



Piscataway SC Instructional Coach – Getting Started

Congratulations, you are the new coach of an Instructional team! Welcome to the wonderful world of youth soccer! As a soccer coach you play a vital role in helping our youth learn about “The Beautiful Game”. Your young players will look to you for many things including how to play the game and how to have fun at the same time.

May be you played soccer before, may be you didn't. Either way, don't worry. This document will help you get started. It may not answer all of your questions but it will give you the basic information. Running a soccer team is sometimes more than just coaching the kids. It will require organizing material for your players and parents and involves many other administrative tasks. This will all be discussed. The main purpose of coaching youth soccer is to make the sport FUN while encouraging player development in a safe environment.

You will find that your coaching efforts will result in a valuable experience for you and your players. You will help them in their path to becoming outstanding young men and women as they learn to be part of a team. It is very rewarding experience. The friends that these kids make during this time will prove to be an invaluable life lesson. So the Piscataway Soccer Club wants to **thank you** for volunteering to be a coach.

1. Required License

To coach instructional soccer the Piscataway Soccer Club requires that each coach (head coach and assistant coaches) obtain a United States Soccer Federation (USSF) F-License. The class is given in New Jersey by the New Jersey Youth Soccer (NJYS), which is the state body that represents USSF. The F-License benefits you in several ways:

- Teaches the psychology of youth soccer
- Teaches some technical player development skills
- Provides you with \$1,000,000 in liability insurance

The class itself is nine hours in length and is usually broken up into two days. The first day focuses on being a coach and what the youth player expects, this is a three-hour lecture. The second day focuses on some practices that you can use for your teams. This is the hands-on portion and lasts for six hours. The cost of the class is approximately \$35. After you have completed the course you will receive a paper copy of your license. The first thing that you want to do with this is make several copies of the license. Submit one of your copies with a copy of your receipt (or canceled check) to the PSC Treasurer. (The club will reimburse you for the cost of the class!) Also, send another copy of your license to the PSC Registrar for safekeeping. Never give your original copy, as somewhere down the road you will need another copy of the license.

A list of the F-License classes can be found in:

<http://www.njyouthsoccer.com/coaching/fsched.htm>

As a new coach you are expected to have a F-license before the season starts, or obtain it before the beginning of your second season. (There are 2 seasons in a soccer “year”Fall and Spring.) Your assistant coach(es) must also get their F-License. Encourage the parents on your team to take the class as well so that they get an understanding of soccer and the aspects of coaching.

2. Player’s Equipment

Since the players are new to the sport they may not realize what they need to play. Here is a recommended list of equipment that they should wear to each practice:

- Size appropriate soccer ball.
 - Size 3 for U6s, U7s and U8s
 - Size 4 for U9 – U12
 - Size 5 for U13 and
- Shin guards
- Cleats (sneakers/indoor shoes for any indoor training)
- Socks – to cover over the shin guards
- Appropriate clothing... including outer garments depending on the weather conditions.
- Athletic supporters for your male players
- Sports goggles for those players who wear glasses
- Water bottle or refreshment beverage

- Game day uniform: shirt, shorts, and socks (remember to tell your new players that the socks go over the shin guards)

You can have the players/parents remember the main equipment as the Five-S's:

1. **S**hirt
2. **S**horts
3. **S**hin-guards
4. **S**ocks
5. **S**hoes (Cleats)

It is very important to understand that players who do not wear shin guards should not be practicing... **or playing in games.** They run the risk of getting injured, especially the young players.

There is some other optional equipment that players may need including a soccer bag to hold their equipment and "Sweet Spots" that are used to hold tied shoe laces in place. You may encourage the parents to purchase these as they do have many benefits. You will notice a lot of laces becoming untied during the games.

In times of inclement or cold weather for games, sweat pants and sweatshirts can be worn *under* the player's uniforms.

3. Coach's Equipment

Coaches will need equipment to run practices and use during the game. The club helps to provide some of this equipment. You can always ask the Club Instructional Vice Presidents if they have some extra equipment. If the club doesn't have the equipment then you may need to purchase it or find another coach that may have extra equipment. Here is a recommended list:

PSC Supplied:

- Game Ball
- Cones/Discs
- Goalie Shirt and Goalie Gloves (supplied by the club for U8 teams and older)
- Scrimmage Vests/Pinnies
- First Aid Kit (including ice packs, supplied by the club)

Optional – You may want purchase

- Practice Balls (a couple may be supplied by the club)
- Ball Pump
- Whistle (Not recommended, a good coach rarely needs it)
- Stop Watch (optional for games)
- Clip Board (optionally for Team Manager)
- Practice Plan Forms
- Extra uniform and shin guards (in case a player forgets)

4. Coach Functions

As mentioned before, the coach is such a vital position on the team. You are the leader of the team and in many ways the role model. As a coach you have many responsibilities. Many of these responsibilities are in addition to the actual games and practices. As coach you are responsible to **communicate** to your team parents. This will include telling your parents when/where you will have practices for the team, canceling a practice, game information, relaying messages from the club, etc.

