
OVSL Coaches' Guide – U8

Fall 2018 – Age Coordinator: David Staats (304-588-1136)



Featuring Training Program by Warren High School Soccer and US Youth Soccer



U8 AGE GROUP

This age group mostly consists of players 7-years-old and incorporates referees, goalkeepers and out of bounds procedures

BASIC RULES

1. **Number of Players:** 6v6 including goalkeeper
2. **Periods:** 10 minute quarters
3. **Referees:** 1 center referee
4. **Introduction to Out of Bounds Procedures:** corner kicks, goal kicks and throw ins are all observed. Referee will allow "unlimited" attempts to complete a legal throw in. All players of the defending team must remain behind the center line during goal kicks. Players can cross the line as soon as the ball is kicked.
5. **No Headers:** purposeful headers will be considered violations resulting in a free kick for the opposing team.
6. **No Offsides Violations:** violations will not be called, but coaches should discourage "cherry-picking" near the goal area.
7. **All Free Kicks are Indirect:** on all free kick restarts (fouls, hand balls, etc), the ball must touch another player before a goal can be scored. No direct shots from free kicks.
8. **Kick-Offs:** Kick-offs must be touched by another player before the original kicker can touch a second time, but they aren't required to kick forward. Opponents must stand outside of the center circle during a kick-off, and all players except the kicker must remain completely on their half of the field. The kicker may "straddle" the middle line. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-off without touching another player. Football-style kick-offs are discouraged, encourage players to dribble and pass.
9. **Goal Area:** There is no penalty area in this age group. The goal area is enlarged to serve as a combined penalty and goal area. Goalkeepers can only use their hands when in this area.
10. **Substitutions:** substitutions can take place at any play stoppage, but the referee must be made aware that substitutions are taking place and approve the substitution. Instructing substitutes to stand on the sideline at midfield will signal the referee to call for subs at the next stoppage.
11. **Positions:** every team fields 1 goalkeeper and 5 field players. OVSL encourages all players to get time at every position, however, do not force a player to play goalkeeper if they're uncomfortable with the position. No player is to play goalkeeper for more than ½ of the game.
 - a. Most teams in the U8 age group break the field positions into two levels (offense and defense) and three widths (left, right, center).
 - b. The most popular formation is a **2-3 formation:** two defenders (left, right) + three offensive players (left, center, right). There is no rule against defensive players crossing the centerline. Some coaches prefer their defenders never cross the centerline to help keep the team organized and spread out.

GOALS

1. **This young age group is all about having fun and starting to understand the rules:** Play will be quick-paced and chaotic. The most successful players love competing for possession and are able to dribble under pressure and shoot outside the goal area.
2. **Understanding the Game:** Players at this level should start to understand not to over-pursue the ball and to commit to their assigned areas of the field. Players should also *start* to understand when to pass to open teammates. Teach players how to be physical without fouling and to celebrate their goals without taunting their opponents.

EQUIPMENT

1. Size 3 ball: every player should have their own ball for practice
2. Water: for every practice and game
3. Cleats: Cleats must be soccer-specific. Baseball cleats and football cleats are not safe for play.
4. Shin Guards: shin guards must be worn UNDER socks.
5. Jewelry: jewelry and accessories (earrings, necklaces, etc) are not to be worn on the field.
6. Uniform: shirts and socks for games will be provided

PRACTICES

1. Each team should practice once or twice per week (weather permitting).
2. Players may have difficulty focusing for long periods. Limit practice times according to your players' attention spans.
3. Keep players engaged. Try to avoid too many drills that require players to wait in line.
4. Get as many touches on the ball as you can.
5. Encourage players to avoid hitting the ball with the toe of their cleat. Laces, outside of foot, inside of foot. Encourage players to dribble the ball close.
6. Encourage players to spread out when a teammate has possession.
7. Teach players to defend by jockeying with the attacker instead of lunging for the ball. Encourage defenders to dribble and pass when they aren't near their own goal instead of kicking the ball as hard as they can, as soon as they can.



