



IN-TOWN COACH HANDBOOK

North Andover Soccer Association

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The GK Program



Age: Players age 4 (as of the date of the first scheduled game) through kindergarten participate in this program.

Objective: For our youngest players, the GK program is an introduction to soccer and an opportunity to build passion and skill. Emphasis is on players dribbling the ball, scoring goals, and having fun.

Structure: Teams consist of roughly 10 players coached by parent volunteers. Teams meet once a week on Saturday mornings for an hour of games and scrimmage. High school volunteers supplement the parent coaches and make the program fun for the kids.

Uniform/Equipment: There are no uniforms needed for the GK program; however, players are provided with a tee shirt. Players must wear shin guards covered with socks. Players use a size 3 soccer ball.

GK Rules of the Game

There are no formal games. Sessions each Saturday should consist of a mix of fun soccer games and free scrimmage. See pages 18 and 21 for game suggestions.

NASA encourages coaches to have free scrimmage at the end of each practice. For these scrimmages there are no goalies.

To enhance the fun and ensure all players get enough touches on the ball coaches can consider:

- Adding multiple balls
- Coaches join in and play with the team
- Move the goals into the field and players play around them "hockey style"

The focus of a GK practice is building basic knowledge of the game and having lots of fun!

The G2 Program



Age: Open to players in first and second grade.

Objective: The G2 program begins to provide players with additional challenges to grow their soccer skills and understanding of the game.

Structure: Teams have two practices and a game each week. Practices are during the week based on coach availability and games are on Saturday. Team makeup is between 12 and 16 players.

Uniform/Equipment: For the G2 program, players are required to purchase (or reuse) an in-town reversible uniform. They must wear shin guards covered with socks. Players use a size 3 soccer ball.

G2 Rules of the Game

For games, the teams play against another in-town team. The team will be split up onto two adjacent fields with the games played simultaneously. The fields are 20 yards by 30 yards and use 4' x 6' goals. Each field is 4v4 with no goalies. Coaches are encouraged to seek balanced gameplay and help all children find and celebrate success.

Games consist of two 28 minute halves and the ref will call subs every 7 minutes.

Most soccer rules are followed, including kickoffs, goal kicks, and corner kicks. There is no heading or offsides at this age level. Kick-ins are used in place of throw-ins. On goal kicks, the players must retreat to their defending half of the field. They can step over midfield when second player touches ball. If there is a foul, all resulting kicks are indirect kicks.

During games, coaches from both teams work together to manage unbalanced teams by adding or by swapping players so that the game remains fun and challenging for all players.

All parents and coaches need to use their best judgement to keep NASA games safe fair and fun.

The G4 Program



Age: For players in third or fourth grade.

Objective: The G4 program begins to prepare players for the traditional game. Coaches work with players to help them develop an understanding of the game and encourage them to begin working with teammates. The primary focus continues to be individual skill development.

Structure: Teams have two practices and a game each week. Team makeup is between 10 and 14 players.

Uniform/Equipment: For the G4 program, players are required to purchase (or reuse) an in-town reversible uniform. They must wear shin guards covered with socks. Players use a size 4 soccer ball.

G4 Rules of the Game

For games, teams play against another in-town team. The teams play 7v7 (six field players and a goalie) on a 40 yard by 60 yard field with 6' x 12' goals. The whole team will play on one field.

Games consist of two 28 minute halves and the ref will call subs every 7 minutes.

Most soccer rules are followed, including kickoffs, offsides (more on next page) goal kicks, throw-ins and corner kicks. There is no heading allowed.

Games are played with goalies. When they goalie makes a save the ball must be thrown back into play. There are no dropkicks or punts. If a teammate makes a pass back to the goalie, the goalie cannot pick the ball up and must kick it as though they are a field player.

During games, coaches from both teams work together to manage unbalanced teams by adding or by swapping players so that the game remains fun and challenging for all players.

