



US YOUTH SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION
ASSISTANT COACH SERIES

U6 and U8
**PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES**
for the Parent Coach

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this activity guidebook is to give you the youth coach, an idea of what should be covered throughout the typical season. The activities reflect the philosophy of the original US Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer. All sessions will key on development in a low-stress, fun-filled environment to give you an organized structure from which you may apply to the particular needs of your team. You should be able to create your own sessions once you understand the essential ingredients.

A practice session should progress from simple to more complex activities:

1. Organizing activity: Emphasis on preparing the player both physically and mentally for the training session. General motor ability (i.e., balance, coordination and flexibility) should also be enhanced. All of the above should be followed by stretching of the various parts of the body. Young players don't need stretching, but it's a good habit for them to begin early.
2. Individual activities: This portion will cover fun-filled methods that can improve a young player's technique in a playing, non-drill manner.
3. Games: These games will challenge the player (without the pressure of high numbers) to improve a variety of the needed skills. It also gives players the opportunity to touch the ball more often.
4. Final game: This time will be used to familiarize the player with the different aspects of playing in a match situation.

The successful coach at this level is the one who can imagine these activities through a player's eyes. A coach at this level must create a fun-filled environment that will have players excited to return.

Learn more about Small-Sided Games at
www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/SmallSidedGames/

CHARACTERISTICS OF UNDER-6 CHILDREN

Short attention span.

Most are individually oriented (me, my, mine).

Activities based on characteristics should be individually based.

Constantly in motion.

Go flat out.*

Psychologically easily bruised.

Little or no concern for team activities.

Physical and psychological development for boys and girls quite similar.

Eye/hand or eye/foot coordination most primitive.

Love to run and jump.

Prefer large soft balls and Nerf balls.

Catching skills not developed.

Can balance on good foot.

*This refers to their racing about in games until complete exhaustion sets in, at which point they stop, breathe, then restart at a torrid pace again.

CHARACTERISTICS OF UNDER-8 CHILDREN

Attention span beyond U-6 but still not extended.

Inclined more toward group activities.

Still in motion.

Still very sensitive. Dislike personal failure in front of peers.

Beginning to develop physical coordination. Most can ride a two-wheeler at this point.

Still enjoy running, jumping, climbing and rolling.

Prefer real balls through imitation of the big guys. Sports heroes becoming important.

Still lack sense of pace. Go flat out.

Activities should be individually based and with pairs of players.

THE PLAYER

The needs and capabilities of players set the philosophy and methods of coaching. We can look at the desired final product, a high-level, world-class soccer player, and create a progressive developmental program that will, over time, allow some to reach the highest standards. At the same time, the soccer experience must be a positive and rewarding one to all those who participate. Each player that steps on the field has different needs and potential. For a variety of reasons, each player will succeed at very different levels. As coach, you can accomplish this by setting individual levels of expectation.

Try as a coach to be open to the needs (physical and psychological) of your players. Understand that soccer is just another vehicle through which we all try to add to the lives of those who participate. Certainly we hope to develop players with a wealth of talent, but at the same time we hope to promote good character and responsibility in young people.

Don't let the value of winning completely overshadow the value of learning. Don't assume that every training method must directly correlate with the game of soccer. For example, games that involve movement and the use of hands can be of value to the coordination of your players. The two are not meant to be the same. A young player must go through years of preparation before he can begin to imitate top flight soccer. Give players a chance to learn and enjoy the very special years of their growth.

Don't let the notion of demonstration scare you. Use that good old American ingenuity that has gotten us where we are today. Bring in a local high school or college hero to demonstrate, or for that matter, a player at least two years older than your players. They'll love him. After all he really knows everything; he's two years older. Most importantly - have fun!

The following are the Principles of Youth Coaching and should be considered as you put together your practice.

1. Developmentally appropriate

Are your activities appropriate for the players you are dealing with?

2. Clear, concise, correct information - brevity, clarity, relevance

Make sure you are giving the players information in a way they can understand. It is also important that the information you give them is in fact correct.

3. Simple to complex

Your practice should begin simple and build into complex activities.

4. Safe and appropriate training area

Make sure the area is safe for the players to play in and the size of the area is appropriate for their level of play.

5. Decision making

The players should be put into decision-making situations. There should be a large number of decisions made on the field by the players not the adult directed. Let the players take ownership of the game.

6. Implications for the game

Do the activities make sense in terms of the game of soccer?

Coaching Activity Checklist

Are the activities fun?

Are the activities organized?

Are the players involved in the activities?

Is creativity and decision making being used?

Are the spaces used appropriate?

Is the coach's feedback appropriate?

Is the coach guiding or controlling the players in the activity?

Are there implications for the game?

SESSION 1 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Organizing activity - (10-15 Minutes)

- A. Start by having players dribble in and out of each other with their hands. At your command, have them stop their balls with various parts of the body as identified by colors. Example - red is right hand, blue is left foot, rainbow is forehead, etc
- B. Have players jog with a ball at their feet in the same direction. When you call a number, that many players must come together with balls touching each other. Example: the call is three, the units of three must be formed by the players. Those players unable to form a unit of three do three half-push-ups
- C. On command, have the players throw the ball from behind through their legs, do a forward roll, and retrieve it.
- D. Throw the ball in the air, clap three times, leap in the air and catch it. Change the variables to suit your objectives, e.g., throw ball and touch the ground or throw ball and touch the ground with an elbow, etc.

Individual Activities (10-15 Minutes) Emphasis Dribbling

- A. Have players dribble their ball in large spaces and try to cover the space. Example: several may choose the penalty area, while others the center circle, etc. Demand that they be creative.
- B. Put out as many cones or markers as there are players. Have players dribble randomly until you command they dribble to a cone. They should all run to the nearest marker and freeze with the ball.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This prepares the body and mind for the session to follow.
 - B. This builds hand/eye coordination and general movement abilities.
 - C. This game improves dribbling in a fun, competitive environment.
 - D. Emphasis here is on a visual tracking and dribbling to a designated place.
-
- A. Observe ball control and balance.
 - B. Beyond the dribbling and movement enhancement, you are asking the player to expand the decision-making process.

