



**Brunswick Soccer Club
Coaching Guidelines
U8 House Program**

Revised: April 2025

Overall Coaches Guidance --- A Page for Success

Brunswick House League Coaches' Responsibility

1. Make it FUN and SAFE
2. ALL PLAYERS PLAY EVERY GAME and playing time should be as equal as possible.
3. Develop Sportsmanship and Soccer Etiquette
4. Develop Soccer Skills
5. Teach Soccer basic principles

Make it FUN and SAFE

1. Keep practices interesting. Change drills and games before players show signs of boredom! Do not lecture; teach and encourage. Let them PLAY!
2. Spend little time standing. Keep them moving from activity to activity.
3. Keep games and practice competitive--- match best players against best players.
4. Do dynamic warm ups and stretches---may be not so important now-but it will be.
5. No sliding tackles and no heading the ball
6. Protect your players and opponents
7. Make sure kids have proper equipment (ball size 3, shin guards), tie their shoe laces. Pick up any debris on the field.

All Players play every game.

1. Each player should have an opportunity to play both offense and defense each game.

Develop Sportsmanship and Soccer Etiquette

1. Practice good behavior as a coach. NO swearing, NO throwing things, NO offensive remarks, etc...
2. Show praise and encouragement to all players no matter their skill level; remember they are still learning the game.
3. Work with your parents to encourage all players.
4. RESPECT the referees; remember the referees are young and learning also.

Develop Soccer Skills

1. Show or have someone show players how! Make it a point of every practice to review a skill. (Kicking, trapping, throw-ins, passing, use of both feet, etc.)
2. Allow for as many touches on the ball as possible per practice.
3. Encourage experimentation.
4. Encourage players to join the Travel program to advance their soccer skills.

Develop Soccer Tactics: Identify something you want to teach each practice (defending, passing, formation, etc)

1. Build (1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2)
2. Spread the field (set cones to define boundaries and areas of play for players, including a goal box)
3. Whatever you want to teach, make sure you do what is necessary to favor the player so that they build confidence.

Ten Commandments of Youth Soccer

Brunswick Soccer places emphasis on the DEVELOPMENTAL aspects of soccer in its house league. Players are taught skills, practice them, and attempt to use those skills on a field under game conditions. We ask that you read and follow the Ten Commandments of Soccer—your children will have a better soccer experience for it.

1. Applaud good play by players on both teams.
2. Recognize that soccer is a game and games are supposed to be fun.
3. Notice that each child will not improve dramatically each game, but will probably improve gradually throughout the season. Encourage each child to improve in a positive manner.
4. Set reasonable expectations for each child or his/her team's performance recognizing that they are children learning how to play. They are not adults or professional players.
5. Encourage coaches, the opposing coaches, the referee, or players on either team.
6. Endeavor to learn as much as you can about soccer, its techniques and especially the rules of the game; a game your child has chosen to play and enjoy.
7. Acknowledge that the coaches are unpaid volunteers who do this so children can learn and enjoy soccer. Respect their decisions. Parents should volunteer to help, whether it is cleaning up after a game, or helping to coach, or some other job that helps the club.
8. Understand that players may get nervous before each game, and that the game should be kept in perspective, regardless of the outcome.
9. Respect the decisions made by the referees, realizing that you were not in the same position as the referee to see the play.
10. Recognize that Club Officials (Referees):
 - A. Have the last word on the field,
 - B. Have the full backing of the Board of Directors through the Referee Coordinator,
 - C. Are in full control of the field of play which includes the sidelines, players, coaches and parents on the sidelines,
 - D. Are human and are also learning.

RULES SUMMARY FOR U8

Length of Game	(4) 12 minute periods – 5 minute half – 2 minute quarter breaks
Ball Size	3
Number of Players	4v4 – no goalkeeper
Offsides	No
Direct Kicks	No
Penalty Kicks	No
Referees	One, provided by club

1. **Equipment:**

- A. All players must wear shin guards while on the field **inside** their soccer socks.
- B. If a player wears shoes with cleats or spikes, the cleats or spikes must be rounded with no sharp edges and constructed of rubber or other pliable material. Metal and hard plastic cleats or spikes are not permitted.
- C. Players must remove any sort of jewelry (watches, rings, necklaces, ear rings, etc.).

2. **NO goal keepers:** DO NOT leave a defensive player back near the goal box to act as a pseudo keeper. Players should be encouraged to move up and back together as a team. Team offense; team defense.

3. **Kick offs, Throw-ins, Corner kicks, and Goal kicks:** Kick offs, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are used to start or restart play depending on the scenario. Opponents should be 10 feet away from the ball on all restarts. Specifically, on a goal kick the opposing team should line up behind the midfield line and cannot steal the ball until a pass is completed by the team taking the goal kick.

4. **Fouls and Misconduct:** The general rules of FIFA are used with the following exception: no offsides, no direct kicks, no penalty kicks - ALL kicks are indirect.

5. **Dangerous Play:** Players must be “on their feet” when playing the ball. Sliding kicks or kicking while down on the ground will be considered dangerous play.

6. **Player Substitutions:**

- A. Substitutions by either side are allowed at any time there is a stoppage in play.
- B. Players may re-enter the game any number of times.

7. **Litter:** Each team is responsible for picking up its own litter (bottles, cups, candy-wrappers, etc.) after each game; this includes the litter of spectators.

8. **Injury:** Play shall be stopped immediately when any player is injured. Coach referees are to stop play prior to assisting injured player.

