

# 8 Mistakes New Youth Soccer Coaches Make

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*If you're new to Youth Soccer Coaching, a few common mistakes are likely to get you into trouble. Learn about them up front so you can avoid major problems as you become increasingly Coaching-savvy.*

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For many youth coaches, improving the soccer skills of their players fast, motivating them the right way and making training more fun and interesting can be a really nightmare. But that nightmare doesn't have to happen, especially when you know, first hand, the most common mistakes new youth soccer coaches make. This article will help you avoid those mistakes by laying out the most typical youth soccer coaching missteps.

## **#1: Not Knowing How To Keep Player's Interest, Focus And Attention In Practice...**

Children who are enthusiastic during a game can become moody and restless when they have to do drills, especially if they aren't much fun. This can lead to loss of interest and indiscipline during training sessions. The best way to keep your practice sessions interesting is to have a plan. That means you need to make your drills as fun and creative as possible.

Make things a little competitive as well - pitting small teams against each other in passing or dribbling drills makes the kids encourage each other and work as a team. A reward system can also do wonders in kindling interest in soccer practice. A good incentive for most children is to promise them some game time at the end of each practice session.

## **#2: Lack Of Motivation**

Motivation can have a major impact on the performance of your players. You need to strike the balance so that your team players work towards a common team goal by making their individual contributions. You have to find ways to motivate them and build their self-confidence so that they actually believe they can succeed.

You should try to make your training sessions interesting and fun, set goals in advance (both short term and long term), show a positive attitude, and always be supportive. Also don't forget to show confidence in your players, encourage them often and talk to each one individually and regularly.

### **#3: Teaching Players At Different Skill Levels On The Same Team**

You have a mixed bag of skill sets. The first thing you need to do as a coach is watch the practice sessions carefully. It's important to recognize the potential in each and every player and to ensure that no one feels they are better or stronger than the rest. Don't single out the stronger players for simple coaching tasks or make an example of them.

Don't assign the same drill to all of them with varying degrees of difficulty, as this can also cultivate a feeling of inferiority among players. Having them all work on different drills will make it clear that different players are good at different things. Make it clear to your players that they need to work together, as a team. No player is better or worse than the other - each player has his own strengths.

### **#4: Not Making Training FUN!**

If your players have fun playing and feel a sense of achievement while practicing, they will look forward to coming back. The fun aspect needs to be built in. A way to keep training fun and avoid boredom is to ensure that players get adequate possession of the ball.

You can do that by simply keeping fewer players to a side and keep your fields small. This ensures that the ball is shared between fewer players and everyone stays involved. Also find ways of making your players warm up without making it sound like a military drill. Maybe you could have short dribbling sessions around the cones or make them play a light game of catch instead.

### **#5: Not Building Teamwork And Playing As A Team**

Have a team meeting before practice and get everyone to comment on previous activities. Before the first ever practice of the season, spend some time setting goals that can be achieved by your team. These goals must be constantly monitored and discussed by the group. For every mini goal that is accomplished, don't forget to reward your players. It will tell them that you care about how well they are doing.

A short trip at the end of your season can be something to really look forward to. The togetherness promotes team spirit. When you go on these camping trips, it can be great if you can organize a friendly soccer match with a local team. This keeps your players busy and builds their self-confidence and friendship.

### **#6: Not Developing Passing Skills**

Passing is a fundamental skill in soccer and you must come up with a variety of drills in your training sessions to make sure every player in your team becomes expert at passing. Passing also involves the creation of space to receive the ball.

The player must put himself in a position to make the pass while keeping an eye on the target. The right passing technique must be used, by approaching the ball from the right angle and the ball must then be kicked with the appropriate part of the foot.

## #7: Difficulty In Understanding And Teaching The Drills

Another big problem that coaches face is making drills simple so that the players understand it easily. For example, in order to make things much easier, you have to explain every drill with simple step-by-step instructions, diagrams and key points.

A good exercise is to imagine that all the kids are playing soccer for the first time, so you need to teach the drills in a way that they can understand the different procedures easily.

## #8: Poor Finishing Skills

Do you remember any games where everything goes right all the way up to the final shot from 15 yards into a goal with just the goalkeeper in sight? Chances are if the players haven't been taught right, this is the point where it all comes apart. Your ace takes a shot, the goalie intercepts, by the time the attacker is able to do anything to the ball a second time, the entire team is in the box and there is a melee.

Sounds familiar? The important thing to be taught to your players is that the first or the second shot is not important, it is the shot that is converted into a goal that is important and till the whistle blows, your players have got to keep attacking.

## Sidestep the problems

These 8 mistakes are pretty common among new youth soccer coaches. Avoiding the pitfalls will take you through the youth soccer coaching success path faster, and you will come out on the other side a much better coach.



*Andre Botelho is a recognized authority in the subject of youth soccer coaching. If you want to learn how to explode your players skills and make training more fun in record time... download his famous "Youth Soccer Coaching Manifesto" at:*

<http://www.soccerdrillstips.com/manifesto>

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