You will quickly realize that there is a lot of communicating and perhaps you should not try and take on everything yourself. Ask your parents to help out with some administrative work. That may be simple as making phone calls or making copies of information. Many parents are willing to help out a little bit and are just waiting to be asked. Since there is a lot of administrative work with any team, you may wish to get a volunteer to help with this. That person is generally called the "Team Manager", and we have separated the Team Manager's functions section below.

Additionally, you will need some assistance during practices and games. You should also ask one of your parents to volunteer as an "Assistant Coach". Most teams try to have at least one assistant coach. Assistant Coaches, like the Head Coach are encouraged to take the F-License Course either before or soon after the season starts.

Let's go over the coach's functions in regards to running the team:

- a. After receiving your roster from the Club during the pre-season meeting, quickly contact the parents to introduce yourself to them and let them know when you plan to meet them or hold practice.

- b. You may want to hold a team meeting or team practice before the season starts where you can speak with all the parents and introduce yourself further. At this meeting you can solicit people to volunteer to be an Assistant Coach and a Team Manager. Explain to your parents what you expect from them (e.g., bring your child to practice on time) and let them know what equipment their child needs to play.
- c. Explain what days, times, and locations:
 - o The club provides professional training sessions,
 - o You would like to have practices,
 - o The games will be played.
- d. Be sure to emphasize to parents that the club's player development emphasis is learning about soccer, learning about sportsmanship, and especially about having FUN. This needs to be the premise of your Coaching Philosophy as well.
- e. Note that game scores are not recorded, so team records are not tracked. Parents need to know that this is part of the development process. Travel teams play in leagues where the game scores are recorded and prizes are given to first place teams, but this is not done for Instructional / in-town / development teams.
- f. Arrive on time to practices and be early to games to lead your team in warm-ups.
- g. Make sure that every player leaves practice/game with a parent, guardian, or other designated adult. Don't leave any of your players at the field alone.
- h. Prepare your practices in advance. Try to make your practices fun while encouraging good technique and good sportsmanship. Having a practice plan will help you tremendously and there will be less idle time at the practice. If you have never prepared one, check out the links at the end of this document, and/or ask the club's Director of Coaching for some samples.
- i. Deal with injuries that will happen from time to time. Always **"err on the side of caution"** with a child's injury. Many times it will only be just a temporary injury and will just need a few minutes of rest. Apply the R.I.C.E. principle for injuries – Rest, Ice, Compress, & Elevate. Keep the completed medical forms with you at all times.
- j. Communicate constantly with the Team Manager and Assistant Coach about the scheduling or canceling of a practice/game, as well as club information. For example,

registration forms for the following season, tryouts for travel soccer, special events that are happening, etc.

- k. Interact with the club about field playing conditions, training sessions, team's responsibilities for building playing fields, and team's responsibilities for painting fields.
- l. Consider entering a recreational tournament. Talk to the parents and get their buy in (there will be a registration cost).
- m. Evaluate players' progress from the beginning of the season to the end. This is important. Players need to be challenged. Any player that is U8 or older, and is ready to move to a travel team, should be encouraged to do so.
- n. Contact the Director of Coaching and/or a Head Coaches via e-mail for any assistance with coaching the team. We are available to help your team if necessary.

One last important coach function **is to have FUN!** They may not master everything that you teach them, and they may not always listen, but hey ... remember that they ARE kids. They will make you smile as they practice/play and as they learn to work together. They will probably make you laugh as well, so learn to enjoy the time. Soccer isn't always about winning on the field. The main goal for your team is to have fun playing.

5. Team Manager Functions

The coach can handle the responsibilities of the Team Manager, but another parent that wants to help out should do it. The Team Manager is responsible for handling a number of the administrative functions and to communicate information with/from the coach to the other parents of the team. This includes:

- Make and distribute copies of the team player rosters. Include the player's name, address, Jersey number (if any), parents' names, and telephone numbers. Having this will make it easier to communicate amongst each other.
- Send out a copy of/link to the team's practice schedule (club provided and your coach's personal practice) to the parents.
- Send out a copy of/link to the team's game schedule to the parents.
- Communicate with parents about having a refreshment schedule for each of the teams' games (if you decide to).
- Help the coach to communicate the canceling of a game/practice with phone calls, text messages, or emails to the

parents. Explain to the parents in advance how you will be able to communicate with them so that they provide you with the appropriate contact information.

