s parking area.

w. Martian Invaders: Mark out a 15 yard by 15 yard grid and place 12 soccer balls in the center of the grid. Place four players at each corner of the grid. At the coach’s whistle, players try to be the first player with four balls in their corner. Once no balls are left in the center, players may rob each other. First to get four balls in their corner wins. This game may be played with teams of two and three in each corner as well. However with groups there is no passing and no goal tending your corner.

10. Other Soccer Points to Teach:

a. Don’t move your kids around like chess pieces; rather, teach them to run to certain spots when you say the following: 1) center kick-off; 2) goal kick offense; 3) goal kick defense; 4) corner kick offense; 5) corner kick defense; and 6) throw-in.

11. At the end of practice, have kids put their hands in the middle and say team name



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.