

LOWER MERION SOCCER CLUB

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SKILLS CLINIC SESSIONS FOR OUR YOUNGEST AGE GROUPS

FALL INTRAMURAL PROGRAM

Gladwyne Playground

SPRING INTRAMURAL PROGRAM

Penn Wynne Playground in Wynnewood

PeeWees Divisions	4 year old boys and girls
Atoms Divisions	5 year old boys
Neutrons Divisions	5 year old girls

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SKILLS CLINIC SESSIONS FOR OUR YOUNGEST AGE GROUPS

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Each skills clinic should last about **20 - 25 minutes**. During these skills clinics, there will be a large supply of soccer balls. For dribbling activities, there should be one ball per player. For passing activities, there should be one ball for every two players. Once the skills clinic has ended, group the players into teams and let them play small sided games (this is usually 4 vs. 4).

The exact skill worked on each week will be determined by the Program Directors. The Program Directors will NOT always follow the outline in this manual. Instead, they will choose the practice activity that they feel needs to be worked on for that week.

Coaches should remember that goalies are NOT used in these age groups. Goaltending should NOT be taught until an older age. LMSA does not use goalies until the seven year old divisions.

WEEK 1: INSTEP DRIBBLING

Dribbling with the instep of the foot will be the first skill taught to our youngest age groups. The instep (also referred to as the top of the foot or “laces”) is the most important part of the foot. In soccer, the instep is used to dribble the ball, pass the ball and shoot the ball.

Coaches should let players know that other parts of the foot can also be used to dribble (inside of the foot and outside of the foot), but this particular practice will focus on simple instep dribbling. For these activities, the players will dribble up and down the field in a straight line. In week three of this program, we will focus on dribbling with the inside of the foot and changing the direction of our dribble.

Coaching Points

- The toe is pointed towards the ground.
- The player lightly touches the ball forward, using the instep of the foot (laces).
- The ball should never be more than a couple of steps in front of the player.
- The player should be touching the ball with almost every step that he / she takes.
- Keep the head up, players should only glance down at the ball briefly.
- Do not let the players merely kick the ball and run after it. The ball should stay close to them.
- When stopping a ball, the player should put the sole of the foot (cleats) on the ball.

When beginning players first learn to dribble, they tend to look down at the ball the entire time. Coaches need to make sure that they only look down occasionally. They should have their heads up most of the time so that they can see who is in front of them (teammates and opponents) and see the field in front of them.

Practice Activity

- 1) Each player should have a size 3 soccer ball.
- 2) The Program Director will line the players up along the sideline of one of the fields and demonstrate the coaching points above.
- 3) The Program Director will then instruct players to dribble with their laces, using both feet while walking to the opposite side of the field.
- 4) In the second progression, the Program Director will instruct the players to dribble back with laces at a jog.
- 5) In the third progression, the Program Director will ask the players to dribble with laces to the opposite line at full speed.
- 6) In the fourth progression, the Program Director will play red light green light to insure that the players are keeping the ball close to their body.
- 7) In the final progression, the Program Director will ask the parent-coaches and referees to come onto the field and attempt to tap the ball away from players as they dribble at full speed up and back to the starting position. This will introduce some soft pressure/resistance at the end of the technical session.

Game Time

After the players have worked on the skill activities for 20-25 minutes, the Program Directors will divide the players into groups of eight. Each group of eight will be assigned to a field. Each referee will get four blue pinnies so that the players can be divided into two teams of four. The coaches should have the players briefly work on dribbling the ball down the field with their laces and then shooting the ball at the goal. Do this for about five minutes before they start their game. Encourage the players to dribble the ball in the game. Encourage them to try and get past opponents by dribbling.

Do not let the players simply kick the ball down the field without a purpose. The philosophy at LMSC is that we want to have all players feel comfortable possessing the ball. Players may dribble the ball, pass the ball (this is too advanced for these young players) or shoot the ball, but NEVER simply blast the ball down the field.

Most importantly however, be sure the players have **FUN, FUN and more FUN.**

WEEK 2: KICKING AND RECEIVING TECHNIQUE

For the second week of play, we will teach the players the proper way to kick a ball. Our coaching will focus on the “instep” kick (striking the ball with the laces) and receiving the ball with the inside of the foot. Similar to dribbling, it is VERY important that we have players practice these two techniques with BOTH the right foot and the left foot.

