



NEW BALL METHOD FOR U6/U7/U8 TEAMS

THE PROCESS:

Whenever a ball goes OUT OF PLAY, a coach announces “NEW BALL” and rolls another ball into play. When a GOAL IS SCORED, each team runs back to their side of the field and coach rolls the ball towards the team that was scored against.

NO KICK OFFS!

NO KICK-INS!

NO GOAL KICKS!

NO CORNER KICKS!

Substitutions are done “on the fly” like hockey. When a player gets tired or the coach wants to make a substitution, the player runs off the field and a new player runs on. No stoppage.

U6 games consist of four, (8) minute quarters, with a (2) minute break between quarters, and a (5) minute break at the half. 4v4, no goalkeeper.

U7 games consist of four, (10) minute quarters, with a (2) minute break between quarters, and a (5) minute break at the half. 4v4, no goalkeeper.

U8 games consist of four, (10) minute quarters, with a (2) minute break between quarters, and a (5) minute break at the half. 5v5 (4 field players + goalkeeper)

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Several balls are required for this method. Both Coaches stand on same sideline with players (opposite parents). ONE coach holds one or two balls in their arms with other balls at feet and does the “New Ball” communication. Home team coach rolls ball first half, away team rolls ball second half.
- Coach rolls the ball to neutral space to start each quarter.
- If the ball goes slightly out of play, but the player dribbles the ball back in, that’s ok – let them play on! If ball goes behind the goal do not play on, roll in a new ball.
- The “NEW BALL” should be rolled to neutral space or toward the disadvantaged team.
- Coaches control the pace of the game. You may need to pause for a few seconds before distributing a new ball, especially after a goal. Give the players a few seconds to re-start and rest after a goal. Roll the new ball in near the center of the field toward the team that was scored against.
- DO NOT bounce the “New Ball” as it is difficult for these players to judge a bouncing ball at this age.
- Favor the team on the wrong end of a one sided game.
- Favor individual players who are not becoming involved in the game.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Why use the New Ball Method?

- More touches on the ball: This method doubles or triples the number of touches by each player in a study conducted in 2001/2002 in youth soccer. More touches means faster skill development and increases enjoyment of the game.
- More playing time: Youth Soccer studied the effect of the New Ball Method and found that in a 7 minute quarter, the ball was in play for 4 minutes using traditional rules, and about 6 minutes and 30 seconds using the New Ball Method.
- This method will speed up the game; produce more goals and more excitement, while at the same time de-emphasizing the importance of scoring and emphasizing play and fun.
- This method can be used to get non-assertive players involved by rolling the new ball to those players; and can be used to even the playing field in a lopsided game. At this age, score is not kept, there is no win/loss record, and the emphasis is on playing, having fun and sportsmanship, not winning.
- Unlike at the higher levels, at this age, goal kicks, corner kicks, and kicks-ins do not provide the tactical advantage for the kicking team, and can often be a disadvantage. Consequently, re-starts substantially slow the game with no benefit to the player.
- The New Ball Method has proven to be a great success with clubs around the country that have adopted it.

Since there is no referee who calls the fouls?

- Fouls at this age are almost always innocent, and result from lack of coordination rather than malicious intent, so fouls should almost never be called—a player can be substituted and instructed on the rules of play when that player comes off the field.
- Players are rarely hurt (other than hurt feelings) by a foul at this age, and since score is not kept and records are not important, any tactical advantage obtained by a foul is meaningless. And can be corrected with the next “NEW BALL”

Who keeps Time?

- The coaches keep time. Or a volunteer parent can keep time.
- Time limits must be adhered to in order prevent delays of all the games later that day.
- Coaches should familiarize themselves with the rules of play for this age group.
- Note that the rules of play are much simpler with the New Ball