

WASHINGTON TIMBERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Recreational Program

Coaches,

Thank you for volunteering to coach! The Club truly appreciates all of you and the work that you do. As a coach you are not only teaching the great game of soccer but you are also being positive role models for today's youth. This doesn't go unnoticed. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

This manual will overview age groups and give you details you need to be successful as a coach. It will also give you information about the Club's philosophy on player development that we should all strive for.

Recreational Program Initiative

The Washington Timbers provide two Recreational programs, Vancouver United (VUSA) and Camas-Washougal (CWSA), and is a non-profit organization with a long history of providing soccer opportunities to our community. We focus on the player and family and strive to ensure all players have opportunity for fun, development, competitive play, and life experiences. We offer soccer for all players age 4-19 and for players of all skill level and ability.

We do accomplish the above by; 1. Ensuring all players are enjoying the game. 2. Teams grow as players develop individually, focus on player development and the team development will follow. 3. Enjoy the moments that you have, keep things in perspective.

Player Development

As stated above, the team grows as players develop. For us coaches our focus should be on developing confident, creative, technically sound players at all ages. To do that we need all players to get significant amount of time on the ball, getting 1000s of touches on the ball, and focusing on 1v1s, 2v1s, 2v2s, 3v2s, 3v3s, and 4v4 is extremely important to this development. All the principals of play can be taught in these scenarios.

Winning is not a top priority, that is an end result of proper training, work ethic, and keeping the long term development of our players in mind. We are a process orientated club and want our coaches and families to understand and support that.



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The message and theme of these talks are very good and ones that the Club believes whole-heartedly. Please feel free to pass these on to your families.

Thank you again for coaching!

See ya on the field!

Sincerely,

Club Leadership, Nick Martinez, & Jeffrey Castagnola
Washington Timbers FC



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Recreational Program

The Game: U5-U8 Overview

Game Length	U5-U6: 2 x 15 minute halves U7-U8: 2 x 20 minute halves Running clock. 5 minute break at half-time.
Playing Time	Each player is to play at least 50% of each game.
Ball	Size 3
Uniforms	Home Team = Off Color Bib (Black, Red, or Blue) Away Team = Blue or Red (home team responsible for changing if there is a conflict)
Number of players	U5 – 3v3 with no GKs U6-U8 - 4 per team on the field. 4v4 with no goalkeepers.
Goalies	None
Referee	Coaches are allowed on the field to ref the game and coach there players.
Substitutions	Unlimited. At any stoppage of play.
Ball In and Out of Play	A ball is out of play only upon the entire ball crossing out of the field of play (e.g. outside of the line).
Slide tackling	Not allowed.
Goal	A goal shall be awarded when the ball fully crosses the end line inside of the goal. If a team is struggling to compete, down 5 goals, they can add a player to the field to help the competitive balance of the game.
Offsides	None
Penalty Kicks	None
Goal kicks – build out line	Goal-kick: A goal kicks is awarded to the defending team when the attacking team is the last to touch the ball before it crosses the end line. To restart play, the ball may be placed anywhere along the goal line. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• During a goal kick the opposing team will fall back to the center line. To allow the team to build play out from the back.
Handball	For a handball infraction to be called, the player handling the ball must be determined to have done so intentionally AND seek an advantage.
Start and Restart of Play:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All restarts shall be indirect, which means the ball must touch another player (on either team) before it can enter the goal.• Opposing players are to remain at least 5 yards away from the ball during all restarts.• Kick-offs shall be taken at the start of each half and following each goal scored.• Kick-ins:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A kick-in shall be awarded to the opposing team when the ball goes out of play on the sidelines.○ During a kick-in the opposing team must remain 5 yards away from the ball to allow the ball to be played in.○ Goals may NOT be scored directly from a kick-in.• Corner-kick: A corner kicks is awarded to the attacking team when the defending team is the last to touch the ball before it crosses the end line. To restart play, the ball is to be placed in the corner on the side in which it crossed the end line.



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About the Player: U5-U6

About the child

- One play, one player. Kids are in the me, my, mine stages of their development
- Kids will play “full out” at all times and need numerous breaks during training and games
- Physical movements are not fully developed; running, jumping, skipping, hopping, and maintaining balance. They will fall often, this doesn't mean they are clumsy, they are developing

About the player

- They can perform simple tasks one at a time
- Visual demonstration is necessary to help players understand what is expected
- “My ball!” is a common phrase you'll hear. The concept of team is often too abstract...this is OK.
- Tactics are of little concern at this age...just make sure they are going in the right direction 😊

Guidelines for coaches

- Coaches need to understand the importance of the players need to feel safe and secure in training and game environments
- Encourage positive social interactions
- Give brief directions; repeat when necessary
- Plan for numerous activities of short duration
- Lots of water breaks
- Trainings are recommended to be 30 to 45 minutes one time weekly (Use interest/attention span of the overall group to determine time frames for practice, they have a lot of soccer left to play at this age)
- Emphasize familiarity and confidence with the ball (every child must have access to a ball throughout each training session)
- Regardless of practice attendance and ability all players should get equal playing time in games. If attendance or behaviors become an issue please discuss with the parents first in a respectful manner. If needed you may contact Nick Martinez for assistance.



