



# U8 Coaches Handbook

Club Philosophy, Team Management, and General Information

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# Values



## Leadership

Modeling the way



## Respect

One community with everyONE



## Fun

We love the game and it shows!



## Wellness

Social, emotional, & physical wellbeing above all else



## Excellence

Going above & beyond

# Long Term Vision



Each program from U4 – U18 will aim to help develop our future adult. It is important to make sure we zoom out and are often looking at the big picture of their 20+ year journey. Don't focus on their current circumstances or abilities, they will have lots of ups and downs on this journey and it's our job to be the support and the compass.

# What does a good soccer player do:



## Tactics

Understand the teams objectives including formations, principles of play, and long term goals. Have good verbal and non verbal communication.



## Game Sense

Makes the best possible individual decision in order to help achieve the team objectives.



## Technique

Executes the decision with a high quality sprint, dribble, shot, pass, or various defending techniques.



## Emotional Intelligence

Social skills, taking responsibility for personal choices, empathy, and self-regulation & self-awareness. These will give the player the ability to work in a team, make good tactical decisions, execute with accuracy and learn from set backs.

# Our Adult Player

*Marginal gains to eventual greatness.*



The CMF adult player understands the importance of sport in a child's development and is involved (at whatever capacity) in CMF programs as part of the CMF family and the Coquitlam community.



Aims to achieve a good balance in life knowing the importance of good life habits to their mental and physical health.



Demonstrates the virtues of; Respect, fun, leadership, excellence, and wellness in everyday life.



Understands our game. Understands tactics, the importance of technical ability and physical literacy no matter the level of play they have or are playing at.



Our adult player is proud of their achievements in sport with no regrets. They achieved what they set out to achieve and are happy to still enjoy the game as adults.



# U8 Age Characteristics

- Individualistic and Self Centered
- Need to have well-established routines
- Self-Esteem strongly linked to perception of success
- Conscious of emotions
- Attention span of a few minutes
- Are likely to imitate and be highly imaginative



# U8 Program Goals

## Enjoyment and Success

- Maximize playing by establishing routines and repeating favoured games/exercises (reducing explanations).
- Manipulate games to ensure everyone has success. This will improve self-esteem and love for the game. Praise often!
- Be imaginative with games. Include movie characters and professional athletes/teams to engage players.

## Ball Manipulation

- Focus is placed on dribbling ability with introduction to passing and shooting. Players may not have the ability to understand team concepts yet.

## Introduction to Formation and GK's

- Soccer has formations and positions. Players should understand these and the basic starting points. Players will go out of position and coaches should guide them back during restart points (goal kicks, corners, throw-ins).
- Soccer has basic principles that will help decision making in games. Let them make their own decisions! And find a balance to remind them of these principles when needed.



# Before The Game

**During the week** prepare your line-up; making sure you alternate your GK's during the season and have a substitution plan. You should aim for all players to have equal playing time every game, along with alternating who starts. It is also important for all players to try all positions during the season. Have players stay in the same position for 1/2 or a full game. It can be confusing to change position every shift.

**30 minutes before kick-off** players should arrive. Make sure you are there early to greet players and set up a warm-up. As part of your team culture, you should have a designated activity players will do on arrival; this can be individual juggling, passing with a partner, a “rondo” or piggy in the middle, tag, or even a player led pick-up game. This is the players time to spend some unstructured time with each other.

**15 minutes before kick-off** is when you should start your warm-up. This is an activity that is led by you in a much more structured way. Some ideas for warm-ups can be found [here](#). Pick a warm-up players enjoy doing and repeat every game day as part of the routine.





# Game Management

**Playing Time:** Players should have balanced playing time to the best of the coach's ability. It will never be exactly fair, but players should have a minimum of 50% playing time each league game.

**Subbing and Line Changes:** Preparation is key. Prepare lines prior to the game for easy transition. Use an assistant coach or manager to help support you on line changes and timing shifts.

**Positions:** It is important that players try all positions. This will help to develop their game understanding and become a more rounded player developing different skills.

**When players are still learning positions:** If possible, have players stay in the same position for 1/2 or a full game. You don't have to switch players every game/shift into multiple positions. It can be confusing to switch new players around in multiple positions every game, and some players will benefit from playing a consistent position in a game. Be clear with parents that players will try all positions and it will help their overall development as a player.



# Creation of an Environment

*Leading a team is very complex and challenging. We want to remind you of a few very important things.*

## Celebration of outside of soccer accomplishments:

Multisport athletes, musicians, and high academics may be reasons for missing sessions/games. We must learn to celebrate these while maintaining the desired environment within our team. If you are unsure on how to deal with a specific situation please contact your Age Group Head Coach (AGHC).

## Celebrate persistence and effort as much as mastery:

Rewards such as being on the starting line up and playing time or praising in front of the group should not be limited to the players that have performed well, but should be extended to the hard workers and persistent players. This will improve confidence, show your belief in them, and set them up to become our future adult player!

Its also what youth, parents, and coaches want. Players working hard within a positive environment that leads to learning, improving and team friendships. Remember that failing and trying again is much harder than succeeding and trying again. These should be appropriately praised.

## Create opportunities to spend extra time together:

Kids make friends with the people they spend time with. Team events outside of soccer will nurture friendships and a team environment.



# Tactics: Game Principles

## *Attacking*

1. First look to move ball towards opposing goal (this can be with a dribble, pass, or shot – players choice!)
2. If you can't, then look to move ball sideways
3. If neither are possible move ball back and look for another way

## *Defending*

1. First prevent the opposition from moving the ball towards your goal
2. If you can also prevent them from going sideways that is better
3. If you can prevent them from moving the ball towards goal, sideways and backwards that is even better!