SESSION 1 (continued)

ACTIVITIES

- C. Play follow the coach. Every player follows the coach dribbling around the field. Along the way, coach does goofy things like hopping on one foot, rolling on the ground, sitting and spinning on the ball, etc. Show players that coach has fun too.

Games (10-15 minutes)

- A. In groups of three, play 1 v. 2. The one who has the ball must dribble and keep it. Those who don't have a ball try to get one.
- B. Set up a game in which two teams of five to six players line up across from each other at a distance of 15 yds. On command (call players by name), one player from each side runs to win the ball and dribbles it back to the team. The other player tries to prevent this from occurring and attempts to dribble back to the other line. Keep score.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

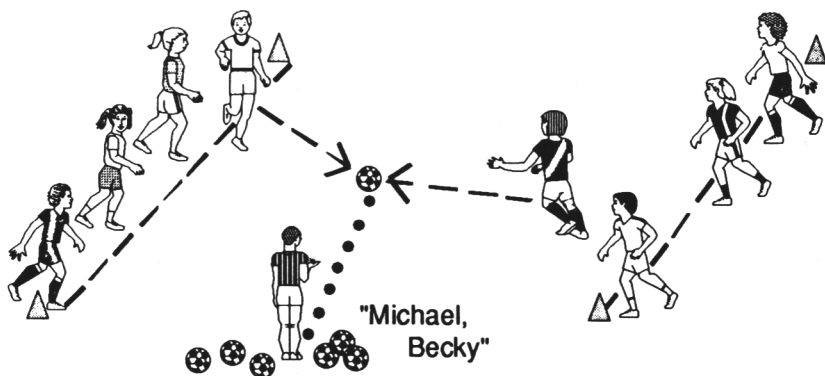
- A. Play 3 v. 3 or 4 v. 4, with no goalkeepers. Have one extra team of equal numbers. They rest until you switch them. This allows for recovery.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. The varied movement patterns that you demonstrate will simply put the players in positions that will help them improve their general coordination and balance. Along the way, enjoy yourself.

- A. Both A and B in this section create situations in which players become familiar with the pressures of the game.
- B. Speed of response and ability to beat an opponent are emphasized. Don't start with a ball in the middle. Roll or kick it out so they must react to it.

- A. Let them play! Here they can learn everything. They should have a great time.



SESSION 2 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Using the lines marked on the field, have players with feet together hop back and forth over the lines. Have them hop quickly, then slowly.
- B. With the lines of the penalty box as base, play a game of tag. Change the conditions to have the 2 to 3 "it" players hold a sock while the others run about with a ball.
- C. In alligator cross, half of the players are lying on their bellies, while the others must go from an imaginary boat to shore. Crossing players must dribble a ball and the "gators" may only reach out with their arms to tag those crossing. Make the crossing space smaller as players improve at dribbling.
- D. Have all players moving about on half of the field, playing balls with their feet. When coach gives a signal the players must pick up their ball and run to the nearest line. The last one on the line must perform a "joke penalty".

Individual activities (10-15 minutes)

Emphasis – Shooting (Striking the ball)

- A. Players stand with their back to goal and their feet apart. Each player releases his ball through his feet, and then chases it to shoot on goal.
- B. With the same situation as above, have the player release the ball over his head and shoot on goal before the third bounce.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. See how high and how low they can jump. Watch for the agility and coordination of the players.
 - B. Challenge the players with a ball to be creative by changing direction and pace.
 - C. Place the gators in random places so the dribblers will have to use body swerves to avoid being tagged.
 - D. Observe coordination and acceleration. Also, players must exercise good vision to find the nearest line.
-
- A. Emphasize quickness of release rather than power.
 - B. Eye/foot coordination is necessary to get the ball on goal.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Coach holds the ball somewhere inside the penalty area. When coach points at a player, that player runs toward the coach. Coach rolls the ball on the ground at the oncoming player's feet. The player must spread his legs to allow the ball to pass, then turn and shoot.

Games (10-15 minutes)

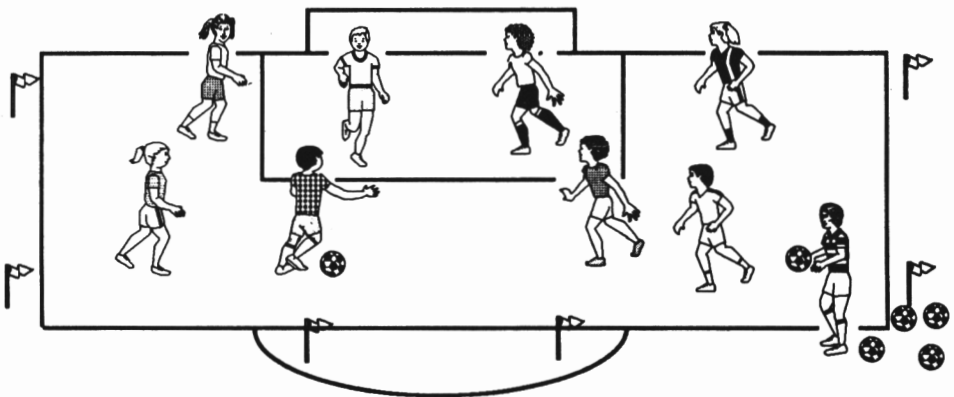
- A. Set up games of 2 v. 2 with goals approximately 10 yds. apart. As quickly as a shot is taken or the ball leaves the area, coach provides another ball.
- B. This game is called shoot 'em up. The players are sitting and balls are rolled or bounced to them. The player then shoots on goal.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. All of the players are in the penalty box, and four goals are set on the lines. Divided into two teams, each team scores as many goals as possible in any of the goals. Coach serves all balls one at a time.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Most players will want to stop the ball first. Don't allow that; keep the ball moving.
- A. This is designed for rapid shooting. If many shots aren't being taken, bring the goals in closer.
- B. Sometimes goals are scored when players are in very unorthodox positions. Create those situations.
- A. This is a good opportunity for coach to observe which of the players will really extend to score goals.



