

## Instructional 4v4 Coaching FAQ

### Why 4v4?

In U8 this season we will be playing 4v4 scrimmages for Under 8 in order to introduce team play skills. 4v4 is preferable to 3v3 in this respect as it gives the players more options for passing and support, while still maintaining a high number touches on the ball per player to develop ball control skills (the primary objective of Instructional).

### What should I be doing?

DO NOT assign positions to the kids or teach them formations. Instead, teach them the following teamwork fundamentals. As they learn to apply them in the scrimmage they will naturally start to develop their own style of positional play.

#### On offense:

- Don't bunch up - spread out and make use of the whole field. Stay at least a pass-length away from the ball handler and your other teammates.
- Get in a position that supports the ball handler, where he has a clear pass to you with no defenders in the way. DON'T call for a pass if there is a defender in the way.
- Communicate - let the ball handler know where you are. Don't just yell "Pass it to me"; instead let him know WHERE you are. For example:
  - Drop = you are open behind him
  - Square (Left/Right) = you are open to the (Left/Right) of him
- If you have the ball, make the defenders challenge you - if they back up, dribble into the space that they are giving you.

#### On defense:

- Don't bunch up - only ONE defender should challenge the ball handler. The other defenders should take up positions between the ball handler and the goal, marking any other attackers who are there.
- MARK GOALSIDE. This means that a defender should be between the player that he is marking and the goal.
- Communicate - help each other defend as a team. For example:
  - I Got Ball = I am marking the ball handler
  - Mark "#" = Tells a teammate to mark a particular opponent
- Never have your back towards the player that you are marking.
- Quickly challenge the ball handler to slow down the attack and steer him away from your goal. Defending objectives are to 1) slow down, 2) contain, and then 3) steal the ball.



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### **How do I do this?**

Before each scrimmage, quickly go over the fundamentals with the players - this should only take a couple of minutes. We suggest that you do this after you have exchanged players for the scrimmage, so that all the players on your field will be thinking about the same things. We also recommend that you give them only a couple of the tips the first week, and then add on as the season progresses - this gives the kids a more manageable task load, and makes it easier for you to focus observe/correct them during the scrimmage.

Our suggested way to reinforce the fundamentals during the scrimmage is to play "Paint a Soccer Picture." When the game starts to get congested, freeze play (or wait until the ball goes out of play), and then ask the players what a good soccer picture looks like. Guide them along by asking questions related to the fundamentals like "Should you stand close to each other, or be a little bit away so that you can receive a pass?" Do not spend a lot of time doing this; once you have asked questions about a few of the points, you ask the players to paint you a good soccer picture, and then when they get into position you unfreeze play or put a ball into play. Usually it takes a few stoppages to get them to think about it on their own, but soon you will be able to shout out "Paint a Picture" while they are playing to get them to spread out and use more cooperative play.

There are several advantages to this approach:

- It does not force players into a particular position or area - players are free to react to the situation at hand
- It requires the players to come up with the answers - after all, they are the ones playing
- It can be done during natural breaks in play, and does not require the coach to go out onto the pitch
- It can be used without stopping play once the players start to learn the concepts

