



LISC Curriculum/Coaching Model

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U8:

This level is considered to be the introduction stage to the game of soccer. The major focus will be on the technical development of the youth player. They should be learning the very basic skills while making it fun and enjoyable for them. At this age, it is recommended for them to play with a 4v4 (diamond) practice environment. These teams will only practice and play 4v4 games on the weekends against each other. You should start each training session with a fun game for the kids to generate their interest. You can then progress to a specific drill you would like to teach, etc. followed by a small-sided game and finished with another fun game. This way they are always moving, they get plenty of touches and have fun without losing interest in one particular drill. If you have enough players to do so you can also try implementing the KNVB Dutch circuit model and adapt that to the number of players/groups you have. *Feel free to see the addendum at the end of the curriculum to learn more about this method.* Tactically, the U8's will learn the roles of positions and the importance of those roles but the major focus will be on skill development and making it fun so they have a good experience with soccer and will want to continue with the sport.

Coach:

At this age the coach(s) need to be very encouraging; enthusiastic; sensitive to children's needs; possess soccer awareness; ability to relate to children; knowledge of the key factors of developing basic skills.

Training Habits:

- Focuses on improvement rather than outcome of scrimmages
- Has respect for teammates and coaching staff
- Gives best effort in an attempt to improve
- Develops understanding of basic principles of play
- Understands concepts/roles of certain positions
- Keeps it simple!
- Demonstrates drill/skill and move on since attention level is short
- Listens to coach and ready to train at assigned time
- Has proper equipment

Ball Skills:

- Use of different turns

- Ball-shielding
- Keeps possession
- Attempts to play with both feet at an early age

Dribbling/Attacking:

- Uses different surfaces when dribbling if they can
- Develops change of pace and direction with the ball
- Attempts to develop basic attacking moves/principles
- Keeps ball close to body between touches

Passing/Receiving:

- Uses the inside of the foot when passing
- Attempts to pass with proper weight, accuracy and timing
- Moves toward ball when receiving
- Attempts to receive the ball correctly

Heading:

- Has been introduced to proper techniques of heading (not a major focal point at this age)

Shooting:

- Uses laces to shoot or firm instep shot when close to goal
- Able to strike a moving ball
- Can shoot while running with the ball focusing on proper technique
- Hits the target area with relative consistency
- Non-kicking foot is correctly placed in relation to the ball

Defending:

- Pressures the ball after loss of possession
- Uses proper defensive stance
- Proper form when tackling an opponent
- Has the ability to attack the ball
- Understands the team shape (diamond)

Notes:

It is important to introduce the basics of the game of soccer at this age and keep everything simple. The main points to remember are to keep it fun and enjoyable while creating a desire amongst the players. Keys to this age group are positioning the body when receiving/passing/shooting/defending, etc. and the ability to use correct form when doing all of these. Players are just figuring out if they like the game of soccer so that should be the main focus when coaching them. Demonstration is crucial therefore coaches should demonstrate clearly whenever possible. The players must also have as many ball contacts as possible since they learn by repetition. Just keep it simple while trying to develop proper form and a love for the game



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U9-U11:

At this level we are still introducing the game of soccer to the young players but we now need to incorporate both the technical and tactical sides of the game at a more intricate level. It is recommended for this age group to play a 2-3-2 formation (2 diamonds) when playing 8v8. The circuit model to running a training session is also recommended for this age. This means that the session should start with a simple game of tag, a small-sided keep away game or whichever game you wish to play. Three groups are then formed and you can run them through three different soccer drills with each focusing on a different aspect of the game (scoring game, possession game, and small sided drill). Explain each game to the team and have groups 1 and 2 rotate after 10-15 minutes and group 3 continue to play a small-sided drill. The players then go through the circuit focusing on each drill and finish with a scrimmage at the end. Make sure each drill is explained to the team and that you introduce new games/drills after the old games/drills are understood. This way they are always moving, they get plenty of touches and have fun without losing interest in one particular drill. The circuit model can be taken from the KNVB Dutch youth model for further analysis and review. *Please see the addendum at the end of the curriculum to further understand the KNVB circuit model.*