SESSION 3 | Striking the ball properly

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Each player lies on his stomach, with arms and legs extended as far as possible.
- B. Coach calls out different body parts, which will be the only parts that touch the ground (e.g. one foot and one hand, one elbow and one knee, forehead and both knees, both knees only, chest and feet).
- C. Ask players to walk like crabs, (seated but walking on hands and feet). Throw out a ball or two that they should kick among themselves.
- D. Put out half as many cones as there are players. Ask players to dribble randomly until you signal. At this point they should leave the ball and run to the nearest cone. Only two players to a cone. Repeat.

Individual activities - Striking the ball properly

- A. Ask players to run and kick an imaginary ball in slow motion.
- B. Place a small (2 yd.) goal between two players. Ask them to strike the ball back and forth to each other, through the goal.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Get ready!
 - B. Fun and balance are the objectives.
 - C. Ask them to try to tag each other.
 - D. Activities like this demand a decision and an action.
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- A. Give a demonstration. Stress slow, slow, slow.
 - B. Give a quick demonstration. Have a goal between each pair.



ACTIVITIES

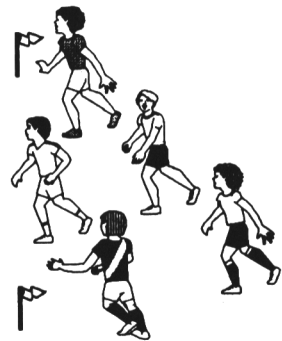
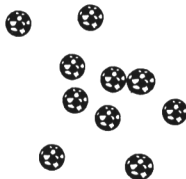
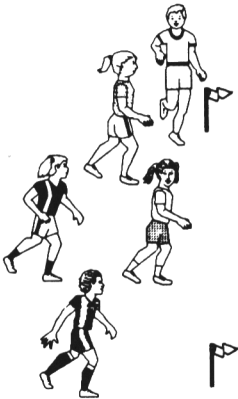
- C. Add some competition to Activity B by asking who can score the most goals in 30 seconds. Repeat.

Games

- A. Divide players into two teams. Have teams opposite each other, outside a defined area 15 x 15 yds. Place eight to 10 balls randomly in the area. On coach's signal, both teams should rush into the area and try to bring a ball back to their side.
- B. This will seem a bit crazy but give it a try on a hot day, just for fun. Fill up some water balloons and let your players try to kick them with the instep.

Final Game

- A. Divide into two teams and play soccer.



EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Competition adds both pressure to perform and excitement
- A. Keep score. You should be able to repeat this game quite a few times.
- B. This is just pure fun.
- A. Let them play and enjoy!

SESSION 4 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Create a circuit activity that involves running, dribbling, shooting, skipping, ball tossing and catching within the penalty area. From a starting point each player must dribble to a bench on its side. There he executes a wall pass, receives the ball and runs to shoot on goal. Coach stands in the goal (and attempts a world class save) where he sends the player on his way with a bouncing ball.
- B. Have each player dribble to a spot marked with two cones where he passes through, then stops the ball and throws it as high as he can. Upon catching the ball he skips quickly back to the starting point.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Dribbling

- A. In a large area have the players move the ball about using just the sole of one foot. After a short period have them switch to the other foot.
- B. Have players move about in an area using only their heels.
- C. Combine A and B by having players switch between sole left and heel right and so on.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Design a circuit that best meets the needs of your team. Ask players to pass through the course 3 times. Coach being a part of the circuit makes it more exciting for the players.
 - B. Watch the skipping closely, it's a good indication of coordination.
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- A. Standing on the support foot properly is the key to balance in this activity.
 - B. Players must be aware of what is behind them by turning their heads.
 - C. See how well the players can adjust to changes in directions.

ACTIVITIES

Games (10-15 minutes)

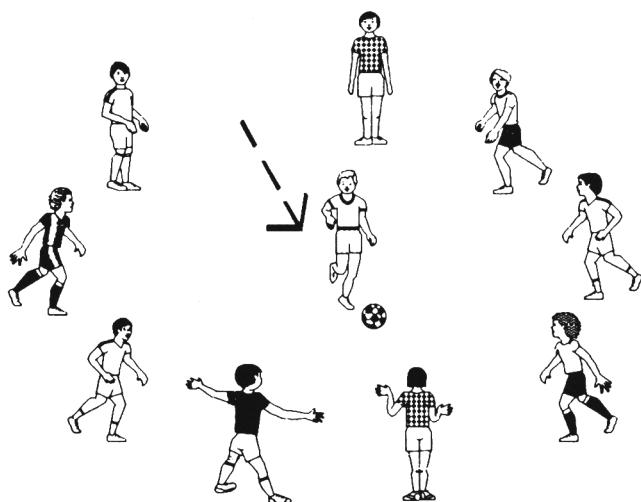
- A. Place four or five players in a line. The first player has a ball at his feet. He begins walking and the others in the line must follow his path. On command he leaves the ball for the second player who proceeds to dribble while the first player goes to the end of the line. Pick up the pace as they get the idea.
- B. Ask players to stand in a circle with one ball at one player's feet. This one dribbles the ball to any other player in the circle who proceeds to do the same.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Coach will need as many as four to six goals (cone goals) for this activity. Divide players into two teams. The teams can score in any goal of their choice. To score, players must dribble through the cone goals rather than shoot.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Encourage directional and pace change by telling them that straight dribbling is boring.
 - B. Their tendency will be to dribble directly across the circle, encourage changes of direction.
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- A. Place the goals at different angles and suggest that when one player scores he can't score again until somebody else on his team does. Everybody gets to dribble.



SESSION 5 | All Skills

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Start by having players dribble in and out of a dozen randomly placed cones in a defined area 20 x 20 yds.
- B. Ask players to dribble until coach gives a signal. At this time they should try to roll the ball (bowling by hand) and knock over as many cones as possible in a short period of time. Then they resume dribbling.
- C. Ask players to lie down and "roll along like a log" in any direction.
- D. Play Simon Says related to touching the ball with various body parts. For example "Simon Says touch your ball with the bottom of your foot. - With your nose (oops! caught you!)"

