

# **PA WEST SOCCER ASSOCIATION**

**U6, U8 AND U10**

**CURRICULA**

**(REVISED FALL 2002)\***

\* The PA West Curricula were revised following US Youth Soccer's August 2002 vote on small-sided games.

# PA WEST SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## U6 CURRICULUM

### **Coaching Emphasis – Individual Play and Fun.**

Coaches of U5 and U6 children should ensure that their players enjoy their soccer experience and are eager to come back. In addition, they should help the children to be ball-oriented (i.e. active in moving towards the ball at all times, etc.) and assist them to become competent playing 1v1. NO LINES, NO LAPS and NO LECTURES.

### **Game Format**

No more than 4v4. **3v3 is highly recommended by PA West and U.S. Youth Soccer (3 field players).** NO GOALKEEPERS.

### **Field Size**

3v3, approximately 30 yards long by 20 yards wide (4v4, approximately 30 yards long by 20 yards wide). Goal size 6 feet wide by 4 feet high (approx.).

### **Roster Size**

For 3v3, a single team roster should be a maximum of 5 (based on all players getting 70% playing time) or a maximum of 8-9 for clubs using the “side-by-side” game method. For 4v4, a single team roster should be a maximum of 6 (based on 70% playing time) or a maximum of 11-12 for clubs using the “side-by-side” game method.

### **Soccer Knowledge**

Not using hands (during the game), in & out of play, direction to attack, etc.

### **Team Positions**

**NONE** - Shape can be addressed, i.e., “Magic Triangle.” The kids can be set up in a triangle to start the game and at other natural breaks in the game (kick offs, goal kicks, etc.). During the game, children must be allowed to run around freely. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOULD CHILDREN BE MADE TO STAND IN POSITION, STAND ON A LINE OR STAY IN A CERTAIN AREA, ETC.

### **Technical Emphasis**

The following techniques should be covered indirectly through the use of developmentally appropriate GAMES (NO DRILLS):

1. Running with the ball
2. Changing direction while running with the ball
3. Kicking the ball (with multiple surfaces)

### **Tactical Emphasis**

Players should be aware of the direction they are attacking. In addition, coaches should develop players to be ball-orientated (i.e. always moving towards the ball, always wanting to be involved in the action, etc.).

### **Practice Schedule**

One “45 minute” practice per week.

### **Recommended Activities**

One player-one ball activities (Tag games with/without the ball, target kicking games, maze races [no dribbling around cones set-up in a straight line!!!], etc), 1 v 1 games and small-sided scrimmages.

### **Player Equipment**

Size 3 ball, athletic shoes, appropriate clothing, shin guards

### **Coaching License**

“Y” Primer or State Youth License recommended.

# PA WEST SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## U8 CURRICULUM

**Coaching Emphasis – Individual Play with “Some” Passing and Fun.** Coaches should continue to emphasize fun and encourage their U7/8 players to be ball-orientated (i.e., active in moving towards the ball at all times, etc.). 1v1’s continue to be important. However, older/more insightful children should be gradually encouraged to move away from the “swarm” around the ball. NO LINES, NO LAPS and NO LECTURES.

### Game Format

No more than 5v5 (4 plus a goalkeeper). **4v4 without goalkeepers is highly recommended by PA West and U.S. Youth Soccer** (Contact PA West’s Director of Coaching and Player Development if you have questions regarding goalkeepers).

### Field Size

4v4 - approximately 40 yards long by 30 yards wide (5v5 should use a field with similar dimensions). Goal size 6 feet wide x 4 feet high (approx.) for 4v4 without goalkeepers.

### Roster Size

For 4v4, a single team roster should be a maximum of 6 (based on 70% playing time) or a maximum of 11-12 for clubs using the “side-by-side” game method. For 5v5, a single team roster should be a maximum of 7 (based on 70% playing time) or a maximum of 14 for clubs using the “side-by-side” game method.

### Soccer Knowledge

What constitutes a foul, throw-ins (for players at some clubs), what we do when we lose the ball, etc.