There will be competition at this age group with leagues and tournaments but the focus will remain on the development of the overall player not on wins and losses. Team concepts will be explored to foster a more competitive training and match environment for these players. This is a time of transition from self-centered to self critical and coaches will have to balance each player's needs and attention spans to create a more well rounded learning environment for everyone. Small-sided games are a crucial part of developing speed of play so that the players will learn to play in a tighter space. Demonstration is also very important when explaining different principles of play. It is important for coaches to establish discipline from the beginning so that each player is benefiting from the experience.

Coach:

Coaches need to be very encouraging; enthusiastic; sensitive to children's needs; possess soccer awareness; ability to relate to children; knowledge of the key factors of basic skills; able to create respect and discipline from the players.

Training Habits:

- Focuses on development rather than outcome of matches
- Has respect for teammates, opponents, referees and coaching staff
- Gives best effort in an attempt to better develop potential
- Develops understanding of basic principles of play/positioning
- Plays a variety of positions and understands concepts of those positions
- Listens to coach and ready to train at assigned time
- Has proper equipment

Ball Skills:

- Uses several different turns/moves
- Has relative composure with the ball when receiving and distributing
- Attempts to play with both feet
- Use of different parts of the foot to move the ball
- Confident in possession of the ball
- Has been introduced to juggling
- Should practice working on individual ball skills outside of training sessions

Dribbling/Attacking:

- Uses a variety of moves to beat an opponent
- Ball remains close to body and in control
- Develops knowledge of where and when to dribble
- Attacks and commits the 1st defender
- Develops insight into proper supporting positions and angles of attack
- Has width and depth in attack
- Understands combination play and overlapping to create space

Passing/Receiving:

- Uses the inside and outside of the foot when passing
- Passes with proper weight, accuracy, and timing
- Proper technique with short and long passing/crossing
- Uses different controlling surfaces when receiving a ball
- Takes a positive 1st touch into space and attacks with speed
- Able to pass efficiently under pressure
- Positive movement after a pass in an effort to support the play

Heading:

- High and wide in defense
- Low and hard in attack
- Attack the ball and head for a purpose
- Use of proper form when heading to prevent injuries

Shooting:

- Proper striking technique
- Uses laces for power and instep for placement
- Able to beat an opponent and strike ball on frame from different angles

- Strikes through middle of the ball
- Takes shots when they are available and hits the target area

Defending:

- Proper defensive stance when approaching the attacking player
- Proper form when tackling an opponent
- Pressures the ball after loss of possession
- Doesn't dive in and is composed when containing attacking player
- Attempts to recover defensively and provides basic cover in defense
- Uses verbal communication when defending and sorting things out on the field
- Understands team shape and players roles on the field

Notes:

This is considered to be the “golden age of learning” and is a very important age in proper skill development and practicing good habits. Basic principles of play need to be stressed and implemented by the coaching staff so the players are more familiar with their surroundings and roles on the pitch. Make sure that most of the fitness is done with the ball and that the players develop speed, strength, and endurance to carry over when they get older. Must keep it simple, fun, and enjoyable for the players so they have a good experience. Increase demands of players but keep everything into perspective and has fun!



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U12-U14:

At this age level the matches will now be played 11v11 on a full sized pitch. Players will be refining their technical skills and further developing their tactical awareness. A higher level of competitive training will be demanded of the players with the focus being on developing physical and psychological aspects of the game. At this age players must be challenged physically as well as mentally by the coaching staff with the hopes of preparing them for High School. Players should begin to understand different formations of play and what each of those entails but the coach will have the ultimate say in what formation he/she plays. Coaches must play a formation that best suits the players that he/she has and a “club” formation will not be asked of the coaches to administer. Formations don’t win games but players do! Player’s positions on the field should start to be more defined as they are now growing into the type of player they can be and what position best suites their style of soccer. However, if a player needs to play “out of position” to better suite the formation that a coach administers then they must be willing to accept that role for the betterment of the team concept.

