

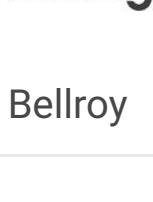
## 20 tips for coaching 5-8 year old players

### Top tips for coaching 5-8-year-old players:

Children at this age come to play football for a whole variety of different reasons, most will involve a love of or a fascination with football. Some will be forced to play by their parents, pound signs in their eyes. However, it is vital that we as coaches provide a positive first experience of the game which could lead to a healthy active lifestyle.



### Breeze through the airport

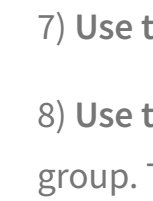


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- 1) Be prepared and ready for when they arrive, have the first game ready to go. As soon as players walk through the door, greet them with a smile, use their name and ask them a question about themselves. Then introduce them to an **arrival activity**, this could simply be a match. Give them a bib and get them on their way. Don't allow them to just boot a ball around until your ready and all players have arrived.
- 2) **Keep explanations simple** and let them ask questions. Players of this age ask 100 questions a minute, LET THEM.
- 3) **Be inclusive and involve all players** in one way or another. Ideally giving all players a ball each.
- 4) **ENCOURAGE and PRAISE!** Children of this age LOVE encouragement and praise.
- 5) **Use visual aids** (tactics board, cones etc) to enhance their understanding and observation.




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- 6) Avoid using negative words and highlighting errors or weakness. **Praise, praise, praise!**
- 7) **Use the players' names at all times.**
- 8) **Use the correct size footballs** (size 3) for this age group. Think of this as like riding a bike, you wouldn't give a child of this age an adult's size bike, it doesn't fit.
- 9) Mix teams around so certain players don't dominate.
- 10) Stay calm and composed with bad behaviour. Sit players out if you need to, **show discipline** but allow them to rectify their behaviour quickly by having a chat with them at the earliest opportunity.



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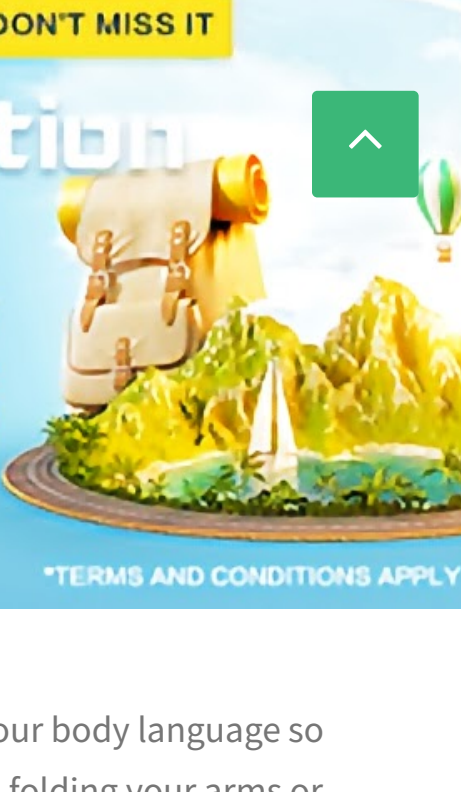


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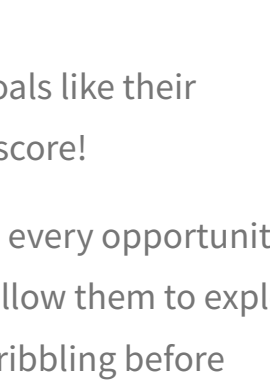


\*TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

- 11) **Allow communication and problem-solving skills.** Ask players to get together in groups or in their team and talk through how they can overcome certain problems, they may surprise you and come up with brilliant ideas!
- 12) **Have a plan B** for situations when your first plan isn't working as you thought it would, when the practice is too easy or too hard. Don't be afraid to change things, this is the sign of a good, observant coach.
- 13) **Ensure fair play and sportsmanship** at all times, don't overlook even the slightest breaches of rules.
- 14) **Encourage risk taking.** It is VITAL that players feel comfortable to make mistakes and try new things, this is how they develop, with the right guidance. Don't scold players for taking risks at this age, let them fail and help them learn from it.
- 15) **Use tag/dodging games.** Players of this age LOVE these types of games. They can be used as a warm up or an introductory game but make sure you eventually get the footballs out!



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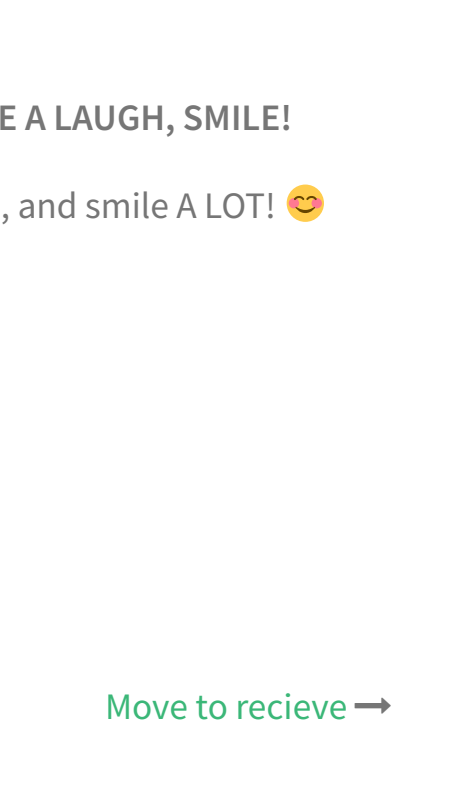


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- 16) Remember, they watch your body language so stay bubbly. Avoid habits like folding your arms or looking fed up.
- 17) **Keep them busy.** Minimum stoppages, except for drinks.
- 18) Encourage them celebrate goals like their favourite footballers when they score!
- 19) **Give them a football each** at every opportunity, let them be selfish and greedy, allow them to explore the ball and be comfortable in dribbling before passing!
- 20) **BE SILLY, BE FUNNY, HAVE A LAUGH, SMILE!**

Allow enjoyment, be positive, and smile A LOT! 😊

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