

ALABAMA SOCCER ASSOCIATION FUTURES LEAGUE



COACH'S WORKBOOK



Alabama Soccer Association Futures League Coach's Worksheet



Introduction

By Kevin Laux, ASA Technical Director

Soccer differs from traditionally popular American sports. In American football and basketball, for example, the coach plays a direct role in the plays and decisions the players make on the field. In soccer however, the player is the main “actor,” or decision maker. This means soccer players must constantly pay attention to what is happening in the game, make sense of it, and then decide how to best help their team. This mental process, simplified into “perceive - decide - act”, can occur once every two seconds. That’s over 2,700 perceptions, decisions, and actions per 90 minute game!

In addition, we must realize that the “act” in the process occurs most often *without* the ball. Coaches, therefore, must consider the “perceive - decide - act” process itself as a fundamental skill of the game like we do with passing or dribbling. At the same time, those actions made with the ball must be of maximum impact for the team to succeed. In summary, players must learn to perceive and decide on their own, while being highly competent with the ball at their feet.

As coaches who must design practices, the question becomes, where do we start ? Many coaches choose drills to first teach techniques like passing and dribbling—thinking that players need to learn this before they can play a game. Prioritizing technique is unnecessary however, when we consider how kids learn these skills around the world. Children grow up playing in the streets, neighborhoods, and parks without adults putting them through drills. They learn the technical skills of soccer on their own through the experience of play and by watching friends and older peers perform the skills.

Now, we know most kids do not play outside as much as they did in the past. Coaches can counteract this by incorporating more games in their practices to replace the time lost. Players then develop the decision-making skills along with the techniques needed to succeed. They also have more fun playing games than doing drills which increases their motivation to play. In fact, this may be our main role as soccer coaches, to make certain our players have fun, which increases their motivation to play, learn, and improve. Fortunately, this task for a coach is easier to accomplish than we think.

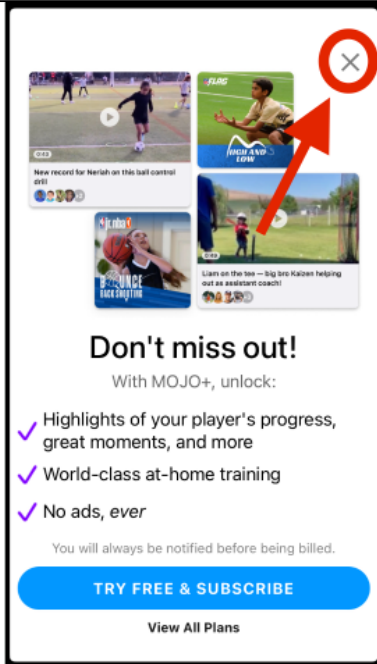
The soccer coach’s tasks begin with choosing the right games or activities for practice. Then he or she should observe and adapt the activity to make sure players have a challenge that provides a bit of struggle but eventually results in success. Only then will our coaching points to teach or reinforce actions be of maximum effect. But everything starts with selecting the right practice activities that help players get better. Fortunately, we have access to an exceptional and free resource to guide coaches in doing just that - the Mojo app.

Accessing Mojo

SCAN HERE TO GET
THE APP FOR FREE

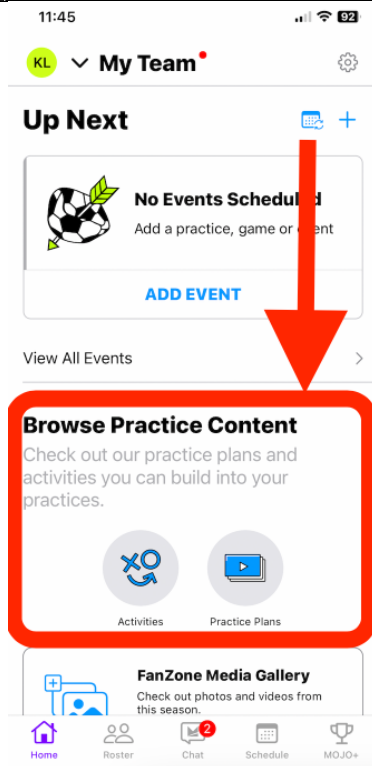


Take a picture of the QR code.



Once downloaded, you will see the screen to the left.

Tap the "X" at the top right to access the free version of the app.



Next, create your team!

Here you can select:

- Age Range
- Number of players
- Space Available

These items will filter activities and sessions to meet your needs

Have fun coaching! And remember, game-based activities provide players fun, decision making opportunities, and repetition to build technical skills!



Futures League Coach's Workbook

Season Planning (Periodization)

This seasonal plan is set with the following principles in mind:

- Scoring is the most difficult task in the game. We begin with it to take advantage of the excitement of a new season.
- It is harder to create than it is to destroy. So we spend more time working on attacking play than on defending.
- Players need more than 1 session to learn new skills. We therefore spend a full week or two on the same topic before moving on to the next one.
- Session Topics are titled based on the moment in the game (attack/defense) and the tactical problem presented based on the area of the field the ball is in. These are the basic tactical problems the game presents to each team. The skills needed for each topic described below are defined in the US Soccer Player Development Framework. These are the terms used in US Soccer Courses.