Kicking Technique

- The “plant leg” is positioned next to the ball, pointing in the direction the kick is to go.
- The toe of the kicking foot is pointed down. The toes will graze the grass as the ball is struck.
- Contact is made with the laces.
- The kicking leg should “follow through” the ball and wind up pointing in the direction the kick is to go.
- Have the players take a couple of steps before planting the non-kicking foot and striking the ball.
- Players should first work on kicking a stationary ball.

Older age players will eventually learn to use both the inside of the foot and the outside of the foot for passing the ball. At these young ages however, we want to limit our teaching to kicking the ball with the instep (laces). Coaches need to know that the concepts of “passing” and “teammates” are a bit too advanced for these young players. The coaches should not expect the players to want to pass the ball or share it with anyone else in a game. Teamwork and passing will not be introduced until future seasons.

Receiving Technique

The most common way for a player to receive a ball that is coming to him / her is to turn the receiving foot so the toes are pointed out and the ball is received with the inside of the foot. The player should lift the receiving leg slightly so that the contact is made at the equator of the ball. If contact is made well below the equator, the ball will skip over the receiving foot. The heel of the receiving foot should be much lower than the toes, which should be pointing up. This is known as “locking the ankle.” If the toes are not raised up, the ball will likely skip over the foot. Introduce the concept of two-touch passing, one touch to trap the ball and the other touch to play the ball to a partner or teammate.

Practice Activity

- 1) Each coach and referee should work with two to four players. Have the players divided into pairs with the players about five to eight yards apart. The players should work on passing the ball back and forth. If there is an odd number of players, a coach or referee can serve as a partner for a player.
- 2) The coaches and referees should observe each player’s techniques and make corrections as necessary. Be sure the players do NOT toe the ball when kicking it. It is VERY important that players learn proper technique at as young an age as possible. Be sure to check for proper technique, both when passing and when receiving the ball. Coaches need to make sure that players are using **BOTH FEET** when kicking the ball and when receiving the ball. It is VERY important that we develop players to be two footed players. Be sure to stress this to all of the players.
- 3) First progression, see how many times players can pass back and forth in 1 minute. Repeat, with players trying to beat their first number. Parents can count for the players. Repeat a third time.
- 4) In the second progression, have referees run between the pairs and stand in between the players to generate interference and block the pass. Introduce the concept of moving to create a better angle for the pass.

Game Time

After the players have worked on the skill activities for 20-25 minutes, the Program Directors will divide the players into groups of eight. Each group of eight will be assigned to a field. Each referee will get four blue pinnies so that the players can be divided into two teams of four. The coaches should have the players briefly work on kicking a ball and receiving balls with their teammates before they start their game. Encourage the players to shoot the ball with the proper kicking technique. Remind them of the proper techniques and remind them to use BOTH FEET.

Most importantly however, be sure the players have **FUN, FUN and more FUN.**

WEEK 3: DRIBBLING WITH THE INSIDE OF THE FOOT

The third practice session will bring the focus back to dribbling, but this time the players will work on using the inside of the foot instead of the instep. Using the inside of the foot allows players to change the direction of the ball whereas the instep dribble is mainly for dribbling the ball straight ahead. Also, the Program Director will introduce the concept of change of speed and finding open space.

Coaches and referees should review what was learned in the first week with instep dribbling (i.e., ball control, head up, etc.) Remind the players that all parts of the foot can be used to dribble the ball. The inside of the foot can be used to dribble the ball to the left and to the right. Coaches and referees will need to demonstrate using just the insides of the left and right foot. The Program Director will ask players if parents drive fast or slow near a school zone or on a highway. The Program Director will then use these terms during the dribbling exercise to get the players to change speed.

Practice Activity

1) The Program Director will move all of the players into the middle of one of the fields. Cones can also be used to define a playing area. Each child will have his / her own soccer ball to work with.

2) On command from the Program Director, the players will dribble their ball inside the playing area, using the inside of their right foot and the inside of their left foot. As with all other skills, it is VERY important that we stress to the players that they work on all skills with both their **LEFT foot and their RIGHT foot**. The Program Director will start by commanding "school zone" where players dribble slowly. He will then command "highway" to get the players to dribble fast. Be sure that the players stay inside the field or coned area.

3) On the command of "stop" by the Program Director, the players will put their foot on the ball and stop dribbling. The Program Director will likely see players bunched on one side of the field. He will then introduce the concept of finding open space and a more equal distribution of players on the field. He will restart the dribbling exercise alternating commanding "school zone" and "highway" to get players to change speed as well as encouraging to keep their heads up to find the open space.

4) Once the players demonstrate proper technique with the inside of the both feet, have them start using the instep for straight ahead dribbling and the inside of the foot to change direction.