### Team Positions

**NONE** - Shape can be addressed, i.e. “Magic Diamond” (one back player, two wide players and one forward player). The children can be set-up in a diamond to start the game and at other natural breaks in the game (kick offs, goal kicks, etc). During the game, children must be allowed to run around freely. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES,

SHOULD CHILDREN BE MADE TO STAY IN A POSITION, STAND ON A LINE OR STAY IN A CERTAIN AREA, ETC.

### **Technical Emphasis**

The following techniques should be covered with children (mostly indirectly) through the use of developmentally appropriate GAMES. The key techniques to be covered are:

1. Dribbling and running with the ball
2. Short passing (with multiple surfaces)
3. Shooting the ball (with multiple surfaces with emphasis on striking the ball with the “laces”)

In addition, the following techniques can be addressed indirectly through games:

1. Turning with the ball
2. Receiving the ball
3. Shielding the ball

### **Tactical Emphasis**

Several areas can be covered with U7/8 players gradually by the recreational coach:

1. Players need continual reinforcement to be ball-orientated (i.e., always moving towards the ball at all times).
2. Once most players are ball-orientated, coaches can also focus on those players (it is very rare that it will be all players) who show a willingness to break out of the “swarm” around the ball. As coaches see this happen, they need to encourage it and help teammates recognize a moment to pass. Under no circumstances should coaches force children, who are not ready developmentally to “spread out,” to stop being ball-orientated.
3. Encouragement and indulging of players that run with the ball and/or dribble past defenders to move the ball forward.
4. Everybody attacks together and everybody defends together. If players are ball-orientated this should happen naturally.
5. When the team is not in possession of the ball, what do the players do...work to get the ball back (this is not a green light to run

defending clinics, but coaches need to clarify the difference between attack and defense with their players).

### **Practice Schedule**

One or two “1 hour” practices per week.

### **Recommended Activities**

Tag games with (and without) the ball, gate games, maze games, target games, 1v1 games, 2v2 games and small-sided scrimmages.

### **Player Equipment**

Size 3 ball, athletic shoes, appropriate clothing, shin guards.

### **Coaching License**

“Y” Primer or State Youth License recommended.

# PA WEST SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## U10 CURRICULUM

### **Coaching Emphasis – Individual Technical Development, Small-Group Decision-Making and Fun.**

Because of the cognitive and psychomotor abilities of U9/10 children, coaches should focus on perfecting their players' fundamental soccer techniques (see the list below). Special emphasis should be placed on developing players who are willing and able to go 1v1. Coaches should not sacrifice their players' technical development in order to win games. Players' decision-making can be enhanced through small-group play in small-sided games. **NO LINES, NO LAPS and NO LECTURES** to ensure soccer remains fun.

### **Game Format**

No more than 7v7 (6 players plus a goalkeeper). **PA West's Director of Coaching and Player Development highly recommends 7v7 (3 defenders, 3 attackers and a goalkeeper) or 5v5.**

### **Field Size**

For 7v7, 50-60 yards long by 40-45+ yards wide or play across one half of an U12 field. For 5v5 see U8 above (clubs may wish to extend the field to 45 yards in length). (For 6v6, 50 yards long by 40 yards wide). Goals should be a minimum of 18 feet wide (21 feet wide highly recommended) x 6-7 feet high (approx.) to encourage lots of shooting and lots of goals. **Although field must be rectangular, clubs should attempt to keep U10 fields short in order to promote lots of opportunities to shoot and to discourage overly direct play ("kick and chase").**

### **Roster Size**

For 7v7, a single team roster should be a maximum of 10 (based on 70% playing time) or a maximum of 18 for clubs using the "side-by-side" game method. For 5v5, a single team roster should be a maximum of 7 (based on 70% playing time) or a maximum of 14 for clubs using the "side-by-side" game method. (For 6v6, a single team roster should be a maximum of 9 (based on 70% playing time) or a maximum of 16 for clubs using the "side-by-side" game method).

