



## Lancaster/Depew Soccer Club

### Director of Coaching:

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USSF National Youth License

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### Expectations of an under 8 player:

The under 8 age group have a bit longer attention span than an under 6 player but is still very short. Kids at this age are easily bruised psychologically. They will remember negative comments for a long time. They're at the age where they want everyone to like them. Try to give lots of praise.

Under 8 kids still lack a sense of space but you will start to see them spread out a bit when they play. Does that mean they will pass the ball? Probably not. Passing is still not an important part of their game, no matter how much anybody yells at them to do otherwise, it is much more fun to dribble and shoot. Let them, they are developing ball awareness. It is however the age where you can start introducing partner activities. Here is where passing and shooting can be introduced. There should still be no emphasis on winning. If they have tried hard they believe they have done well, we should support their enthusiasm! They will be able to follow 2 or 3 step instructions and are starting to have a good understanding about what it means to play a "game", unlike at the U-6 level. They are also starting to cooperate more with their teammates. In fact, they now will recognize that they even have teammates by the fact that they **occasionally** will pass the ball to a teammate, on purpose. They will often say the words "I can't" but will quickly run to you to show you that they can, even when they only think that they can't. Try encouraging them constantly, and ask "Hey, can you do this?"

You will have some players that are playing as a 7 year old whose had two years of soccer experience and thus have already touched the ball a few thousand times in their lives. This, however, does not mean that these players are ready for the mental demands of tactical team soccer. True, they do have some idea of the game, but the emphasis still needs to be placed on the individual's ability to control the ball with his/her body. They are still there to have fun, and because some of players may be brand new to the sport, it is imperative that activities are geared towards individual success and participation. Learning how to control the ball and dribble should be the main objective. They need to touch the ball as many times as possible during fun activities that will engage them. When showing new skills and techniques, players learn best by simple explanation with a demonstration.