5) In the next progression, the coaches and referees will move into the practice area and try to kick the players' soccer balls outside of the practice area. The players, while remaining in the practice area, try to avoid having their ball kicked away by dribbling away from the coaches and referees. If a player's ball is kicked out of the playing area, have them quickly retrieve their ball and rejoin the game right away. **Note to coaches and referees:** Do NOT kick the balls hard or far. We do not want to hurt the players and we do not want them spending much time chasing after their ball. Repeat this activity several times.

Game Time

After the players have worked on the skill activities for 20-25 minutes, the Program Director will divide the players into groups of eight. Each group of eight will be assigned to a field. Each referee will get four blue pinnies so that the players can be divided into two teams of four. The coaches should have the players briefly work on dribbling before they start their game.

Coaches need to encourage the players to dribble the ball in the game. Encourage players to try and dribble past the opposing players. This is a VERY important skill for them to practice. At younger ages, they will often lose the ball. Coaches need to remember that players will only develop solid dribbling skills if they are encouraged to dribble at opponents, trying to beat them. Do not worry if they do not succeed at this right away. It will take a long time before players are able to succeed at beating players on the dribble. Never let the players simply kick the ball down the field without a purpose.

Most importantly however, be sure the players have **FUN, FUN and more FUN**.

WEEK 4: KICKING AND SHOOTING

The fourth practice session will build on what was worked on during the second training session. The Program Director will review the key technical points for kicking a ball with the instep as well as receiving a ball with the inside of the foot. Coaches should review all of the key points outlined in the week two practice session. Other key points to stress to the players include:

- The upper body should be leaning forward, over the ball, when shooting.
- The knee of the kicking foot should be positioned over the ball.
- Contact with the ball should be made at the equator of the ball.
- Players should NEVER toe a ball. Instead, be sure they use the laces to strike a ball.
- Stress to the players that they need to learn to shoot a ball both **left footed and right footed**.

Practice Activity

1) Group the players into pairs, with each pair supervised by a coach or referee. Have the two players setup about 15-20 yards from each other. Put the coach / referee in between the two players with his / her legs spread apart to create a small goal.

2) The player with the ball takes a shot at the "goal," trying to knock the ball between the coach / referee's legs. After the shot, the player on the opposite side of the coach / referee will try to control the ball as it arrives, using the inside of the foot. That player then attempts a shot on goal. Continue this activity for several minutes, keeping track of how many goals each player scores.

3) In the second progression, all players have a ball and play "kick the coach" in the field of play. Players try to strike the ball at the referees and coaches as they are running around the inside of the field. Players count how many times their shot hits the referees and coaches.

4) After about 20 minutes, the Program Directors will divide the players into small teams, assigning eight players to each field. Each referee will get four blue pinnies so that the eight players can be divided into two teams of four. Before the games begin, the coaches and referees are to work with the players at the individual fields.

5) Have each group of four players take turns shooting at the goal on their half of the field that they were assigned to. Be sure each player has a ball to work with. At first, have the players shoot at the goal with a stationary ball. After a few minutes, progress to having the players start further from the goal, dribble for about five yards, then shoot a moving ball at the goal. This is a lot more like what they will experience in a game since the ball is almost always moving during a game.

Be sure that the players practice this both **left footed and right footed**.

Remind the players that when kicking a moving ball, they need to get their plant leg next to the ball when shooting. The timing of this will be difficult for players of this age, but they should still at least be aware of this concept.

Game Time

After the players have had plenty of chances to shoot at a goal, get them organized to play in their 4 vs. 4 games. Coaches should encourage the players to dribble the ball towards the goal and shoot. Encourage them to shoot whenever they are near the goal. Most importantly as always, be sure the players have **fun, fun and more fun**.

Note: In this practice, more time will be spent with the players at separate fields than in previous practices. One reason for this is so each player will have plenty of chances to shoot at a goal. The second reason for this is so that coaches get a chance to work on their own with players. It is important to remember that when these players get older, they will be assigned to teams of 12 or 14 players for a season. The coaches who are helping the Program Directors today will be the ones who will be in charge of their own teams in future seasons. This is a good chance for adult coaches to develop leadership skills, organize youngsters, make coaching points, etc.

Coaches are encouraged to take charge and be leaders, while remembering that their primary purpose as coaches is to ensure the players are having a **FUN TIME**.