U8 Training Program

Andy Pinkerton, Head Coach Warren High School Girls Soccer

U8 MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- Recognition and use of both feet
- Introduction of dribbling moves to possess or beat a defender
- Passing and receiving across their body with the inside of the foot utilizing proper technique
- Movement in and out of space
- Striking the ball properly with the instep when shooting
- More accurate awareness of roles and responsibilities in transition
- Role of first defender and proper tackling technique
- Introduction of receiving air balls with chest, thigh and foot (**No Heading!**)
- Introduction of combination play
- Introduction of juggling with various surfaces (chest, thigh, feet)

COMPONENTS OF THE GAME

- **Fitness:** Agility, eye-foot and eye-hand coordination, balance, leaping, bounding, tumbling, catching, throwing, pulling, pushing, warm-up activities and movement education. Continue education on sports nutrition with players and parents.
- **Technique:** Experiment with the qualities of a rolling or spinning ball. Introduce ball lifting (throw-ins), juggling, block tackle (shielding), receiving ground balls with the inside and sole of the foot, shooting with the inside of the foot, passing with different parts of the foot, shooting and dribbling while changing direction.
- **Psychology:** Encourage working in pairs, sportsmanship, parental involvement, how to play, emotional management, creativity, dynamic activities, participation of all players and a safe and fun environment. Athletes still have a short attention span unless the player has a high interest level. Encourage trying new things, and create activities that foster positive feedback and attainable positive success.
- **Tactics:** Back line and forward line, 1v1 attack and choosing to dribble or pass. Introduce the names of positions (fullbacks and forwards). Institute games of 2v1, 1v2 and 2v2, playing with the ball with a purpose and promote problem solving.

TYPICAL U8 TRAINING SESSION

- Should not exceed 60 minutes
- Warm-up, free play, or game-like activity (Technical Warm-Up); approximately 15 minutes
- A mixture of individual and partner activities. Add more maze-type games. Introduce target games with a variety of player combinations: 1v1, 2v1, 1v2 and 2v2 (Small Sided Activity); approximately 30 minutes
- Conclude with a Small-Sided Game of 4v4, two goals and no goalkeepers; approximately 15 minutes
 - It is important to ensure each child has a ball and to focus on fun games.
 - The benefit of the increased number of touches on the ball in the activities/games is irreplaceable.
 - Coaches should be well prepared and have a selection of game-like activities planned, while keeping in mind these young children have short attention spans.
 - Sample drills are attached to this document.

Technical Warm-Up



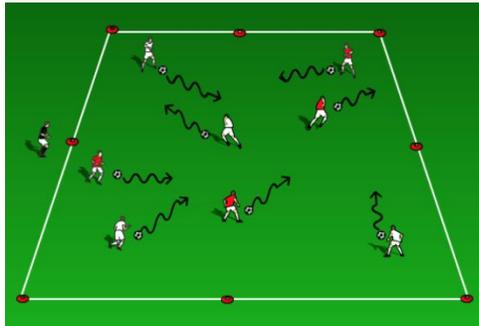
4 Colors, 4 Zones

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place (4) cones in each Quarter of the space 5W x 12L using (4) different colors. There should be (4) different colored spaces in the grid. Players should each have a ball at their feet. Players dribble around in the space until the coach calls out (1-2) colors. All player rush towards the colored box. **DONT BE LAST!!!** *Variations:* Use only R Foot, Use only L Foot, Dribble only with inside of foot, Dribble only with outside of foot.

Technique of Dribbling: Head up, eyes looking forward to open space. Toe down (laces), heel up while dribbling the ball.

Technique of Changing Direction: Identify space without defenders. Position the ball aware from body, check shoulder for open space, reach for ball to turn. Get low on turn to move fast after change of direction.

