

# COACHING CURRICULUM UNDER 8-12

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
<b>KICKING</b> Type of Kick	Drop punt both feet	In these age groups, players should be introduced to accuracy in their kicking, paying special attention to the teaching of the drop punt for passing and goalkicking.
	Torpedo preferred foot	Highlight the importance and relevance of the torpedo punt kick in the game. The coach should emphasise the value of this kick in gaining territory.
	Banana (checkside)	Highlight the importance and relevance of the banana (checkside) kick in the game and give time to experiment with this kick for goal.
	Quick kick/snap	Players should be given time to experiment with these improvised kicks for goal and to clear the ball from defence or a dangerous position.
<b>KICKING</b> Accuracy	Stationary target	Special attention needs to be given to the teaching of the drop punt for passing and goalkicking.
	To a lead	Kick to a point/area on the ground to allow player to run on to the ball.
	On the run	Acceleration and balance are critical in teaching players to kick accurately on the run.
	For goal – set shot	Determine distance players can kick ball for success. Balance and a straight run-up are important ingredients to an accurate kick.
	For goal – running shot	Determine distance players can kick ball for success.
	For goal – snap shot	Players should be given time to experiment with these improvised kicks for goal.
<b>HANDBALL</b> Type of Handball	Rocket	Players in the age group should be introduced to the mechanics of handballing the ball from an open palm.
	Both hands	Players should be well established in the mechanics of the handball and should be able to fist the ball clear of the open hand.
<b>HANDBALL</b> Use	From ground	Players need to be made aware to give the ball off accurately with a handball at ground level or when going to ground.
	Hit/knock on	Use of hand/fist to keep the ball in motion or to knock it to the advantage of a teammate.
	Follow up	Drills that require players to follow their disposal should be introduced, especially after handballing to a teammate. Ability to get the ball back in a drill is good incentive for players to follow up and encourages them to help their teammate who may be under pressure.
<b>MARKING</b> Type of Mark/ Technique	Overhead – standing	Continue to observe players in this scenario to ensure that the correct techniques are used when players are attempting an overhead mark.
	Overhead/chest – pack mark	Players should be introduced to some token pressure when practising marking on the chest. This will enable them to avoid physical distractions when attempting a mark and assist them in using their body position for an advantage.
	Overhead – jumping, both legs	The coach should continue to encourage players to leap and extend their body to take overhead marks.
	Chest	Concentrate on developing players' abilities to gather a chest mark in low/diving positions.
	In front – hand mark	The difficulty of this skill cannot be understated. Players in this age group have a small hand size relative to ball size and their lack of accurate ball tracking ability means this skill should be introduced gradually and in a controlled environment.
	Body use	The coach can use partnered or pack mark activities to teach players how to use their bodies to contest for marks.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
<b>PICKING UP THE BALL</b>	Stationary ball	Develop these skills using the different scenarios.
	Ball approaching	
	Ball going away	
	Ball running across path	
<b>BOUNCING BALL</b>	Touching on ground	The player should be placed under token pressure when doing this activity, either in a relay race, someone shadowing or as a requirement in a modified game.
<b>BOUNCING BALL</b>	Preferred/ non-preferred hand	Players should be placed under token pressure when doing this activity, either in a relay race, someone shadowing or as a requirement in a modified game.
<b>TAP-OUT</b>	Preferred/ non-preferred hand	Start development of skill to a stationary target. Emphasise the correct position of hand, palm, then fist. From stationary target, progress to moving tap-out and to moving target.
<b>PLAY ON</b> *depending on local rules	Selecting when*	Players need to be made aware of the importance of playing on when the opportunity arises and not stall the movement of the ball when they take a mark, receive a free kick etc.
<b>CHANGING DIRECTION</b>	Baulk/side-step/ dummy/spin	Emphasise correct techniques. Work through from walking to running.
	Fending	A player's ability to ward off or 'fend' a tackle can be advantageous in a game situation. The coach must allow the players time to work on this skill, especially if local leagues allow tackling at this age group.
	Blind turn	Although this skill is generally discouraged by most coaches, players should be given the opportunity to practise this skill and given licence to use it in special circumstances in the game.
<b>RUNNING TO</b>	Technique	Poor straight-line running technique with or without the ball reduces a player's efficiency to cover ground quickly and accelerate out of congested situations.
	Receive	Players need to be continually reminded that their chances of obtaining more possessions or being involved more in the game will come with their ability to run to receiving positions instead of standing around and spectating after the ball has left their immediate area.
	Back up	This skill is similar to following a possession to assist a teammate receiving the ball. This skill also introduces the players to cover their teammate when they are attempting to gather or receive the ball.
	Man up (accountability)	Players should be aware of their immediate opponent and understand the responsibility for their immediate opponent. Activities at training that reinforce this are important at this age group. The coach should allow players offensive flair and not overly stress the defensive side of their game at this age.
	Running into space	Continue to assist players in identifying where space is on the ground and how to create and exploit space created.
	Running into vision	Players have a far better chance of receiving a disposal from their teammate if their teammate can see them in their immediate line of vision. Coaches need to encourage players to run to where a teammate is looking before that teammate delivers the ball.
<b>TACKLING</b> *depending on local rules	*Side	Emphasise correct technique and safety in executing the skill.
	*Front-falling	Players should be introduced to tackling from in front, given the techniques whereby harm and fear is reduced.
<b>SPOILING</b>	Preferred side	Players need to understand the value of a spoil, especially when caught behind an opponent in aerial/marking contests. Introduce the ability to track and punch the ball or spoil an attempt to mark the ball by an opponent within the laws of the game.
	Rear	As per above, but having the player practise and attempt spoiling from behind their opponent.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
<b>SMOTHERING</b>	Side	This skill needs to be introduced to players in a sequential and controlled manner so that young players can gain the confidence and expertise to execute a smother from the side in a game situation without hesitation.
<b>SHEPHERDING</b>	Arm use	The coach should assist players to develop effective protection for their teammates by introducing the 'brace position' and tensing the arms to shepherd opposition players fairly.
<b>ON THE MARK</b> *depending on local rules	Standing the mark	Educate players to effectively guard or stand the mark to discourage the opposition from playing on or gaining an advantage. Arms high and a sideways jumping motion can assist in this process.
<b>BUMPING</b>	Technique	The correct bumping technique needs to be introduced to players in these age groups. Use bump bags and other soft materials to begin with and discourage players from jumping off the ground.
	One-on-one tussle	Players should be encouraged to develop ways in which they can stand their ground and experiment using their own strength and maintaining balance.
<b>CHASING</b>	Chase	Understanding of when to chase in relation to game situations.
<b>ROLLING</b>	Forward – shoulder roll	The forward shoulder roll should be reinforced to this age group.
	Forward recover	The extension of the forward shoulder role is the ability to perform the shoulder role once sent off balance and then recovering to one's feet as quickly as possible to remain in the contest.
<b>LANDING</b>	Two feet	The two-foot landing or the 'motorbike' landing should be reinforced to this age group.
	One foot	Extend the players by reinforcing the two-foot landing and then the one-foot landing.
	Various positions and forces	Vary the direction players are put off balance to enable them to improve their ability to fall effectively and safely.
<b>RECOVERY</b>	Second and third efforts	Players need to be introduced to the concept of continuing to be involved in a contest beyond a single effort to tackle, mark, shepherd, chase etc.
	Maintaining ground	The coach can use partnered or pack mark activities to teach players how to use their bodies to maintain their ground to contest for marks and the loose ball.
	Keeping feet	Players at the younger age groups fall to ground too regularly and, if not countered, develop this habitually.

