



# U8-U9 COACHES HANDBOOK



L.T.P.D  
long term player development



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# PARENT ORIENTATION

At the beginning of the season, we strongly encourage you to hold a short parents meeting. As a coach, you represent Aurora FC to many parents and act as the voice of the club. With that said, there are a few things that parents should know from the outset to help the season run smoothly, with a strong emphasis on the fact that *we are all here for our children to have fun and enjoy the beautiful game of soccer.* Please remind your parents of the following expectations and rules:

1. Parents MUST STAY at practices/ games or designate someone to stay (other than the coach)
2. Players aren't allowed to wear jewelry or watches; no taping over earrings.
3. Players must wear shin guards.
4. Family members sit on the opposite side of the field as the players and coaches during games.

We're looking forward to a great season of soccer! Our primary aim is to ensure that the players have fun on the field playing soccer, parents, officials and coaches. Although we are the coaches of the team, we're also parents and ask for your support and co-operation to help make this a fun and rewarding summer. Here are some guidelines for players and their parents this season:

- U6-U13 age groups: no scores or standings are recorded.
- Please have players arrive 5-10 minutes early for any practice or game, so the team can be ready to start on time.

This is Club Policy and is strongly suggested that you wait 24 hours before doing so. Please do not raise the issue immediately after the practice/game in front of the players or other parents.

## **Players With Own Ball**

For the season, each player will be given a ball at the start of the season. Please write your child's name on the ball. It is your responsibility as a parent to remember to bring it to every practice/game.

## **Risk Management**

While it is not possible to eliminate ALL the risks involved in playing youth soccer, we at the Aurora FC are committed to reducing the risks as much as we can. Before each game, please do a systematic inspection of the playing area as most fields are open to the public and may contain debris.

## Referees (U9+)

Each year, we are pleased to welcome between 20-30 new referees to our club. These young referees (12-15 yrs of age) have recently taken the introductory referee course and are eager to start learning the game from a referee's perspective. These young referees learn game-by-game and need our help to build their confidence and self-esteem. What we do not want is to have our young referees leave after their first season because of verbal abuse and criticism from the sidelines. **Please remember that soccer is just a game, the players learn by practicing and through positive encouragement, as do our referees.** We would like to remind everyone that the Aurora FC has a **ZERO** tolerance towards abuse of any kind towards referees, players or coaches. As a coach/parent, we are responsible for our personal conduct.

## Snack time U6-U7

Snack time is at the END of the playing session. Children are encouraged to drink water when they rotate off the field. The halftime change over should not be more than a minute or two.

## Programming Dates

All outdoor programs start in late May and end in late August.

## Equal Playing Time and Positions

ALL players are entitled to play an equal amount of time. We will strongly encourage players to play all positions throughout the season. This is the philosophy and commitment of the Aurora FC.

# ROLE OF THE COACH

*Teacher. Mentor. Role model. Cheerleader. Parent. Occasional disciplinarian.*

Soccer coaches wear many different hats, particularly when they're training young players, many of whom are lacing up their cleats for the first time. You might find yourself leading a fun activity one minute and reining in a distracted player the next.

You must be flexible, because a session or activity that was meant to last 10 minutes might need to be switched up after half that time to keep players engaged. Above all, make sure everyone is enjoying the session—including you. Being a coach is demanding, but it's also incredibly rewarding. There's nothing quite like witnessing the thrill a young player gets when they score their first goal, or make a fantastic pass. Also, the lessons a child learns from a good coach can last a lifetime.

The objective isn't just to develop better soccer players—it's to develop well rounded people who are disciplined, persistent and able to work well with others. Shaping the lives of young people is a tremendous responsibility. As a coach, you must do everything you can to foster a player's love for the game, and to help them achieve their potential.

Good coaches seek out new ways to develop their knowledge of the game and how players learn. But it's not just about what you teach. It's about how you teach. Ultimately, it's your personality and enthusiasm that will have the biggest impact on your players.

Try to remember these three fundamental responsibilities of coaching young children:

**You are a Teacher:**

- Provide simple teaching/coaching points to help your players learn and understand the activity
- Encourage individual skill development through games and other activities
- Provide lots of activity to help contribute to an active lifestyle

**You are a Leader**

- Set goals that are challenging but realistic for your group
- Encourage your players to be the best they can be
- Promote the importance of being a good sport and playing fair

**You are a Mentor**

- Listen to your players' concerns and support them at every endeavour
- Make soccer a positive, fun experience for the children as they look to you for guidance

**Coaches Conduct**

Coaches are expected to be respectful of all players, referees, opposing coaches and all parents. As such, coaches should refrain from any language or gestures that can be deemed to be offensive at any time during a game. Remember that the players are there to have fun and play soccer, and they are looking to coaches for a positive example. Coaches should be specifically mindful of comments aimed at the referees, some referees are young and still learning. If you have a concern about a referee, please direct these concerns to the Club, rather than at the game in front of the players.

