



# National Soccer Coaches Association of Canada

## The "Fundamentals" phase

# U8 Player Development Guidelines

- **A player-centred approach** to coaching, where the child comes first.
- The major objective of this stage is to develop **physical literacy** - speed, agility, balance, co-ordination and basic soccer skills.
- **A game-centred approach**, for optimal, holistic learning.
- All aspects of the game: technical, physical, tactical and game intelligence are developed through **5v5 Street Soccer** similar small-sided games that allow the opportunity to express enjoyment and develop skills through games.
- **A Guided-Discovery approach** to learning, where the coach stimulates the players' game intelligence through effective questioning.



Very young players from 5 to 8 years of age love to play. Therefore, all practices should be based on fun games. Players must spend the maximum time possible in contact with the ball and experiment by themselves. For the first time the player has to build a relationship with other players. Give different responsibilities to the players in order to develop a sense of team. Basic motor skills like walking, running or jumping have to be combined with ball handling and ball control.

### Useful tips:

- Two weekly training sessions of 60 minutes
- 1 game / week is a safe workload for U/7's , U/8's.
- Plan your sessions in advance
- Arrive early and set up the area
- Give clear, short instructions
- Demonstrate quickly and efficiently
- Keep the session flowing
- Vary the activities but keep it simple
- Be enthusiastic and give lots of praise
- Encourage after mistakes
- Be patient
- Have fun (both the kids and you!)
- Keep everyone active, avoid having kids standing around

### Useful tips:

- The training session for kids this age consists of 3 components: The Beginning, The Middle and The End.
- The purpose of The Beginning (better known as the warm-up) is to get the kids in the right frame of mind and activate their bodies.
- **DO NOT RUN LAPS AROUND THE FIELD !**
- All sorts of relays and tagging games with and without the ball are much better, more specific and more fun, and help develop the children's basic coordination.
- The Middle is the section of the training session where we conduct fun football exercises such as dribbling, passing, shooting, etc.
- The last part (The End) is allocated for playing all sorts of Small-Sided Games.



# National Soccer Coaches Association of Canada

## U8 TRAINING GUIDELINES

### Ball Mastery

The Ball Mastery component of is based on the **Coerver Coaching** methodology.

The main objective of this component is to teach all the fundamental movement skills using a well-structured, positive and fun approach.

Our main focus for the players is the development and enhancement of individual skills a foundation on which to build all other aspects of the game.

- **Ball Suppleness**
- **1 v 1 Attacking and Defending.**
- **Moves and Fakes**
- **Passing and receiving**
- **Finishing**

### Develop Awareness and Vision through small sided games and **Street Soccer**

**Small-Sided Games** are soccer games with fewer players competing on a smaller sized field. 1v1 - 2v1 – 3v2 – 4v4 are all fun games that involve the players more because one ball is being shared by fewer players.

All ages can play "**Small Sided Games**", but it has a greater impact on our younger soccer players because it presents an appropriate environment for the developing soccer players.

Here are some of the reasons why we believe that our young soccer players will develop **Vision and Creativity** by playing small-sided games and **Futsal**:

1. Young soccer players are able to touch the soccer ball more often and become more skilful with it!  
**(Individual technical development)**
2. Young soccer players are able to make more, less-complicated decisions during the game! **(Tactical development)**
3. Young soccer players become more physically efficient in the space they are playing in **(Reduced field size)**
4. Young soccer players can have more individual teaching time with the coach! **(Need to feel worthy...need to feel important)**
5. Young soccer players have more opportunities to be involved in the game! **(More opportunity to solve problems)**
6. Young soccer players have more opportunities to play on both sides of the ball!  
**(More exposure to attacking and defending situations)**

### Physical Literacy

Appropriate and correct running, jumping and throwing techniques are taught using the ABC's of athletics (Agility, Balance, Co-ordination, Speed).

The development of these fundamental movement skills will contribute significantly to the athletic development and future achievements.

Participation in other sports is encouraged , however, players must also participate in the soccer program in order to develop soccer related skills and technique.

## FUNDAMENTALS PRACTICE OBJECTIVES

TECHNICAL	Introduce basic individual technique
PHYSICAL	Develop agility, balance, coordination with or without the ball
TACTICAL	Individual and small group decision making
SOCIAL	Increase confidence with the ball and playing with teammates
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Create a positive learning environment

