



## PHILOSOPHY & RULES

This is sometimes referred to as “The Golden Age of Learning”. Most players start identifying with teachers and coaches at this age. They are very impressionable, so a lot of growth can take place, but they want to learn by doing not by listening to a lecture. The idea of the more a player plays, the more times he or she touches the ball, and the more touches the better a player gets still applies, but now we put demands and or restrictions on the games and drills in order to develop higher level skills and decision making.

The first rule is to have fun. **Once children enjoy the game, they’ll want to learn more about it.** Make sure each player has a ball, which should allow all players to get lots of touches of the ball. The game is for all players. Make sure to involve all players including the non-assertive players. Create exercises and games that demand team play for success. Let the games and the practices be the teachers. Encourage the use of teammates and the basic awareness of space and what is going on around you. Focus on the development of the individual player and small groups versus the development of the team.

### Under 10-12

- 9v9 with a 13 player maximum roster.
- Every Saturday each team plays one game consisting of two-30 minute halves.
- The spring season ends with the loser-out Cost Cutter Cup.
- 55x95 yard field with full-sized goals.
- Unlimited substitution on any stoppage with the referee’s discretion.
- Off sides is explained and enforced starting at under 10.

Select soccer becomes an option at this age. At the end of the U10 spring season there are tryouts for the Under 11-12 Whatcom Development League. The top 60 boys and top 60 girls from the county are selected and the Under 11 and 12 players are distributed evenly onto four teams. These teams compete against each other and four teams from Skagit County in both the fall and spring seasons. Moving the more advanced players into their own league enables many previously overshadowed players to step to the forefront of the recreational league. It minimizes the talent gap on both recreational and WDL teams at U11-12 making it easier to develop players as a team.

The WCYSA Development Director is always available to help and or answer questions.

Travis Connell

Phone: 384-6323 ext.8

Fax: 380-3918

Email: [travis@whatcomsoccer.com](mailto:travis@whatcomsoccer.com)

Whatcom County Youth Soccer Association

5238 Northwest Drive Bellingham, Wa 98226

[travis@whatcomsoccer.com](mailto:travis@whatcomsoccer.com)



## TOGETHER WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL

Picture your team as your family. One of your initial tasks should be organizing a meeting of all the families of your team. Not a parent meeting or a player meeting, but a family meeting. We know that communication is the key to strong relationships and families. Listen to your families' questions, concerns, and expectations. Help everyone get to know each other. Cultivate a working relationship with all the members of your family. Topics of conversation:

1. Elect a team mom or dad or both.
2. Find an assistant coach that will be at all games and most practices (all volunteers need RMA clearance).
3. Establish a basic practice schedule and location.
4. Explain your development philosophy (refer to objectives section).
5. Explain how game days work, the parents' role on game days, and their sideline behavior.
6. List any team rules you have.
7. Discuss the drop-off and pick-up of kids at practice and games.
8. Invite parents and players to approach you with any questions or concerns. Supply them with phone numbers and email and the best times to get a hold of you.

Remember that you are much stronger and resourceful as a group. Ask the new team mom or dad to prepare and distribute a team phone/email list, assign families for snack duty, and distribute the uniforms to each of the players. Treat this person well. They are extremely important.

**Continue to communicate with the families on your team. Speak with them at practices and games. If you have time email them a weekly or biweekly newsletter explaining the progress of the team. This can be really fun.**

Make sure we finish the season with a bang. Playing in our program is largely a social activity. If the kids have fun and make new friends it will have been a positive experience for them and we will have accomplished our primary objective. Ask your team mom or dad to appoint an end of the season party committee to organize the party. Try to spread the work out instead of having the team parent do everything throughout the entire season. Party requirements:

1. Collect uniforms.
2. Everyone gets an award.
3. Food.

Be creative and have fun. This is a wonderful opportunity. Pick-up the schedule for the first game at the spring coaches meeting the Tuesday prior to the first game. On Saturday pick up your first half game schedule at the field marshal table. The second half can be picked up at the field marshal table halfway through the season. After each game fill out a game report and leave it the box at the schedule wall.