Individual activities - All Skills

- A. Ask players to execute a variety of skills, one after another.
 - 1. Dribble quickly.
 - 2. Strike the ball, chase it, strike it again with your other foot.
 - 3. Throw your ball up, make it stop in front of you.
 - 4. Head the ball out of your own hands, chase it, sit on it and spin.
 - 5. Dribble in slow motion, freeze on command.
 - 6. Crawl on hands and knees while moving your ball with hands, forehead, knees, or feet.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Stress controlling the ball without knocking over cones.
 - B. Players replace all cones they knock over and keep track of the number they knock over. Compare scores. Repeat the game to better scores.
 - C. If they roll into anyone they should immediately roll in a new direction.
 - D. Go fast and try to trick them with this old game. Go through the motions yourself.
-
- A. Mix it up. Go from one skill to another. No one skill should last for more than 20-30 seconds. Add rest time when needed. Don't let them get bored with anything. Discontinue when players seem to be losing interest. Make them laugh.

ACTIVITIES

Games

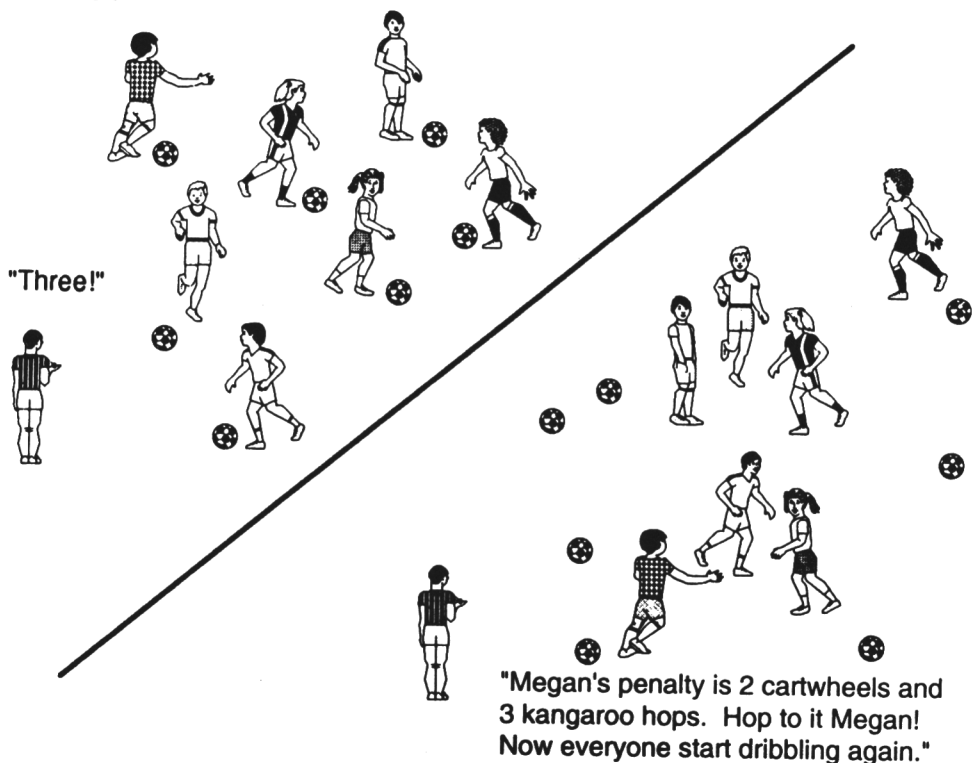
- A. In pairs, play tag. One player dribbles until the other (with no ball) catches him. Ball possession changes at this point.
- B. The Numbers Game: Ask all players to dribble in and out of each other until coach calls a number (two, three, five, etc). Players should leave the ball and form a group of that size.

Large Group Activity

- A. Divide players into three or four equal teams and play on a small field using two goals. Two teams rest while two teams play.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Repeat and change partners regularly. Give rest time when needed.
 - B. Help those who seem to struggle at first. Ask players who don't make it into a group to perform a joke penalty like half a sit-up.
-
- A. Change teams every two minutes.



SESSION 6 | Body Movement

ACTIVITIES

Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Simon Says or Coach Says is still one of the best kinds of warm-up activities available. Using oral commands activates the player's body and mind.
- B. After a few minutes of Simon/Coach says, introduce the ball and continue with ball related Simon/Coach says.
- C. Players stand on a line facing coach about 20 yards away. Coach calls out a color. Any player wearing that color may run. Coach tries to tag one or more of the runners. Every runner tagged becomes "it" with Coach in the middle.
- D. As with Simon/Coach Says, play the same color game as in C but introduce the ball.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Body Movement

- A. Have players move around in the center circle imitating an animal that coach names. Coach should name a variety of animals which will change the player's actions from crawling, to standing, to flying, to swimming movements.
- B. See how the same activity works with a ball to be carried by the animal. How does a bird fly, yet carry a ball? Let them sort it out.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Observe the enthusiasm or lack of it displayed by some players. Use your observations to build the session.
 - B. Watch to see which players are or are not comfortable with a ball.
 - C. Emphasize body swerves and change of pace while running to avoid being tagged.
 - D. Observe who can run with some semblance of ball control.
-
- A. Some players are reasonably coordinated and can do quite well, while most struggle a little.
 - B. Some creative solutions will be employed by a few players. Encourage this.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Wiggle a jump rope on the ground while players move around in the circle jumping over this rope or snake. Try the same game by rolling a ball and asking players to pick it up and jump with it in their hands.

Games (10-15 minutes)

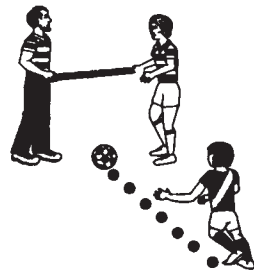
- A. With one ball, three players must keep the ball moving using various body parts. Each player must take a turn touching the ball once. Coach calls out the body part to be used.
- B. The same three players sitting in a small circle must keep the ball moving with just the bottoms of their feet. If the ball goes outside their circle they must all move crab style to set up again and continue to play.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. All of the players are on the same team. Coach and an assistant (ask a parent to help) walk about with a stick held by one at each end. The challenge is for players to strike the ball under the stick (a moving goal) and between the adults for a goal.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. This exercise helps them take charge of their self space. See if they can jump to land at the same spot where they launched.
- A. Observe how well the players move their bodies to accommodate the conditions you establish, e.g. move the ball with an elbow.
- B. This is eye/foot coordination in a primitive state.
- A. Through coach's movements, have players spread out over the field. Don't expect to see much passing.