All parents and coaches need to use theirbest judgement to keep NASA games safe fair and fun

G4 Offsides & Restarts

Offsides can be called in G4 games. A player is in an offside position if, when a teammate has the ball, the attacker is:

- closer to the other team's goal than the ball AND
- closer to the other team's goal than the second to last defender AND
- within the 14 yard line. (Note: for G6 and up, it is in the other team's full end of the field).

It is not illegal for a player to be in an offside position, however, the minute they become involved in the play, the referee will blow the whistle and call an indirect kick. There is no offside on a throwin or corner kick.

There are no PK's in NASA matches For G4, and all infractions by defenders inside the 14 yard line result in direct or indirect depending on the nature of the infraction. The ball will be placed on the 14 yard line for restart.

On goal kicks, the players must retreat to their defending half of the field. They can step over midfield when second player touches ball. If there is a foul, all resulting kicks are indirect kicks.

The NASA Practice Philosophy

Play/Practice/Play



NASA follows the Play 1-Practice-Play 2 coaching philosophy.

This a coaching philosophy designed around a player-centered approach to coaching.

Taking a player-centered approach places the needs and motivations of the player at the forefront of a coach's approach to coaching his or her players.

The concept of Play-Practice-Play is to allow young players to experience the game and game-like situations as much as possible.

This approach differs from traditional practices that may have children standing in lines, running laps and participating in drills that don't resemble the game of soccer.

credit: US Soccer

Part 1: Play

When players arrive to practice, the first responsibility of the coach is to create an environment that is safe, engaging and fun. In the Play 1 phase, players engage in small-sided games with the primary focus on having fun. It is important that these pickup-style games are led by the players and facilitated by the coaches.

During this Play 1 stage, players have the opportunity to experience the game while the coach observes and guides them towards developing their own solutions rather than being directed what to do.

NASA Example: Set up a field of play that can start as soon some of your players arrive with as little as 2v2. The “goal” of the game will be to knock off a soccer ball off a disc cone with the ball that is in play. Initially, there will be 2 cones on each side of the field with a ball on it approximately 5 yards in from the end line. As more players arrive, expand the field and add an additional target to each side. Continue progressing until the entire team has arrived and you have created a field of play adequate for your team with targets, and allow them to play for 10 to 15 minutes without specific instructions but with guidance.

After they have warmed up, give them a water break and bring them in to introduce the next part of practice.



Part 2: Practice



In the second phase of Play 1-Practice-Play 2, children are engaged in different forms of targeted learning activities to further guide their opportunities to develop. The goal of the Practice phase is to create an environment filled with opportunities for players to experience and learn about the goal of the training session through repetition.

Practice activities should be of appropriate challenge (striking a balance between success and failure), resemble the game, involve the players making decisions and allow for creative problem solving. The role of the coach during this phase is to guide players while using teaching actions. While it is during this phase that targeted learning takes place, there should always be an emphasis on keeping the atmosphere fun and enjoyable for the players.

NASA Example: For the NASA in-town program, you can use a small portion of this time to teach the specifics of a NASA in-town game, i.e., how to start the game, kick-ins/throw-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks, etc. See next page for example.

Note: For GK, the practice structure should be almost fully focused on "play". If a game is working, stay with it. If it's not working, scrap it and try another. The goal of a GK practice is #1 for the kids to be having fun with a ball at their feet. Whatever form this takes is ok!

Part 2:

Practice (cont.)

Game: 10-Cone Shooting Game

Suggested Ages: G2-G4 (add progressions if your players are grasping the game quickly)

Game Objective: The objective of the game is to help players improve the strength and accuracy of their shot.

Duration: About 1/3 of practice time

Coaching Talking Points: Help players understand where to plant their foot and to strike with the laces.

Note: There are many different games you can incorporate in each section of the practice. This is just one example.

10-Cone Shooting Game



Set-up: Place 10 stand up cones straight across. For GK players, the cones should only be about 6-inches apart. As you play this game with older groups, the cones get progressively further apart. For G8, the cones should be about 18-inches apart.

The distance between the players and the cones they are trying to knock down is also dependent on the age group playing. GK is between 5 to 7 yards. G2 and G4 is between 10 to 15 yards. G6 is about 15 yards and G8 is about 20 yards.



