



**U7 & U8 Coaching Information  
&  
Training Program**

## Under 8 Training program.

### Introduction.

The Under 8 age group is very important in the development of young soccer players. With that in mind it is very important that we focus upon making practices and games a fun and enjoyable experience. This training program is a 10 week plan that can take you through the season and emphasizes the following areas.

#### Dribbling:

- Running with the ball, dribbling in space.
- Dribbling to beat a player.

#### Shooting and Ballstriking:

- Using the laces.
- Using the inside of the foot.

The training plan this season does put more emphasis on the game itself and as a result will also include some ideas about how you should set up your team in the 4 v 4 game so the players have as much fun as possible and also improve technically.

In addition the clubs professional staff will be running an Academy program for the Under 8 age group. The 6 week program starts on Tuesday September 2nd until Tuesday October 7th and will run from 5 – 6pm. This is an excellent opportunity for your players to receive instruction from an experienced and highly qualified coaching staff and interact with other young players in the program. The information and registration forms are available via the Johnston Soccer club website. I hope you have an enjoyable and rewarding fall season. We appreciate your efforts and would like to help you in any way we can and hope this training program serves that purpose.

## Week 1.

Coaching topic. Dribbling: Running with the ball.

Coaching points.

Technical.

1. Keep your body over the ball.
2. Make sure the toe is pointed down.
3. Make contact with the laces.
4. Play with your head up.
5. Maintain control of the ball.

Tactical, decision making.

1. Look for players to take longer touches when they have space in front of them and smaller touches when space is limited.

Practice session.

### 1. Game Rabbit shoot. Field 30 x 20 { 10 minutes }

The players line up at one end of the field with one player or the coach as the hunter at the other end of the field facing away from the players. The players start dribbling and aim to get to the opposite end of the field. When the coach turns around the players must stop dribbling and hide behind their soccer ball. Any player who is not behind their ball must return to the start line. The first player to cross the line with their ball is the winner and becomes the hunter for the next game. Repeat 4-5 times.

### 2. Game Bulldog Field 30 x 20 { 10 - 15 minutes }

The players line up on one side of the field with a ball each. The coach or a selected player stands in the middle of the field. The players aim to dribble the ball past them and across the line opposite where they put their foot on the ball. If the player in the center kicks a player's ball out of play that player joins them in the center. The last player to be eliminated wins the game.

### 3. Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25 { 30-35 minutes }

Teams 4 v 4.

## Week 2.

Topic Dribbling: Running with the ball.

Coaching points

Technical

1. Keep the body over the ball
2. Make sure the toe is pointed down on contact
3. Make contact with the laces
4. Keep your head up and maintain control of the ball.

Tactical

1. Look to take small touches when close to opponents and longer touches when in space.

Practice session.

1. Game Dribbling relay. Field 30 x 20 { 10 minutes }

The players are in two teams with each team lined up at one end of the field with a ball each. The first player in line has to dribble the ball up to and around a cone 20 yards away before returning to the line. Once the player has completed the run the next player in line can go. The first team to complete the course wins the game. Repeat 4-5 times.

2. Game. Fighter Pilot. Field 20 x 20. { 10-15 minutes }

The players are divided into two teams. The players on one team have a ball each and aim to hit the players on the other team on or below the knee. The players on the other team act as planes and move around the field with both arms stretched out. If they are struck by the ball they must tuck one arm in and continue to run around until they are hit a second time. At this point they are eliminated from the game. The game ends after a minute or when all the players have been caught. Switch roles and repeat a number of times.

3. Game 1 – 2 – 3 Go Field 30 x 20 with a small goal at each end { 15 – 20 minutes }

Divide the players into two teams who line up on opposite corners of the field. Each player is given a number with a player on the opposite team having a corresponding number. The coach calls out a number and the respective players come out and play one on one until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. After 5 minutes start calling out numbers at intervals so you have two or three games going on at the same time. The first team to score 5 goals wins the game.

5. Scrimmage Field 35 x 25 { 15 – 20 minutes }

Teams 4 v 4 with small goals. If you have a larger group play two games of 3 v 3.

## Week 3.

Coaching Topic. Shooting / Ballstriking with the inside of the foot.

### Coaching points

#### Technical.

1. Approach the ball from an angle.
2. Place the non kicking foot next to the ball.
3. Make contact with the inside of the foot.
4. Keep the ankle locked.
5. Strike through the center of the ball.

#### Tactical.

1. Encourage the players to shoot at every opportunity with either foot.

### Practice session.

1. Game. Battleships. Field 25 x 20. { 10-15 minutes }

The players have a ball each with the field set up with 15 – 20 cones that represent battleships. The players play for 45 - 60 seconds and get a point each time they pass the ball with the inside of the foot and knock over a battleship. The player with the most points wins the game. For variation the coach or a selected player can dribble after the players and if a players ball is hit their score goes back to zero.