It is also important that coaches do not enter the playing field or the opposing team's side of the field during the game. There have been many reports of this happening during games in previous seasons, and is not acceptable. Also, it is Club policy that coaches and players sit on one side of the field and parents sit on the opposite side of the field.

Coaches should also ensure players are dressed appropriately for play in order to avoid injury. This means coaches should remind players that they are not allowed to wear jewellery or watches, and they must wear shin guards at all times while on the field. Referees have the right to ask any player who is not dressed appropriately to leave the field during the game.

## The Coach Toolkit

The gradual progressive development of players is FUNdamental to the enjoyment, technical competency and retention in the game. The “Four-Corner” development model places the player at the center of the development process with soccer experiences that meet the four key needs of the player.

Technical/Tactical	Social/Emotional
Physical	Mental

Every coach needs a variety of coaching methods to use as tools with their teams. Here is a tool kit of five coaching methods and explanations of their use.

1. **Coach within the flow of the game.** This is successful with players whose technique allows them to process and play at the same time. The coach provides clear, brief instruction to individuals or small groups of players as the ball is moving. This is not an ongoing monologue, but rather instructions at a critical time to influence play. The caution here is to not let this become noise.
2. **Coach the individual player as the game continues.** Here the coach stops an individual player to make a coaching point, but does not stop the activity. While the coach interacts with the player, the team plays a “man down.” Obviously the interaction must be brief and concise to get the player back into the activity.
3. **Coach at natural stoppages.** Here the coach addresses groups of players during times when the game is still, e.g. when the ball goes out of bounds; at water breaks; change over. While being brief and concise is always important, here it is important to focus on a problem that is fresh in the player’s mind.
4. **Allowing the conditions of the activity to coach the theme.** Here the conditions of the activity provide the problem for the players to solve. For example, the 6-goal game to coach small group defending. Defending three goals forces the players to pay particular attention to cover and balance. Conversely attacking three goals will reward the team that can change the point of attack quickly and accurately.
5. **Coach using the “freeze” method.** Here the coach “freezes” the game to make his or hers coaching point. This allows the coach to “paint” a very visual picture for the players. Use this option with care, because if used too often it can disrupt the game and frustrate the players.

## ***Guiding Principles to Practice/Games***

- Make sure each player has a soccer ball
- Ensure that your sessions have plenty of movement and promote running, stopping, changing direction, and ball manipulation
- Avoid long lineups and keep information short and simple
- Everyone should be included as much as possible
- Practices should be varied and versatile
- Teach the players to show respect for opponents and referees
- Make sure each player has the appropriate equipment
- Remember the games are for the kids (not the adults)
- Be a kid yourself for an hour and have fun

It is very important to understand the stages in the **Long Term Player Development** program that your players have reached in order to provide a safe learning environment.

### **FUNDamentals (U6-U9)**

At the FUNdamentals stage, individual player development is paramount. We create and promote an environment that is fun and allows players to learn through exploration. The emphasis here is placed on the ABC's of movement: agility, balance and co-ordination plus speed. Movement exercises/games are designed to get players several touches with the ball.

### **Learn To Train (U10-U13)**

This is the "Golden Age of Learning" and an important time to teach basic principles of play and establish a solid training ethic. Coaches will emphasize repetitions, as they are important to develop technical excellence, but create a fun and challenging environment with activities and games to stimulate learning.

## ***Coach Self-Development***

The OSA offers more than 100 courses and coach education opportunities each year. The Aurora FC encourages all coaches to be active participants in the coaching community through certification, coaching clinics, online resources and conferences. Here are a few coaching resources to help you get started. If you would like more information, please contact our House League Director [www.aysc.ca](http://www.aysc.ca)

Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) - [www.ontariosoccer.net](http://www.ontariosoccer.net)  
Canada Soccer Association (CSA) - [www.canadasoccer.com](http://www.canadasoccer.com)  
York Region Soccer Association (YRSA) - [www.yrsa.ca](http://www.yrsa.ca)

# GAME DAY

## Equipment

You will receive a coaching bag with the following equipment, that should be brought to the field at all times: 1 First Aid Kit, 15 Discs/cones, 1 Air Pump, 2 Pylons, 2-4 used soccer balls to be used if a player forgets their own ball. U7 and older will get a keeper shirt and gloves and U9 and older get a game ball and game sheets. Please contact the office if you have any equipment problems such as missing cones or defective soccer balls. Problems with sizing of shirts need to be directed to the convenor.

