

How to Plan and Conduct a Practice

Preparing for Practice

- Write out your practice plan and follow it. This should make your session more productive and enjoyable. A blank practice plan form is included in this booklet for your convenience. Photocopy a supply, and use on each time you prepare for a practice.
- Plan to keep everyone active. (for example) Use small groups when doing drills, so players don't have to wait long for their turn.
- Plan practices so they are fun! Try to include a variety of drills, games, relays and competitions.
- Concentrate on practicing a few skills well, rather than attempting to cover too much at one time.
- Make sure you have enough equipment and sufficient space for all the drills and activities you want to do.
- Take a step-by-step approach. Younger and inexperienced players should master basic skills before moving on to more complex skills.

Keep your practice plans.

They will remind you of what you have covered and any problems you encountered.

Running the practice

“Never be on time!” **Get to practice early** and insist that your players arrive on time.

Inspect the practice and playing field for safety hazards - glass rock, etc before each session

Share responsibilities with another coach (and other Assistants if necessary). This will give players more individual attention and help keep them active and involved.

Young children have a short attention span, so keep drills and other activities brief (5-10 minutes each, for example).

Teaching Tips #1

- Arrange players in a semi-circle in front of you
- Position players so there are no distractions behind you - the sun shining in their eyes, for example
- Scan the group as you talk. Make eye contact with all players.
- Speak in a concise, clear manner. Too much information may confuse your players.
- Ask questions to make sure players have understood you and know what is expected of them.
- When setting up a drill, tell your players how, where, in what direction, and how many, or for how long. Do a walk through of the activity so that your players can visualize the requirements.
- Quickly get the players active

Teaching Tips #2

- Each player should have their own soccer ball
- Have a lot of variety planned for each practice
- Ensure players work and rest
- Be happy with small improvements from the players
- Be enthusiastic
- Simplify exercises
- Reinforce positively every effort. Praise!

- Provide as many contacts with the ball as possible. In a game, players may only get four or five chances to dribble or kick the ball.
- They must get many more contacts of the ball in practice to improve.
- Continually challenge players by increasing the difficulty of drills once they have mastered easier ones.
- Treat all players equally and emphasize positive feedback. Try to talk to each player individually at every practice.
- Use relays, drills and partner and movement exercises that focus on soccer skill development, fitness and fun.