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# Youth Soccer Coaches Guide



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## Coaches Guide

We appreciate you joining us as a coach or assistant coach for our upcoming Youth Soccer season. Many coaches have been asking us for a coaching guide to assist them in guiding their team throughout the season.

Within this guide you will find materials that we hope you will find useful for the upcoming season. If there is anything you would like to see in guides like this in the future, please let us know as we will continue to build on this for seasons to come.

Thank you so much for volunteering to coach this season! You are a HUGE part of our success and we couldn't do what we do without your help and contribution to our program. By volunteering to coach, you help keep the registration cost down for everyone and add to the great memories that kids will have of sports for years to come!

Inside this guide you will find the following:

- Coaches Conduct
- League Rules
- Overview
- Development
- Stretching and Warming Up
- Drills
- COVID-19 Protocols

Have a safe and fun season!

Regards:

Amenity Athletics Management

## Coaches Guide

With regard to my players: I believe that my role as a coach is to contribute to the overall success, physical, and athletic growth of the player through participation in soccer.

- I will endeavor to be a good instructor and a positive role model for my players.
- I believe that the score of a game comes second to the safety and welfare of all my players.
- I will endeavor to put winning in its proper perspective.
- I am responsible for understanding and competing within the letter and the spirit of the Laws of the Game.
- I will teach my players to understand and play within the letter and spirit of the Laws, as well.

With regard to opposing teams:

- I believe that the way my team conducts itself can also have an influence, for better or worse, on those we compete against.
- I will endeavor to make my team a positive role model.
- I will not coach, nor allow my players to play, with intent to cause injury to opposing players.
- Neither I nor my players and spectators will display hostile behavior towards opposing players.
- I will emphasize winning without boasting and losing without bitterness.

With regard to Referees:

- I believe that Referees, just as coaches and players, are attempting to do their best.
- I will instill in my players and spectators a respect for that fact.
- I understand that my attitude can influence my players and spectators.
- I will display a controlled and undemonstrative attitude toward Referees at all times.
- Neither I nor my players and spectators will address a Referee before, during or after the game in a demeaning fashion.

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and the spectators on their side of the field, specifically as it relates to the referee, coaches, players and spectators on the other team. Verbal and/or physical abuse will not be tolerated. If players conduct is not in the spirit of recreational soccer the referee can have the player leave the game for a cooling off period (length-determined by the referee). The same conduct rule applies to spectators. If the cooling off period does not resolve the problem, the spectator may be asked to leave the field. If a coach approaches a referee or steps on to the field to challenge a call, they will be asked to leave the game and the incident will be reviewed.



## League Rules

The league will be run following FIFA guidelines for general play. As most youth leagues, there are some supplemental rules that can be found below. A copy of the FIFA rules can be found at [http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/federation/81/42/36/lotg\\_en.pdf](http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/federation/81/42/36/lotg_en.pdf). These supplemental rules are used for the safety of the players and to make the games run smoothly.

- U5, U6, U8, U10, U12, U15 Divisions: There is offside penalties only in the U10, U12 and U15 divisions
- U10, U12 and U15 Divisions only: Penalties in the 18' (penalty area) will result in a penalty shot
- There are unlimited substitutions and substitutions can be made on throw-in, corner kick, after a goal is scored, or any goal kick.
- Players should play at least half of the game

### U5 and U6

#### Size 3 ball

- 4 players on the field at a time (4v4)
- 8 minute quarters
- No goalie
- Players cannot be in the goal box unless there is another player inside the goal box. This rule will be enforced by referees to the best of their ability. Generally we are just trying to avoid coaches placing a child in the box and having them act as a goalie.
- Players will have 2 chances for correct throw ins. After the first throw in the referee or coach will instruct the child on how to throw it in. If the player still throws the ball incorrectly it will result in a turnover. I have instructed my referees to be lenient for this age group.
- There are unlimited substitutions and substitutions can be made on throw-in, after a goal is scored, or any goal kick.

### U8

#### Size 3 ball

- 10 minute quarters
- There is no goalie. (5v5 in Heritage Landing) (4v4 in Bartram Springs)
- Referees will allow one re-throw in the case of incorrect throw ins.
- There are unlimited substitutions and substitutions can be made on throw-in, after a goal is scored, or any goal kick.

### U10

#### Size 4 ball

- 25 minute halves
- 7 players on a field at a time including the goalie (8 in Bartram)
- Incorrect throw ins will result in a turnover
- There are unlimited substitutions and substitutions can be made on throw-in, after a goal is scored, or any goal kick.
- There is offside penalties only in the U10, U12 and U15 divisions.
- U10, U12 and U15 Divisions only: Penalties in the 18' (penalty area) will result in a penalty shot. Each player should play at least half of the game.

### U12

#### Size 5 ball

- 25 minute halves
- 7 players on a field at a time including the goalie (8 in Bartram)
- Incorrect throw ins will result in a turnover
- There are unlimited substitutions and substitutions can be made on throw-in, after a goal is scored, or any goal kick.
- There is offside penalties only in the U10, U12 and U15 divisions.
- U10, U12 and U15 Divisions only: Penalties in the 18' (penalty area) will result in a penalty shot. Each player should play at least half of the game.

### U15

#### Size 5 ball

- 30 minute halves
- 8 players on a field at a time including the goalie
- Incorrect throw ins will result in a turnover
- There are unlimited substitutions and substitutions can be made on throw-in, after a goal is scored, or any goal kick.
- There is offside penalties only in the U10, U12 and U15 divisions.
- U10, U12 and U15 Divisions only: Penalties in the 18' (penalty area) will result in a penalty shot. Each player should play at least half of the game.

## **Coaching 101 - Overview**

### **A Philosophy to Believe in**

The game of soccer is just that, “a game”. The number one reason (well documented in a number of studies) children participate in soccer is to have FUN!!! If they don’t have fun, they will soon quit. It is detrimental to the player if there is too much pressure placed on them too early to achieve a result rather than simply experiencing the sheer joy of a youth game. At their heart, youth sports are not about how many wins and losses are accumulated or how many trophies are collected. Yet, too often adults think just the opposite and that joy is taken away. Most people would agree children do not think like adults. Then why do we expect them to play like adults?