WEEK 5: DRIBBLE LIKE AN ANIMAL

Practice Activity

This practice will focus on dribbling. Each player will work with his own ball during the practice session. The practice starts out with each player dribbling his / her soccer ball around in an area, going in and out of the other players who are also dribbling a ball.

The Program Director will then stop play and have the players dribble like a particular animal. This is a fun activity for the players since they will enjoy imitating various animals. But, at the same time, they will be developing their dribbling skills. Below is a list of the different animals that the Program Director will call out and ask the players to imitate when dribbling. As always, be sure they work on their dribbling both **left footed and right footed**.

1) PENGUIN - A Penguin does not go very fast. Penguins have both feet pointed out a little bit. The players dribble the ball by using the insides of their feet, **alternating between the inside of the left foot and the inside of the right foot**. The players should try to touch the ball with every step while walking / dribbling like a penguin.

2) TURTLE - Turtles are very slow, but can walk forwards or backwards. A forward moving turtle dribbles a ball by placing the **sole of the foot** on the ball, then pushing the ball forward a few feet. The turtle would then repeat this, using the other foot. All touches are with the soles of the feet, pushing the ball forward with the left sole, then the right sole, etc. Have them avoid going in straight lines. Instead, have the players try to change direction, dribbling sometimes to their left and sometimes to their right.

A backwards turtle would have the ball well out in front of him. The player would then reach out with one foot, place the sole of the foot on the ball, then pull the ball back while taking a step backwards. The player then repeats this, using the sole of the other foot. Continue alternating feet, pulling the ball back and taking a step back. The players should never pull the ball under them so that the ball rolls behind them. Instead, they should make sure that the ball is always within eye sight, just in front of them.

3) CHEETAH - A Cheetah is the fastest animal on the planet but can only sprint for a short period of time. When the Program Director calls out "Cheetah," each player dribbles as fast as they can while maintaining possession of their ball. Be sure the players do not kick the ball far away and run after it. Instead, they should keep the ball close so that they can change direction easily and avoid having their ball hit another cheetah. This should only be done for short periods of time since they will easily get tired. Be sure players control the ball so they do not dribble the ball outside of the field.

4) RABBIT - A rabbit is rather fast and changes direction quickly. The Program Director should tell the players that a rabbit would dribble at a fast speed (but not top speed) but **change direction every time they touch the ball**. Now, the players are constantly cutting the ball 90 degrees to their left or to their right.

5) FINAL ACTIVITY - In the final progression, the Program Director will ask the referees to come on the field and attempt to lightly touch the ball away from players as they dribble as rabbits, penguins and cheetahs (not turtles). This will introduce some soft pressure/resistance at the end of the technical session. The referees should try to get in the way of the dribbles, forcing them to change direction and go around each referee.

Game Time

As with previous practices, divide them up into teams of four and play 4 vs. 4. Encourage the players to dribble the ball up the field and try creative dribbling moves in a game.

Most importantly, as we should all know by now ... make sure the players are having **FUN, FUN and more FUN**.

WEEK 6: USING THE OUTSIDE OF THE FOOT WHEN DRIBBLING AND EXCHANGE OF BALL BETWEEN FEET

Soccer players need to use all parts of the foot when dribbling and switch the ball between their dominant foot and non-dominant foot when dribbling. This will be a challenging session for many, but it is important to start using the inside and outside of the foot and both feet at an early age. We want the players to learn how to change the direction of the ball when they are dribbling.

Practice Activity

- 1) Have the players line up on the white line, each with a ball. The Program Director will demonstrate dribbling with the inside and outside of the right foot. The first touch is with the inside of right foot; the second touch is with the outside of right foot. Have the players repeat this with their left foot. Remember that players this age often do NOT know their left from their right. Just be sure each player is using BOTH feet.
- 2) Have the players come on to the field. Begin at a very slow speed, having the players touch the ball with the inside, then outside of the same foot. Increase speed to jogging as the players get more comfortable.
- 3) Be sure to have the players alternate between using only the right foot and then only the left foot.
- 4) **Second Activity:** Work on moving the ball from one foot to the other. This is to be done by pulling the ball back with the sole of one foot over to the inside of the other foot. The Program Director will demonstrate this and then the players will work on this on their own while standing in place. The ball should alternate between their right foot and left foot.
- 5) **Third Activity:** Return to dribbling with all right foot (or dominant), alternating between inside and outside touches. As soon as the coach yells "Change Feet," the players move the ball to their opposite foot as described in the Second Activity listed above. Encourage players to change speed after exchange from one foot to another.
- 6) **Final Activity:** The Program Director will ask the parent-coaches and referees to come on the field and attempt to touch the ball away from players as they dribble with the inside and outside of their feet. This will enable the players to work on their moves under soft pressure / resistance at the end of the technical session.