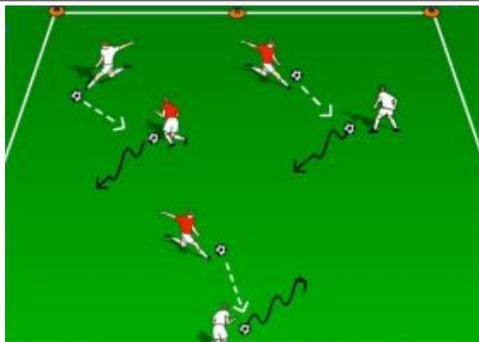


ALL THE SURFACES - BALL MANIPULATION

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Each player has a ball at their feet in the space. Coach should demonstrate how to touch the ball with all the surfaces: Inside, Outside, Bottom (sole), Heel, and Toe. Players should dribble around and wait for the coach to call "PART OF THE FOOT/ TOE" in which they then dribble with that part of the foot to the ball. Encourage them to use see how fast they can go inside, Outside, Bottom (sole), Heel, and Toe

Guided Questions: What part of the foot can we use to dribble? Where should we dribble the ball? Where should you look to dribble the ball?



Ball Tag

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

All players should have a ball at their feet. Players should dribble throughout the space and try to tag someone else's ball by passing their ball into the other ball. After they have tagged someone's ball, then should try to tag someone else. Players can tag the same player twice until they have tagged everyone.

Technique of Passing: Distance of the ball away from body will allow for more speed & weight on the ball. Last touch before striking the ball should be in front of player and towards target.

Tactics of Passing: Pass ball into space where ball is moving. Head up and look forward to see available spaces to move & pass.



Clean your room

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Make (3) Channels 20W x 10L. The middle channel is called the HALLWAY and is FOR COACHES ONLY. Divide the players evenly, and place them in the outside channels. Players should try to kick the ball into the other team's room. The goal is to have as few balls as possible at the end of time. Players are restricted to their zones, and coaches can send balls from the hallway back into their rooms. After a set period of time end the game and check to see who has the most balls/messiest room to determine a winner. Clean Room = fewest balls Dirty Room = most balls.

Technique of Passing: Strike the middle of the ball. Position your non-kicking foot alongside the ball, pointed at your target. Lock your angle, toe up, heel down. Follow through the ball.

Technical Warm-Up



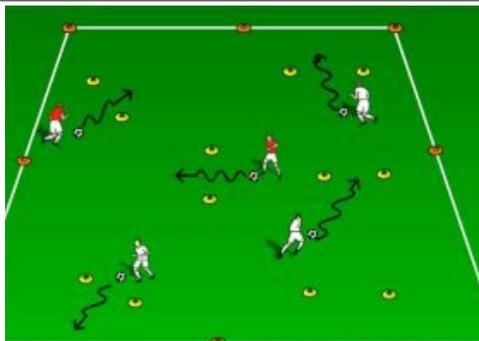
Cone Destruction - Builders & Breakers

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place 8-10 tall cones throughout the space. Give 3/4 (75%) of the players balls (breakers). The other 1/4 (25%) of players are without balls (builders). BREAKERS = The players with the ball should try to dribble/pass into the cones and "knock them over." BUILDERS = Players without the balls can tackle the ball and knock away the ball. The players without the ball can "save" the cones by standing them back up once they've been knocked down. *Objective* = To have all the cones knocked over at one time. *Coach should select builders & breakers.

Technique of Dribbling: Head up, eyes looking forward to open space. Toe down, heel up (laces), Inside foot.

Tactics of Dribbling: Identify space without defenders. Small touches to change direction. Large touches to move quicker in open space



Gates Dribble

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place a pairs of cones (2-3 yds wide) throughout the space making several gates. Each player should have a ball at their feet. Count the number of gates dribbled through in a specific amount of time. Players have to go through each gate before they can go through the same gate again. *Variations:* R foot only, L foot only, Inside foot dribble, Laces dribble.