SESSION 7 | Heading

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area.
- B. Pause and explain that they should pretend to be cars in a parking lot. Players must avoid traffic and collisions. When other cars are in their area they must use their foot-break and change directions.
- C.
 1. Ask players to balance with one foot on the ball. Switch or alternate feet as fast as possible.
 2. Ask them to balance the ball on the forehead while doing a deep knee bend. Repeat five times.
 3. Have them lay down with the ball under the back, and roll back and forth while trying to stay balanced over the ball.

Individual activities Emphasis - Shooting

- A. Give a quick demonstration of proper shooting technique.
- B. Place 15 to 20 cones over an area 30 x 30 yds. Send the players out on a hunting trip to shoot at any cone they see. Have them keep track of the number of hits. The only requirement is that they set up any cone they knock over.
- C. Use coach as a moving target.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Emphasize ball control.
 - B. This puts the skill of dribbling in terms that are exciting to young players. You must be excited to get them excited.
 - C. These activities all stress the players balance. Coach should give a good picture of each activity. Have some fun while demonstrating.
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- A. Don't expect perfect form. Give them an idea and let them shoot the way their body allows them.
 - B. Set time limits and get them excited about moving from one cone to another. The more they do this, the more they'll like it.
 - C. At this age there is no real danger. Don't run over any players, and make sure they understand that kicking balls at other players is not tolerated.

ACTIVITIES

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- D. Set up a 6 yd. goal of cones. Place players on one side. On your signal each player shoots at the goal. When all shots are taken, players run through the goal and get ready to shoot again from the other side. Repeat as long as they're having fun. For added fun, be the goalie.

Game

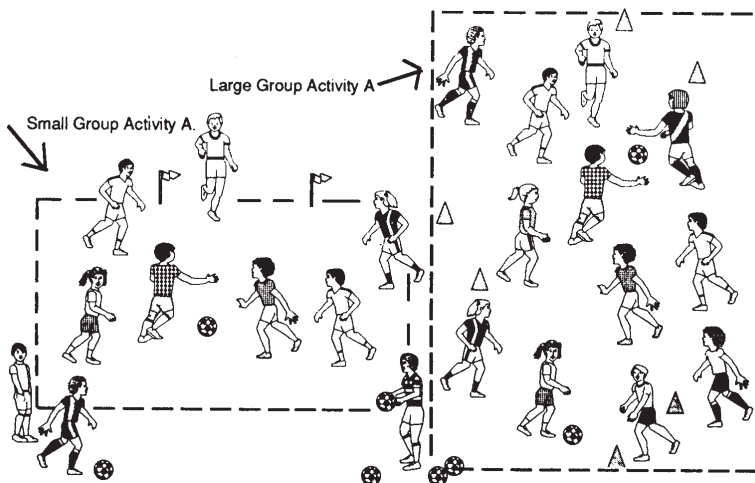
- A. Play 3 v. 3 to one full-sized goal. Have a large supply of balls to keep the action going. As soon as a shot occurs send in another ball. Keep the players going for about a minute. Change the six players and repeat.

Final Game

- A. Divide the group into two teams (different colors). Set up three small goals with cones (3 yds.) Tell players they can score at any goal they choose. Play with one ball at first, add another later so that more shots will occur.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- D. Shooting will improve in direct proportion to the number of shots taken. Their bodies will adapt if repetition occurs.
- A. Use extra players to retrieve balls. This game improves shooting in a realistic manner. Don't talk, let them shoot again and again. A goal without a net will be very helpful.
- A. Notice that with two balls the players will appear to be very unorganized. Just keep balls in the middle and they'll love it!



SESSION 8 | Ball touching and large muscle activity

ACTIVITIES

Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. With arms extended players shuffle about in a confined space and may not touch another player.
- B. Have players leaning forward, bent at the waist with knees stiff. With two hands they must move a ball around the area without either hand lifting off the ball.
- C. Players are in pairs sitting with knees slightly bent and toes touching. Both reach forward and clasp hands then proceed to execute a rowing motion.
- D. Rag-tag is played with a soft piece of material tied into a firm knot. The player who is it must throw the knotted rag at the other player's legs. Others try to dodge.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Ball Touching and Large Muscle Activity

- A. Have each player throw a ball in the air, execute a forward roll and catch the ball before it bounces three times.
- B. Partners stand facing each other about eight yards apart. They must throw a ball with two hands from over head so that the ball bounces three times before it is caught by the partner. Repeat with two bounces, then on bounce.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Players must have lateral movement as well as forward and backward experiences.
 - B. This balance activity also necessitates movement with vision.
 - C. Observe the cooperation or lack of it on the part of the players.
 - D. See how well come of the players can scheme to avoid getting tagged.
-
- A. Don't look for great success here, but hope for good tries.
 - B. Observe to see how many of the players can use their bodies to accommodate the conditions of the activity.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Partners stand one yard apart, back-to-back. The ball then is passed with two hands overhead and back between legs. Have them repeat the pass by twisting from side-to-side.

Games (10-15 minutes)

- A. In groups of three, players face each other in a small circle and hold a ball between their foreheads. Once in place, the players attempt to move about while keeping the ball in place on their foreheads without using hands.
- B. Players with a partner sit side-by-side with one ball between their ankles raised off the ground. The challenge is to transfer the ball between partners without using hands. Try the same activity with knees.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Play across the field in 4 v. 4. On the coach's command, all players freeze and the player nearest the ball is permitted to pick up the ball and kick it as far as he chooses.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Encourage the more successful players to become quicker and those struggling to attempt the activity to practice slower.
- A. This is a cooperative effort that requires the proper amount of applied pressure for success.
- B. Some of the players may be able to execute this with their eyes closed. If so, that's real skill.
- A. Coach should be certain that every player gets at least two or three good whacks at the ball.

SESSION 9 | Heading

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Have players begin by dribbling in and out of each other in a confined area.
- B. Have players bend over, throw their ball through their legs, run to the ball, place one hand on it and run around it twice without losing contact. Repeat several times.
- C. Ask half the team to spread out and stand still with their legs spread wide. Ask the other half to jog around with ball in hand, rolling it through as many pairs of legs as possible.
- D. Have players dribble in and out of each other. On coach's signal all players jump into the air and try to fly like a bird. As they return to earth they should collapse and roll gently on the ground. Repeat: dribble, fly, land and roll.

