

## PAT HUTTENBACH'S SOCCER COACHES TRAINING SESSION

Being part of a neighborhood soccer club means that all coaches should help each other to make sure all teams have fun and all coaches enjoy being a coach. I am trying to share some of my best practices and tips so other teams can improve. For today's session, I want to focus on three (3) main subject areas. First, I will go over all sorts of games (yes, we should call them games and not drills) to use for players of different ages. Second, we will go over the team management issues and how to get more parent volunteers and assistant coaches. We will also try to learn how to run fun practice sessions and how to work on player development, and prepare for actual game scenarios. Third, I want to share some of my best personal tips/games with all of the coaches, and I hope other coaches will share some of their best tips with the other coaches as well.

- I. Demonstration of various different games to use during practices – see the various handouts with many additional ideas.
  - Different games can be modified for different ages;
  - The key is to have fun (I try to have my practices end with my best, most fun game at the end of practice);
  - Try to avoid long lines;
  - Players like to “beat” records and have competitive, fun games;
  - There are many different games for skill development and/or endurance training and try to have a good blend at different practices;
  - Try to get parents to help out with break-out sessions and various other games;
  - See all of the handouts for many additional game ideas.
- A. Full team games involving the whole team (many more ideas are on the attached handouts).
  1. Red Light / Green Light / Purple Light / Yellow Light / Orange Light;
  2. The Bear Game (or the Fuzzy Pink Rabbit game);
  3. Teams scoring goals against parents/coaches in goal;
  4. Forest through Trees game;
  5. Tag games, Tails games;
  6. Battle of the cones game;
  7. Run out and knock down 3-5 cones game;
  8. Dribble-Freeze game with coach looking the other direction;
  9. Capture the flag game;
  10. Shark bait game;

11. Duck hunt game;
12. Run many different types of scrimmages (see handout);
13. Bring ball back to line or coach game (kids can zoom back and score on cone goals or kick through coaches legs or bring back making animal sounds or bring back having to dribble through figure 8 cones;
14. Penalty kicks against the parents/coaches game;
15. Teammate pass/score game – teammates dribble down the sideline and then pass to the teammate running down the middle of the field to be able to shoot and score a goal (use cones to keep the player dribbling on the outside of the field close to the sideline)
16. Pre-practice games to use as players are still arriving;
  - a. Goalie punts/kicks/throws game;
  - b. Goal kick accuracy or distance game;
  - c. Corner kick bowling/accuracy game;
  - d. Throw in for distance game;
  - e. Rolling kick for distance game.

B. Various break-out sessions to have groups of 2-3 players:

1. Trapping session/game (kids have to stop the ball from crossing a line without using their hands);
2. Goalie Goalie game (see handout);
3. Figure 8 dribbling – using both feet, then just right foot, then just left foot;
4. Throw-in distance game;
5. Throw-in accuracy game;
6. Soccer goal storing stations:
  - Aiming at cones;
  - Right foot/left foot only to shoot;
  - Have the kids line up not in the middle of field but off to the side;
  - Must kick the ball while it is still in the air after a tall throw or after one or two bounces;
7. Soccer juggling station;
8. Cone knock down games;
9. Thunder foot game;
10. Soccer bowling.

II. How to get parents involved and how to get more assistant coaches?

1. Start with a question – Why do parents not want to help?
  - a. They do not know what to do;

- b. Time commitment issues (but remember that someone is bringing their kids to the practices);
  - c. Do not know “soccer” (some of the best coaches have no prior soccer experience as the key is having enthusiasm and having a good time with kids).
2. If you want an assistant coach, do not ask a parent if they want to be an assistant coach. The best question to ask is, “Do you mind helping me out for a little bit?” Another good question is, “Do you know how to roll a soccer ball?” Another question is, “Can you smile and have fun with some kids for a few minutes?” The key to getting parent involvement is making it very easy for them to say, “yes.” I am sometimes so “mean” that I will sometimes send a child over to ask the parent to see if they will come over and help for a few minutes. Very few parents will say, “No” to their own kid.
  3. Even if they do not want to commit to being an assistant coach, there are many ways that parents can help out. They can participate in various breakout sessions. They can stand in the middle of a goal to be a target or active goalie. They can help lead cheers. They can participate in a parents vs. team game. They can run laps if the kids beat a coach or parent. They can stand on the other side of the field at games. They can stand to help the goalie in games. They can help get the “penny” on the goalie.
  4. I like to get parents involved early on and actually have them participate in many of the opening cheers for the season. At various times, I will have parents come in and do cheers at different games.
  5. Call parents Coach [last name]. Yes, even if they have not helped before, say, “Okay players, go speak to Coach \_\_\_\_\_ over there.” or “Coach \_\_\_\_\_, can you help me with something?” If you call them Coach, you may end up developing some additional coaches.
  6. Once a parent has a good time helping out, they are more inclined to help out in the future. Make the parents want to come back and help more.
  7. I send an email request to the parents early in the season asking for help and I thank the ones that come help.

### III. Personal best tips and secrets to share with other coaches.

1. Make the kids feel good about themselves. You can always find something good a kid did at practice and compliment him on it.

2. Offer tons of praise.
3. Make things fun.
4. Have team secrets (secret plays or secret language).
5. Have team cheers (basic cheers and “tails” cheers and “explosion” cheers)
6. Run team vs. coaches and/or team vs. parents games.
7. Have players or coaches go around in a circle and speak about players.
8. Have a silly string day.
9. Offer dollar tree prizes and/or cheap prizes on special occasions.
10. Have a soccer carnival game at some point during the season.
11. Offer a water/Gatorade dump on the coaches if the team plays well (not based on a victory).
12. End practices with a very fun game.
13. Talk about the future (show trophies, talk about parents game, talk about silly string day, etc.).
14. Do advanced stuff and show kids what they can do in the future.
  - For example, show a throwing game and then do a running, throwing game and explain the skill;
  - Show a change in direction play;
  - Have a station on how to do a bicycle kick;
  - Have a fancy moves skill to try to get past a player or coolest moves skill game;
15. Offer non-soccer events to movies, bowling, magic shows, etc.
16. Have special team code stuff:
  - Throw in code;
  - “Torpedo” play for corner kicks;
  - Opening kickoff play.