

AUBURN PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

HELPFUL HINTS AND TIPS

Here are just a few helpful hints and tips for you as you begin your next season with your soccer team.

- ◇ Engage the Children
- ◇ Create an atmosphere that is positive, respectful and fair
- ◇ Communicate to the children on an eye-to-eye level about the fundamentals of the sport
- ◇ Emphasize the “team” over the “individual”
- ◇ Emphasize the participation over the winning
- ◇ Demonstrate good sportsmanship
- ◇ Put the needs of the children over your own
- ◇ Never underestimate the abilities of young players

KIDS WANT TO PLAY and the game is a remarkable teacher!

SOCCER SAFETY

- ◇ Take care and look after your equipment
- ◇ Be aware of the field conditions; sprinklers, holes, etc.
- ◇ Be aware of tippy goals
- ◇ No climbing/hanging on goals
- ◇ Make sure you have water for the kids or make sure that they bring water.

SCHEDULING PRACTICE

When planning for a practice session keep these few things in mind:

- ◇ Practices should be planned and thought out in advance
- ◇ Create a simple schedule to follow. Always have two to three extra exercises to reinforce the skill for the day
- ◇ Focus on one of the throughout your training session;
 - 1) Ball Control
 - 2) Dribbling
 - 3) Passing
 - 4) Shooting
 - 5) Defending
- ◇ These five skills are the basics when it comes to training your players. Make sure to emphasize one particular skill throughout your training session. For example, if your practice emphasizes dribbling; make sure the warm-up is an introduction to the skill (whether they know or recognize it or not); and the scrimmage at the end reinforces one or all of the elements taught during the session. See the sample practice schedule for more detail.
- ◇ Make your presentation full of energy and FUN! Ultimately, whether your children enjoy the game of soccer will depend upon how enjoyable you make practices and games and you how well you do at being a coach and role model. **The most important thing you can teach your players is to have FUN and enjoy the game.**

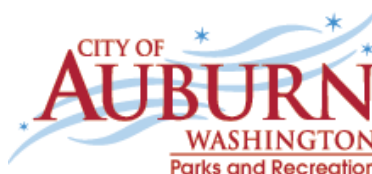
WARM-UP

A proper warm-up prior to playing sports is important to prepare the body for strenuous activity and reduce the chance of injury. Start slowly and gradually increase the heart rate. Relate the warm-up to the skill of the day. Be creative, energetic, and make the warm-up a fun start to the practice.

Warm-up Activities

- ◇ Follow the leader
- ◇ Relay races
- ◇ Steps in ladders
- ◇ Tag Games

Remember: Be creative and fun... incorporate your skill or small parts of the skill during these warm-up activities and games.



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Stretching

Some believe that stretching is not necessary at this age. Physically speaking this may be true, **however**, the habit of stretching will become very beneficial. Players should stretch throughout the warm-up activity. Stretch in unison and count out loud. Count in French, Spanish, Italian, and Pig Latin to keep it fun and interesting.

Ankles	Hamstrings	Buttocks	Back	
Calves	Quads	Groin	Neck	Shoulders

Remember: Relax and move gradually into the stretching position. Hold 20 seconds... and do not bounce!

Juggling and Basic Ball Control

The object of juggling is to keep the ball in the air as long as possible using all parts of the body except the hands. Some believe it is unnecessary to spend time learning to juggle. However, while players struggle with the challenges of juggling, they are polishing all of the basic technical skills needed for good ball control. In addition, juggling improves players' control, coordination, touch, timing, rhythm, and overall confidence with the ball. Therefore, juggling does play an important part in developing a young soccer player.

Remember: "Not all good jugglers are good soccer players; but all good soccer players are good jugglers."

Juggling

- ◇ Begin by having all players sit down with a ball in each player's hands with knees bent upward.
- ◇ Have player toss the ball to a foot and knock it back to the hands. Have them practice with each foot. This teaches proper leg motion. The knee joint is your hinge, not your hip. If they use their fanny or hips the ball will either hit them in the nose or fly over their heads.
- ◇ Strike the ball with the top of the foot on the laces.
- ◇ Have players stand up, drop the ball to a foot and touch it back up to their hands. Repeat this procedure with the other foot.
- ◇ Eventually, try alternating touches from one foot to the other before catching the ball.
- ◇ Switch to dropping the ball to the thighs and work up to alternating touches.
- ◇ Have players touch the ball off of a foot and let it bounce again "bounce...touch" etc. Then have the players try two touches before each bounce, and so on.
- ◇ Challenge players to juggle the ball low to the ground, high in the air, and on the move.

Dribbling

Dribbling is a technique that young players will continually rely on. It is, therefore, important to develop player's confidence and to encourage improvisation and flare when teaching the various methods of dribbling. It is equally important to develop an understanding for the proper times and reason that a player may dribble.