Technique of Dribbling: Head up, eyes looking forward to open space. Direct touches towards space that you want to enter

Tactics of Dribbling: Smaller touches to get through gate. Larger touches in space to a new gate



PENNY TAG

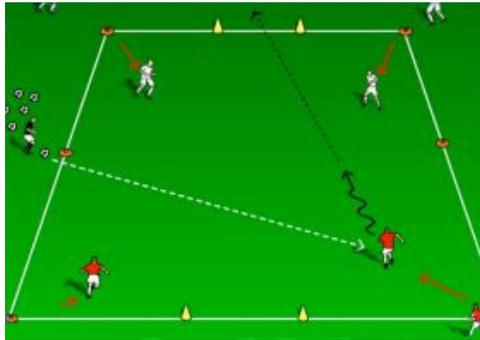
TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Each player has a ball at their feet. They must keep possession of the ball at all times. Give 1/3 of the players a penny/scrimmage vest to hold in their hand. Players need to dribble after one another and 'tag' them with the penny (NO THROWING). If you get tagged, then you take the penny to take someone else. NO TAG BACKS. Play for time, don't end up with the penny!

Technique of Dribbling: Use the outside of the foot to go faster into space. Use the inside of the foot to change direction more quickly. Head up, and eyes forward when dribbling.

Tactics of Dribbling: Find the open space. Change speed & direction often to get away from defenders and tagger.

Small Sided Activities

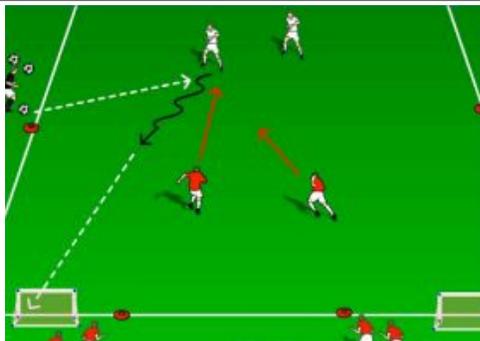


2v2 Continuous

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place (2) tall cones 5 yards wide on each endline, making a goal. Position players in each corner of the space. The game begins when the coach plays the ball to one team. The game is played until there is a goal, or the ball goes out of bounds. Players run off, and the next group steps on. Play for time or number (#) of goals scored

Passing & Dribbling decisions: Do I need to take small touches or big touches when dribbling? Where should I look first when I receive the ball? Who can I look to if I have a defender near me? What can I do to help me teammate if they have the ball?



2 v 2, 2 Goals

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place (2) cones 3 yards apart on each endline in the corner to make (4) total goals throughout the space. Position (2) cones between the goals for players to rest. Coach starts with the ball and plays to one team. (2) Players from each team run onto the field and play until there is a goal or the ball goes out of bounds. Goals are scored by passing through the cones. Run back to your line and switch.

Passing & Dribbling Decisions: What part of the foot should I use to dribble quickly or slowly? Why should I keep my head up and looking at the whole field? How can I change direction if 1 goal has defenders near it?

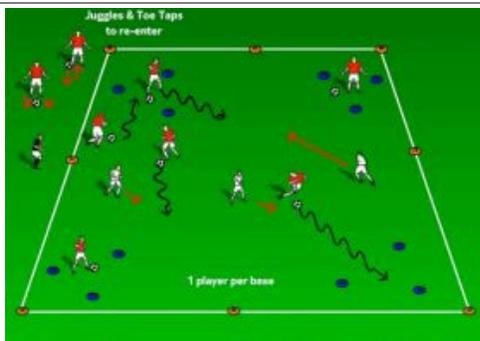


2v2 with (4) Goals

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place (2) cones 3 yards apart on each endline in the corner to make (4) total goals throughout the space. Position (2) cones between the goals for players to rest. Coach starts with the ball and plays to one team. (2) players from each team run onto the field and play until there is a goal or the ball goes out of bounds. Goals are scored by passing through the cones. Run back to your line and switch.

Passing & Dribbling Decisions: What part of the foot should I use to dribble quickly or slowly? Why should I keep my head up and looking at the whole field? How can I change direction if 1 goal has defenders near it? Who can I look to if I cannot dribble?



Base Tag

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place (4) bases made up of 3 cones (4x4x4) throughout the space. Designate a groups of player who are "it" to begin the game. The players who are it, are without a ball. Those who are not it have a ball. Only (1) player can be in a base at a time. If you are in a base, and someone new comes into the base you get "bumped" out. If you get tug outside the base, run over to coach to perform ball skills to enter the game again (juggles or toe taps #). After 2-3minutes, there is no re-entry once tug. Players rest outside space. Coach need to the bases 1 by 1 to ensure there are fewer bases than players remaining

Technique of Dribbling: Small touches to move quickly into the base. Large touches to move through open space without being tug.