## Field Closures and Weather Policy

### *Severe Weather*

If games are cancelled, or fields closed, due to severe or inclement weather, the Town of Aurora will notify the Aurora FC by 4:00pm. The Aurora FC will email all coaches and convenors and post information on the Aurora FC website and social media channels (Twitter/Facebook) ASAP. If there is no official notice from the Aurora FC office by 4:15pm, then players, coaches, and referees are expected to show up to the field and decide if it is safe to play. Outdoor games will normally proceed even if it is raining but must be halted by the referee and or coach in the event of lightning.

### *Cancellation of Games*

Games can be called off, abandoned or cancelled prior to or after it has commenced for weather conditions, outside interference or unsafe ground by the game referee only. If no referee is present, the two coaches make the decision to cancel the game and no penalty will result.

### *Field Closures*

Aurora FC can NOT be responsible for providing replacement games for games cancelled due to field closures beyond our control.

# RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules and regulations section highlights some key components including league structure and an explanation of the Retreat Line. A more thorough explanation of all rules and regulations is attached to your coaches bag, and discussed in more detail in the houseleague document section of the Aurora FC website. Please reference this guide if you have any questions or contact our House League Director.

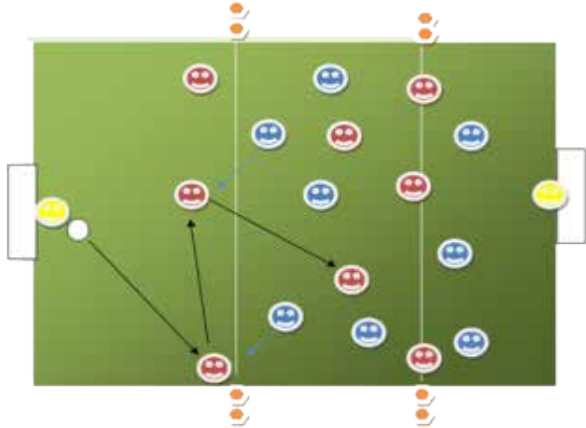
## *The Retreat Line (U6 – U11 only)*

To enable youth players to play a possession style of soccer they must learn to play through the thirds of the field and have the ability to maintain possession throughout the whole field, while under pressure. Every player on the field must become comfortable in possession of the ball. Possession based soccer should become their default style of play

When the goalkeeper has the ball at a goal kick or after making a save the opposing team members would “retreat” to the predetermined area of the field. The predetermined areas are as follows:

- 5v5 - Half way line. It is recommended the goalkeeper does not drop kick the ball
- 7v7 – 1/3rds line

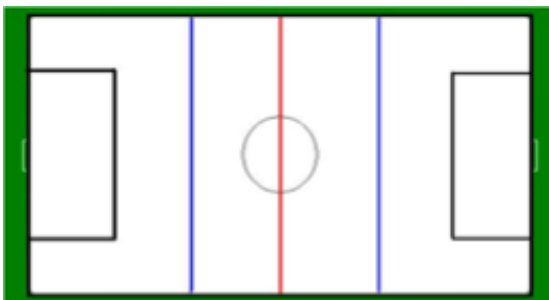
With the opposition retreating to the correct part of the field the goalkeeper can now successfully throw or pass the ball to a team mate. Once the player receiving the ball from the goalkeeper receives the ball, the ball is in play and the opposition players can pressure and attempt to win the ball.



If the goalkeeper chooses not to wait for the opposing players to “retreat” and throws or passes the ball down the field, the ball is instantly in play and does not require a player from the goalkeeper’s team to touch the ball first.