- Disseminate information from the club to all team parents. For example, tell the parents when it is time to register their child for the next season. They can register online and find other club information at <http://www.PiscatawaySoccer.org>

It is recommended that communication by the team manager, coaches, and the parents be done via e-mail as much as possible. We have found it to be the most effective and efficient way to communicate to others. However, in events where you need to reach people quickly (e.g., game canceled because of weather) then phone calls, text messaging may be a better method.

6. Game/Training Cancellation Procedure

Depending on weather conditions, the game/training fields may or may not be safe for players. On each game/training day, either the club's Instructional Head Coach, or one of the Instructional Vice Presidents will determine if field conditions are playable. This decision will be made no later than 4:00pm on weekdays and 8:00am on weekends. If they are found to be unsafe for games/training, then the club's web page www.PiscatawaySoccer.org will be updated with a cancellation message on the home page. If the website is not updated then the games/training are considered on.

Additionally, a broadcast e-mail will be sent to all Instructional Coaches indicating that the games/training are canceled.

Once the club website have been updated with the current status of the scheduled games/training – it is the responsibility of respective team's coach/team manager to relay the cancellation of the game to their respective members.

It is recommended that you check the club website for the latest information no later that 8:00 AM the day of the game. This will allow time for coaches/team managers to forward the message to their respective team players/parents via phone/email/texts/etc.

If the playing/weather conditions are **"inconclusive"** in the morning, then always check the website. Assume the games are "on" if the

message has not been updated. If in the event that games are being played and then the playing/weather conditions turn bad, then the only the referee can determine whether the game will be stopped (not the parents). Once a game is stopped during the day because of the weather/playing conditions then all games on that same field are also canceled, even if the weather conditions improve later that morning/day.

7. Piscataway Soccer Club Board of Directors

There may be reasons why you may need to contact members of the Piscataway Soccer Club Board of Directors. The current Board can be found on the club's website www.PiscatawaySoccer.org

8. Piscataway Soccer Club Coaching Philosophy

The basic philosophy within our soccer club is to create a fun and safe environment that teaches and encourages player development at all levels. Player development especially at the younger ages is the club's primary theme. We would like to see all of our players improve their soccer skills. At the youngest age it is very important for the players to work on the basic technical skills such as: dribbling, receiving the ball, passing the ball, shooting, and shielding. One of the keys to improving a player's soccer skills is to encourage that each player get as many touches on the ball as possible. The more touches that a player gets the more comfortable they will become with the ball and the quicker they will master the basic technical skills required to help them get to the next level.

So what can a coach do to have their players get more touches and thus develop better ball skills? The coach can do the following:

- a. At practice use drills and games that require that every player have a ball. When you have a drill where just one player has the ball then the other players are not getting touches on the ball. So have each of the players bring their balls to practice or provide a ball for them.
- b. Use small-side games. Meaning that instead of having a practice of 6v6 (six versus six), use a practice with two games of 3v3. When playing 3v3, you are going to force players that may get lost when there are a lot of players on the pitch/field

to have more touches on the ball. Using a lot of 3v3 helps players understand team concept in simpler terms.

- c. Eliminate or modify line drills. A line drill is where you have one player at the head of the line doing something with the ball while everyone else is watching. Doing this too often wastes time for the other players and they won't get enough touches on the ball. If you must do a line drill, then here are some examples that the other players in the line must do while waiting: "taps" (touching the ball continuously with the sole of their feet), "boxes" (passing the ball between the insides of both feet), or some dribbling moves. A better alternative might be to break the line into two (2) smaller that are working simultaneously in order to minimize the wait time in each line.
- d. Eliminate or modify knockout games. A knockout game is one where you eliminate players in a game and they must sit out until all the players are out. This can be modified so that any player knocked out can get back in after doing 10 dribbling moves (for example, drag back turns).
- e. Repetition, repetition, and repetition. With ANY technical skill, a youth player must keep repeating the skill over and over again. We should create this environment where they will be repeating the skill that you want them to master. Switch games around but having the same technical skill being used and keeping the game fresh and new to the players. The more that they repeat the skill the more likely that it will become part of their muscle memory and they will master the skill.
- f. Low-pressure environment. In order to master the skill, the player needs time to perform the skill. Thus not having any defensive pressure on them is important so that they can focus on what needs to be done and have some success at doing this. Do this during the first half of your training sessions.
- g. Apply conditions in games to help force players to do the actions that you requested. For example, you may have been practicing dribbling that day and so after you have done the repetitive and low-pressure games, you now decide to play a small-sided 3v3 game with goals. You can give 1 point for each goal scored but give 2 points for each time that they do a "scissors" dribbling move. Applying conditions is another great way to help the players remember what they learned in the individual lessons and apply the skill in your match-like play.