Tactics of Dribbling: Head up, and eyes forward. Look for open space, or base to enter with dribble.

Small Sided Activities



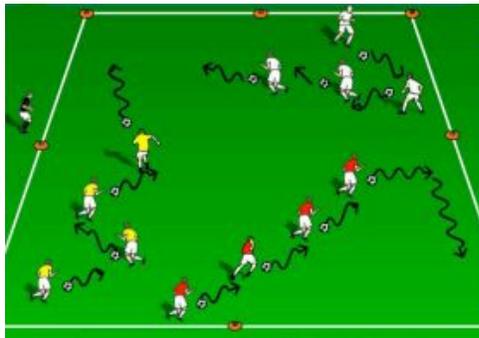
Cone Destruction - Builders & Breakers + Partners

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place 8-10 tall cones throughout the space. 3/4 (75%) of the players should be in pairs with one ball between them (breakers). The other 1/4 (25%) of players are without balls (builders). The players with the ball should try to dribble/pass into the cones and "knock them over." Players without the balls can tackle the ball and knock away the ball. The players without the ball can "save" the cones by standing them back up once they've been knocked down. *Objective* = To have all the cones knocked over at one time. *Coach should select builders & breakers

Technique of Passing: Watch your eyes make contact with the ball. Strike the center of the ball.

Tactics of Passing: If you don't have the ball, move so your teammate can "see" you with the ball & their eyes. If you can't dribble, then look for your teammate to share the ball and move the defender.



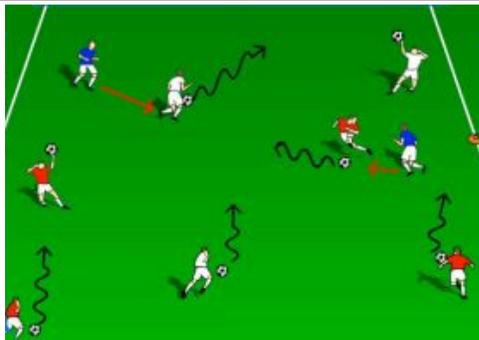
Follow the Leader

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Divide the players into groups evenly. Each player should have a ball. Designate (1) players the group's leader. The leader should dribble throughout the space, changing speed & direction. The rest of the group should keep and not allow large gaps between each other. After 30-45 sec rotate leaders.

Technique of Dribbling: Head up, eyes looking forward, light on your toes. Quick feet to avoid defenders and change direction with the ball.

Tactics of Dribbling: Look for open space. Keep the ball close when defenders are nearby. Bigger touches into space to go fast.



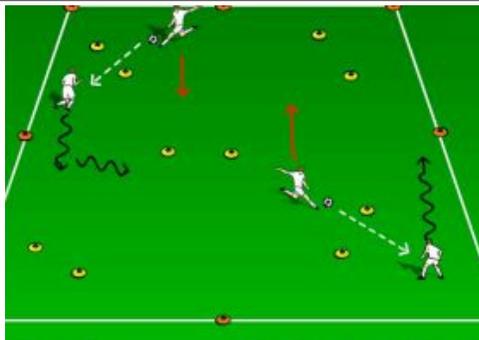
Freeze Tag

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

1/4 (25%) of the players do not have balls, and 3/4 (75%) of the players have balls at their feet. Players must dribble the ball, and keep possession at all times. Try to avoid being tug. If you get tug, stop the ball and hold it above your head. Wait for a teammate to tag you to reenter the game. The game is over when everyone has been tug

Technique of Dribbling: Use the outside of the foot to go faster into space. Use the inside of the foot to change direction more quickly. Head up, and eyes forward when dribbling.

Tactics of Dribbling: Head up, always looking for open space. Change directions as often as possible to avoid being tug, and to find new space.