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Recreational Program

About the Player: U7

The U7 Player

About the child

- Beginning to understand the concept of a teammate (passing is now more of an option ☺)
- Be aware of the growth children are undergoing in the joints and growth plates
- Improvement in coordination from the U6 player is noticeable
- Players heart rate peaks sooner than adults and takes longer to recover. Same goes for their temperature regulation system
- Players language is more advanced and the ability to recall previous events increases
- Ability to understand more than one task at a time
- Beginning to understand the relationship between time and space
- They show the need for approval from adults; parents, teachers, coaches, etc
- Negative comments carry weight, be a positive coach!
- Team identity is formed..."I play for Tim's team!" or "I play on the Crazy Meatballs!"
- Desire for social acceptance

About the player

- More inclined for group activities
- Very sensitive
- Begin to identify with "sport heros"
- Still lack the sense of pace; will continue to play "flat-out"
- Beginning to develop physical confidence
- Players are still in a very activity stage in their development; jumping, climbing, rolling, and running are still fun!

Guidelines for coaches

- Be a teacher of the game, not a director (guided discovery)
- Soccer is FUN! While players maybe be more aware of the score, wins and losses do not matter
- Praise players often and challenge them to get better
- More structured practices; warm-up with dynamic stretching > individual and pattern activities
> finish practice with free play (scrimmage with little to no coaching)
- Training is recommended to be 45 minutes and no more than 1 hour two times weekly
- Regardless of practice attendance and ability all players should get equal playing time in games. If attendance or behaviors become an issue please discuss with the parents first in a respectful manner. If needed you may contact Nick Martinez for assistance.



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Recreational Program

About the Player: U8

About the child

- Beginning to understand the concept of a teammate (passing is now more of an option ☺)
- Be aware of the growth children are undergoing in the joints and growth plates
- Improvement in coordination from the U6 player is noticeable
- Players heart rate peaks sooner than adults and takes longer to recover. Same goes for their temperature regulation system
- Players language is more advanced and the ability to recall previous events increases
- Ability to understand more than one task at a time
- Beginning to understand the relationship between time and space
- They show the need for approval from adults; parents, teachers, coaches, etc
- Negative comments carry weight, be a positive coach!
- Team identity is formed..."I play for Tim's team!" or "I play on the Crazy Meatballs!"
- Desire for social acceptance

About the player

- More inclined for group activities
- Very sensitive
- Begin to identify with "sport heroes"
- Still lack the sense of pace; will continue to play "flat-out"
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- Players are still in a very activity stage in their development; jumping, climbing, rolling, and running are still fun!

Guidelines for coaches

- Be a teacher of the game, not a director (guided discovery)
- Soccer is FUN! While players maybe be more aware of the score, wins and losses do not matter
- Praise players often and challenge them to get better
- More structured practices; warm-up with dynamic stretching > individual and pattern activities > finish practice with free play (scrimmage with little to no coaching)
- Training can last an hour



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U5-U8 Coaching Resources

[National Youth License Manual](#)

Grassroots coaching licenses-The club will work to offer these on a yearly or bi-yearly basis. Sometimes, these courses can be free of charge to you as a coach if offered by WA Timbers!



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The Game: U9-U10 Overview

Game Length	2 x 25 minute halves Running clock. 5 minute break at half-time. 7v7 Format – 6 field players and a GK
Playing Time	Each player is to play at least 50% of each game.
Ball	Size 4
Uniforms	Home Team = White : Away Team = Blue or Red (home team responsible for changing if there is a conflict)
Number of players	7 per team on the field; one goalie plus 6 field players (7v7) Suggested formations: 1 GK – 2 Defenders – 3 Midfielders – 1 Forward. 1 GK – 3 Defenders – 2 Midfielders – 1 Forward
Goalies	Yes. Dropkicking is NOT allowed.
Referee	Referee's will be provided by the club. Center only.
Substitutions	Unlimited. At any stoppage of play.
Ball In and Out of Play	A ball is out of play only upon the entire ball crossing out of the field of play (e.g. outside of the line).
Slide tackling	Not allowed.
Goal	A goal shall be awarded when the ball fully crosses the end line inside of the goal.
Offsides	Yes, but very loosely called. See SWYSA specific definition.
Penalty Kicks	Yes
Build out line	The buildout line refers to the US Soccer Developmental Guidelines per below: - When the GK has the ball in their hands either during play or from a goal kick, the opposing team will begin a retreat to the 'Buildout Line' as defined within individual modified rules. For our league the build out line is the center line. -This is not to require the opposing team to fully retreat if the GK chooses to execute a quick restart. - Once the GK has put the ball into play, the opposing team may resume play as normal.
Handball	For a handball infraction to be called, the player handling the ball must be determined to have done so intentionally AND seek an advantage.
Start and Restart of Play:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All restarts shall be indirect, which means the ball must touch another player (on either team) before it can enter the goal.• Opposing players are to remain at least 8 yards away from the ball during all restarts.• Kick-offs shall be taken at the start of each half and following each goal scored.• Throw-in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team when the ball goes out of play on the sidelines.○ When throwing in a ball, a player must keep both feet on the ground. Two hand are to be used, the motion must start behind the head and go directly forward.• Goal-kick: A goal kicks is awarded to the defending team when the attacking team is the last to touch the ball before it crosses the end line. To restart play, the ball may be placed anywhere along the 6 yard box.