Game Time

After the players have worked on the skill activities for 20-25 minutes, the Program Directors will divide the players into groups of eight. Each group of eight will be assigned to a field. Each referee will get four blue pinnies so that the players can be divided into two teams of four. The parent-coaches should have the players briefly work on dribbling before they start their game.

The coaches need to encourage the players to dribble the ball in the game. Encourage them to try and dribble past the opposing players. This is a VERY important skill for them to practice. At the younger ages, they will often lose the ball. Coaches need to remember that players will only develop solid dribbling skills if they are encouraged to dribble at opponents, trying to beat them. Do not worry if they do not succeed at this right away. It will take a long time before players are able to succeed at beating players on the dribble.

During the games, do **NOT** let the players simply kick the ball down the field without a purpose.

Most of all however, be sure the players have **FUN, FUN and more FUN.**

WEEK 7: CHANGING DIRECTION WHILE DRIBBLING

The ability to dribble a ball and maintain control of it when opponents are near is a very important soccer skill. This practice will continue our work on dribbling.

Practice Activity

1) Place all players on one of the playing fields, each player needs a ball to work with. The Program Director will demonstrate a couple of advanced moves, then let the players practice them while supervised by the coaches and referees who will correct the players' technique as needed.

2) Captain Hook: Hooking a ball is a quick change of direction. The player takes several dribbles in a straight line, then quickly "hooks" the ball back in the opposite direction. This is done by having the player extend his leg out so his foot actually gets ahead of the ball. The player then uses the inside of the foot to turn the ball back in the opposite direction. The player needs to quickly swing his / her hips so that the player is now facing in the exact opposite direction that he / she was originally dribbling.

The Program Director will let the players dribble randomly around the field, working on hooking the ball. The coaches and referees need to make sure that the players are doing this both **left footed and right footed**.

3) Pull Back: This is another change of direction move which is designed to change the direction of the ball 180 degrees. The players start out dribbling in a straight line, then put the sole of the foot (cleats) on top of the ball, pull it back and dribble in the opposite direction. It is important for the coaches and referees to point out that the players should turn their body **in the direction** of the foot pulling the ball back and "see the ball" at all times. They should **never** pull the ball back under them in a way that the ball would be behind them. Be sure they pull the ball back and **turn so that the ball is in eye site at all times**.

Similar to the Captain Hook move, the Program Director will give the players plenty of time to work on this move while the coaches and referees observe the players and make coaching corrections as needed. Also, as before, the players will need to work on this move both **left footed and right footed**.

4) The Program Director will ask the referees to come on the field and approach the players. As soon as a player recognizes that a defender is in front of him/her, the player will perform a Captain Hook move or a Pull Back move to change direction and get away from the defender.

Game Time

After the players have had plenty of chances to work on the different dribbling moves, divide the players into groups of 8, have the referees get four pinnies for each field and get the 4 vs. 4 games started. Coaches should encourage the players to try the Captain Hook move and the Pull Back move in the games. Most importantly as always, be sure the players have **fun, fun and more fun**.

WEEK 8: FUN DRIBBLING GAMES – PART I - CARS

The referees will make a big circle with small cones. The Program Director will then line up the players on the sideline and briefly review the various dribbling points. The Program Director will also remind the players that they may use many different parts of the foot (sole, inside, outside and instep). The players will then be asked to dribble the ball inside the playing area.

The players will then be asked to work on change of speed. The Program Director will call “School Zone” when the players are to dribble slow and then yell “highway” when the players are to dribble fast.

Next, the Program Director will add the command “Pot Hole” to challenge the players to change the direction of the ball with the inside of the foot or the outside of the foot.

The next command they will learn will be “gas station.” This is where the players must turn the ball by using the Captain Hook move and the Pull Back move. Be sure that the coaching points of these two moves are reviewed. When the players hear this command, they will be asked to dribble the ball to one of the cones marking the playing area and perform one of those two moves.

The Program Director can then shout out a different command every 10 seconds until the players get tired. After doing this a few times, the coaches and referees will be asked to come onto the field and lightly touch the ball away from the players as they dribble their ball. This will introduce soft pressure / resistance to the session. Referees and coaches need to be sure to not kick the balls away hard, we do not want anyone getting hurt.