Week	Topic	Attacking Skills needed:
1	ATTACKING: Improve Creating Chances & Scoring Goals	WITH THE BALL: Controlling Protecting Driving Dribbling Passing Shooting SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS: Scanning Supporting Adapting Body Shape
2	ATTACKING: Improve Creating Chances & Scoring Goals	
3	ATTACKING: Improve Moving the Ball into the Opponent's 1/2	
4	ATTACKING: Improve Moving the Ball into the Opponent's 1/2	
5	DEFENDING: Improve Defending in Own 1/2	
6	DEFENDING: Improve Defending in Own 1/2	
7	DEFENDING: Improve Defending in Opponent's 1/2	Defending Skills Needed: AGAINST THE BALL: Intercepting Pressing Challenging Delaying Block the shot SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS: Scanning Adapting body shape Covering Marking
8	ATTACKING: Improve Moving the Ball into the Opponent's 1/2	
9	DEFENDING: Improve Defending in Opponent's 1/2	
10	ATTACKING: Improve Creating Chances & Scoring Goals	
11	ATTACKING: Improve Creating Chances & Scoring Goals	
12	open	



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Team Communication Templates

All of the below templates take the aim of trying to keep parents informed, involved, and inspired to trust you with their child's soccer development. Therefore you will see in each template an outline that follows this approach

Pre-season

INTRODUCTION - let everyone know who you are.

INFORM - tell everyone what your goals are for the season. Be mindful that in order to form a team, the group of players must have a goal. And, this goal is best decided upon with input from the players - so you get buy-in.

INVOLVE - Tell the parents what you need from them for the season to be a success. This can include things like being on time, communicating when there are issues, volunteers to bring snacks for games, etc.

You also need to provide some educational material about the game of soccer for those less familiar with it. This is also the best time to introduce what you will be teaching the players during the season. Here is where having a notable, trustworthy resource can give you credibility - Think about US Soccer's Player Development Framework.

INSPIRE - End with a positive message about how you plan to help the players develop to their full potential

Mid-season

This meeting/email most often gets used as a reminder of the things you've previously covered (preseason) and may feel or even be unnecessary. Still, it is wise to communicate the important things discussed at the beginning of the season.

INFORM - reminders of key items discussed previously.

INVOLVE - Reinforce the need for parents to be involved however is needed.

INSPIRE - present information showing the progress of the team thus far and where you plan to take them through the rest of the season.

Post Season

INTRODUCTION - thank everyone for their participation and efforts for the season

INFORM - the timeframe for the next soccer season, or other sports the players may want to try.

INVOLVE - other opportunities to stay active in soccer during the season's break

INSPIRE - Any ideas you have for continuing to have some fun during the off-season.

Pre-game

INTRODUCTION

INFORM of game time & location. Remind when to arrive and what to bring.

INVOLVE - Tell everyone of the previous week's training/practice goals and that you will task the players with winning the game by applying what they worked on. Encourage the parents to cheer if they see something specific (tell them what this is) related to the goal you've worked on.

Let them know what they can do to help the players on game day like, waking up a reasonable time, having a healthy meal, etc.

INSPIRE - End the email with a note that reminds everyone that as the adults we are role models. Our behavior tells the children how to act within the sporting world and beyond.

Post game

INFORM - Tell everyone of the coming week's schedule. Include your thoughts on the previous game but be careful to keep it positive.

INVOLVE - remind everyone of the things they can do to help their child be successful in soccer, and maybe the things not to do. Keep in mind, that if you mention something that a parent should not do, you may want to include a better option so the parent's have a behavior to strive for.

INSPIRE - Reinforce the message about being a role model and servant leader. The more often we live out this message the better.



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Leading Players and Creating a Team

Team Name: _____ Coach's Name: _____

Getting to know your Players

	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	PARENT'S NAMES	UNIQUE NON-SOCCER CHARACTERISTICS:
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				

TEAM GOALS

With the team, choose no more than 3 goals for the season. Try to make them specific, measurable and attainable.

1

2

3

TEAM BEHAVIORS

With the team agree on several team behaviors (things we all do). Aim to make them behaviors that will help the team accomplish their goals and are things within their control (EX: showing up on time - kids do not control that)

1

2

3

4

5

6

FUTURES LEAGUE LEAGUE WORKBOOK

Competition Safeguarding

What is Competition Safeguarding?

- Techniques and tools used to adjust an inappropriate matchup in a game.

Why should Competition Safeguarding be used?

- The dominating team can lack intensity and competitiveness, lose discipline, and disengage from the game.
- The losing team can get frustrated, lack intensity and competitiveness, lose discipline, and disengage from the game.
- Unbalanced competition impedes development, is not fun and leads to players quitting the game!

When should it be used?