Proper soccer development means children playing age appropriate activities, so they can experience, comprehend, and execute the game as it relates to where they are in their cognitive development. It is about playing all the different positions on the team, so the player learns all the skills necessary to develop in the game. It’s about receiving equal playing time, so the players are all given equal opportunity to learn. It’s about learning the techniques of the game through a variety of fun games where players have as much contact with a ball as possible and learn at their own rates.

Amenity Athletics wants you to respect the game of soccer, respect the players, the opponents, the referee, and the parents. Please go about your teachings in a thorough, positive, yet humble manner. Please take the responsibility of instructing the Amenity Athletics area’s impressionable youth with a great deal of care and joy. We hope you find the guidebook helpful.

### **Characteristics for Coaching**

**PATIENCE** – This is probably the most important characteristic. Let’s face it—12 active boys or girls together require a lot of attention. A good coach is one who doesn’t expect angels on the soccer field.

**TOLERANCE** – This quality goes hand-in-hand with patience. Kids are going to be rowdy, moody or lazy. Tolerance takes the different mind-sets and turns the focus to the tasks “at hand”.

**ACCEPTANCE** – Children are so very different. Each one has varied potential and skill levels. A good coach is one who recognizes each child as an individual and he/she encourages that child to perform at his/her very best level. Perfection is not required!

**MOTIVATION** – Soccer can be viewed as kids kicking a ball across the field, or it can be viewed as an opportunity for growth. The true test lies in sparking a child’s interest to learn and grow and keeping that spark alive each season.

**RESPECT** – At so many games, coaches, and sometimes parents, of the other teams berate and belittle their players for making “mistakes”. Sometimes they even go as far as criticizing opposing team members. Good grief! We’re playing recreational soccer! This isn’t the World Cup. A good Coach never singles out a child for making a mistake and he/she does not allow parents or the other team members to do so either.

**SPORTSMANSHIP** – Our definition of sportsmanship is to teach kids to work together as a team in order to achieve a common goal. It also means teaching kids to respect other players as well as each other. Insults are not tolerated. Mistakes are team mistakes, and they are used as teaching tools for the next game.

**ABILITY TO TEACH** – Sounds simple, right? It’s not. How many times has a parent signed up a child for a sport, only to have a well-intentioned father decide to coach? He may or may not know the sport. He may or may not relate well to his players. There is a huge difference between the team whose members do what is yelled at them, and the team whose members understand what to do and why. A good coach teaches his

players basic fundamentals, explains concepts and enables his/her players to think logically when making a play.

**LOVE OF KIDS** – They have the energy to make every practice and every game a new experience for coaches and parents alike. Without their vision and energy, sports would be dull and unappreciated. They offer a day-to-day challenge for coaches, which is contagious and which is motivation for everyone involved in athletics at all levels.

**LOVE OF THE GAME** – Coaches must love their sport, and, more importantly, must show their players enthusiasm for every aspect of the game. This would include techniques and tactics. The love of the game must also show to the players the love for fair-play, respect for the opponents, officials, and spectators, and positive reinforcement for team mates. Only a good coach who loves the game can provide the correct aspects involved in the winning and losing of competition.

## **Communication**

All Coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with the team parents. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season.

The email should provide an introduction of yourself and any background you may like to provide. Give them your philosophy on teaching soccer (hopefully using material from this guide).

- Discuss the value of the sport and the health benefits to the children.
- Discuss the philosophy of age-appropriate activities.
- State the importance you assign to having fun and developing technique.
- State how you evaluate player development through skills and not winning.
- Discuss any team rules and guidelines (e.g., must be there 15 min. before kickoff).
- Let them know that all players will receive equal playing time.

If possible, ask parents to advise you if there is a night your child cannot practice. Sometimes your schedule will dictate when practices have to take place, but hopefully you have some flexibility to work out a day/time that works for the entire team. 1 of the main pain points joining a youth recreational sport is if the team can only practice on a day that your child cannot. Determining this early on will permit potential roster changes so schedules work for all.

Let them know the age format for the team (5v5), what size ball the child should have, that it's strongly recommended they have soccer cleats and bring water to every practice.

Next - establish your expectations from them! Again, potentially using material from this guide, please ask them to follow the parent code of conduct they agreed to when registering with Amenity Athletics! Ask them to keep everything positive through the season. Your expectations may also be requests like arriving 15 minutes before every game, to be on time for practice, to bring a ball to every practice, to contribute towards team snacks, etc.

## **Team Management**

- Offer for any volunteers to help with practices. Especially at younger ages this is EXTREMELY helpful. Sometimes parents are either hesitant to coach because they don't have experience or their schedule doesn't allow them to be a full time coach, but they would love to help when they can.
- Request a parent to help communicate with the team concerning practices and games. Set up an email distribution list, telephone tree or group text messaging system.
- Ask the team parent to organize a simple healthy SNACK schedule for game days. Discourage turning snacks into a financial hardship for some parents (it is completely voluntary). Orange or apple slices, or seedless grapes are good choices (obviously ensure any trash is removed after the game).

## **Coaches' Responsibilities**

- Demonstrate leadership, good sportsmanship, respect, and coach with humility.
- Treat each player fairly.
- Organize practices and teach the game through age appropriate activities/games.
- Provide a safe environment i.e. Inspect playing surface.
- Arrive at practice on time and remain until a parent picks up every child.
- Contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem.
- Give regular feedback to players.
- Be careful how you use various social media outlets.
- Distribute a schedule of practices and games in a timely manner.
- Ensure equal playing time and at least ensure each player plays half of every game.
- Respect referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself respectfully on the field.
- Continue to seek coaching education.

## **Define player Responsibilities**

- Attend practices/games regularly and arrive on time.
- Bring proper equipment to each practice and game.
- Clean your soccer shoes/boots & maintain your equipment.
- Have your own ball and make sure that it is properly inflated.
- Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice or game.
- Try your best at each practice.
- Work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork.
- Respect the referees.
- Be supportive of teammates all the time.
- Answer questions from the parents.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

- Do not coach your child during games.
- Transport your child to and from practices and games on time.
- Be supportive of all the players (Criticism does not improve performance).
- Help your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort.
- Focus on mastering skills and having fun, not winning.
- Attend games and cheer the team.
- Refrain from criticizing the opponents; be positive with all players.
- Refrain from criticizing others on various social media sites.
- Respect the referees (There will be mistakes, but they are doing their best).
- Do not communicate any grievances with a coach after a game. Follow the 24 hour rule. After 24 hours if a parent has any concerns, they can reach out to you to discuss.

