



**BOONE
SOCCER CLUB**
BOONE, IOWA

Guide to Coaching 3/4-year-old Youth Soccer

The main goal for each practice at this age level is to have fun. Don't stress over rigid practice plans, as you will have to go with the flow at each practice.

Important Practice Coaching Tips for this age group:

- 1. Have Fun**
- 2. Don't allow use of hands to pick up the ball while on the field**
- 3. Have a ball for every player at the practice**
- 4. Keep practice moving, no waiting in lines to participate**
- 5. Do not be negative, use positive reinforcement**
- 6. Be enthusiastic**
- 7. Include parents in the practice**
- 8. Keep the practice to 45-60 minutes or shorter depending on the interest of the kids (include several short water breaks)**

Main Skills to teach:

- NO HANDS, FEET ONLY
- "Dribbling" the soccer ball with the inside of the feet
- Listening to the coach
- Understanding the concept of goals, and directions of play
- "Defense" It is ok to steal the ball from other players
- "Throw Ins" (this is to be used when a ball is kicked out of bounds)

The children do not need to be perfect at these skills, but they are the basics and should be continually reinforced.

Children at this age do best with consistency. Keep the "games" at practices simple and similar.

At this age the games will be played 3 on 3 without a goalie. You should scrimmage at the end of the practice for a short time so they are aware of game-like atmosphere.

If you have "scared" or "shy" children:

- Don't force them onto the field
- Involve the parents for help, even if they need to come onto the practice field with the player
- Hold their hand if necessary
- On game days, follow the same suggestions but the child may be more likely to play at the beginning of the game. Follow their lead and continue to involve the parents.

(cont)

Practice:

- Approximately 2 practices prior to games starting
- No longer than 30 minutes due to the attention span of young children
- Keep them fun and positive
- Don't stress about too many skills as it is all about fun at this age

Game Time:

- 3 on 3 without a goalie
- 30 minute games
- At the games, mix your players (boys and girls as well as ability).
- Rotate in any fashion that works for your team.
- Be willing to substitute players often as they tire easily therefore lose interest in the game.
- Remember to use positive reinforcement and don't put too much thought into scoring in the wrong goal...it happens, use it as a learning experience.

We suggest utilizing the Assistant Coach to keep your players sitting together on the sidelines during the game. This will speed up substitutions as well as allow the adult to use it as a teachable moment.

If you have any problems or questions please feel free to call or e-mail any of the board members as we would be happy to help.

There are many great coaching resources on the Internet. Here are a few of the websites that our coaches have found to be helpful:

- http://soccerhelp.com/Soccer_Practice_Plans.shtml
(“Coach Doug” - This one has practice plans and is an excellent guide for anyone new to soccer.)
- www.nysl.com
- [Coaching Youth Soccer U4 - U5 age groups](http://www.coachingyouthsoccer.com/agegroups)
- <http://www.soccerxpert.com/fun-soccer-drills.aspx>
- <http://www.soccerplayingguide.com/u6-soccer-drills-for-kids.html>
- [http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/soccer drills and games for very young children.htm](http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/soccer_drills_and_games_for_very_young_children.htm)
- <http://www.coachingsoccer101.com/drills.htm>