Individual activities

Emphasis - Heading

Although heading is not generally a part of the game at this age, it doesn't hurt to expose players to the skill in a gentle way.

- A. Ask players to move around, on hands and knees, pushing the ball with different parts of their head.
- B. Ask players to move around randomly while striking the ball out of their own hands with the forehead and area above the temple.
- C. Set out six 4-yd. goals in a square 30 x 30 yds. Ask players to move from goal to goal scoring as many goals as possible in a given time. Again they serve the ball to themselves and head the ball.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Which players are constantly getting caught standing straight up?
 - B. Player agility and flexibility plus ball technique can be observed.
 - C. Here the coach can observe the mechanical speed of players reacting to a verbal command.
 - D. Coach can observe the natural speed of players since the ball is left behind.
-
- A. Watch the eye/body part coordination and timing.
 - B. If they roll it too far, they can't catch the ball, too slowly and they can't lift it: understanding pace.
 - C. Success from the thigh is only achieved if the thigh is parallel to the ground.

ACTIVITIES

Game

- A. Divide players into two teams (two colors). Construct a small playing field with cones, complete with 2-yard goals. The field should be about 15 x 20 yds. Run a series of 1 v. 1 games. Keep score. Start each game with the ball in the center. Ask each player to balance with one foot on the ball, until coach say "Go"! They play until someone scores or for about a minute.

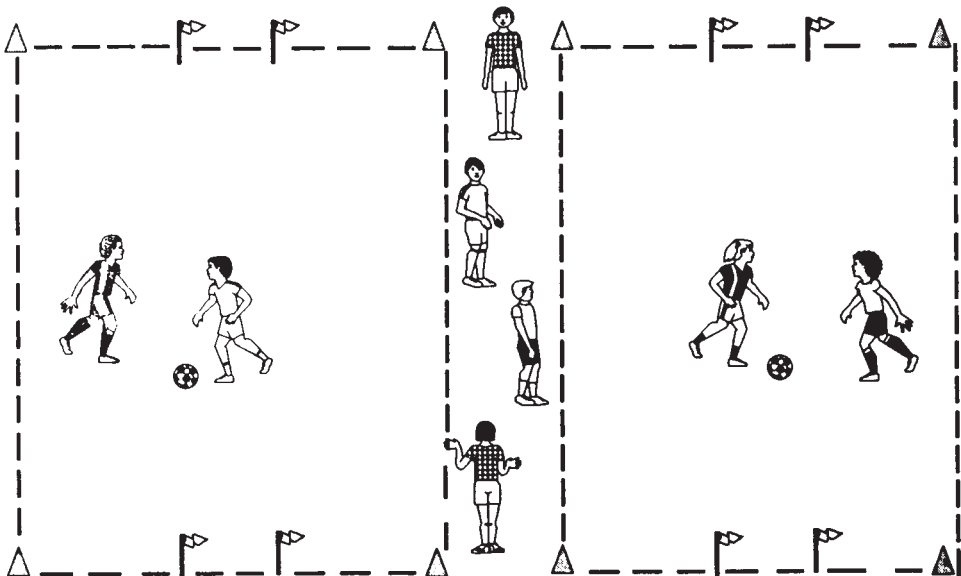
Final Game

- A. Construct a field that is suitable for the same two teams. Ask them to play real soccer just like their weekend games!

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Be an organizer! Remember players don't like to sit. They like to play! You can set up two fields if numbers are high.

- A. Keep them active!



SESSION 10 | Vision

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. With players moving around freely in the penalty box area, the coach calls a color. Whoever is wearing that color is it. He chases and tags for 10 seconds. All tagged players must stand frozen for a count to be taken.
- B. Play the same activity, but with the ball. Players dribble about until a color is called, then they may pick up their ball and run.
- C. Have players kneel on one knee, place their hand on the other and close their eyes. Coach goes to some part of the field and gives a signal to go. At the signal, the players open their eyes, find the coach and quickly dribble to him.
- D. Play C with one ball per player. If they catch on, don't be a stationary target. Move.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes)

Emphasis - Vision

- A. Have players dribble in the center circle. When players see coach hold up some fingers, they must sit and hold up the same number of fingers. The first one that does this correctly becomes coach.
- B. Play the same activity but introduce a "stealer" (a player moving around without a ball, holding his two socks. He may steal a ball).

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This is a means of activating the player's mind and vision.
 - B. Why pick up their ball and run? They are not yet ready to accelerate and scheme and change direction all at once.
 - C. The first clue they get is audible, the second visual. See how well they use clues.
 - D. Once coach begins to move they must make all kinds of dribbling adjustments. Excellent!
-
- A. In order to play here successfully, they must dribble with their eyes up away from the ground.
 - B. Now some real problems surface. They have a ball, they are looking for you and they must guard against the "stealer".

ACTIVITIES

- C. Coach stands in front of the group with a ball. Coach then puts the ball in various positions, e.g., over his head, between his feet, behind him, on his knee, on his right shoulder, etc. players imitate.

Games (10-15 minutes)

- A. In groups of three, two players have a ball and a player in the middle has no ball. The middle player faces one of the players with a ball who serves it on the ground or in the air. When the player receives the ball, he sends it back to the server and turns to the other player. Repeat the action three times then switch roles.
- B. This is an activity for five to six players. One player throws the ball in the air and calls the name of one of the others. The player whose name is called runs to the ball, collects it and immediately yells halt. The other players freeze. The player with the ball places it on the ground and kicks it to one of the other players.

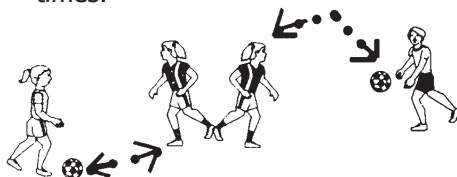
Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Play a regular soccer game with goals. At any given time coach yells "clouds in the sky" at which time all of the players freeze and drop to the ground. The moving ball continues to roll until it touches a player or goes out of bounds. If it touches a player, that player's team gets a goal. If it rolls into the goal, it counts for three goals.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Set up the proper number of grids to avoid long lines. You can deal with defensive problems but emphasize dribbling.