## **Behavior**

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain higher level of sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both off and on the field. A coach's primary responsibility is for his/her players to have fun, to develop soccer players, and to instill a passion for the game. The performance of coaches is not measured in wins and losses, but rather in what is taught to players in terms of technique, sportsmanship, and fair play.

Coaches must maintain respect for the game as well as the referees. Coaches are charged with the responsibility of controlling their players and parents at all times during a match. Coaches lead and teach by example; players will be a reflection upon each individual coach.

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to:

- Have a basic knowledge of the game and to pursue coaching education allowing you to better develop your players.
- Use positive reinforcement when dealing with players, never use foul or abusive language, and never abuse a player mentally, verbally, or physically.
- Have respect for the authority of the referee and his/her assistants. You should not harass, abuse, or berate the referee during or after the match. You should not enter the field of play without the referee's permission.

Exhibit good sportsmanship both off and on the field. You should teach your players the rules of the game, fair play, and proper game behavior.

Your actions as a coach will teach your players as well as the parents and spectators how to become a true fan of the game.

Children play soccer to have fun, to learn and develop a passion for the game as well as to improve their skills. Players have a responsibility to their team, coach, and soccer organization. They are representatives of the club as well as the team, coach, parents, and the community. Players must maintain a high level of sportsmanship and fair play. As a coach, it is your responsibility that your players understand how to play within the “Laws of the Game” and to respect the game and all involved with the game.

Players should:

- Play within the laws of the game and spirit of the game.
- Be on time and prepared for matches and training sessions.
- Display self-control in all situations and should not use foul or abusive language at any time-- before, during, or after a game, or training session.
- Train and play to the best of their ability, have a positive attitude, and encourage others to do the same.
- Show respect towards the referee and his/her assistants as well as toward the opponents. Do not harass, abuse, or berate a referee for any reason.

## Equipment

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:** Make sure you have a list of emergency contact information for all your players  
**MEDICAL KITS** - A simple kit for games and practices is a good idea for every coach. A kit could include, but not limited to:

- Ice (and 'zip-lock' bags) – Band aids – Vaseline
- Sterile pads – Adhesive tape – Elastic wraps
- Antibiotic ointment & Bee sting relief ointment

**PUMP and inflating needle:** Sometimes the game ball is over inflated or too soft and may need adjusting. The same goes for the balls players bring to practice.

**SHIN GUARDS:** Shin guards are an absolute requirement for games and practices (the pull-on "legging" type with foam padding that protects the front of the leg from ankle to shin is an excellent shin guard). Shin guards with plastic inserts offer additional protection, especially for the older player.

**SOCCER SHOES/BOOTS:** Soccer shoes/boots are recommended, but not required by most clubs. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not allowed for soccer. Soccer cleats for most recreational play must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats), and no less than 3/8 inch in diameter.

**WATER BOTTLE** (with player's name on it): Fresh water should be available to your players at each practice and game. It is easier for the coach if each player provides his or her own water bottle.

**SHIRTS, SOCKS, SHORTS:** Amenity Athletics provides a jersey and shorts. You will be required to purchase socks.

**SPARE SHIRTS** (pennies): Two (2) for your goalkeepers - Having two extra shirts of different colors (each contrasting with your team shirts) insures that you will always have a goalkeeper's shirt that contrasts with the opposition colors.

**GOALKEEPER'S GLOVES:** An inexpensive pair is a useful addition to your game bag.

**BALLS:** If possible, have a good quality ball available for the games. This can be used as a game ball if none is provided. The leather or synthetic leather stitched soccer balls are best; avoid the hard plastic-skinned balls, which are unpleasant to kick or head.

- Size #3 - smallest standard size, for the youngest players (e.g. age 3 to U-8).
- Size #4 - intermediate size, appropriate for U-9 through U-12.
- Size #5 - largest standard size, for U-13 to adult.

**CONES or PYLONS** (about a dozen): Use these to set up small areas for practice activities.



## **Development**

- Activities that the child wants to participate in because they are fun.
- Players being exposed to playing all positions.
- Every player has a ball for practice.
- Activities designed to maximize the number of touches by each player at practice.
- Rules modified for players according to their age group characteristics.
- Equipment modified for players according to their age group characteristics.
- Activities designed to promote thinking, not doing drills.
- De-emphasize winning/losing. We do not need to keep standings, statistics, etc.
- Kids at the beginning of practice are waiting for the coach to tell them what to do. This is extremely negative. What we as coaches should be doing is creating an environment where the kids play the game.
- What a coach can do to create this environment at the beginning of practice:
  - As the first kids arrive at practice place 2 small goals so they can play 1 vs. 1.
  - As another child arrives have them jump in and make it 2 vs. 1.
- Keep adjusting the field size as new players show until they are all playing a game.
- Do this for about 15 minutes, and then begin practice.

## **Role of the Coach**

- Set up the condition and environment for learning.
- Facilitate the learning.
- Players must have fun.
- Players need to receive positive feedback from the coach.
- Coach must be enthusiastic about what they are doing.
- It should all be done in the "Spirit" of Play.
- Activities need to be geared towards the players achieving success, with success measured by FUN.

## **Coaching by Age**

Before we can effectively coach the children that have been entrusted to our care, we need to understand the characteristics of whom we are developing. It is imperative that you understand that when you are dealing with children, that you take the time to comprehend where they are currently in their own development. To understand the following information better, it would be extremely beneficial if you could attend a National Youth Coaching Course or Youth Module Course as well as any other coaching clinics that are available.