Game play: When you say go, players will shoot their ball straight across and attempt to knock down a cone with their ball. After they shoot, they do not run across to get their ball. The space between where they shoot and the cones is the “River” and if they try to cross it, they’ll get their feet all wet. They go behind the cones on their side of the “River” to retrieve a ball that the other team shot, dribble it back to the line (between the disc cones), and shoot again. Players keep doing this until one team knocks all 10 cones down.

Progressions:

- For older groups, play a round where they must shoot with their weaker foot.
- For younger groups, have the winning team count 5 “Big Fluffy Stars” as the losing team does them.
- Allow one player to be a defender and play in front of the cones trying to stop shots before they reach the cones.

Part 3:

Play 2



The final stage of Play 1-Practice-Play 2 is the scrimmage/game.

This phase offers players the opportunity and freedom to play, without interruption, in an environment that mirrors the actual game.

The focus of the Play 2 phase is to encourage players to express themselves and demonstrate what they learned during the Practice phase.

A coach should observe and guide using minimal dialogue if possible. By silently observing the application of the Practice phase in the final Play 2 phase, the coach is able to check each player's understanding and ability to execute the goal of the training session.

Credit: US Soccer

NASA Example: See next page

Note: The following example primarily targets G2-G4. For GK, keep the scrimmage light and fun. Add in extra soccer balls as necessary to ensure all players have a chance to touch the ball.

Part 3: Play 2 (cont.)

Game: Scrimmage - keeping the focus on what was taught in the "practice" portion of the session.

Suggested Ages: G2-G4

Duration: About 1/3 of practice time

How To Play: To reinforce what was worked in the "practice" portion of the session, set up your game field with stand-up cones on the end-lines. In order to score, players must knock down the tall cones with their "shot". Do not use goalies. The coach stands at midfield feeding balls into play. If a team knocks down all their opponent's cones, they win the game and you can reset and play again.

Progression: For G4, create a corridor with disc cones 5-yards in front of the stand-up cones in which neither the attacking or defending player can cross. This will encourage players to work on the strength and accuracy of their shot.

Coaching Talking Points: For this part of the practice, players should play as independently as possible with coaching points at a minimum.

Using The Mojo Practice Builder

MOJO is a fantastic and free tool to help you build your practices each week, using the play/practice/play model. With just a couple of clicks within the app you can create a personalized practice plan that helps you focus on your team's growth areas. This app is amazing and it will save you a ton of time preparing, while making practices easy to manage and really fun for the kids. Just follow these 3 quick steps:

STEP 1: Download The App

The link below will take you to a QR code for downloading the app to your phone:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nGb-9TOwAp2ENnTYWsJzCe-walczC2Id/view?usp=sharing>

STEP 2: Link To NASA

Linking your app to the North Andover Soccer Association will give you access to some great Mass Youth Soccer approved training plans. Here's a quick video on how to link to NASA within the MOJO app:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10wx6PahRcnDQL8dwQOkV5RabuxbWw76n/view?usp=sharing>

STEP 3: Set Up Your Team & Build Your First Practice

The link below has a quick video walkthrough for setting up Mojo to use when building practices for your team. Please note: You will see within the app that it can be used as a team communication tool, however we prefer that all team communication is done through TeamSnap, so please disregard this feature.

<https://youtu.be/ZTMLPd38xws>

Remember: This app is FREE! You do not have to pay to use MOJO as a practice tool. There is an optional upgrade within the app called MOJO+, a subscription which gives users access to individual 1-on-1 activities kids can do at home. Coaches DO NOT need to subscribe to MOJO+ to enjoy the great practice plans and activities.

G4 Activity Links



The links below breaks down some quick and fun drills to try with G4 players that are familiar with the basics of the game.

Depending on the activity, these games can be used for either the Play 1 or Practice portion of the session.