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corner-kick: A corner kick is awarded to the attacking team when the defending team is the last to touch the ball before it crosses the end line. To restart play, the ball is to be placed in the corner on the side in which it crossed the end line. |
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About the Player: U9-U10

About the child

- Kids at this point will have gained a tremendous amount of physical strength, endurance, and power
- Ability to follow complex instruction
- They are able to problem solve on their own
- Attention span has increased
- Beginning to understand sense of pace and spatial awareness
- Gender differences become more apparent

About the player

- Players will become more competitive
- Attachment to peer group and team becomes more important to the player
- Increased pressure on players by peer group
- Group training/tactics are becoming easier to understand

Guidelines for the coach

- While players are becoming more competitive, FUN should still be a main emphasis in training and games
- Continued focus on long-term development of players
- Emphasize friendship, respect, teamwork, and sportsmanship



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Recreational Program

Areas of Focus

Dribbling

1. Manipulate the ball from side to side using various parts of your foot; inside, outside, sole.
2. Moving the ball past opponents
 - a. Pure speed
 - b. Change of pace
 - c. Change of direction
3. Running with the ball at your feet
 - a. Comfort with the ball at your feet, moving the ball while under pressure
 - b. Big touches into big space, Little touches into little space
4. Individual possession (shielding)
 - a. Body shape (make yourself big)
 - b. Position of the ball (ball away from the defender)
 - c. Change of direction
5. Allow players to express their individual skill while dribbling. Mistakes will happen, that is OK. We want kids to be comfortable dribbling the ball in various situations.

Passing

1. Weight, of pace, of the pass. Passes played at the right pace to feet or into space to allow teammates to easily control the ball
2. Passes must be accurate
3. Time of the pass. Is your teammate ready? Are they in a good position? Are they already under pressure?
4. Time of the run. It takes two players to successfully complete a pass. Are our teammates finding space to receive the ball? Are they in proper supporting position?
5. When to dribble, when to pass? Players should be encouraged to dribble and guided to when they should make passes.

Receiving

1. Make an early decision about how you will receive the ball. What part of the body? What direction will your first touch take you? What's the next move?
2. Get in line with the path of the ball.
3. Keep your eye on the ball
 - a. Relax the body part receiving the ball
4. First touch should be a preparation (away from pressure) to either pass, dribble, or shoot.



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Warm-up games

Pac-Man

One player starts with a ball in a grid (usually one of the better players). All the others start in the grid without their balls (placed just outside the grid within easy reach). On command the player with the ball has to dribble the ball under control while attempting to tag others. If he does then they also get their ball and attempt the same.

Freeze Tag

Every player starts without a ball in a grid except two taggers (in different color bibs). After 3 seconds, the taggers are free to tag anyone else. If tagged, they have to freeze with their legs apart. They can be released (or unfrozen) by another free player running up to them and crawling through the frozen players' legs. Swap taggers after 30 seconds or if they freeze everybody!

This can also be played with the ball, just as a tag game. When frozen, the player holds their ball over their head. To be unfrozen, free players pass their ball through the legs of the frozen players.

Math Dribble

Each player is dribbling with a ball in a set area. When the coach calls a number, the players have to get in groups of that number (and take their ball with them). The last group that gets together gets a fun, quick exercise! Coach can gradually introduce basic math problems to come up with the number... make it challenging for your age group. This helps our players to use their brain whilst dribbling!

Hospital Tag

Lay out appropriate sized grid, with a small square in the middle (the hospital). Make 2 players taggers, who have to chase others. If tagged on shoulder for instance, player has to hold shoulder with one hand until they can run into the hospital to free themselves. Game gets amusing if player is tagged 2-3 times in open!