### **The 6 & Under Player**

- From a physical perspective (psychomotor), children in this age group perform activities at full speed. Then they need frequent rests and then they go again. Movements such as running, hopping, skipping and maintaining balance are not fully developed at this age. Minimize practice drills that does not involve the full group as their attention space at this age is usually limited.
- From a mental perspective (cognitive), they have a short attention span, can only perform one task at a time and only if it's given with basic instructions. They don't have a clear understanding of the team concept and tactics are useless. Everything revolves around themselves and the ball.
- From a social (psychosocial) standpoint the children need to feel secure in practice and in games. The coach needs to be sensitive in selecting activities that allow social interaction with the other players in their group. They are easily bruised psychologically. Elimination games are discouraged. They will also tend to exaggerate their accomplishments- let them.

## The 8 & Under Player:

- This is the stage where players begin to understand the concept of passing to a teammate.
- From a physical standpoint, they still lack a sense of pace and tend to exert themselves hard and then drop. They are now starting to develop some physical confidence in themselves and they are still into running, climbing, rolling and jumping.
- From a mental perspective, they feel if they tried hard then they performed well
- (regardless of the activity's outcome). They are beginning to show a limited ability to
- tend to more than one task at a time.
- From a social perspective, they have a great need for approval from adults and like to show off individual skills. Negative comments carry great weight. Their playmates start to emerge, and they will start to move towards small groups. They want everyone to like them at this age. You should be positive with everything that you do.

## The 10 & Under Player:

- Children at this age are typically in grades 4 and 5 and may have been playing soccer for half of their life. This is typically the age group where families will decide if the child wants to play more competitive soccer. It's critical that coaches for this age group provide the development needed should a player want to pursue playing competitive soccer.
- From a physical standpoint, they gain a lot of strength, endurance and power during this period. Some children will grow faster than others and can approach 5 feet and weigh upwards of 80 lbs. or more. Be aware of the differences and how you match them up with each other during activities.
- From a mental perspective, they can remember and follow complex instructions, which enables them to solve higher-level problems. They will begin to think in advance and anticipate actions or ball movements.
- From a social perspective, players will begin to initiate play on their own and are becoming more serious about their soccer. Peer group belonging and pressure generated by peers becomes more significant. The need to belong becomes important.

## The 12 & Under Player

- Children at this age are on the edge of childhood and adolescence. It can present a multitude of problems, but also an abundance of potential. A coach must understand the child's goals at this point and balance development (for kids that still want to pursue competitive soccer) with fun. Many kids at this age have decided they want to stay in recreational soccer and don't want the pressure of competitive soccer – they just want to have FUN!
- From a physical standpoint strength and power become a major factor in their performance. Their muscles mature, and they realize how much more they can do on the field. Their coordination significantly improves, and it shows up in the execution of child's technical ability. From a mental perspective, the educators refer to the U12 as the fertile period for learning. They can sequence thoughts and perform complex tasks. A coach can expect his players to understand the game and use teammates to solve problems. They are usually eager to learn.
- From a social perspective whether a child enters puberty early or late is significant. Girls tend to form cliques while boys take a broader approach to team relationships. The way they feel about themselves can determine how they relate to their teammates.
- Sometimes popularity influences self-esteem.

## The 13 to 19 Player

- Continuing the path from U12, at this age many players have decided that they do not want to play competitive soccer. They play recreational soccer to have fun and to be with their friends. This age of recreational soccer is just as important as any age. Especially with the older players, they may not have opportunities to play an organized sport elsewhere, as it gets more and more difficult to obtain enough players to fill a roster with enough teams. It's a unique age for recreational soccer when generally players become more supportive of each other. Enjoy these years as you get closer to the child's sports activities coming to an end. As always, a coach must always be positive. The players need recreational soccer to be an environment they can get away from the pressures of being a teenager.

## **Technical Focus by Age**

### **The 6 and Under Player:**

The technical focus should be on the proper dribbling technic with inside, outside, and laces. Also, learning how to stop and/or change direction with the ball with basic moves. For example, turning with the inside or outside of the foot, pull back, and roll- over using the bottom of the foot. Remember this age group of players are full of energy and need to be constantly playing with the ball as much as possible during your practices. Do your best to involve all the players and avoid lines (non-participating players). Ending with a small sided game (3v3 or 4v4) is recommended. It allows the players to play soccer which is what they really want to do anyway.

### **The 8 and Under Player:**

By this stage, there still needs to be emphasis on the technical side of dribbling and changing direction with some control of the ball. Now you can try and introduce a few new moves that help change direction with control of the ball. The next step is also introducing the basic technique of passing short to medium range using the inside of the foot and laces. This age group is still high energy and need a lot of time playing with the ball during your practices. Try and avoid multiple lines during your practices. Again, ending with a small sided game will help them have fun and burn energy.

### **The 10 and Under Player:**

This age group now understands working within a small group. Continue to emphasize technical foot skills and basic passing technique within small group activities while challenging their skill level. An introduction about the principals of play and shooting technic along with communication within the game can be done.

### **Principals of Attack:**

- Possession/Penetration (First Attacker)
- Pass, Dribble, or Shoot
  - Support/Mobility (Second Attacker)
  - Balance (Third Attacker)
  - Transition (attacking to defending)

### **Principals of Defending:**

- Pressure (First Defender)
- Cover (Second Defender)
- Balance (Third Defender)
- Transition (defending to attacking)

### **The 12 and Under Player:**

Players should continue to work on the fundamental technics of dribbling, passing, and shooting. Continue to cover the principals of play (Attacking and Defending) along with proper communication within the game. Try organizing your training/practice session to cover a specific topic. Focus on position roles within each line of your team along with the technical and tactical skills to help them be successful while still challenging their skill level. For example:

- Defensive line (Goal Keeper/outside backs/center backs)
- Midfield line (outside midfielders/center midfielders)
- Attacking/Forward line (Wingers/Strikers)

The ideas of Technical skills (How it is done) and Tactical (Why it is done) start to interact within each training/practice session. An example is the topic of crossing (attacking). First, work on how players cross/switch the ball. Second, introduce more players with low pressure from defenders and teach why (tactical - to create chances to score) the player should cross/switch the ball. Then, finish with a team scrimmage emphasizing the technical and tactical purpose of crossing or switching. Again, try and avoid players standing in lines for a long period of time.

### **13 and Older:**

At this age the focus should be on the enjoyment and respect of the game. Continue to cover fundamental technical and tactical skills along with principals of play all within some friendly individual or small-sided competition. The focus at this age group is to have FUN! That's the only reason the child is still playing recreational soccer at this age.