The ball is in play once it leaves the penalty area (7v7/9v9) All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:

- Is touched by a player of the team taking the goal kick OR,
- Leaves the field of play OR,
- Goes over the retreat line. (If the goalkeeper chooses to play the ball across the retreat line prior to the opposition crossing the retreat line)



# SESSION 1

Focus: Dribbling

## BALL MASTERY (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- Each player with a ball

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- #1. Players must run with the ball and dribble using all parts of the feet
- #2. Players stop the ball and touch the ball with the sole of their shoe using their right then left foot, keep ball on the same spot
- #3. Use right and left knee to touch the ball on the ground

## GATES (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- Each child with a ball

### Coaching Points

- Check shoulder
- Arm up
- Furthest foot
- Foot on the ball



### Instructions

- Lay out a cone course; place pairs of cones 1 metre apart randomly throughout the field.
- i) Players dribble through cones with their ball
- ii) Players stop & turn at cones
- Challenge players to 'race against the clock' - 30 second or 45 second race

# SESSION 1

Focus: Dribbling

## 1v1 Soccer (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 45x25 grid
- 6 goals

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Ball close to foot
- Change of speed

### Instructions

- Make 3-4 (3 for U5, 4 for U6) mini fields in your 1/2 field
- Have the players play against another player
- Rotate the games several times



## 5v5 GAME (30 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 35x30 grid with 2 goals

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Ball close to foot
- Change of speed

### Instructions

- 5v5 game to goals, including goalkeepers
- Option: 4v4 game to goal, no goalkeepers
- Rotate players approximately every 3 minutes



# SESSION 2

Focus: Change of Direction

## BALL MASTERY (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- Each player with a ball

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- #1. *On The Floor*: On the field, the player lays on the ball with chest and stretches out his/her right hand and calls out "Superman" as fast as they can
- #2. *The Fastest Man Alive*: Place ball between feet and pass with inside of the right to left while static and then moving
- #3. *Do Some Tricks*: The coach calls out some tricks (ex. Drag Back—these will have to be demonstrated first)
- #4. *Up To Heaven*: The player picks up the ball and throws it head-height then runs after it to continue dribbling

## SHARK ISLAND (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- 3-4 cone islands (triangles)
- Each player with a ball

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change of direction
- Change of speed



### Instructions

- Use cones to create 3 or 4 islands in your half of the field
- Players imagine swimming with their ball
- 1 player (Shark) bites other players by chasing them with the ball in their hands. The 'Shark' touches others with the ball
- The object is for players not to be touched by the shark
- Players can rest on the 'islands'.
- Rotate the 'sharks'

# SESSION 2

Focus: Change of Direction

## CHANGE OF DIRECTION (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- 2 gates at opposite corners

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change of direction
- Change of speed



### Instructions

- Two groups of players on opposite corners, one group with a ball
- The player with a ball will play a pass across and defends the player receiving the ball becomes the attacker
- The attacking player has the option to dribble through either gate
- If the defender wins the ball, they become the attacker and can dribble through the gate

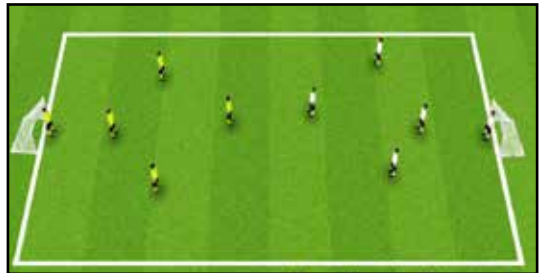
## 5v5 GAME (30 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 35x30 grid with 2 goals

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change of direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- 5v5 game to goals, including goalkeepers
- Option: 4v4 game to goal, no goalkeepers
- Rotate players approximately every 3 minutes

# SESSION 3

Focus: Running with the Ball

## BOB THE BUILDER (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- 10 Cones
- Each player with a ball

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change of direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- Lay cones randomly through your half of the field
- Split players into 2 groups. One group are 'breakers', the other are 'Bob the Builders'
- Both are dribbling, but 'breakers' turn up the cones
- 'Bob the Builders' fix them.
- Give teams a turn at both roles

## GATES GAME (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x30 grid
- Split in half with 2 groups

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- Players dribble through gates
- Split the players into two groups one group can only dribble through the red and the others can dribble through the blue
- Players cannot dribble through the same coloured gate back to back

# SESSION 3

Focus: Running with the Ball

## RUNNING WITH THE BALL (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 25x30 grid
- Split in half with 2 groups

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change of direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- Player 1 starts off running with the ball diagonally around the cone, and passes the ball to player 2, who then receives the ball and runs towards the opposite cone and passes to player 3 and so on.