Coach:

Coaches need to be more demanding and possess a strong personality when relating to the players. This is the age that many players go through growth development as well as social development so a coach must be understanding of that and know how to best educate their players in how to deal with that. Player’s attention spans are still pretty short so a coach must teach a skill and move on or else they will lose the player. Each skill that is taught must be practiced at length in order to improve and develop proper technique.

Training Habits:

- Focuses on the overall development of the player individually as well as the team and not the win/loss record
- Has respect for teammates, opponents, referees, and coaching staff
- Works outside of practice times to improve individual skills
- Works to maintain his/her fitness level outside of scheduled practice times
- Gives best effort in order to maximize potential
- Takes feedback from coaching staff and attempts to improve
- Will report to practice/games on time and communicate with coaches if conflicts arise

- Has proper attire/equipment

Ball Skills:

- Composed on the ball and comfortable with either foot
- Uses several feint/moves in attack and defense
- Advanced juggling
- Develops speed with the ball
- Must practice ball skills outside of scheduled practice time to improve

Dribbling/Attacking:

- Encourage players to go 1v1 and run at defenders
- Be creative when attacking
- Uses a variety of turns and moves to get away from pressure
- Exhibits exceptional change of pace and direction
- Balanced dribbling and on the ball composure
- Knows when and where to dribble and makes correct tactical decision

Passing/Receiving:

- Uses a variety of passes short, long, driven, chipped, crosses, bent, etc.
- Passes with proper weight, accuracy, and timing
- Has proper technique with short and long passing/crossing
- Use of different controlling surfaces when receiving a ball
- Takes a positive 1st touch into space and attacks with speed
- Able to pass efficiently under pressure and on the run
- Positive movement after a pass in an effort to support the play

Heading:

- High and wide in defense
- Low and hard in attack
- Attack the ball and head for a purpose
- Uses proper form when heading to prevent injuries

Shooting:

- Proper striking technique
- Uses laces for power and instep for placement
- Able to beat an opponent and strike ball on frame from different angles
- Strikes through middle of the ball
- Takes shots when they are available and hits the target area
- Recognizes shooting opportunities
- Shows good balance and is creative in tight situations

Defending:

- Proper defensive stance when approaching the attacking player
- Proper form when tackling an opponent

- Pressures the ball after loss of possession
- Doesn't dive in and is composed when containing attacking player
- Able to challenge and win every 50/50 ball
- Attempts to recover defensively and provides basic cover in defense
- Uses verbal communication when defending and sorting things out on the field
- Able to mark key players in dangerous areas
- Pushes up as a unit
- Understands team shape and players roles on the field with different formations
- Should begin to understand responsibilities of zonal defending and man marking
- Understands when and where to foul opponent
- Knows role in defending set pieces and knows responsibilities on corner kicks

Game Awareness/Decision Making:

- Ability to read and understand the game
- Increase speed in decision making on the pitch
- Positions themselves in a position to receive a pass or defend as a cohesive unit
- Ability to combine in attack and use space to advantage
- Movement off the ball is positive
- Ability to provide width and depth both in attack and defense
- Ability to find ways to get behind the defense
- Organizationally sound in defense
- Understands delay tracking/containing, recovery runs, pressure, cover, balance
- Always increasing tactical awareness in game like situations and technical speed

Notes:

At this age players should already be aware of their roles on the pitch and should be fine-tuning their skills on the field. Skills should be mastered all under game like situations to improve the overall player both technically and tactically. Formations and roles on the field still need to be presented at a basic level so that players can comprehend what they are taking in and apply that on the field. This is a crucial stage in player's development as they are starting to figure out if they want to stick with soccer and move on at the High School level or if they aren't interested in it anymore. Some players will stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, shortage of playing time or that it just isn't that fun to them anymore. Coaches should focus on strengthening players core and stability since they are at the age to grow and develop. Fitness work needs to be done with and without the ball.