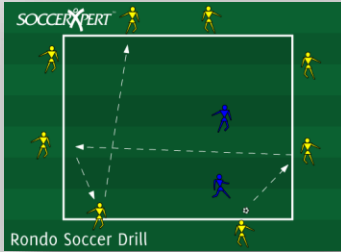
### Warming Up for All Ages

- Simply performing static stretches prior to exercise doesn't help you one bit. In fact, it can hurt your athletic performance. So if you or your young athlete are still doing static stretching before your workout, practice or game-- change it up.
- What's the difference between static and dynamic stretching?
- Static stretching involves holding a position for 30 seconds or more to elongate the muscle while a dynamic warm up involves stretching through a range of motion.
- Your body needs to warm up by slowly increasing your heart rate and breathing rate. In doing so, you are lubricating your joints, which will give you better range of motion and better elasticity in tendons and ligaments.
- These 10 simple exercises work as a dynamic warm up for kids of any age or sport. Do each exercise for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat as necessary. All stretching exercises should be done for at least 20 to 30 seconds on each side.

1. Jumping Jacks
2. Walking Knee Hugs – With each step, raise the knee up to hip height or higher and “hug” it with both arms, pulling toward your belly and chest
3. Arm Circles – Make sure you go in both directions to fully warm up the shoulder joints
4. Side Shuffles – Warm up your whole lower body and don't forget to stay low
5. Backpedaling – Focus on your balance and feet
7. Lunges Squats
8. Leg Swings – Start off with forward and backward swings, then move on to lateral swings
9. Inchworms – A total body exercise that will warm you up from head to toe. From standing, bend forward so your hands can slowly walk out to a push up position on the floor. Slowly begin to walk your feet towards your hands as much as you can while keeping legs straight. Stand up and repeat.
10. Full Body Twists – With your arms either straight out or bent, twist your upper body back and forth in a slow controlled motion

\*Another fun way to incorporate a FUN full body warm up is to play a quick game of freeze dance. Pull up a song or two on your phone appropriate for children. When the music starts, the kids start dancing and moving around. Encourage them use their whole body. When you pause the music, they freeze. This is a great way to incorporate a warm up without them knowing it☺





## Rondo Soccer Drill

### **Drill Setup**

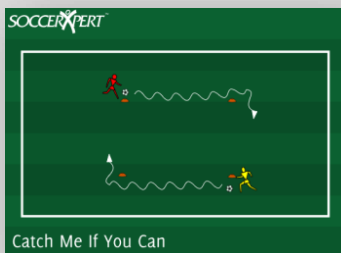
- Create a 12x12 grid.
- Position two defenders inside the grid.
- Position the remaining players evenly spaced out around the outside of the grid.

### **Drill Instructions**

- The players outside the grid start with a pass to any of the players on the outside of the grid.
- The outside players attempt to remain in possession without letting the defenders win the ball.
- The defensive players try to cut off passing lanes and win possession of the ball.
- If possession is lost, whether to a defensive player, a bad pass, or a bad touch, the player making the mistake switches roles with one of the defenders.
- Players should switch fast, and the game should not stop for long.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Players should only move minimally, left and right, to position themselves in good passing lanes.
- Encourage players to be creative as players often have to rely on tricks, flicks, flighted-balls, back-heels, and 1-touch passing
- Receiving players must learn how to react to handle all types of balls played to them.
- Players should think ahead of the play and be ready to play immediately.



## Catch Me If You Can

### **Drill Setup**

- Create a 10 X 10-yard grid.
- Start a player on two diagonal corners of the grid.
- Each of the two players has a ball.

### **Drill Instructions**

- As the coach yells, "GO," players must dribble around the outside of the grid in an attempt to catch their partner.
- As the coach yells, "STOP," the players must stop the ball.
- As the coach yells, "TURN," the players must switch the direction around the grid.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Close Control
- Speed with the ball
- Keep the ball close
- Sharp touches



## Soccer Shooting Agility Drill

### **Drill Setup**

- Use 10-12 cones to create a channel ending near the penalty area.
- At the top of the channel, use 4-5 cones to create a line angled towards the corner flag.
- The coach stands at the end of the channel, nearest the goal, a couple yards inside the penalty area.
- The shooting players start 4-5 yards at the top of the channel with a ball.

### **Drill Instructions**

- The first player in line (shooter) passes through the channel to the coach (or target player).
- The shooter makes a check-run down the channel towards the coach.
- The coach returns the pass to the advancing attacker inside the channel.
- The shooter once again returns the ball to the coach quickly backpedals towards the end of the tunnel in which he began.
- The coach lays a ball off to either side.
- The advancing shooter must quickly react to the direction of the pass, sprint around the end of the cones and take a shot on stride.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Work at full speed
- Quick movement after pass
- React quickly to the pass and direction of the pass
- Solid strike on the ball
- Follow through towards goal



## 1v1 Shooting Drill

### Drill Setup

- Set cones in the shape of a diamond about 20 yards from goal. Each cone about 12 yards apart. Adjust the size based on the age and skill level of your players.
- Instruct one player to start at cone 2, 3, and 4. The remaining players form a line behind cone 1.
- Instruct one player to start in the goal (not necessarily the goalkeeper as this will change).
- A supply of balls should be placed near cone 1.

### Drill Instructions

- Player 1 starts with the ball and passes to player 2. Player 1 follows the pass and moves to player 2's place.
- Player 2 passes to player 3 and moves into quickly moves into defensive position.
- Player 3 passes to player 4 and takes 4's place.
- Player 4 receives the ball and immediately takes on player 2 in 1v1 battle to goal.
- If player 4 doesn't score in the 1 vs 1, player 4 becomes the keeper. If player 4 scores, keeper remains.

### Drill Coaching Points

- Good passing combination
- Quick Movement off the ball
- Good defensive posture and positioning
- Shooter beats the defender with speed and gets a shot on target.



## Alien Tag, U4 soccer game

### Drill Setup

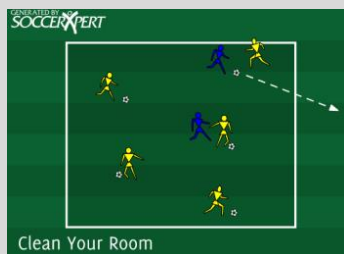
- Create an area about 20X20. Call this space Mars.
- Two players will need balls. They will be the aliens.
- The remaining players are inside the grid with a pool noodle each (without a ball). They are the spaceships.