If you ever need advice or assistance on which drills to run at practice, please don't hesitate to reach out to Roland and Scott at doc@nasoccer.com.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ_hbsZmd7M



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8XU93a3kpo>



<https://www.soccerdrive.com/soccer-drills/age-level/u10>

G2 Activity Links



The links below breaks down some quick and fun drills to try with G2 to encourage teamwork and build foot skills.

Depending on the activity, these games can be used for either the Play 1 or Practice portion of the session.

If you ever need advice or assistance on which drills to run at practice, please don't hesitate to reach out to Roland and Scott at doc@nasoccer.com.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zXOG_W_3T8

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gY9ii_7e5o&list=PLaSL84U3HNjBim737vyN1EHnflifK)



[v=9gY9ii_7e5o&list=PLaSL84U3HNjBim737vyN1EHnflifK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gY9ii_7e5o&list=PLaSL84U3HNjBim737vyN1EHnflifK)
[GAcS](#)



<https://www.soccerdrive.com/soccer-drills/age-level/u8>

GK Activity Links



Below are some quick and playful drills to begin teaching the basics of the game.

For GK, the practice structure should be almost fully focused on "play". If a game is working, stay with it. If it's not working, scrap it and try another. The goal of a GK practice is #1 for the kids to be having fun with a ball at their feet. Whatever form this takes is ok!

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoYtwkme5HI>



<https://www.soccerdrive.com/soccer-drills/age-level/u6>

TARGETING GROWTH AREAS

SHOOTING

10 Cone Shooting Game (with progressions for older kids): p. 14-15
Lightning, Power/Finesse. Click [HERE](#).

DRIBBLING

GK: Red Light/Green Light, Fishy/Fishy, Ouch!. Click [HERE](#).
G2: Fishy/Fishy, Relay Races, Ouch!, Through The Gates. Click [HERE](#).
G4: Obstacle Course/Relay Race, World Cup. Click [HERE](#).

TEAMWORK

GK: Chain Tag. Click [HERE](#).
G2: World Cup. Click [HERE](#).
G4: World Cup, Lingo. Click [HERE](#).

1 V. 1 SKILLS

GK: Space Wars. Click [HERE](#).
G2: Space Wars, Pirates Treasure, Steal The Bacon. Click [HERE](#).
G4: Pirates Treasure, Steal The Bacon. Click [HERE](#).

Note: If you need advice or assistance on which drills to run at practice, please don't hesitate to reach out to Scott & Roland at doc@nasoccer.com.

Formal Training Opportunities

Introduction To Grassroots Coaching: This free 20 minute introductory module, is represents the first step coaching license pathway, Coaches who complete the module will also be provided with four complimentary Play-Practice-Play training sessions.

<https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach/courses/available/16/details/1546>

4v4:

This course can be done online via the link below.

<https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach/courses/available/26/details/1547>

There are also in-person dates periodically throughout the year that can be found here:

<https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach/courses/available/22/course-info>

7v7

This course can also be completed online via a 2 hours class:

<https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach/courses/available/25/details/1548>

There are also in-person dates periodically throughout the year that can be found here:

<https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach/courses/available/21/course-info>

Other Resources

North Andover Soccer Association:

<https://www.northandoversoccer.com>

Massachusetts Youth Soccer session plans:

<https://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/session-plans/>

Positive Coaching Alliance:

<https://positivecoach.org>

The Coaching Manual: (note: this is not a free service)

<https://www.thecoachingmanual.com>

Great Reads:

- Every Moment Matters, John O'Sullivan
- Soccer IQ: Things That Smart Players Do, Dan Blank

Three young girls in soccer uniforms are standing on a grassy field at sunset. They are all flexing their right biceps. The girl on the left is wearing a white jersey with a red vertical stripe and the number 1. The girl in the middle is wearing a white jersey with a red vertical stripe and the number 2. The girl on the right is wearing a white jersey with a red vertical stripe and the number 3. The background shows a sunset sky with clouds and trees.

**"ALL KIDS NEED IS A LITTLE HELP, A LITTLE
HOPE & SOMEONE WHO BELIEVES IN
THEM."**

-MAGIC JOHNSON