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U15-U18:

At this age players should be serious about the game of soccer and should respond to the demands set forth by the coach(s). Individual efforts of the players dictate the fulfillment of each player's potential, which needs to be molded and guided by the coach(s). Playing time is not guaranteed at this age and needs to be assessed and evaluated each week by the coaching staff, which means that what you do in practice has a large effect to what you do on the field. Players should be comfortable playing a variety of formations set forth by the coach(s) in order to best suit their needs and what they are trying to accomplish as a team. The training environment needs to be intense and challenge the players mentally, physically, technically, and tactically. Players will be groomed to play at the next level and the demands that come with playing at a high level. The use of small sided games are still very important in developing team speed, awareness, and decision making. Players should know what they are supposed to do in the defending, middle, and attacking thirds of the field and should be able to respond to whatever situation they are put in. Players should be willing to accept the coach(s) feedback and able to adjust and apply that on the field. Team discipline is a must and should be monitored by the coaches.

Coach:

Coaches need to be very experienced, knowledgeable, and charismatic when dealing with this age group. There should be no question about his/her authority and decision-making. Players at this age will test the coach(s) so be prepared in how to handle those situations and learn to relate to your players. Each player is different and should be treated as such but should not deviate from the team concept and what the team is trying to accomplish. Discipline and respect from the player and coach(s) should be a central theme in learning how to play as a unit which is the overall goal.

Training Habits:

- Focuses on the overall development of the player individually as well as the team and not the win/loss record
- Has respect for teammates, opponents, referees, and coaching staff
- Must work outside of practice times to improve individual skills
- Must work to maintain his/her fitness level outside of scheduled practice times
- Gives best effort in order to maximize potential

- Takes feedback from coaching staff and attempts to improve
- Will report to practice/games on time and communicate with coaches if conflicts arise
- Has proper attire/equipment

Ball Skills:

- Composed on the ball and comfortable with either foot
- Uses several feint/moves in attack and defense
- Advanced juggling
- Master speed with the ball
- Must practice ball skills outside of scheduled practice time to improve

Dribbling/Attacking:

- Encourage players to go 1v1 and run at defenders
- Be creative when attacking
- Uses a variety of turns and moves to get away from pressure
- Exhibits exceptional change of pace and direction
- Balanced dribbling and on the ball composure
- Maintains possession of the ball
- Masters counter attack
- Masters set plays and the roles of each attacking player
- Knows when and where to dribble and makes correct tactical decision

Passing/Receiving:

- Uses a variety of passes short, long, driven, chipped, crosses, bent
- Pass with proper weight, accuracy, and timing
- Proper technique with short and long passing/crossing
- Use of different controlling surfaces when receiving a ball
- Takes a positive 1st touch into space and attacks with speed
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Heading:

- High and wide in defense
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Shooting:

- Proper striking technique
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- Able to beat an opponent and strike ball on frame from different angles
- Strikes through middle of the ball
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- Recognizes shooting opportunities and finishes all opportunities
- Shows good balance and is creative in tight situations

Defending:

- Proper defensive stance when approaching the attacking player
- Proper form when tackling an opponent
- Pressures the ball after loss of possession
- Doesn't dive in and is composed when containing attacking player
- Able to challenge and win every 50/50 ball
- Attempts to recover defensively and provides basic cover in defense
- Uses verbal communication when defending and sorting things out on the field
- Able to mark key players in dangerous areas
- Pushes up as a unit
- Understands team shape and players roles on the field with different formations
- Understands concepts of man to man marking and zonal defense (sweeper&stopper, three in the back, or flat back four)
- Understands when and where to foul opponent
- Knows role in defending set pieces and knows responsibilities on corner kicks