### Drill Instructions

- Have the spaceships hold either end of the noodle to create the front of their spaceship. Their goal is to avoid the aliens who are kicking space rocks (soccer balls) at them.
- Aliens have a ball, and the coach should have a few spare balls if the "space rocks" are hurled into space.
- If an alien hits the spaceship (any part of the player) with the ball, the spaceship must spin out of control and crash to the ground.
- For the first iteration, let the spaceships get back into the game after some minor repairs (5 jumping jacks or something like that).

### Drill Coaching Points

- The coach can improve their experience by making noises, crash sounds, or yelling "heeeeeeelp" when a ship goes down.
- The spaceships should have their heads up and looking around to avoid the aliens.
- Make sure the players move by telling making them crash if they aren't moving.
- The aliens must dribble the ball and aim for the space ships so this will be a good start to controlling the ball and shots/passes.
- Make it fun for the kids.



## Clean your room, defensive, dribbling, soccer drill

### Drill Setup

- Create a grid that is approximately 15 X 15 yards. You should adjust the size of the area depending on the size, skill set, and the number of players.
- Assign one player to "clean the room." This player will act as the defender to knock everyone's ball out of the grid.
- Every player other than the room cleaner needs a ball.

### Drill Instructions

- Start by having the players dribble around free in the grid.
- The coach should release the room cleaner into the grid.
- The room cleaner's job is to steal the ball from the dribbling players and kick the ball out of the grid.
- The dribblers must retrieve their balls and attempt to get back into the grid as quickly as possible.
- The room is "clean" once all of the balls are out of the grid at one time.
- The room cleaner should kick the ball out of the grid as far as they can to give them a chance to get all of the players.
- If a player is struggling to clean their room, a 2nd room cleaner can be sent to assist.

### Drill Coaching Points

- Instruct the room cleaner (defender) to pressure players with the ball quickly and kick the ball out of the grid as far as possible.
- Dribblers must be aware of the defender (pressure) and remain calm and protect the ball.



## Soccer Dribbling Game - Pirate Treasure

### **Drill Setup**

- Create a grid about 30X30.
- Set up about 10 tall cones (the treasure) along one side of the grid.
- On the opposite side have each player (the pirates) start with a ball.
- 2-3 players start in the grid with an alternate color jersey on. They are defending the treasure (tall cones) along the side of the grid.

### **Drill Instructions**

- On the coaches command, the pirates attempt to dribble past the defenders to take the treasure.
- To take the treasure the players must knock down the cone with the ball.
- Once they have knocked down the cone they must pick up the cone and take it back to their starting point while dribbling the ball.
- If the pirates lose the ball by the defenders, they must start back over at the original starting point.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Keep the ball close and in control.
- Pick head up while dribbling so they can see where the defenders are.
- Dribblers should explode past the defenders and dribble with speed.



## Circle keep-away passing game, soccer keep away, passing game

### **Drill Setup**

- With cones, mark off a circle with a 10-yard diameter.
- Designate two defenders in the middle of the circle holding a yellow pinny in their hands.
- Have the remaining players position themselves just inside the circle with one ball.

### **Drill Instructions**

- The two players in the middle will act as defenders while the rest of the circle will play keep away from these defenders.
- Start with the first pass being free.
- The attacking players can move about the circle in an attempt to maintain possession and string together passes.
- As a defender win the ball, they switch places with the offensive player that lost the ball to the defender. In this case, the defender drops the yellow pinny and join the attackers. The new defender grabs the yellow pinny and holds it in their hand.
- If the pass goes outside of the circle, the player that made the bad pass, or the player that did not properly trap the ball will take the place of the defender that has been in the middle the longest.
- If the attacking players put together ten passes, the defenders do a quick lap around the circle. The lap of shame, as we call it.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Clean, crisp passes.
- Good first-touch into space or towards the next pass.
- Good communication.
- Have fun.



## Soccer Body Movement, Coordination, and Balance

### **Drill Setup**

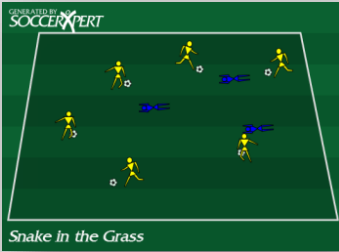
- In an unmarked area gather your players without their soccer ball (you can introduce this later in this drill).
- The coach should come up with a short list of activities such as skipping, one-legged hops, star jumps, log rolls, summer salts, push-ups, etc.

### **Drill Instructions**

- The coach should start by asking the players "I can do [activity] can you?"
- The coach should then demonstrate to the players the activity and have the children do the same.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Allow Children the ability to explore their body movements.
- Make it fun for the children!



## Snake in the Grass Youth Soccer Game

### **Drill Setup**

- Create a small grid approximately 15X15 yards.
- All of the players should be inside the grid.
- The coach should designate two players to be the "snakes" by lying on their stomachs.
- Each of the players begins with one of their hands on the snakes in the grass.

### **Drill Instructions**

- When the coach yells "SNAKE IN THE GRASS" the non-snake players attempt to avoid the snakes as the snakes attempt to slither around on their stomach and touch a non-snake player.
- As a player is touched, that player also becomes a snake.
- The activity continues until everyone is a snake.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- This soccer game is designed to work on young soccer players balance, coordination and body movement.
- As the children attempt to avoid the snakes, they will move in all directions and should be encouraged to run, jump, cut, turn, etc to avoid the snake.



## Soccer Goalkeeper Warm-up Drill

### **Drill Setup**

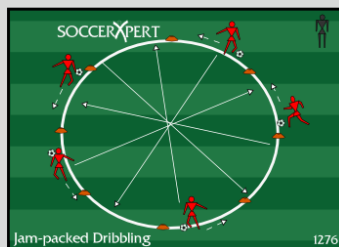
- This warmup will only require a goal and about 6 or so soccer balls.
- Make sure the goalkeeper has performed jogging, stretching and some light catching before performing this warmup.

