

## Coaches Training – K-Clinic Basic

- This basic training program is based upon Mass Youth Soccer Association’s (MYSA) U6 guidelines and F-license training
- HYSA highly recommends that K-Clinic and U8 coaches complete the MYSA F-license training. Cost for training is reimbursed by HYSA.

### (1) K-Clinic Objectives

- Basic introduction to soccer with heavy emphasis on fun and games
- Creating a fun environment that happens to include a soccer ball

“If it isn’t fun, it’s not soccer” ~**Tony DiCicco** (coach of 1994 U.S. Women’s Olympic Gold Medal Team, current coach of the Boston Breakers)

### (2) Characteristics of the K-Clinic Player

It is very important to understand the kids you are working with.

- Live in the moment – can’t remember yesterday and don’t care about tomorrow
- Enjoy playing, not watching
- Limited attention span – 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task
- Have two speeds – fast and stop
- Effort is synonymous with performance – if they tried hard, they believe they’ve done well
- Look for adult approval
- Unable to think abstractly – can’t understand tactics
- Active imaginations

### (3) Role of the K-Clinic Coach

At the K-Clinic level the primary role of the coach is that of an Activity Leader. Your job is to create an environment of play that allows “the game to be the teacher”.

- Choose the activities based upon learning objectives and FUN
- Gauge and mark the size of the activity area
- Determine the number of players who should be involved
- Balancing groups/teams by skill level to get a desired affect
- Manipulating the duration of activities
- Transitioning from one activity to another
- Ensuring adequate water breaks

#### (4) Key Skill to Develop at the K-Clinic Level

Fun, dribbling and motor development (running, turning, changing speeds, etc...) should be the central themes in U6 practices. The goal is to get the kids comfortable on the ball, so they need to touch the ball as often as possible. Activities where every player has a ball are recommended.

Skill priorities are:

- Dribble with all parts of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Soft first touch
- Dribble while keeping their head up
- Dribbling to “open space”

Teaching tactics (i.e. making on and off the ball decisions based upon position of teammates, opponents, field location, etc...) at the K-Clinic level is a waste of time. These concepts are beyond their comprehension and they won't retain the information. The only tactic to emphasize at this level is dribbling to “open space”.

#### (5) Coaching Points and Methodologies

“The game is the Greatest Teacher”. Children learn through playing. By trial and error players learn what works and what doesn't work.

Kids know how to play without adult instruction, so let them play without too much coaching intrusion.

Rule of thumb: “No laps, no lines, no lectures”

- Laps are not fun, the kids will get plenty of exercise through the activities and games
- Lines require kids to wait. Waiting is not fun and it takes time away from touching the ball.
- Children don't like to be lectured, you'll lose them.

The kids' attention span is very limited, so games need to be simple and instructions short and to the point, no more than 15 seconds.

The large majority of children learn by doing. Recommended method of coaching:

- Brief description
- Provide clear and simple demonstration
- Get them playing
- Give personal attention to those who are having trouble while the others are engaged in the activity

Children need repetition, it is not necessary to come up with new activities for every practice. Repeat activities at practices that the kids like.

Young players require a lot of encouragement and praise, they are NOT receptive or resilient to negative feedback.

Use their imaginations to make the activities fun. E.g. incorporate animals and popular characters in the activities (sharks and minnows, Shrek, etc...). When you send them for water breaks, have them go backwards or act like frogs (hopping) or monkeys or dinosaurs ...

Take a knee when speaking with the kids so you are at their eye level. Stand up and talk with players when you need to show authority and regain control.

#### (6) Practice Guidelines

LENGTH: 60 minutes

- 30 minutes of activities
- 30 minutes of scrimmage with another team

ACTIVITIES

- Incorporate 1-2 skills objectives
- Activities should last 6-8 minutes each
- Fit in 3 to 4 activities per practice

WATER BREAKS

- Every 10 to 12 minutes

#### (7) Scrimmage Guidelines

FORMAT: 3 vs. 3, no goalies

FIELD: 30 yds long by 20 yds wide with PUG goals at each end

GAME FORMAT

- Split team in half and hold dual field scrimmage with another team, schedule will be set up
- Restart out of bounds with kick-ins or dribble-ins (no throw-ins at this level)
- Incorporate frequent subbing

## (8) Dealing with Challenging Situations

### AGGRESSION

Aggressive behavior may endanger others and must be treated seriously. It is the duty of the coach to provide a safe environment for all the players. An aggressive child should never be allowed to repeatedly endanger others. That being said, the aggressive player should be provided the opportunity to play.

If a player demonstrates overly aggressive behavior:

1. Immediately talk to him/her and make sure they understand the behavior is inappropriate
2. Provide a clear guideline to the player, such as “if you do that again, you will have to sit out of practice”
3. Once the player reaches the condition you set, immediately take the player off the field. Important that you take the action you promised, empty threats will not deter overly aggressive behavior.
  - Briefly and clearly explain why you took them off the field
  - Show him/her where to sit (facing away from field and without a ball)
  - Extremely important to make sure the player is in your view at all times
4. After a short time (1 to 2 minutes), walk over to the player and ask him/her to tell you why they were taken off the field. If he/she tells you and agrees to discontinue the aggressive behavior, allow the player back on the field to play.
  - If player is stubborn and will not tell you why they were removed from the field, give them some more time to cool off.
  - Try again after a short time. Don't allow player back on the field until he/she communicates an understanding and commitment to stop the behavior.
5. If the behavior continues, repeat the steps.
6. If the behavior does not improve:
  - inform the K-clinic coordinator so that HYSA is aware of the issue
  - talk to the player's parents and enlist their help and guidance

## HYPERACTIVITY

Be careful when evaluating hyperactivity, it may simply be the result of instructing (talking) too long and not allowing the kids to play enough and utilize their abundant energy.

