

A stylized white line drawing of a soccer field on a dark blue background. The field includes a central circle, a rectangular box in the upper half, and corner arcs in the top-left and top-right.

**ROCHESTER SOCCER CLUB**

# **TRAINING & GAME MANAGEMENT**

**IDEAS, TIPS & REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE VOLUNTEER COACH**

A stylized white line drawing of a soccer field on a dark blue background. The field includes a central circle, a rectangular box in the lower half, and corner arcs in the bottom-left and bottom-right.

**RSCSOCCER.ORG**

# Planning

You have volunteered to coach and your first practice is upon you. Now what?

Preparation!

A prepared coach is a confident coach, and that readiness will allow your players to get the most out of their training session.

Five components to focus on throughout your season:

1. **Training Activities**
2. **Session Plans**
3. **Running Your Session**
4. **Planning Your Season**
5. **Game Management**

Let's navigate through each of these on the following pages.

# Training Activities

Training activities are what make up your training session plan. These activities should be:

- **Age-appropriate**
  - Consider your players' abilities when choosing training activities.
- **Fun**
  - This is why players play and why coaches coach.
- **Full of decision-making**
  - Present the "what" and "when", not just the "how". Ask questions and guide them to answers.
- **Flexible**
  - Ensure your activities can be made more or less challenging depending on the players' success.
- **Dynamic**
  - Avoid players standing and in lines, and ensure players are engaged and moving with and without the ball as much as possible.

# Session Plans

Preparation is still the name of the game! Efficient training sessions require coaches to plan in advance.

Things to consider:

- **Time**
  - How long should each activity last? Factors to consider include the difficulty of the activity, the players' attention spans, number of players present and weather elements such as heat.
- **Equipment**
  - Know what equipment you will need - pinnies, cones, balls, goals, etc.
- **Space**
  - Make sure you have adequate field space to do what you want to accomplish.
- **Set Up**
  - Quickly transition from one activity to the next by only needing to add/remove as little equipment as possible.
- **Focus**
  - Recommendation is to limit teaching to up to two techniques and tactical points per practice.

# Session Plans

Elements of a training session include:

- **Warm-Up**
  - Ready the players for the session ahead. Give them a glimpse into what you will teach them.
- **Individual or Partner Activities**
  - Each player should have time with the ball and themselves (example: working on 1v1 moves, dribbling, passing/receiving, etc.).
- **Small Group Activities**
  - Start making the practice look more like a game/add an element of pressure (1v1, 2v1, fun games that work on what you have introduced, etc.).
- **Game-like Finish**
  - Scrimmage! Players love playing, and they will love showing you what you taught them! Plus, this is an excellent way to teach players the rules.

As players become older, incorporate dynamic stretching movements to warm-up and static stretching to cool down to aid in recovery and injury prevention.

# Session Plans - Resources

The following link includes both individual activities and complete practice plans:

- **US Youth Soccer - Training Session Plans**

These activities/plans can be copied, printed or simply used as idea generators for what and how you choose to plan for each practice. This helps take out the guesswork when busy schedules cause less time to plan!

Remember the components of training activities and session plans when creating your practices.



# Running Your Session

Your session is planned, your equipment is laid out and your players are ready to go! From here it is all about fun, encouragement and learning! During your session, consider the following elements:

- **Fun and Encouragement**

- Keep players engaged with your positive words and show your confidence in them! Make it enjoyable by having all players active as much as possible.

- **Coaching Points**

- Make them clear and concise. Consider not always stopping play but coaching as the activity flows.
- Consider asking questions versus immediately telling answers.

- **Your Positioning**

- Stand in areas to see all of your players so you can notice the details.

- **Debriefing**

- After training, go over what players learned, ask what they enjoyed and give them positive feedback.

# Planning Your Season

It is important to have a plan not just for each week, but for an entire season. For the volunteer coach, this is as simple as knowing what you want to work on in the months ahead, with a structure to it.

This, like a training session itself, should be flexible to meet the needs of the team.

When planning your season, first know how many practices you will have. This will allow you to decide how often you will want to work on each topic you plan to teach.

Make note - moving too quickly away from one topic will not reinforce the technique, skill or tactic within your players.

Consider starting with the basics and advancing your practices. A good foundation leads to players ready for your next challenge.

# Coaching License Options

Volunteer coaches are not required to have coaching licenses.

But, two pathways exist if you are considering formal coaching education:

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and United Soccer Coaches (USC).

Both organizations offer courses of all levels, including special topics to suit all the needs of the game. Further, some introductory courses can be taken online and/or free of charge, including webinars and e-learning.

[USSF Coaching Courses](#)

[USC Coaching Courses](#)



# Game Management

It is finally gameday! What do you need in order to have yourself and your players prepared?