### **Drill Instructions**

- From the side of the goal, approximately 7 yards from goal, the coach should gather 6-7 soccer balls with one in hand.
- On the coach's command, instruct the goalkeeper to sprint out to touch the soccer ball you are holding, then quickly back peddle towards the goal (while keeping their eyes on the ball in your hand).
- As the keeper back peddles towards the goal throw a high lofted ball at the goal where the goalkeeper must punch over the crossbar or catch it.
- After the ball is caught, the coach throws a ball towards the near post in which the keeper must quickly react and push the ball past the post out of touch or catch the ball.
- The coach then quickly throws another ball towards the far post and the keeper must again catch or push the ball past the post.
- After this ball is caught the coach then shoots the next ball on goal and the keeper must make a save again.
- Now move to the other side of the goal and do it again.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Quick footwork and movements.
- Cut off angles since shots are from sides.
- Keep Shoulders square to the ball.
- Quick recover from shots and being ready for rebounds
- Make sure keeper is correctly judging high balls.



## Jam-Packed Soccer Dribbling Drill

### **Drill Setup**

- Create a circle with disc cones that is approximately 20 yards in circumference.
- Make sure each player has a ball.
- Instruct the players to spread out around the outside of the circle.

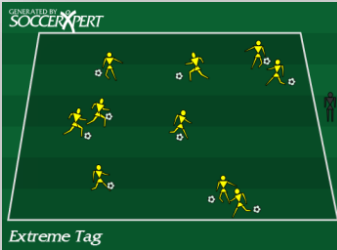
### **Drill Instructions**

- Have the players begin the soccer drill by dribbling around the outside of the circle all in the same direction.
- The coach should inform the players to listen for specific queues and perform those actions once the coach shouts the command.
- These commands are:
  - JOG - players should dribble at a comfortable speed
  - FULL SPEED - players should dribble at their top speed
  - CUT - players should cut the ball in the other direction and travel in the other direction around the circle
  - CROSS - all players should cut across the grid avoiding contact with other players or other players balls.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Since all players are entering the center area at the same time, make sure players are looking ahead of them with their head up.
- Remind players to keep the ball close when entering the traffic area.
- Have players start playing with their arms up and out for balance and shielding.
- Instruct players to dribble with both feet and all parts of the foot.
- This drill is intended to be both helpful and fun, so make sure to HAVE FUN!





## Extreme Tag Soccer Game and Dribbling Skills

### **Drill Setup**

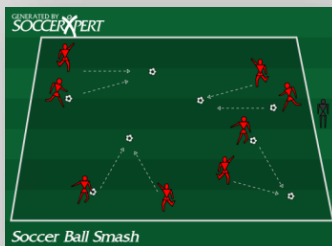
- Create a grid that is approximately 20X20 yards.
- The size of the grid can vary depending on the number of players.
- Each player should have a soccer ball.

### **Drill Instructions**

- Players dribble around in the grid trying to avoid a tag from the other players.
- The tag must be below the player's knee to receive credit for the tag.
- Each successful tag below the knee will result in a point being awarded to the tagging player.
- If the player gets tagged, a point is subtracted from their total.
- The first player to 5 wins that round.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Make sure players are dribbling with their head up
- Instruct players to find open space.
- Players will want to leave their ball when being chased, so make sure the players keep their ball in close control.
- Make sure the kids have FUN!



## Soccer Ball Smash Soccer Passing Drill.

### **Drill Setup**

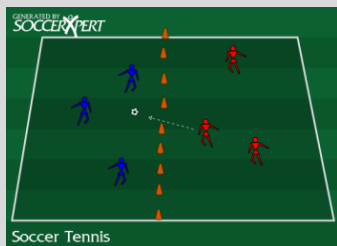
- Create a large grid approximately 40X50 yards.
- Pair up each of the players and make sure each player has a ball.
- The two partners should stand near to each other inside the grid but spread away from other groups of players when starting this drill.

### **Drill Instructions**

- Instruct player 1 to pass his ball forward.
- After Player 1's ball stops moving, player 2 then passes their ball at player 1's ball in an attempt to hit player 1's ball.
- If player 2 misses, then player 1 tries to hit player 2's ball from where it landed previously.
- Each time a player hits their opponents ball, they collect a point.
- The first player to 5 wins that match.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- Make sure the players are striking the ball with the right surface of the foot.
- Make sure the weight of the pass is good
- Watch the plant foot to make sure it is pointing to its target.



## Soccer Tennis Soccer Game

### **Drill Setup**

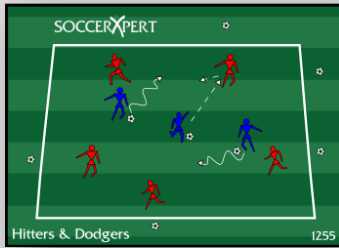
- Build a court that is 12 X 24 yards (2 12 yard squares).
- Assign a team of 3 players to each of the 12X12 grid.
- The size of your court will depend on the number of players and can be made larger or smaller depending on the number of players playing and their age.

### **Drill Instructions**

- To begin the game, instruct the serving team to have one person start serving the ball from behind the back line.
- The server must volley or half volley the ball to their opponents side of the court.
- The receiving team has one bounce and two touches to receive the ball and play it back to their opponent's side of the court. However, the ball doesn't have to bounce, and the ball can be played in 1 touch.
- If the ball touches the ground twice or is knocked out of the playing court, a point is awarded to the serving team.
- Keep score just as you would in tennis.

### **Drill Coaching Points**

- HAVE FUN
- This is a great way to let kids experiment with controlling/judging flighted balls



## Hitters and Dodgers Soccer Passing Game

### Drill Setup

- Create a grid that is about 15X15 yards.
- Adjust the grid bigger or smaller depending on the age and number of kids you have.
- You will need to have a ball for each player; however, only three players start off with balls.
- Place the remaining balls outside the grid.
- The three players with balls are called the "hitters."
- The remaining players should start off scattered throughout the grid they are the "dodgers."

### Drill Instructions

- Instruct the "hitters" to dribble inside the grid and attempt to pass the ball to any of the "dodgers" and hit them with the ball.
- The "dodgers" are attempting to avoid being hit by the "hitters".
- If a "dodger" is hit, he must collect a ball from the extra balls outside the grid and join the hitters.
- The last players standing win.