# U8 Formations: 1-2-1-2 Formation



## Key Coaching Points:

**Goalie** plays everything for possession (roll ball to teammate or pass to teammate).

**Defenders** need to shift left and right depending on placement of the ball on the field.  
For example: If the other team is in possession, and the ball is on the right side, the left defender should shift towards the middle of the field to cover and the right defender should close space and mark tight.

**Central Midfield** needs to hold central area of the field.

**Forwards** need to shift with the play and keep the depth (stay high) to help spread out their opponents. Forward player needs to support on the side that the ball is on and look to form triangles with ball carrier.



# U8 Formations: 1-3-1-1 Formation



## Key Coaching Points:

**Goalie** plays everything for possession (roll ball to teammate or pass to teammate).

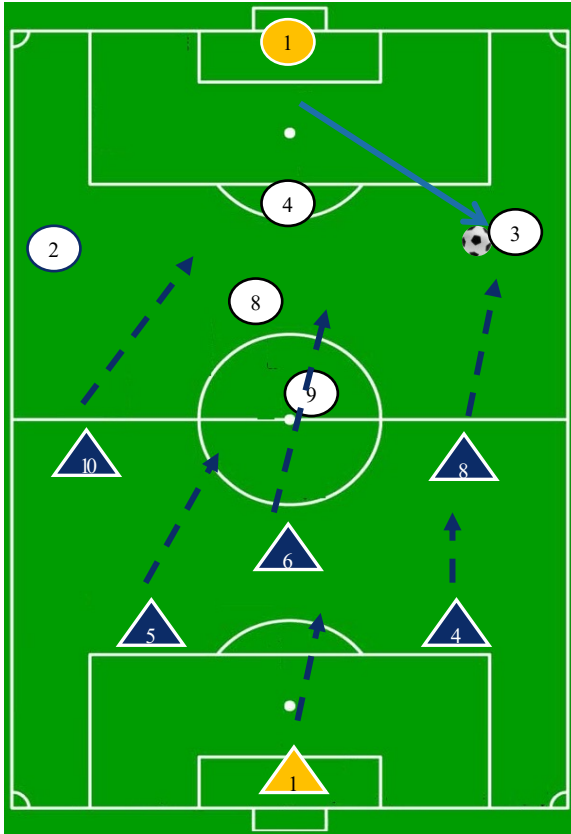
**Central Defender** must communicate to team and hold the central area of the field. Central defender does not want to stay too far back and create a large gap for opposing team to attack into, close the space and stay close to your teammates.

**Right/Left Winger** need to move forward into the attacking 1/3 to support their Forward and Midfielder when the ball is on their side. The far side winger moves towards the middle to create cover with the central defender, and anticipate balls coming cross field to attack. **Wingers** need to transition forward and support quickly, but also retreat upon losing the ball and play a more defensive roll.

**Central Midfielder** must hold the middle position to keep the team shape. Central Midfield should always be part of a triangle.

**Forward** need to shift with the play and keep the depth (stay high) to help spread out their opponents. Forward player needs to support on the side that the ball is on and look to form triangles with ball carrier.

# The Game: An extension of training



The game is another training session for our young players, it gives us the ability to teach them positions, rules, game day routines, and about success, failure, working with others and dealing with emotions.

This is because the players are playing the “game of their lives”. The importance of this game for them might be monumental. They cannot (and should not) comprehend the lengthy journey they are embarking on. Below are things we do as coaches to make sure they are on the right path:

- Give equal playing time for all, no matter attendance. For us this is training.
- Give players the opportunity to try all positions, including goalkeeper
- We play with retreat line. This means that on goal kicks or when the goalkeeper has it in their hands, the opposition will retreat to half and wait for the goalkeepers pass to be completed before stepping onto our half.

[Retreat Line Video](#)

# Decision Making

## An Integral Part of Development

Our decisions in the game and in life are based on our emotions and how we deal with them. Fear, frustration, anger, self-doubt, and ego can dictate what we do. This may lead to poor decision making and behaviours. The game is a great way to start introducing these to our young players, especially since they are starting to become aware of their emotions. As leaders, we must first make sure to not transfer these emotions to our players, such as fear of losing a game.

Instead create an environment where its ok to have these emotions and where they can learn to understand them and overcome them. To do this we use team virtues.

The next slide has some examples that you can use or modify in your coaching

# Team Values

## Teach them about courage!

“Courage allows me to play and perform with heart, to be brave and overcome fear”

Some decisions are hard! Passing the ball sideways to a teammate when you are learning to pass is risky and may lead to a goal. But we won't learn how to do it unless we try. Conquer that fear of failure and if it's the right decision pass sideways! It's the only way to get better.

## Teach them about compassion!

“Compassion from my teammates allows me to be courageous”

My teammates will make mistakes. But in order to get better they must be brave and continue to try things that they cannot do. I must support them in their journey and put myself in their shoes when they make a mistake because I hope they will do the same for me.

## Teach them about respect!

“Go out of your way to make sure nobody feels beneath you”

Thank your parents and coaches. Value the opposition, without them you would not have a game. Thank the referee for teaching you the rules and making sure the game was played fairly. These are the people that will help you grow. Treat them accordingly.



# General Info

## [CMFSC Technical Staff Contact Information](#)

### Age Group Head Coaches:

AGHC are available for guidance when delivering sessions and managing players and parents. Please let them know if you have concerns and they will help you or involve the appropriate people.

## [BC Soccer Mandatory Certification](#)

See what coaching certification is required for head coaches and recommended for volunteer coaches for the different age groups.

## [MOJO Curriculum App](#)

Our curriculum has moved to the MOJO App. If you have not done so, please watch the video on how to download and start using this great resource.

## [CMFSC Coaching Workshops](#)

We will hold coaching workshops through the year. Once confirmed they will appear here.