- When one team is leading by 4 goals, consider using the Competition Safeguarding Steps. If a team is leading by 6 or more goals, the Competition Safeguarding Steps must be used.

What are some sample Safeguarding Steps?

- Move the buildout line back to midfield or appropriate location.
- Add a buildout line for 9v9 game.
- Add a player to the team that is behind (instead of taking a player off from the team in the lead - we do not want to take away playing time).
- Move players around so the more dominant players get opportunities in positions outside of the spine (central positions) of the team.
- Encourage or challenge the winning team with a specific task or challenge--not a restriction. (Ex: Pass back to the goalkeeper when you win the ball or try to score off of a cross).

Who should utilize these tools & techniques?

Coaches and referees are the only people tasked with implementing these techniques.

How should they be implemented?

Coaches should connect with each other prior to the game's start and agree to utilize Competition Safeguarding in the event the score gets out of hand. They should include the referee in this conversation and remind the parents that these things may occur in an effort to create a better development environment for the kids.



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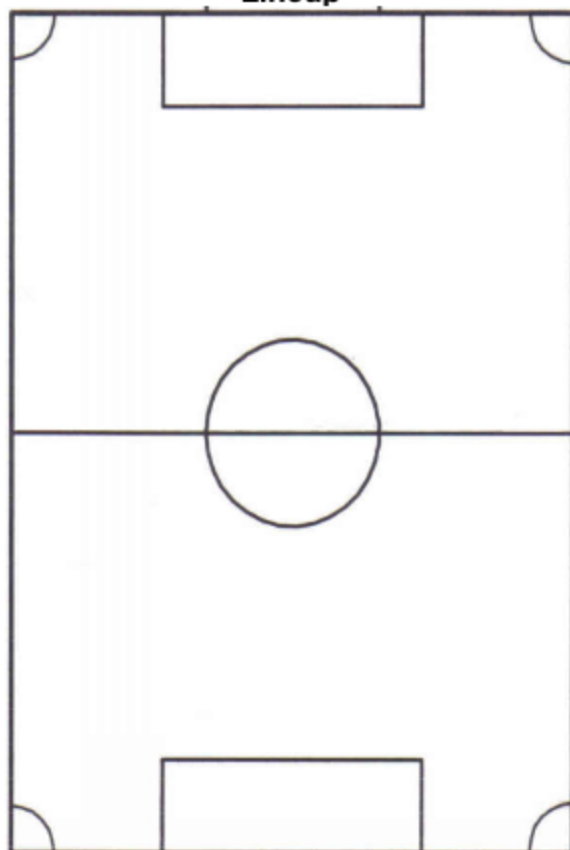
Game Day Template



Team:	Date:	Time:
Game Context		
Opponent:	Location:	
Weather:	Field Conditions:	
Miscellaneous:		

Game Goals (Let's try to win the game by accomplishing...	
Goal #1:	Notes:
Goal #2:	Notes:
Pre-Game Message Notes:	

Lineup



Substitutions

Player In	Position/Player Out	Time

Observations:

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HALF TIME SCORE - US:

Opponent:

Half Time Template

Welfare check (How is everyone doing)

How did we do at (Insert Goal #1)

How did we do at (Insert Goal #2)

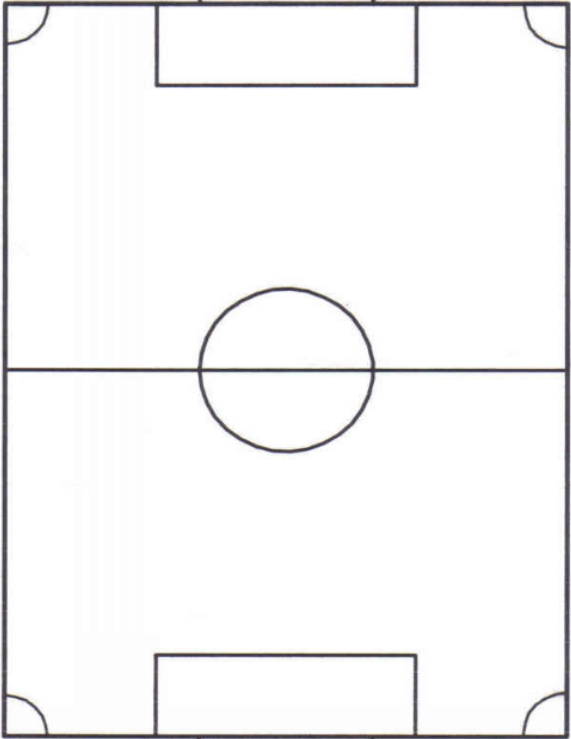
What can we do to be better at (Insert Goal #1) in the 2nd half?

What can we do to be better at (Insert Goal #2) in the 2nd half?

Okay, lets' see if we can win the 2nd half by...

Here is the lineup to start...

Lineup



Substitutions

Player In	Position/Player Out	Time

Observations:

FINAL SCORE - US:

OPPONENT:

Post Game Template

Welfare check (how is everyone doing?)

Appreciation of effort

Review of performance

Weekly schedule