Tactic	Component	Recommendation
<b>DEFENCE</b>	Backline play	Manning up, accountability and 'matching up' with an opponent should be introduced at this age but not to the detriment of encouraging players to win the football and using their skills.
	Attacking	Players introduced to the concept of assisting in a forward build-up from defence.
<b>FORWARD</b>	Forward-line play	Creating, running into and finding space, leading and accountability for an opponent.
	Leading	Leading and the ability to get a 'start' on your immediate opponent should be introduced.
	Defending	Manning up on kick-outs and matching up on the immediate defender when the opposition has the ball will assist the defensive part of forward-line play. This practice should be tempered and the players' abilities to win the football and dispose of it creatively should not be suppressed for the sake of being overly opponent-conscious.
<b>MIDFIELD</b>	Defending	Manning up and being accountable for your own 'match up' should be coached to players who play in midfield/on-ball roles. This practice should be tempered and the players' abilities to win the football and dispose of it creatively should not be suppressed for the sake of being overly opponent-conscious.
<b>POSITIONAL PLAY</b> <small>*rotate around as many zones as possible in early years</small>	Zone specific	All players in this age group need to be aware and practise playing in the three zones of the ground (forward, midfield, back).
	Line specific	Players should start developing insights into the specific requirements to play in different 'lines' of the ground.
<b>TEAMWORK</b>	Sharing the ball	This pivotal concept in all team sports needs to be continually emphasised to this age group.
	Protecting teammate	See shepherding/bumping
	Constructive talk	Calling for the ball, deciding who should go for the ball, encouraging words and other forms of constructive communications are important to start introducing. Negative self talk and negative comments should be negated as soon as they appear or prevented by setting team rules and basic "codes" of playing behaviour.
<b>SET PLAYS</b>	Centre square, boundary throw-ins, around-the-ground set-ups	Understand what areas should be covered – back, side and front – and where the ball is to be hit should be covered.
	Opposition kick-outs	Match up and man up should be the only opposition kick-out plans developed and practised at this age group.

Miscellaneous	Component	Recommendation
<b>CONDITIONING</b>	Aerobic – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Muscular – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Anaerobic – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Speed/agility – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Flexibility	Stretching program used at training and on match-days.
<b>NUTRITION</b>	Healthy choices	Advice on healthy eating is advisable at this age group. Also identification of energy-rich foods and pre-game meals.
<b>WELFARE</b>		Interests of the child – social, emotional, development. Coach to develop self-esteem and inherent success or sense of worth in all activities.
<b>SOCIAL SKILLING</b>	"How do others see me?"	More 'we' orientated rather than 'me' orientated. Feedback becomes vitally important to get a sense of how they are seen by others. Peer acceptance becoming more important. Sensitive to negative comparisons with other children.
<b>INJURY MANAGEMENT</b>		Introduction to correct injury management techniques – RICER, warm up, cool down, stretching.