- **Knowledge of the Rules**
  - Game length, ball size, number of players, etc.
- **Formations**
  - Have a defensive line, midfield line & attacking line.
- **Substitutions Patterns**
  - Equal playing time! Let players show what they know. The emphasis is on the fun, not the result.
- **Equipment**
  - Game ball, different color pinny/shirt than your and your opponent's jersey for your goalkeeper.
  - Your coaching badge.
- **Positive Attitude**
  - Encouraging body language and appropriate words.

# Gameday Coaching

Some games, your players will all look like the next Messi or Hamm, and other days you will not recognize them! This is normal, and has to be expected and embraced.

How coaches handle the positive moments as well as the mistakes in a game will go a long way in a child's growth emotionally and as a player.

Berating or belittling players, yelling constantly and subbing off players for mistakes will only seek to diminish a player's confidence and interest in playing.

Winning or losing, keep it positive. The experience is more important than the score line. Players play for fun!

Embrace the challenges of the game and use your voice and actions in a positive way. Often times, less is more when it comes to words during the flow of the game.

The following pages will provide some suggestions on communication to your players and families before, during and after a game.

# Gameday Coaching

## Pre-Game

- **Greet your players as they arrive**
  - Get them excited to play... though they probably already are ready to go!
- **Ensure players have their jersey and gear**
  - A quick run home by mom or dad for shin guards is easier well in advance of kick-off!
- **Team talk before warm-ups**
  - Briefly address the team to let them know what you want to see from them in the game.
- **Warm-up**
  - Take some time to get the players moving and prepared! Consider incorporating an activity from practice that includes a skill(s) you want to see in the game.
- **Team talk before kick-off**
  - Less is more! Remind them to have fun, to show good sporting behavior to everyone (coaches, players, officials, parents) and to try their best!
  - Give them the line-up and show your confidence in them with a positive word or two right before taking the field.

# Gameday Coaching

## In-Game

- **Sideline Behavior**
  - Positive body language and words. This is toward all players, the officials, spectators and opposing coaches.
- **Less is More**
  - Continuously shouting will only confuse your players. Pick moments to offer coaching points.
- **Substitutions**
  - Time your subs best you can to make sure playing time is equal. Value participation over winning.
- **Addressing Substitutes**
  - Keep the talk brief when players come off, but make sure they hear a positive note from you.
- **Halftime Instructions**
  - Again keep it brief. Make mental notes or write down some positives and one/two ways to improve. Send them back out with confidence!
- **Sporting Play**
  - We are all here for fun. If games become lopsided, look to challenge your players with a passing restriction before scoring or playing down a player. Blowouts are not fun for either side.
- **Calm and Collected**
  - If facing an unruly opponent, keep a cool head. Politely remind the opposing coach of why we are here and then play your game, not theirs.

# Gameday Coaching

## Post-Game

- **Acknowledge the Opponent**
  - Shake hands, fist bump or clap toward the opponent.  
No negative words or actions from you or your players.
- **Thank the Referee**
  - Show your gratitude for their efforts.
- **Post-Game Talk**
  - Keep it simple. Positive words and an eye on the next chance to play.
  - Get kids excited to come back again by reminding them of your next practice.
- **Clean-Up**
  - Make sure the bench area is cleared of any trash that may have accumulated from your team (water bottles, tape, etc.), and that all gear is accounted for.
- **Exiting**
  - As another game may be getting ready to start, please make sure players/families are cleared off the field as quickly as possible. Chatting can take place in non-playing areas.

# Gameday Troubleshooting

- **Referee or Opponent is a No-Show**

- You have the field so work with the opposing coach to find parent refs to help. If the team is a no-show, then you have the field to scrimmage with your team.

- **Injuries / Illness**

- Head injuries should be attended to in accordance with Heads Up policy.

- **Travel Players**

- Stars Oakland players are permitted to play one season only with a recreational team. Non-rostered players may not participate in recreational games.

- **Lack of Players**

- Inform the opposing coach upon arrival if you know you will be short.
- Request to play at even numbers.
- Request to share a player or two.
- Remember, it is about the experience, not the result.

- **Spectator/Coach Behavior Issues**

- It is your responsibility to control your spectators' behavior during the game.
- Referees will use their discretion to appropriately handle poor sporting behavior from spectators and coaches.
- Contact the Recreational Technical Director with in-game behavioral issues.



We hope this guide has assisted you in navigating your soccer season in successful ways on and off the field.

You are the model of behavior for your players, and they will look to you for guidance and encouragement every step of the way.

No matter if this is your first season coaching or you have many years of experience, we all can continue to improve ourselves as coaches. This, in turn, further aids in the development of our RSC players.

You are an important component to our RSC Family, and many times the initial coach for our budding soccer players.

We thank you for this commitment to volunteerism and toward the betterment of our players.

Please enjoy every step of the way. Good luck on a fun and enjoyable season.

# Thank You