- A. Let this go for about 30 seconds and then give them a rest. Repeat several times.



- B. You won't see a lot of passing but that's okay. Dribbling is the area to be improved.

- A. This will improve those who are good dribblers and also force those who normally won't dribble to goal to give it a shot.

SESSION 11 | Striking the Ball

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Begin by asking players to move in and out of each other while pushing their ball with hands only.
- B. Play the same activity except that on the coach's signal, all players must roll their ball away and chase down any other ball. They should then continue to move the ball with hands only.
- C. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other randomly.
- D. On coach's signal players kick their ball approximately 10 yards outside of the dribbling area which is 15 x 15 yds. They should then continue on with any other ball they pick up.

Individual activities - Striking a Ball

- A. Give a quick demonstration of the proper way to strike a ball. Let them try.
- B. Put four to five players in a circle designated by cones. All other players should surround the circle and have a ball in hand. The job of the outside players is to roll balls into the circle and collect them as the inside players kick them out of the circle. Inside players must constantly clear all balls out of the circle.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This activity is a bit different and works on balance and changing directions.
 - B. Try to cause confusion by getting the players going in every direction. Avoid collisions.
 - C. Same as above except that this relates more to soccer. Change speed and directions.
 - D. Get them moving in a hurried fashion.
-
- A. Show them as well as you can, or have a player who strikes the ball (kicks) well demonstrate.
 - B. Define the game in terms that players can identify with such as, asking outside players to mess up the circle with balls. Ask inside players to keep the inside area clean by kicking all balls out. Change the roles regularly.

ACTIVITIES

- A. Divide into two teams (different colors). Set up a large 20 x 30 yd area with no goals. Ask players to play 3 v. 3 with the challenge of kicking the ball over their opponents' end line. Keep score and change players about every minute.

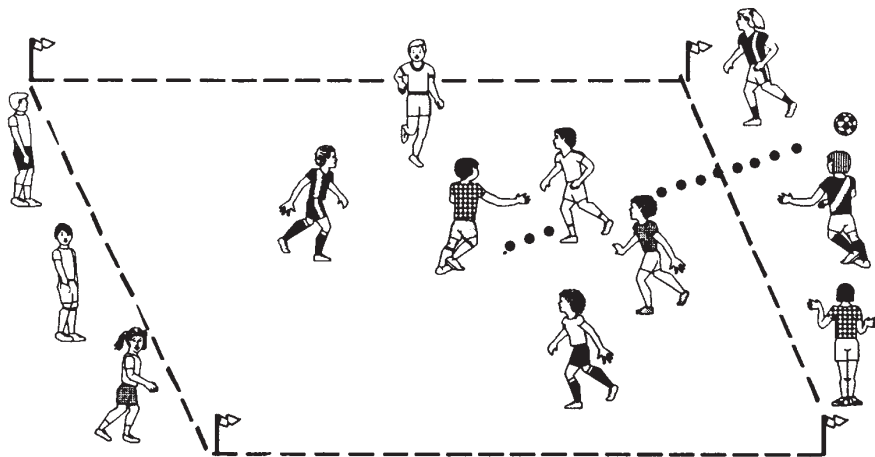
Final Game

- A. Play the same game as above in a large enough area to accommodate your full team (two teams in different colors). Again each team scores by kicking the ball anywhere over the opponent's end line.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This game brings in most of the normal soccer game but expands the goal area to encourage scoring more goals (striking balls). Keep balls in play and players moving.

- A. Make the field small enough so many goals are scored but large enough so players aren't cramped.



"One point for the Blue Team!"

SESSION 12 | Goalkeeping

ACTIVITIES

Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have players sit with legs wide apart. Ask them to reach with right hand to right foot, then left hand to left foot. Hold the position. Now stretch right hand to left foot, hold, then left hand to right foot.
- B. With players on their backs and arms stretched on the ground above their head, have them bring feet up overhead to touch toes to fingers.
- C. Still on their backs/shoulders, have them do bicycle peddling and long stride walking movements.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes)

Emphasis – Goalkeeping (not really but allows players to use their hands for a practice)

- A. From a kneeling position, players throw the ball into the air, hop to their feet, and catch the ball. Have them try this from a sitting position.
- B. Standing with legs spread apart and the ball held behind them, players must release the ball forward between their legs then sprint to pick it up. Go again.
- C. Have players lie on their stomachs with a ball in their hands. On signal they must roll over on their backs, throw the ball into the air with both hands and catch it.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This is an opportunity for you to observe flexibility in the players. Try to have them do it rhythmically, i.e., right to left then left to right.
 - B. Stretching is a fine means of getting ready to play.
 - C. Change the pace of movement from very rapid to slow motion. Encourage twisting and turning variations too.
-
- A. Eye/hand, upper body coordination and lower body agility are all a part of this activity.
 - B. Coach will need to assist with the release at first; but once they practice some, they'll be just fine.
 - C. This is a total body movement activity with a ball in flight as a further distraction. Patiently repeat this exercise several times.

ACTIVITIES

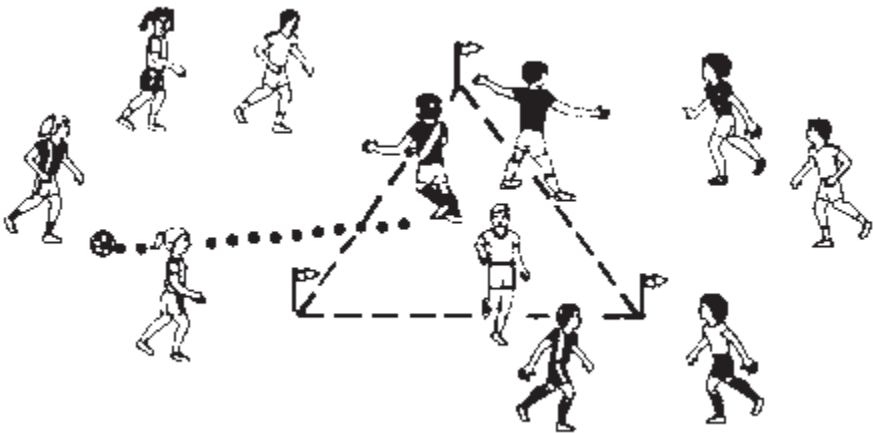
- A. With players in a circle with one ball, ask one player to roll the ball to another. The receiving player must pick it up and throw to one of the other players. The second receiving player then rolls his release. Roll, throw, roll, throw...
- B. One player is in the center of four goals set on a 20 x 20 yd. grid. Each goal has a goalkeeper. The player in the middle may shoot on any goal he chooses.