### Drill Coaching Points

- Coaches should talk to the hitters about keeping their ball close to the while getting their heads up to find the dodgers.
- Coaches should focus on good passing form: using the inside of the foot with good pace on the ball.



## Soccer Tag; Soccer Dribbling Drill

### Drill Setup

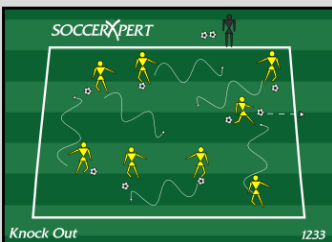
- Create a grid that is approximately 20X20 (or larger depending on the number of players involved).
- Each player should have a ball and position them inside the grid.

### Drill Instructions

- Instruct the players to tag (touch) other players within the grid.
- Once the player gets tagged, they must hold that area of the body that was touched while still dribbling while avoiding other tags and attempting to tag others.
- If players are tagged a 2nd time, they must hold both touched areas while dribbling.
- If the player is tagged a 3rd time, the player must move to the outside of the grid and perform an exercise such as 25 toe touches, four juggles, 25 foundation touches, or push-ups before rejoining the game.

### Drill Coaching Points

- Keeping the ball close to the player.
- Head up where they can see ball and players.
- Use all parts of the foot while dribbling (inside, outside, bottom, heel, top).
- Be agile and attempt to move away from the tag.



## Knock-out Dribbling Game

### Drill Setup

- Create a 20x20 grid. The size of the grid could vary depending on the skill level and the number of players. Each player starts with a ball inside the grid.

### Drill Instructions

- Instruct the players to protect their ball while trying to "knock-out" the other player's ball out of the grid.
- Players must stay with their ball and cannot leave the ball for extended periods of time.
- Players can only be "knocked-out" 2 times where they do 5-10 pushups and get back in the game.
- On the 3rd time, they are out.
- The last player standing in the end wins.

### Drill Coaching Points

- Instruct players to keep the ball close and touch the ball often
- Players heads should be up looking for other players and be aware of their surroundings

For more drills visit [SoccerXpert.com](http://SoccerXpert.com)

Amenity Athletics will continue to monitor Local, State and Federal communications, guidelines, recommendations and advisories regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

\*The below are recommended for any parent, guardian, or player participating in Amenity Athletics Recreational programs.

### **For Parents**

- Please check your child's temperature before bringing them to a practice or to a game.
- Please adhere to social distancing during practices and games. If you feel like you cannot do so, please stay in your car.
- Sanitize or clean all of your child's clothes and equipment before and after each game and practices (cleats, ball, shin guards, etc.);
- Please wear a mask during practices or game days if social distancing is not possible.
- Please let Amenity Athletics know immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason. Please reach out to TCallahanAmenity@gmail.com
- Please provide personal sanitizer to your child for practices and games.

### **For Players:**

- Please wash your hands before and after practices and games.
- We would like to encourage all players to wear a mask before and after practices and games.
- Please do not touch anyone else's equipment, water, snack, or bag. \*Bring your own water bottle to all practices and games.
- We would like everyone to please practice social distancing when not playing or off the fields and place bags or equipment at least 6 feet apart.
- Please no group celebrations, high fives, shaking hands, hugs, etc.

### **For Coaches:**

- Please help Amenity Athletics to ensure health and safety of the athletes.
- Please ask players how they are feeling. If someone does not look healthy please speak to their parents and see if sending them home might be the best decision.
- Please continue to follow all state and local health protocols.
- Please make sure all players have their own equipment, water bottle, shoes, etc.
- Coaches or Assistant Coaches should be the only one handling team equipment during practices and games.
- Please maintain social distance during practices and game days. If you feel you can not maintain social distancing, we suggest wearing a mask.
- Please sanitize team equipment after practices and/or game days.

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- Please sanitize team equipment after practices and/or game days.



## Coaches Guide

### **For Spectators:**

- Limit the number of spectators for your child to 2.
- Upon arrival, watch games only from the sidelines.
- Wear a mask if unable to adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Maintain social distancing guidelines while spectating games, staying 6ft away from other spectators.
- Leave the field area as soon as the game concludes.
- We also recommend that parents or guardians bring their own seating when spectating games and avoid bleachers or public seating when possible.
- Please arrive no sooner than 15 minutes before game time and please do not remain on the field after the game.

### **For Referees:**

- Wear a mask while at the fields, except while refereeing games.
- Ensure that no more than 2 coaches/managers are present in each team's bench area.

### **Player Protocols Following Confirmed or Suspected Case of Covid-19**

- Inform your coach and email Tim Callahan at [TCallahanAmenity@gmail.com](mailto:TCallahanAmenity@gmail.com) immediately.
- Person cannot attend Amenity Athletics games or practices until:
  - 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared OR Negative results of an FDA authorized COVID-19 test from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected 24 hours apart (two negative specimens).

### **Player / staff with confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms:**

- Inform Tim Callahan at [TCallahanAmenity@gmail.com](mailto:TCallahanAmenity@gmail.com) immediately
- Person cannot attend games or practices until:
  - 14 days after date of their first positive COVID-19 test, assuming no symptoms since that time OR negative results of an FDA authorized COVID-19 test from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected 24 hours apart (two negative specimens).

### **Protocols Following Exposure to a Suspected or Diagnosed Case of COVID-19**

- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
- Practice social distancing. Maintain 6ft of distance from others and stay out of crowded places.
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.
- Stay at home until 14 days after your last exposure; monitor for any symptoms consistent with infection during this timeframe.
- Check temperature twice a day and stay away from people who are at higher-risk.
- If asymptomatic after 14 days since last exposure, they can return to participation.

### **Amenity Athletics will continue to:**

- Keep up to date with Local, State, and Federal Regulations and distribute protocols accordingly.
- Communicate regularly with all coaches throughout the season in order to implement plans to notify teams of any situations where someone may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Educate all staff on protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC recommendations, and other necessary information.
- Ensure adequate field space for social distancing.

**MAKE SURE  
YOU HAVE  
FUN**

**Good luck this season!**