## 5v5 GAME (30 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 35x30 grid with 2 goals

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change of direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- 5v5 game to goals, including goalkeepers
- Option: 4v4 game to goal, no goalkeepers
- Rotate players approximately every 3 minutes

# SESSION 4

Focus: Passing & Receiving

## BALL MASTERY (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- Each player with a ball

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Change direction
- Close control



### Instructions

- #1. *Change With a Mate*: The player stops the ball with the sole of their shoe, makes eye contact, and call out the name of the closest person to change position
- #2. *Toe the Line*: Using the sole of the shoe roll the ball in a straight line with both left and right feet
- #3. *Stop Start Again*: Stop ball with sole, start with laces (they should skip while doing this exercise)

## PASSING (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- Place several squares on the field using cones

### Coaching Points

- Firm pass
- Eye on the ball
- Step into pass
- Part of foot



### Instructions

- Players work in pairs with one ball and simply start off by passing through the square
- Players must play through a different side of the square they received the initial pass

# SESSION 4

Focus: Passing & Receiving

## PASSING TRIANGLE (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- Using 3 cones, create a triangle 8yds between each cone

### Coaching Points

- Firm pass
- Eye on the ball
- Step into the pass
- Part of foot



### Instructions

- Balls start at point of triangle and the first player plays a pass to their right, and follows their pass
- The players continue to pass the ball around the triangle

## 5v5 GAME (30 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 35x30 grid with 2 goals

### Coaching Points

- Firm pass
- Eye on ball
- Step into the pass
- Part of foot



### Instructions

- 5v5 game to goals, including goalkeepers
- Option: 4v4 game to goal, no goalkeepers
- Rotate players approximately every 3 minutes

# SESSION 5

Focus: Shielding

## FOX & RABBIT (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid

### Coaching Points

- Pinky toe
- Head Up
- Arm up
- Furthest foot



### Instructions

- One group of players are the 'rabbits' and the other are the foxes.
- Players are to chase the 'rabbits' (but not steal the ball) encouraging the ball players to shield their ball and run with it
- After a few minutes, allow the players to switch so that both groups become the 'Foxes' and chase their players around the field

## SHIELDING 1v1 (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 30x20 grid
- 1 goal

### Coaching Points

- Check shoulder
- Arm up
- Furthest foot
- Foot on the ball



### Instructions

- Goalkeeper starts off by rolling the ball forward just outside the box, while one player from each line races out to win the ball
- The first player to get to the ball attacks the goal while the defender tries to win the ball and score on one of the two small goals

# SESSION 5

Focus: Shielding

## 1v1 Soccer (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 45x25 grid
- 6 goals

### Coaching Points

- Check shoulder
- Arm up
- Furthest foot
- Foot on ball



### Instructions

- Make 3-4 (3 for U5, 4 for U6) mini fields in your 1/2 field.
- Have the players play against another player
- Rotate the games several times

## 5v5 GAME (30 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 35x30 grid with 2 goals

### Coaching Points

- Check shoulder
- Arm up
- Furthest foot
- Foot on the ball



### Instructions

- 5v5 game to goals, including goalkeepers
- 4v4 game to goal, no goalkeepers
- Rotate players approximately every 3 minutes

# SESSION 6

Focus: Shooting

## KEEP YOUR BACKYARD CLEAN (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid

### Coaching Points

- Part of foot
- Eye on the ball
- Non-kicking foot
- Follow through



### Instructions

- Play across your half field and divide players into 2 teams. Each team will have 1/2 the field as their 'backyard'
- The object is for each team's players to kick their ball into the other's backyard (area)
- Players continuously kick to keep their backyard free of balls
- Place a time limit of 30-45 seconds; see which team can keep their 'backyard' clean
- Have parents help retrieving the balls

## RAPID FIRE (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 20x20 grid
- Cones

### Coaching Points

- Use laces
- Eye on the ball
- Plant non-kicking foot



### Instructions

- Use two cones to make a 'net'. Place 5 or 6 'nets' throughout your field.
- The players dribble throughout the field shooting to score goals.
- Have players act as goalkeepers

# SESSION 6

Focus: Shooting

## SHOOTING (10 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 25x20 grid
- 1 goal

### Coaching Points

- Use laces
- Eye on the ball
- Plant non-kicking foot
- Accuracy before power



### Instructions

- Balls start next to both sides of the goal.
- Ball is passed once at a time across to the player directly in front of them, who takes a touch and shoots on goal.
- Players follow their pass, and the player shooting collects their ball and goes to the end of the line

## 5v5 GAME (30 minutes)

### Set-Up

- 35x30 grid with 2 goals

### Coaching Points

- Use laces
- Eye on the ball
- Plant non-kicking foot
- Accuracy before power



### Instructions

- 5v5 game to goals, including goalkeepers
- 4v4 game to goal, no goalkeepers
- Rotate players approximately every 3 minutes



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