### **Soccer Knowledge**

“Spreading out” to create length and width, the laws of the game (that is, those laws that impact how players play) except Offside (which need not be implemented at U10), the “moves” used by professional players and greater awareness of professional teams/players through watching “pro” games.

### **Team Positions**

Players can be exposed to and asked to play a position. However, coaches must remember that positions are “fluid” not fixed and that, developmentally, many children will still have a difficult time playing a position. Coaches must make allowances for these children, enable them to roam and adjust their team accordingly. For 7v7 play three defenders and three forwards (do not use a sweeper). For 5v5 organize the players into a diamond as per the U8’s (For 6-aside play one defender, three midfielders and one forward). Rotate those players into the goalkeeper position, who are willing to go in goal.

### **Technique**

The following techniques should be covered with children through the use of developmentally appropriate games (especially match condition games). Drills are to be avoided by inexperienced coaches (drills focusing on intricate individual technique can be used for short periods by qualified, experienced soccer coaches). The techniques to be covered in the order of importance are:

1. Dribbling the ball (coaches should place special emphasis on developing the skills needed to go 1v1 and beat defenders)
2. Running with the ball to attack space
3. Turning with the ball to elude a defender or change direction
4. Shooting (nurture an aggressive attitude towards shooting and cover multiple shooting skills while stressing the volley and driven techniques)
5. Passing (with inside and outside of foot)
6. Receiving the ball (wedge and cushioning techniques to minimize number of touches needed to control the ball)
7. Heading (to be introduced in “user friendly” manner)
8. Shielding the ball for possession

## **Tactics**

Below are some tactical considerations for the U10 coach. Coaches must remember that our players' technical development is vastly more important than tactics at this age. However, coaches can help players make better use of their greater technical prowess by making superior decisions. Team tactics can be addressed one practice out of every ten.

1. 1v1 or individual attacking tactics. Players must first be coached to be aggressive to take on defenders 1v1. In addition, they need to learn the techniques used to beat defenders 1v1. Players should be taught an array of 1v1 moves (ball feints, body feints, fakes, turns, etc.). Only then can we guide players to apply them effectively by learning how, when and where to beat defenders. Players need help becoming more comfortable when playing with their back to the opponent's goal.
2. Creativity. Players need to be encouraged to improvise and to take risks in solving tactical problems. Coaches and players need to remember the difference between creative decisions (good/unique ideas...that might not always work out) and bad decisions (making the same mistake twice!).
3. Vision. Players should be encouraged to “get their heads-up,” to “see the field” and to scan for options before receiving the ball, so they already know upon controlling the ball what their next action will be.
4. Play quickly but with purpose. Coaches are compelled to discourage “kick-ball.” Players should not be allowed nor encouraged to kick, “send” or “dump” the ball aimlessly down the field. However, our players have to be encouraged to play (think, execute, etc.) quickly.
5. Small-group play. Focus upon support play. Do players move or stand still when not in possession? Do they move into open spaces at the right time? Players should be encouraged to “find” new positions to help their teammates, rather than be told when and where to move.
6. Individual defending. Do players try to recover the ball after losing possession? Encourage players to defend actively with caution, rather than “over-pursue” the ball. Do not use a sweeper, since this will hinder individual defending development.

7. Team play. Does the team attack and defend together as a large group? Does the team transition quickly (on their own) from attack to defense after losing the ball and from defense to attack after winning the ball?

### **Practice Schedule**

Two “one hour” practices per week. Practices should not last more than 70 minutes. Players can be encouraged to attend a third “skills” practice if it is offered by the club.

### **Recommended Activities**

Tag games with the ball, 1 v 1 games, small-group activities, small-sided match conditioned games and small-sided scrimmages.

### **Player Equipment**

All U10 players should have their own ball (size 4) to take home and practice, soccer shoes, appropriate clothing, shin guards.

### **Coaching License**

The State Youth License is recommended for in-house coaches. All travel coaches must have an “E” License by the start of the U10 spring season.