Gates Passing

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place a pairs of cones (2-3 yards wide) throughout the space making several gates. Players should work in pairs with (1) ball between them. Players are to pass to one another through each gate. Count the number gates passed through during specific time period. Players have to go through each gate once before they can go through the same gate again.

Technique of Passing: Use the inside of the foot to strike the middle of the ball. Put your non-kicking foot next to the ball, and point it to your teammate. Follow through with your kick/pass.

Tactics of Passing: Pass to your teammate, or where they will be.

Small Sided Activities

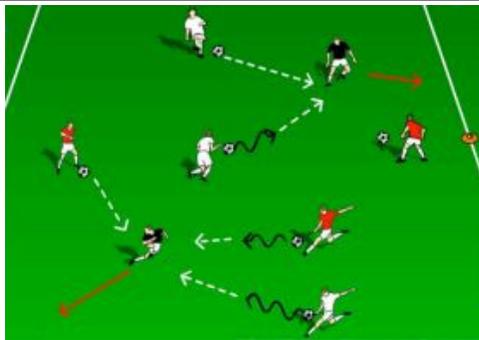


Gates Passing with Defenders

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place a pairs of cones (2-3 yards wide) throughout the space making several gates. Players should work in pairs with (1) ball between them. Players are to pass to one another through each gate. Pass for time to collect the highest number of gates. Players have to go through each gate before they can go through the same gate again. Defenders can steal the ball and dribble around to keep the ball away from the pairs. Pairs should steal ball back from defender and keep counting their gates.

Passing & Dribbling Decisions: What should I do pass or dribble? Who am I looking for to know if I should pass or dribble? Where should we go to keep possession of the ball?



Kick the Coach

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Each player should have a ball at their feet. Players are to dribble around and try to "kick the coach" = pass the ball into the coach (below the knee). Points are scored for hitting the coach. Play for time - record scores.

Technique of Passing: Distance of the ball away from body will allow for more speed & weight on the ball. Last touch before striking the ball should be in front of player and towards target. Follow through the ball to keep control and place ball below knee.

Tactics of Passing: Pass ball into space where coach is moving. Head up and look forward to see available spaces to move & pass.



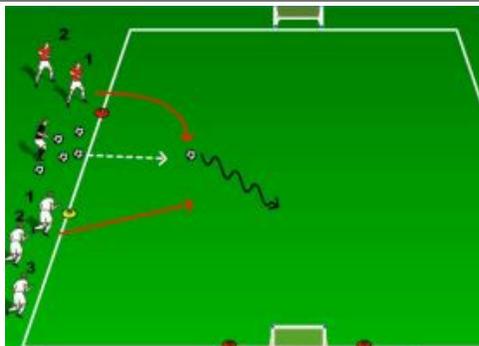
Pacman

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place the ball in a group, and position cones around them. Coach starts out as Pacman. Dribble around and pass the ball into player's legs (BELOW THE KNEE). If they get hit, then go and retrieve a ball, and join as Pacman. Play until (1) player remains. They get to start as Pacman the next game

Technique of Dribbling: Small touches to change direction (inside & outside foot). Large touches to go faster (outside foot). Bottom of foot (sole) to stop moving and change direction.

Tactics of Dribbling & Passing: Anticipate where the player will run. Pass & dribble into space the player is moving.



Slot Machine Match-ups

TRAINING AREA = 20W x 30L

Place (1) goal at each end of the space. Number the players #1-4 if possible. Position each group, white & red on opposite sides of Coach. Coach will play a ball into the field and call a (#) number(s). If your number is called run onto the field. If a goal is scored, or the ball goes out of bounds, run quickly back to your line. Play 1v1, 1v2, 2v2, 2v3, 3v3; Rotate numbers

Dribbling Decisions: What part of the foot can I use to: stop the ball, go faster, or slow down? Where should I make my 1st touch? How do I know when to change direction? What can I do if I am not able to dribble?

Game



Play 4v4

Set up as many fields as the numbers will allow (20W x 30L).

Play for 8 minutes, get a water break, and play again.

Reinforce all coaching points from practice.