If a player's hyperactivity is not bothering or distracting the other players, you don't need to do anything. If it becomes a distraction to other players, try to use the player's energy as opposed to curbing or fighting it:

- Give the hyperactive child tasks to do like setting up or cleaning up the practice cones
- Ask the player to show you what he/she can do with the ball, i.e. keep them busy during downtimes

## WITHDRAWN BEHAVIOR

Children who avoid social play and aren't connecting with the other players often simply need a "safe bridge" into group play.

- Try having a coach partner with them at first and then try working them into the player group
- Try partnering them with a player they are friends with or a "friendly" player that may be able to draw them into group play

If the child is extremely hesitant, don't force them into the group. They may simply need a little more time to adjust. Be flexible and allow the child to enter play even if it is in the middle of an activity.

Providing abundant praise and reassurances to withdrawn players often helps with transitioning them into group activity.

## (9) Recommended Activities

***\*Note at the K-clinic level, all activities focus on dribbling and balance/coordination***

### 1. HAND TAG

Description: Every player dribbles a soccer ball in a defined space while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball and have to stay within the defined space. Have them count how many players they have tagged. For second round, have them try to beat their first score.

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

### 2. BODY PART DRIBBLE

Description: In designated space, all players dribble a ball. Shout out a body part and all players must touch that body part to the ball as quickly as they can.

- At some times call out two or three body parts consecutively during one stoppage (e.g. tummy, nose, elbow)
- At some times call out two body parts at once (e.g. hands and feet)

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

### 3. KANGAROO JACK

Description: All players except two or three begin with a ball, players without ball are Kangaroo w Players with balls dribble within designated space. Kangaroos hop like a kangaroo and try to tag players dribbling. If a player gets tagged or goes outside the designated area he/she becomes a Kangaroo as well. Play until all players are turned into Kangaroos.

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

#### 4. FREE DRIBBLE

Description: All players dribble a ball within designated space. Have players use inside, outside, and sole of both feet to dribble. Coach calls out changes in direction and changes in speed (fast dribble with outside of foot).

- Have players dribble toward another player and then do a move to avoid the player
- Coach can randomly put pressure on players and force them to change direction or do a move

Driving Dribble Variation: Designate Grandma as a slow driver, Mom as a medium speed driver and Dad as a fast driver. Coach calls out whose driving and players dribble at speed of the driver.

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

#### 5. RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

Description: All players line up across the far field line with a ball. Shout “green light” for players to fast towards the coach at the opposite side of field. Shout “yellow light” for players to dribble slowly towards the coach. Shout “red light” for players to stop ball and put their foot on top of it. Coach controls frequency and variety of light changes. Once players catch on, can add other colors with different actions:

- Purple – hop back and forth over the ball
- Orange – run around the ball
- Blue – hide behind the ball
- Silver – dance around the ball

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

## 6. FREEZE TAG

Description: Break up players into two groups with everyone dribbling a ball in the designated space. One team tries to freeze the other team by touching them while dribbling (also if a player goes outside the designated space they are automatically frozen). If a player is frozen, they hold their ball on their head and spread their legs. They are unfrozen when a player from their team dribbles their ball through the frozen player's legs. If all players are frozen the game is over and the other team takes a turn as the freezers. If the game goes more than 3-4 minutes, just switch the teams.

Monster Freeze Variation: Coach is the Freeze Monster and all the players are on the same team trying to avoid being frozen.

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

## 7. PIRATE GAME

Description: All players dribble a ball in the designated space. Shout the following commands and the player must complete the associated action:

- Swab the deck – dribble the ball back and forth between the insides of both feet
- Raise the flag – stop the ball and do toe touches
- Shoot the cannon – pick up the ball and juggle it off the knee
- Salute the captain – stop the ball, place one foot on the ball and yell "Aye, aye captain!"

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

## 8. SHARKS AND MINNOWS

Description: All players line up across the far field line with a ball, these players are the minnows. Select two players to be the sharks. Instruct minnows to dribble across the field and avoid the sharks. Instruct the sharks to try and steal the ball from the minnows. If a minnow has the ball stolen from them before they get across the field they turn into a shark. Game ends when there is only one minnow left or no minnows left.

Skills: Dribbling, Attacking the Ball, and Balance/Coordination

## 9. PLANETS

Description: Set up cones at four to five different locations on the field and designate as different planets. All players dribble within the designated space. Shout out a “planet name” and the players all dribble to the planet. Mix it up by shouting one planet and then changing to another planet before the all make it there.

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

## 10. GATE DRIBBLING

Description: Randomly place pairs of cones making small goals throughout the designated space. Players try to accumulate as many goals as possible in the provided time (1-2 minutes). Have players keep track of the number of goals they get. Challenge each player to get more points in the second round of the game. Make rules that players can’t move back and forth between one or two goals, they need to go to goals all over the field.

Skills: Dribbling and Balance/Coordination

## 11. CAPTURE THE BALLS

Description: Set up 3-4 “home bases” with cones equidistant from the center of the field. Split the players into 3-4 teams and place them in their home base. Place all the balls into the center of the field. On command, teams are to go get as many balls as they can and dribble them back to their home base. Players are allowed to steal balls from other team’s home bases. At end of 2-3 minutes stop play and count balls. Winning team is the one with the most balls. Players are not allowed to touch balls with hands or push other players. Let players meet for 1 minute to develop strategy before second round.

Skills: Dribbling, Balance/Coordination and Strategy

## 12. JUGGLING

Description: Everyone with a ball. Players try keeping the ball in the air with feet and thighs. Players count how many times they touch the ball before it drops to the ground. Ask them to shout out their highest score.

Skills: Dribbling, Touch and Balance/Coordination