

## SASA U4 Coaching Guide

### ***Philosophy: Why U4 Matters***

The U4 age group is often a player's very first experience with soccer. This is the pivotal year where SASA can create a positive, fun, and welcoming environment that encourages players and families to stay involved for years to come. At this age, success is measured by smiles, enthusiasm, and players looking forward to coming back each week.

The primary goals at U4 are:

- Introduce the game of soccer in a safe and joyful way.
- Help players feel comfortable on the field with a ball.
- Build trust with families and set expectations for the soccer experience.

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### **Practice Framework: Play–Practice–Play (PPP)**

*The Play–Practice–Play (PPP) format works well for U4 because it keeps players engaged and moving. U4 players have very short attention spans and learn best through play.*

### ***Recommended Session Length***

- 30–40 minutes total.
- One session per week is sufficient.

### **Example Session Outline**

Phase	Time	Purpose
Play 1: Free Play	5–10 min	Let players explore and play with minimal instruction. Observe how they interact with the ball and each other.
Practice: Focused Activity	15–20 min	Introduce one basic skill (like dribbling) through a fun game or activity. Keep it simple and engaging.
Play 2: Guided Play	5–10 min	Another short game where players can use the skill they practiced. Offer light encouragement and guidance.

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### ***Skills & Competencies***

At U4, focus on simple technical and personal skills:

#### **Technical Skills**

- Moving with the ball (dribbling)
- Kicking toward a target
- Stopping the ball with their foot
- Learning what is “in” and “out” of play

#### **People Skills**

- Listening to the coach and following simple directions
- Taking turns and sharing the ball
- Building confidence and feeling included

### **Coach Prompts**

At U4, coaching is more about guiding than instructing. Use positive language and simple questions to engage players:

- “Can you show me how fast you can go with the ball?”
- “Who can stop the ball first when I say ‘stop’?”
- “Where do we want to kick the ball?”
- “How can we help our teammates?”