2. Game. Passing gate race. Field 35 x 25. { 10 – 15 minutes }

Set up 5-6 small cone goals { 2-3 yards wide } on the field. The players are in teams of two and play with one ball. The players must pass the ball to their partner through each of the small goals without knocking over the cones. If a player knocks over the cone they must pass the ball through the goal again before they continue. The first team to complete the course wins the game.

3. Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25 with small goals at each end. { 30 minutes }

Teams 4 v 4 or 5 v 5.

## Week 4.

Coaching topic. Dribbling to beat a player.

Coaching points.

Technical.

1. Maintain close control of the ball.
2. Keep your head up.
3. Change direction.
4. Acceleration.

Tactical

1. Always encourage players to dribble in one v one situations.

Practice session.

1. Game. Stuck in the mud. Field 25 x 20. { 5 - 10 minutes }

Select 1-2 players or yourself as the tagging players. All the other players have a ball each and dribble around the field aiming to avoid the tagging players. If a player is tagged they stand still with their legs apart and hold the ball above the head. They can be set free by one of the dribbling players passing the ball through their legs. Play for a minute or until all the players have been caught. Change tagging players after each game.

2. Game. Crab soccer. Field 25 x 15. { 10 – 15 minutes }

The players start at one end of the field with the coach or a selected player sitting in the crab position in the center of the field. The players aim to dribble to the opposite end of the field with the coach trying to kick all the balls off the field while remaining in the crab position. Any player caught joins the coach in the middle of the field and the game continues. The last player to be caught wins the game. Repeat with different players in the middle.

3. Game. 1 v 1 to an endline. Fields. Set up 2-3 15 x 10 fields. { 10 – 15 minutes }

The players are in groups of 3-4. The players play 1 v 1 for a minute with a point awarded every time they dribble across their opponents endline. After a minute the players in each group switch and play another player in their group. The player in each group with the most wins is the winner of the game.

4. Scrimmage. Field 30 x 20 with a goal at each end. { 15 – 20 minutes }

Teams 3 v 3 or 4 v 4.

## Week 5.

Topic. Dribbling to beat a player.

Coaching points.

Technical.

1. Maintain close control.
2. Keep your head up.
3. Change direction.
4. Change speed.

Tactical.

1. Look for the players to take on players in one v one situations.

Practice Session.

1. Game. Hunters. Field 25 x 15. { 10 – 15 minutes }

The players are in two teams. The players on one team have a ball each and start on the outside of the field with the other team on the field. The dribbling team aim to hit their opponents on or below the knee. If a player is hit they are eliminated from the game. Play for a minute or until all the players have been knocked out. Repeat 3-4 times with the teams roles switched.

2. Game. The Chain Game. Field 25 x 15. { 15 minutes }

The players line up at one end of the field with a ball each. Select two players or yourself and your assistant coach to form a chain in the middle of the field. The players aim to dribble to the opposite end of the field while keeping the ball under control. The two players in the center of the field try to kick the balls out of play while maintaining the chain. If a player is caught they join the chain or form a new chain with another player. The last player in at the end of the game is the winner.

3. Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25 with a goal at each end. { 30 minutes }

Teams 3 v 3 or 4 v 4.

## Week 6.

Coaching Topic. Shooting / Ballstriking with the laces.

Coaching points.

Technical.

1. Approach the ball from an angle.
2. Place the non kicking foot next to the ball.
3. Make contact with the laces.
4. Keep the ankle locked.
5. Strike through the center of the ball.
6. Keep the knee over the ball.

Tactical.

1. Encourage the players to shoot at every opportunity with both feet.
2. Look for the better players to be striking a moving ball.

Practice session.

1. Game. Battleships. Field 25 x 20. { 10 minutes }

The players have a ball each with the field set up with 15 – 20 cones that represent battleships. The players play for 45 - 60 seconds and get a point each time they knock over a battleship by striking the ball with their laces. The player with the most points wins the game. For variation the coach or a selected player can dribble after the players and if a players ball is hit that players score goes back to zero.

2. Game. Goals Galore. Field 20 x 30 with 2-3 small goals at each end. { 20–25 minutes }

The field is divided in half with three goals { 5-6 yards wide } at each end. The players are in two teams and must remain in their own half. They have a ball each and can score in any of the oppositions three goals. All the players can be goalkeepers and can strike any of the balls in their own half or behind the goals. Encourage the players to hit a moving ball. The first team to score 7 goals wins the game.

3. Scrimmage. Field 30 x 20 with small goals at each end. { 15-20 minutes }

Teams 4 v 4 or 5 v 5.

