

SASA U7–8 Coaching Guide

Philosophy: Why U7–8 Matters

The U7–8 age group is a critical stage where players begin to develop stronger technical skills, understand basic tactics, and experience more competitive play. At this age, players start noticing skill differences among peers, and coaches can help all players feel successful while addressing individual growth. Success here means players enjoy the game, improve their abilities, and gain confidence playing with and against others.

The primary goals at U7–8 are:

- Build on foundational skills with more precision and creativity.
- Introduce players to simple tactical ideas like spacing and support.
- Foster resilience, teamwork, and enjoyment of competition.

Practice Framework: Play–Practice–Play (PPP)

At U7–8, players can handle longer and more structured activities but still learn best through games and challenges. The PPP format keeps sessions engaging while introducing more complex concepts.

Recommended Session Length

- 50–60 minutes total.
- One to two sessions per week are recommended.
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Example Session Outline

Phase	Time	Purpose
Play 1: Free Play	5–10 min	Allow players to play freely in a small-sided game. Observe decision-making and teamwork.
Practice: Focused Activity	25–35 min	Work on a key skill or concept (e.g., passing under pressure, defending space) with a game-based activity. Keep players moving and challenged.
Play 2: Guided Play	10–15 min	Finish with a small-sided game that emphasizes the day's focus. Offer light, constructive feedback.

Skills & Competencies

At U7–8, players are developing more refined technical skills and beginning to think about team play:

Technical Skills

- Dribbling with changes of speed and direction
- Accurate passing and receiving under pressure
- Shooting technique and confidence near goal
- Basic defensive stance and tackling
- Understanding field positions and roles

People Skills

- Working as a team and supporting teammates
 - Developing perseverance when facing challenges
 - Beginning to communicate on the field
 - Demonstrating sportsmanship in competitive moments
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Coach Prompts

At U7–8, players benefit from thoughtful questions that help them problem-solve and reflect:

- “Where can you move to help your teammate with the ball?”
 - “What’s the best way to stop your opponent from scoring?”
 - “How can we make the field big when we have the ball?”
 - “Where should you be when we lose the ball?”
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For additional guidance or support, contact the SASA Coaching Coordinator or visit <https://www.ntxsoccer.org/coaching-resources/>.