## OBJECTIVES

Most 9, 10, and 11 year-olds want to learn by “doing” not by being lectured. Players should not be pigeonholed into only one position at this stage in their development. Nor should there be a permanent team goalkeeper. We want to create well-rounded soccer players, not just defenders or strikers. The duty of the coach is to give each player the opportunity to develop all the skills of the game. Positions should be taught with the move into 11-aside soccer. We should focus our energy on small group play, making sure groups of 4 and 5 players are spread out at a time. Here is a list of objectives:

- 1. Develop individual technical skill with pressure, i.e. smaller spaces, on the move, vs. a defender, less time.**
- 2. Reiterate use of space and support through triangle and diamond shapes:**
  - Spread out on offense to create width and depth.
  - Every time the ball moves, each player should be adjusting their position in order to create good passing lanes.
  - Penetrate into space your team creates to get the opponent off balance.
- 3. Introduce basic principles of defending:**
  - Everyone gets behind the ball and compact.
  - Patience: don't try to win the ball back until you have cover.
  - The first defender slows down the ball and channels it to one side. Second and third defenders get behind the first defender to give them cover, while all the time being aware of the location of the ball-handlers teammates and their goal.
- 4. Expose players to all positions, including goalkeeper, to ensure well-rounded development.**

Continue to develop each player's basic skills in a fun and challenging environment. If the players are better able to dribble, pass and receive the ball then it will be easier for them to grasp some of these tactical concepts like support and possession play. The duration of practice can be lengthened to between 60 and 90 minutes and some teams will be motivated enough for two trainings a week. Let the games and practices be the teachers. Some fun games and exercises can be found in the additional resources below.

### Additional resources:

“Coaching 9, 10, and 11 year olds” –Tony Waiters

“U12 Assistant Coach Series” –US Youth Soccer

“Peak Performance” –Ronald Quinn

“Success in Soccer” –magazine

usysa.com

wsysa.com

whatcomsoccer.com



## PRACTICES

Always arrive early and set up as many of the flags, discs, and cones possible so you won't need to stop practice to set up the next exercise. The less standing around, the better. Kids arrive at different times so have something ready for the early kids to get into right away. Give them a supervised task like juggling or shooting at a cone. Something that a parent can watch while you set up. This activity will keep them from being distracted and getting into trouble. **When constructing lesson plans for practice focus on one theme throughout instead of trying to coach passing, dribbling, and shooting all at once.** Keep exercises short, focused, and full of energy. Here are two sample practice plans:

### Practice #1

**Topic: Passing**

Hand Ball	10-minutes	warm-up
Stretch	4-minutes	
Passing Series	15-minutes	skill building
Water break	4-minutes	
Canada	20-minutes	skill building
Water break	4-minutes	
3v3 games	15-minutes	free play
Review	3-minutes	reiterate topic and coaching points

### Practice #2

**Topic: Scoring from crossing balls**

End Zone Game	15-minutes	warm-up
Stretch	4-minutes	
Passing Series	15-minutes	skill building
Water Break	4-minutes	
The Cross	15-minutes	skill building
Water Break	4-minutes	
Bahia	15-minutes	skill building
Review	3-minutes	Coaching points and homework

At this level it is helpful to conclude one practice a week with a 3v3 or 4v4 game of free play. This is the perfect time for players to try the skills from practice in a game situation. During these scrimmages do not coach, just let them play and learn on their own. Don't confuse the kids by coaching passing throughout most of the practice and then correcting their dribbling, shooting and defending in the scrimmage. End all



practices with a short review. It takes the average child 7 times before they remember something that you teach them. Reiterate the topic of the practice, go over your coaching points, and assign an easy soccer related homework that they can turn in next practice such as soccer trivia, a ball trick, juggling record, or creating a new fake. **Please remain at practice until parents pick up all players.** During practice, have fun and let your personality come alive.

The WCYSA Development Director is always available to help and or answer questions.