## Week 7.

Topic. Dribbling to beat a player.

Coaching points

Technical

1. Maintain close control
2. Keep the head up
3. Change direction
4. Change speed

Tactical

1. Always encourage players to dribble in one on one situations.

Practice session.

1. Game. Dodgems. Field 20 x 20. { 10 minutes }

All the players have a ball and stand on a different side of the field to the other players where that is possible. When the coach shouts “ go “ the players aim to dribble to the line opposite. The first player to stop the ball on or just past the line with the sole of the foot wins the game. If the coach shouts “ turn “ the players must turn and dribble back to their starting position. Repeat any number of times.

2. Game. King of the Jungle. Field 20 x 20 { 10–15 minutes }

The players all have a ball and dribble the ball around the field. When the coach shouts “ Go “ the players continue to dribble while aiming to kick the other players balls out of play. If a players ball goes out of play they must retrieve it as quickly as possible. Each time a players ball goes out of play they lose a life. Play for a minute with the player losing the least number of lives winning the game. Repeat 5-6 times.

3. Game. Bulldog. Field 30 x 20. { 15 minutes }

The players line up at one end of the field with a ball each and aim to dribble to the line opposite taking at least 5 touches. One player or the coach stands in the center of the field and tries to kick the player’s balls out of play. If a players ball is kicked out of play they then join the group in the center. The last player left in at the end wins the game.

4. Scrimmage Field 35 x 25 { 15 – 20 minutes }

Teams play 4 v 4. If you have more players play two games of 3 v 3 on a slightly smaller field.

## Week 8.

Topic. Dribbling to beat a player.

Coaching points.

Technical.

1. Maintain close control.
2. Keep the head up.
3. Change direction.
4. Change speed

Tactical decision-making.

1. Always encourage players to dribble in one on one situations.

Practice session.

1. Game. Dodging balls. Field 10 x 10 { 10 minutes }

The players have a ball each and must dribble within the small square keeping the ball moving at all times. If a players ball hits another players ball, hits another player or runs out of play that player loses a life. Play for a minute with the player losing the fewest lives winning the game. For variation the coach can join in the game as a dribbling player or make the field smaller.

2. Game. Flag Soccer. Field 30 x 20 { 10 – 15 minutes }

The players have a soccer ball each and a pinnie attached to the hip{ flag football style }. The players dribble round the field maintaining control of their ball. If a player has their flag pulled out or their ball runs out of play they lose a life. Play for up to 60 seconds at a time with the player losing the fewest lives winning the game.

3. Game 1 – 2 – 3 Go. Field 30 x 20 with a goal at each end { 15 – 20 minutes }

Divide the players into two teams who line up on the opposite corners of the field. Each player is given a number with a player on the opposition team having a corresponding number. The coach calls out a number and the respective players come out and play one on one until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. For variation the coach shouts “ change “ and the two players on the field run off and are replaced by the next players in line. The first time that scores 5 goals wins the game.

5. Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25 with a goal at each end.

Teams play 3 v 3 or 4 v 4.

## Week 9.

### Coaching Topic. Shooting/Ballstriking.

#### Coaching points

##### Technical.

1. Approach the ball from an angle.
2. Place the non kicking foot next to the ball.
3. Make contact with the laces or inside of the foot.
4. Strike through the center of the ball.
5. Keep the ankle locked and the knee over the ball.

##### Tactical.

1. Encourage the players to shoot at every opportunity with both feet.
2. Look for the players to be striking a moving ball.

#### Practice Session.

1. Technical Activity. Field 20 x 30. { 10-15 minutes }

The players are in groups of three with one player at each end of the field 20 yards apart. The goalkeeper stands in the center in a small goal { 5-6 yards wide }. The players take it in turns to shoot at goal. Change the goalkeepers every 2-3 minutes. Encourage the players to use both feet and to use the laces and the inside of the foot to strike the ball.

2. Game. Goals Galore. Field 20 x 30. { 15-20 minutes }

The field is divided in half with two or three goals { 5-6 yards wide } at each end. The players are in two teams and must remain in their own half. They have a ball each and can score in any of the opposition goals. Any of the players can play as goalkeepers and players can shoot any of the balls in their half or behind the goal. The first team to score 7 goals wins.

3. Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25 with goals at each end. { 20-25 minutes }

Teams. 4 v 4 or 5 v 5.

Week 10.

Coaching topic. Small sided tournament.

Field sizes. 35 x 25. with a small goal { 2-3 yards } at each end.

Select teams of 3 or 4 players and play a small tournament. Try and balance the teams in terms of ability. I would also consider joining with another team so you have more teams and a larger pool of players.