Reasons that a player dribbles include:

- To "create" a shot opportunity or "beat" an opponent
- To "carry" the ball forward taking advantage of space given
- To "relieve" pressure and gain space or time to make a play
- To "shield" or maintain possession if there are no options

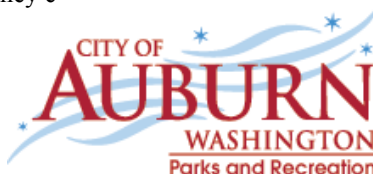
While dribbling, a player must be able to:

- See the field
- Keep close control
- Change directions quickly
- Change speeds suddenly

Dribbling Skills

Seeing the Field (Peripheral Vision):

Having players look at a soccer ball a few yards in front of them. Then have them look at a tree or an object further away. Point out that even though they are not looking at the ball, they c



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FAST FOOTWORK SEQUENCE

Fast footwork is key to a soccer player's success on the field. A player must be able to escape tight situations, change directions, unbalance defenders, and be unpredictable. The following sequence is designed to develop control, confidence and quickness with the ball at the player's feet.

To begin, it may be helpful to set-up a grid 10 by 10 as a boundary. This boundary can be increased or decreased to promote better control. This set-up can also allow the coach to use commands such as, "knock out" "sit", "stand", etc.. Another option might be to make this a "Soccer Aerobics" worked with music and dance steps...

Phase one - Get to know the ball:

While standing on one foot, use the other to roll the ball forward, backward, sideways, and all the way around the standing foot. The goal is to get use to the feel of the ball.

Phase two - Movement with the ball:

1. Toe Tapping:

Tap the ball outward with your toe, and pull it back with the soul of the same foot. Switch feet and start adding hops and a little movement.

2. Running on the ball:

Start with one foot on the ball. Yell switch, and put the other foot on top of the ball. Repeat until they pick up the pace to a full jog, or even a sprint. Emphasize:

- Arms up and out for balance
- Legs bent and relaxed
- Fanny down
- Quick feet while moving with the ball

3. Foundation or the Basic:

Knock the ball between your feet, keeping the ball directly underneath the body. Increase the speed as you improve, and eventually add movement.

4. Add Toe Tapping to the Foundation. Push, pull, knock between the feet, push, pull. Be creative – push with one foot, pull with the other, and continue the foundation...

Improvise and add your own ideas to the sequence. Tailor it to your group's abilities, however, do not underestimate them.

Phase three- Turns:

1. Stop-Pull-and Pivot:

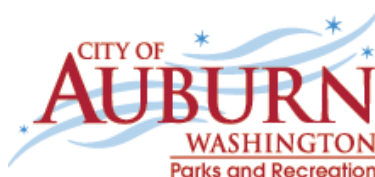
Start with the foundation and move forward, stop the ball with the bottom of the foot, pull it directly back, pivot on inside foot, and continue the opposite direction.

2. Drag over:

Drag the ball across your body with one foot in one direction, then switch and use other foot going the opposite direction.

3. "V":

Start with the foundation, push the ball away from your body and pull it back, quickly change direction of the ball and continue foundation.



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Dribbling Exercises

Star Wars

Mark off a grid 15 by 15. Choose 1 or 2 volunteers to be Darth Mol or The Emperor. Players try to dribble from one end of the square to the other. If they get their balls knocked out then they become “droids”. They have to try to stop dribblers by crab walking. After three crabs have been created, then Darth Mol can become a regular droid too (depending on skill levels). The last player to become a droid wins!

Skill Knock Out

Using a grid (15 x 15) players dribble throughout the grid waiting for commands. The key is to explain and let them practice certain skills and then using the commands switch from one to another. Be loud and crisp or they will get bored.

Steps to cover (commands are in caps):

1. Dribbling under CONTROL. Slow to medium pace looking over the field.
2. SHIELD! Let them actively shield someone. Make them rub their behind up against anyone near them. This helps them visualize what shielding actually does.
3. SPEED DRIBBLE! Moving the ball quickly into space. Key=1st 3 steps are the fastest.
4. SWITCH! Change direction using a move like the pull back or pull back and behind the leg.
5. SHOT! Using the fake blast to freeze an opponent and then continuing the dribble.
6. SIT! A fun one to throw in. They sit on their ball as fast as they can, jump up and continue to dribble.
7. KNOCK OUT! On this final command they turn against each other using the techniques they have just learned and try to be the last player remaining with a ball in the grid. As players are “knocked out” they may line up with coach on one line and as coach determines may baby step in line with joined hands to make the grid grow smaller and smaller. With only 2-3 players left use the countdown 10 to zero to create an urgency.

One vs. One Tournament

Using 2 lines of cones approximately 2 steps apart and 5-7 steps across (depending on age), place one player on each cone. The cones represent mini fields. With one ball on each field, players play a one minute game using rock/paper/scissors to break ties. Winners move up the grid to the King of the Grid. Losers stay where they are. Loser on the top moves to the bottom. All games start and end together. No out of bounds. This game creates action and no boredom as it moves too fast.

Emphasizes dribbling and beating an opponent one on one. Can play 8-12 games if you do it right.

HISTORY!

A shooting game. Using a goal with you (coach) as goalie the players line up outside the penalty area and dribble in one at a time and try to score on you. If they miss you get to then try and score on their goal (set up near the line) which they are now trying to frantically cover as a goalie. If you score then the player is now HISTORY! And everyone on the team yells...1, 2, 3: HISTORY! Once history they get to shag balls for you. BUT, if someone scores on you then they all yell JAIL BREAK and everyone gets back in line. This game remains fun if you encourage the yelling of History to keep them pumped up.