9. **Dangerous Conditions:** No games or practice are allowed during lightning storms. No playing until 30 minutes after the last lightning strike. Games will be cancelled/postponed on the field at the start of the game. Games will be canceled only by the game’s referee. Coaches who referee U-6 games (both Coaches) will be able to make the determination to cancel, on the field at the time of the game. Fields will only be closed by the Field Director/Committee. Games will not be rescheduled without the knowledge and approval of the Scheduling Director.

10. **Practice Space:** Scheduled games, house or travel have first priority on field use. Scheduled clinics have second priority. Use of fields for practice is third priority. When conditions warrant (overcrowding), any one team may use only half of a field exclusively. Please work together and cooperate with each other. Field space for games and practice has become, and will probably continue to be, a problem. We are all part of the same team!

BUILD OUT LINE

The build out line promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting.

1. On a goal kick, a defensive free kick inside the penalty area, or when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball with their hands, the opposing team must move behind the build-out line until the ball is put back into play.
2. Once the opposing team is behind the build out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed).
3. On a goal kick, a defensive free kick inside the penalty area, or when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball with their hands, the opposing team may cross the build-out line when:
 - The goalkeeper changes possession from their hand to play the ball with their feet, or
 - a second touch is made by another player on the goalkeeper's team, or
 - the ball comes to a complete stop, or
 - the ball crosses the buildout line.

To support the intent of the development rule, coaches and referees should be mindful of any intentional delays being caused by opponents not retreating in a timely manner or encroaching over the build out line prior to the ball being put into play.

Coaches are responsible for addressing these types of issues with their players

Referees can manage the situation with misconduct if deemed appropriate.

Developmental Training for U8

Technical:

1. Teach Passing, Trapping, Shooting, dribbling, and game situations like throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks. Encourage use of both feet.
2. Offense should focus on passing, dribbling, and shooting.
3. Defense should focus on stealing the ball and protecting the goal. Encourage players to make a play on the ball.
4. All Goal kicks, Corner kicks, Throw-ins should be repeated until correct.
5. **NO players at this age should be heading the ball, refs will call a penalty if this happens during a game!**

Tactical:

1. Teach general principals of offense and defense. Teach team shape of Triangle, Square/Diamond.
2. Teach the basic Square (with 2 forwards and 2 defenders) and Diamond (1 forward, 2 midfielders, and 1 defender). Show that the game is made up of Triangles and Squares/Diamonds.
3. Keep the Square/Diamond together. Do not leave the defender(s) on the far end of the field acting as keepers. They should be encouraged to move up the field and support the offensive players
4. For Goal Kicks, the defending team should not place players on the goal box. The defending team backs up to midline.
5. Stress the importance of letting teammates get the ball. Get away from swarm ball but do not overemphasize the need to pass.
6. Let the kids learn to dribble and challenge players.

Psychological:

1. Fun, Fun, Confidence
2. When they make a mistake, let them know every player makes mistakes and there is nothing to worry about!

Physical:

1 Running, lateral movement—in practice have drills where they are running until they get tired—use the average kid as your benchmark—the stronger kids can do extra without them knowing, have them shag errant balls, have them demonstrate etc.

Brunswick/Red Bull Soccer Developmental Plans:

Targeted key learning outcomes of training program				
Individual Possession		Attacking		
Team Information				
Team Name		House League	Age group	U6 & U8
Running with the ball Turning Physical Awareness		Shooting Crossing		
Group Possession Ground Control Passing Awareness of teammates		Defending Tackling Closing Down		
Practice #	Topic	Learning Outcomes		
1	Physical Awareness	Understanding game rules. Utilizing the space of the full field. Understanding positions and their responsibilities.		
2	Team Awareness	Making players aware of the space they have individually. Increasing their abilities to play with their heads up.		
3	Running with the ball Dribbling	Keeping the ball close to you when dribbling. Having a positive first touch when attacking space. Using all parts of the feet.		
4	Turning	Keeping the ball under control. In slow – Out fast. Using the upper body to exaggerate the turn.		
5	Striking the ball	Planting non-kicking foot next to the ball. Kicking with different parts of the foot. – Laces, Instep, Side foot. Striking the center of the ball – Locking the ankle.		
6	Passing	Head up to see the target. Non-kicking foot planted next to the ball, pointing in the direction to want the ball to go. Using appropriate weight on the ball. Using the appropriate part of the foot.		
7	Shooting	Non-kicking foot planted next to the ball. Ankle locked, toe pointed down. Follow through the ball for additional power. Knowing when, where and how to shoot for maximum effectiveness.		
8	Tackling	Knowing how and when to tackle. Using different types of tackling methods – Poke tackle, block tackle.		
9	Closing Down	Approaching the attacker side on – Improves balance. Slowing the attacker down – Limiting options. Looking to squeeze play out toward sidelines.		
10	Review	Re-Cap of the season. Using the skills, and abilities learnt over the last 9 sessions		

Playing Formation

Diamond (1-2-1) → 1 defender, 2 midfielders, 1 forward

Value of the 1-2-1

- Introduces players to defense, midfield and offense.
- Encourages passes out wide to midfielders or the “winger” to use the entire field.
- Forward can also be called “target” and are the focus of the forward pass up, i.e. “find target player.”
- 1-2-1 introduces players to the two most basic and important shapes (upon which all higher-level formations are based): the triangle and the diamond.
- 1-2-1 promotes a disciplined approach to playing one's position both in the attack and in defense.
- 1-2-1 is the foundation of all of the more advanced (and often very different) formations of the 7v7, 9v9, and 11v11 levels.