Game Time

After about 25 - 30 minutes of playing these dribbling games, divide the players into groups of 8. Have the referees get four pinnies for each field and get the 4 vs. 4 games started. Coaches should continue to encourage the players to work on the various dribbling moves in the games. Encourage the players to try and beat opponents with their dribbling moves. Most importantly as always, be sure the players have **FUN, FUN AND MORE FUN.**

WEEK 9: FUN DRIBBLING GAMES – PART II – PIRATE SHIP

This activity can be done on the same day as the “CARS” activity above or at a separate session. The last day of the season is usually reserved for 4v4 games only. This activity could be done the following week if there is another training session on the schedule before the end of the season.

Set up the field so that there is a set of cones on each of the touch lines, spread every 10 yards and another set of cones about 5 yards beyond the field. These cones will have balls placed on them.

The Program Director will call the players on the field and explain that they are on a Pirate Ship. They need to stay on the ship between the touch lines as there are sharks in the water. The Program Director will get the players to start free dribbling and then introduce the following commands (in order):

- **Don't Sink The Boat:** Players need to keep their head up and dribble into open space so that they are equally distributed on the boat. Tell the players that the boat will tip if too many players are bunched on one side.
- **Swab The Deck:** The players must now move their ball between the inside of their feet, alternating between the right and left foot. Tell the players that they are “swabbing the deck” of the ship.
- **Climb The Ropes:** The players stop the ball and do ball taps with the sole of their feet, alternating between right and left foot.
- **Man Overboard.** The players must dribble their ball to the touchline, look out to the sea, and do a pull back to bring the ball back to the middle of the boat.
- **Fire The Cannons:** This is where the players dribble to the edge of the boat and shoot their ball to knock off the ball that is on the outer cones. They need to retrieve their ball quickly and come back in the middle of the boat. This is done until all balls have been knocked off the cones. This can be repeated several times.
- Referees can be introduced as “bad pirates” trying to take the ball away from the players in the last progression of the free dribble exercise

Game Time

After about 25 - 30 minutes of playing these dribbling games, divide the players into groups of 8. Have the referees get four pinnies for each field and get the 4 vs. 4 games started. Coaches should continue to encourage the players to work on the various dribbling moves in the games. Encourage the players to try and beat opponents with their dribbling moves. Most importantly as always, be sure the players have **FUN, FUN AND MORE FUN.**

LAST WEEK: GAMES, GAMES AND MORE GAMES

The last week of the season will focus on letting the kids have fun playing a lot of small sided games. As players show up, put the first eight players on one field and let them play. As others arrive, have the referees kick a ball with them until another group of eight players is available. Put them on another field and let them play. Keep doing this as players arrive one by one. If desired, have a game of 3v3 going and add the next two players into that group to make it 4v4.

After a short amount of time, give everyone a quick water break. Bring the players back in after the water break and make completely new teams for the next round of games. Repeat this process every 15 minutes or so until it is time for the players to go home.

The Program Directors will be very busy on the last day of the season, talking with the parents about what takes place at LMSC beyond this season. They usually are asked questions about what LMSC has in store for them in the future, including soccer in future seasons, the Travel Team Program, etc. The Program Directors will likely be too busy to run a training session of their own.

It is most important that the players have a FUN time on the last day so they carry that memory until the next season starts.

Coaches need to remember that when the players get old enough, the players will be divided into set teams for the season and the individual coaches will be responsible for organizing their team, running practices, etc. This will take place when the players turn six years of age. Coaches in these younger divisions are encouraged to sign up to be HEAD coaches for their child's team when the players get old enough. The following coaching concepts should always be remembered for all age groups:

- Practices and Games should always be FUN. That is why the players signed up.
- Skill development takes place much faster when each player has his / her own ball to work with. Also maximize the ball : player ratio and minimize the number of players standing in lines doing nothing.
- In practices, try to maximize the number of touches on the ball that each player gets. This will maximize the rate of skill development.
- In games, players should be encouraged to dribble the ball and try to beat opponents. They will often fail and lose the ball, but this is how skills are developed. They must be encouraged to try their skills in game situations and not worry about failing when they are on the field. Keep encouraging players to dribble the ball and try to beat opponents. It takes a lot of time and many failures before success will start to occur.
- Players at these young ages, do not understand the concepts of passing or teammates. This is OK. They will get that when they are older. Give that time, players at this age do not want to share the ball.
- Players love to compete. Practices should have a lot of small sided games. 1 v 1, 2 v 2, etc. When coaches are running their own practices, play a lot of small sided games. Refer to the coaching material that LMSC provides them to come up with age appropriate ideas for practices.