Line Tag

Have all players pair up and stand shoulder to shoulder. Break one pair up and give one player a colored vest to hold in hand. They then attempt to tag the other player. If they do they drop the vest and roles change. The runner can escape by joining shoulder to shoulder with one of the other pairs, in which case the player on the far end becomes the runner. Can progress to having 2 taggers and see how it affects the players thinking. Can you see a link to the real game?

Ball Wars!

Every player starts with a ball in a grid. On command they can hunt each other down and if they can touch their ball against somebody else's then they score a point. This teaches them to be creative, fake to get a view of someone's ball or in turn shield their own ball from attack!

U9-U10 Coaching Resources

[National Youth License Manual](#)

[RCL JR Academy Manual](#)

[Games for Understanding <-Very good manual](#)



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The Game: Overview

Game Length	U11-U12: 30 minute halves U13-U14: 35 minute halves U15-U16: 40 minute halves U17-U18: 45 minute halves Running clock. 5 minute break at half-time.
Playing Time	Each player is to play at least 50% of each game.
Ball	U11-U12: size 4 U13-U18: size 5
Uniforms	Home Team = White : Away Team = Blue or Red (home team responsible for changing if there is a conflict)
Number of players	U11-U12: 9v9 U13-U18: 11v11
Goalies	Yes. Dropkicking is allowed
Referee	Club will provide referees
Substitutions	Unlimited. At any stoppage of play.
Ball In and Out of Play	A ball is out of play only upon the entire ball crossing out of the field of play (e.g. outside of the line).
Slide tackling	U11-U18: allowed
Goal	A goal shall be awarded when the ball fully crosses the end line inside of the goal.
Offsides	Yes.
Penalty Kicks	Yes
Handball	For a handball infraction to be called, the player handling the ball must be determined to have done so intentionally AND seek an advantage.
Start and Restart of Play:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All restarts shall be indirect, which means the ball must touch another player (on either team) before it can enter the goal.• Opposing players are to remain at least 10 yards away from the ball during all restarts.• Kick-offs shall be taken at the start of each half and following each goal scored.• Throw-in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team when the ball goes out of play on the sidelines.○ When throwing in a ball, a player must keep both feet on the ground. Two hand are to be used, the motion must start behind the head and go directly forward.• Goal-kick: A goal kicks is awarded to the defending team when the attacking team is the last to touch the ball before it crosses the end line. To restart play, the ball may be placed anywhere along the 6 yard box.• Corner-kick: A corner kicks is awarded to the attacking team when the defending team is the last to touch the ball before it crosses



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	the end line. To restart play, the ball is to be placed in the corner on the side in which it crossed the end line.
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Areas of Focus - Individual

Dribbling

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 - a. Pure speed
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 - c. Change of direction
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Areas of Focus – Team

Principals of defense

1. Pressure – Once possession of the ball is lost the player closest to the ball should try to regain possession or simply apply pressure to delay the opposing teams attack.
2. Delay – The pressuring defender forces the attacking team to slow down their attack and allow the defense to organize behind them. They must be careful not to overcommit. If this defender is beaten too easily then we may get caught on a counter-attack.
3. Depth – Or defensive cover. Our defense should never be caught “flat”, by providing depth we ensure that we don’t get beat by one pass through our defensive lines.
4. Balance – Refers to the weak side defender. They must provide balance and cover vital space in order to prevent attackers making runs into dangerous areas.
5. Compactness – As our team recovers and organizes defensively the idea for team defending is to take away time and space. The time issue is our immediate pressure on the ball. Taking away space and being compact is what our team defense. We should be looking to plug up passing lanes and take away options centrally that lead to a direct opportunity on our goal.
6. Control – When defending we need to make sure we are under control. As an individual if we can’t win the ball then keep the attacker in front of us and make them play sideways or backwards. As a team we must be in control and organized to keep our shape.
7. Counter-attack – Once we win the ball back how do we go forward? How do we want to attack?

Principals of offense

1. Penetration – The player with the ball should be thinking “how can I penetrate the defense?”. Players can penetrate the defense with a shot, with a pass to a teammate through, or behind, the defenders, or dribble the through the defenders and into space.
2. Support – The player on the ball should always have options; forward, square, and backwards. The more options we have the easier it is for us to keep the ball. Good support has players that are in good angles of support, proper distance of support, and the speed in which we get into those supporting positions. Think of diamonds or triangles when teaching support.
3. Mobility – Off the ball movement. Being able to unsettle the defense with creative runs is very important in days game of soccer. As players move into space, teams should move into the space left. Be aware of your teammates and their movements.
4. Width – When in possession of the ball being able to spread the defense out provides passing lanes. Getting wide provides those lanes. Exploit the space in wide areas.
5. Improvisation – Encourage creativity and set-up training environments that allow players to express their creativity. Mistakes are OK!



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U11+ Coaching Resources

[National Youth License Manual](#)

[ODP Coaching Manual](#)