Game Awareness/Decision Making:

- Ability to read and understand the game
- Increase speed in decision making on the pitch
- All games should be played at game speed and high level of intensity
- Positions themselves in a position to receive a pass or defend as a cohesive unit
- Ability to combine in attack and use space to advantage
- Movement off the ball is positive
- Ability to provide width and depth both in attack and defense
- Ability to find ways to get behind the defense
- Organizationally sound in defense
- Understands delay tracking/containing, recovery runs, pressure, cover and balance

Notes:

Players should know their roles on the pitch and should be fine-tuning their skills. Skills should be mastered all under game like situations to improve the overall player both technically and tactically. Formations and roles on the field can now be presented at a more complicated level so that players can adjust and get prepared for the next level. This is still a crucial stage in player's development as they are starting to figure out if they want to stick with soccer and play at a higher level or if they aren't interested in it anymore. Some players will stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, shortage of playing time or that it just isn't that fun to them anymore. Coaches need to be aware of this and be able to address each player's needs. Coaches should be honest and up front when assessing players talent level so that they have guidance and direction for ways to improve. Coaches should work to master all players' weaknesses in order to prepare them for what is to come. Coaches should focus on strengthening players core and

stability as well as increasing endurance/fitness level. Players need to be challenged mentally in order to get the most out of them in stressful game like situations. Communication and respect is crucial in developing a coach/player relationship and needs to be taken seriously. Preparing your players about the game of “life” and how to be a leader off the field is also an important part of this process.

*Addendum: LISC Curriculum/Coaching Model for U11 and below
Adapted from KNVB Dutch Youth Model*

Time (min.)	Drill	Game Area	Groups	Players/Grp.
-15-0	Setting up the equipment			
0-15	Warming up/dynamic stretching		1	14
15-25	Start with fun game of tag, world cup, etc.	All game areas	1	14
25-55 (Switch after 10-15 min with Group 2)	Scoring drill (Group 1)	Scoring and defending	1	3
25-55 (Switch after 10-15 min with Group 1)	Keeping possession drill (Group 2)	Keeping possession and winning possession as an individual	1	4
<i>Comment</i>	<i>Scoring drill and keeping possession drill are linked and are played at same time</i>	<i>Seven players rotate from one of the two soccer drills to the other after 10-15 minutes</i>	<i>After 10-15 min., the coach will have the players in groups 1 and 2 swap roles while group 3 continues to play. Group3 can have a break after 15 minutes to keep interest level.</i>	
25-55 (Group 3 plays this whole time and coach introduces new concepts/restrictions to keep interest)	Small sided drill (Group 3)	Keeping possession and winning possession as a team	1	7
55-75	Small sided game of 7v7	All game areas	1	14
75-85	Cooling down/take down		1	14

Note: if you only have one hour of time then just shorten the time slots so you can get everything in. Make sure to explain each drill to the whole team so they have a concept of what they are trying to do at each station. After each training session make sure that the group that was playing the small-sided drill has done the scoring drill/possession drill throughout the week. Have patience in introducing something new to the kids and hopefully with more repetition they will catch on. Don't give up after first training session if the kids struggle a bit. Adapt this model how you want to, as this is just a model for your use and application.

Reference List

1. United States Soccer Coaching Forum, Under12-Under19 Curriculum Guidelines
<http://www.ussoccer.com/coaches/content.sps?iType=179&icustompageid=960>
2. Coaching Under 10's&Under 12's- A Complete Coaching Course
KNVB Academy, by Tim Stoop
3. Chad Jones, Director of Coaching for Mid State Soccer Club and the Soccer Coordinator at the DISC in Decatur, IL
4. Trey Bradberry, Former Director of Coaching for Little Illini Soccer Club in Champaign, IL
5. Michael Kobylinski, Director of Coaching for Little Illini Soccer Club in Champaign, IL