- h. Less emphasis on positioning during the practice. In general, you may need to let players know that they may be playing closer to the goal or tell player B that they should just be 5 yards behind player A. Your team may not look as organized and may lose because of this but sometimes winning because of tactics and positioning may be counter-productive to player development at the young ages. Coaches should be less concerned at the very youngest level of tactics and winning. They should be more concerned with their players' skill development.
- i. Playing all players at least 50% of the game. This is an ethic that we expect from all coaches. Players should play at least this much of the game so they have the opportunity to develop those skills in a match setting.
- j. Referee abuse will not be tolerated. Most of the referees that manage Instructional games are pre-teen/young teenagers. They are usually players/ex-players that are in the club's referee program. They are gaining valuable experience and we expect that they will make a mistake, at least in the eyes of some parents, who may/may not know all the rules. Please give the referees your support and thank them at the end of the game, because without them, the game cannot be played.

Player development is not a short-term project. What we put into our training sessions today may not pay dividends for the players until several seasons to come. Be patient, they will get it.

9. Piscataway Soccer Club Coaching Ethics

Our club's coaching ethics are very closely tied to the club's coaching philosophy. This is especially true in the area of player development, where winning games does not necessarily correspond to player development. We want to develop all of our players as best that we can, so it is important that all players get to play at least 50% of the game plus play and learn various positions.

The Coaching Ethics emphasizes that winning and losing are not the main measurements in determining the team's success. Progress and improvement in the technical skills and eventually the tactical skills are, along with the general enjoyment of the game.

Other important parts of the coaches' ethics are to respect the game, officials, parents, and players. Also demonstrate good sportsmanship by not running up scores in games where both teams may not have the same talent level. Coaches are expected to be positive role model for both players and parents.

10. Soccer Links and References

The following is a small list of online soccer related sites that can be referenced and used to either help setup your team, understand the rules of the game, give ideas on soccer practices, provide forms that coaches may need, list coach education courses, player training, and coach equipment shopping site. Also, our club site will help communicate information on membership meetings, coach's meetings, tryouts, special tournaments, and special training events. This is just a small list of many more soccer related sites, so consider this something to just get started with.

Jeff Pill's Coaching Tips

Everything you want to read as a new coach – this is the starter kit itself plus it has practice plans.

<http://www.eteamz.com/soccer/pills/jpill.htm>

Dan Flowers Soccer Drills for U6 Players

Nice little exercises for the very young.

http://www.charltonsports.org/soccer/coaching_flowers.htm

Soccer Practice Games

Careful some of these cost money but not bad stuff

<http://www.soccer-practice-games.com/>

Strong Soccer

Video clips of player moves, shooting drills,

<http://www.strongsoccer.com/>

1000 Touches

Sites that encourages 1000 touches on the ball right from the start of practice

<http://www.ayso88.org/coach/1000touches.html>

<http://strikingeagles.tripod.com/1000%20touches.htm>

New Jersey Youth Soccer Coaching Courses

List USSF coaching license courses

http://www.njyouthsoccer.com/coaching/coaching_schools.htm

New Jersey Youth Soccer Referee Courses

List sites that hold Referee License Courses.

http://www.njyouthsoccer.com/referees/ref_main.htm

New Jersey Youth Soccer Recreational Tournaments

List state approved tournaments that recreational teams can play in

http://www.njyouthsoccer.com/recreation/rec_tourn.htm

National Soccer Coaches Association of America

Organization supporting coaches, contains coaching education courses

<http://www.nscaa.com/>

Laws of the Game

Official sites for Soccer Laws of the Game and Spirit of the Game

<http://www.drblank.com/slaws.htm>

<http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame.html> (see link to PDF)

Soccer Equipment

Soccer related equipment, balls, scrimmage vests, cones, etc

<http://www.soccer.com>

Piscataway Soccer Club Home Page

Information on the Club and what are the upcoming events

<http://www.PiscatawaySoccer.org>

11. Other Resources

There are also many books and videos that are very helpful for player development. Two books that demonstrates well small-sided play is called:

“Coaching 6, 7, and 8 Year Olds”

By Bobby Howe & Tony Waiters

“Coaching 9, 10, and 11 Year Olds”

By Bobby Howe & Tony Waiters

There are also several video DVDs can be rented from the Piscataway Library. Look for a separate document for what's available on the club web site.

Version 1.2 – Fall 2003, Ed Carr

Version 1.3 – Spring 2011, Chuck Myers