Final Game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Set up a triangle in the middle of the field. This will act as a 3-sided goal and should be defended by three goalkeepers. All other play outside the triangle and may not go through the space.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Emphasis is on eye/hand coordination for air and ground balls.
 - B. Although goalkeeping is the topic, don't miss this chance to observe shooting on goal. Be sure to rotate goalkeepers so that every player gets a chance to play keeper.
-
- A. Once they get the knack of this game they'll want to play it all of the time. Many ball touches means plenty of fun.



SESSION 13 | Balance

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Begin by asking players to dribble in and out of each other.
- B. Ask players to continue dribbling until coach calls out a body part, e.g. hand, knee, forehead, elbow. At this signal each player should stop his ball with that body part.
- C. Have players alternate between bouncing and catching, and throwing straight up and catching. The better they are the higher the throws and bounces.
- D. Ask players to throw their ball anywhere, run to it, kick it, fetch it. Repeat

Individual activities

Emphasis - Balance

This session will serve to develop balance. Although it is not a skill in itself, balance is essential to all motor skills.

- A. Ask players to get into different balancing positions:
 - 1. With ball in hand, make a bridge.
 - 2. Hold the ball in front of you while standing on one leg.
 - 3. Bounce on your ball in a seated position.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Make players smile, avoid collisions, move in different directions.
 - B. Balance is being developed. Make them bend, squat and lean. Keep them laughing. Give a brief pause and then get them dribbling again. Repeat.
 - C. This will develop general motor ability and they'll have fun. Challenge them with, "Who can throw the highest and still catch".
 - D. This will develop a number of skills. To make a game of it, ask players to freeze when they've completed the series. Then change the series.
-
- A. These positions and others you think of will cause children to become more aware of their center of gravity.

ACTIVITIES

- B. Ask players to hop after you (chase you) on one foot, the other foot, both feet.
- C. Set down two rows of cones 5 yds. apart.
 - 1. Have players run forward and backward between them.
 - 2. Ask them to shuffle sideways, back and forth between the cones.
 - 3. Have the players skip forward and backward. This is difficult.

Games

- A. Define a 20 x 20 yd area of play with cones. Ask players to dribble and protect their own ball. Have one less ball than the number of players.
- B. With the same field arrangement, subtract a number of balls so that only half of the players have a ball. In this way you have created a number of 1 v. 1 situations.

Final game

- A. Divide the group in half and play regular soccer.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. Make a game of tag out of it. Challenge them; make them laugh!
 - C. Stress speed. Allow rest if needed.
-
- A. If you have no ball, get one; if you have one keep it.
 - B. This is the beginning of shielding or possession. Let them experiment with it and have a good time.
-
- A. Let them play!

SESSION 14 | Ball Touching

ACTIVITIES

Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Players jog about the field with coach saying "grass - right hand", or "grass - left hand", or "grass - both hands", or "grass - chin". Each call requires players to put that body part to the ground.
- B. With the same idea as above, here each body part called goes airborne, e.g., right knee in the air, left elbow in the air, left eyebrow in the air, etc.
- C. Play shadow tag with players running around trying to step on another player's shadow. This becomes real fun when each player has a ball to run with at his feet.
- D. Have players play "stooping tag". Two players are "it" and the rest run about in an area dribbling a ball. If a player is running with his ball and gets tagged, he is "it". If before being tagged he is in a stopping position, that is a "base" and he is safe.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes)

Emphasis - Ball touching

- A. Have players sit while rotating the ball on the ground around their entire body. Next, tell them to slip it under their back by keeping their shoulders on the ground and raising the lower back.
- B. Each player hops about in an area with each hop coinciding with a bounce of his ball.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This will improve coordination and the ability to work with a partner.
 - B. Good touch on the ball will be enhanced. Ask players to increase speed as they master this technique.
 - C. Stretch ankles, lower legs, hamstrings, thighs, lower back, and neck. (see illustrations on page 46.)
 - D. This activity will increase a variety of motor skills. Let them do it at their own pace.
-
- A. Don't allow the leaders to move in straight lines. Change leaders every once in a while.
 - B. Allow adequate rest before you send the players to the next object.

ACTIVITIES

- C. With players in a legs spread wide standing position, ask them throw the ball over the head to the other hand. Upon catching, the ball is returned back overhead to the other hand.

Games (10-15 minutes)

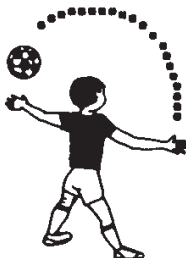
- A. Have all players on their knees in a circle. Two balls should be thrown between players with successful catches being tallied. A 30-second time limit for a world record could help stimulate excitement.
- B. This requires a participant and a scorekeeper. At a given signal the participant plays the ball from his hands to any body part and back to his hands. No body part can be used twice in succession. After 30 seconds, switch roles.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have all players move around in half the field either dribbling the ball with their feet or throwing it in the air. When coach calls a body part, the ball is controlled with that body part called touching the ball.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. This is an eye/hand and ball sense activity. At times the ball may go out of their sight. If they still catch it, that's ball sense.
- A. Observe how some of the players are more successful at this than they are at some of the ground games.
- B. Creative players really enjoy these kinds of activities. Others moan a lot and complain.
- A. Although this is a large group activity, this is a very individual exercise. Observe to see which of the players can adapt to the demands and succeed.



SESSION 15 | Balance

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Have players move around in the penalty box (with no ball). Ask them to act as small as they can be or as big or as thin or as tall or as wide or as heavy or as light.
- B. Direct players to run in place as fast as they can, then as slow as they can. Do the same with bouncing in place or with hand movement.
- C. Have kneeling players raise one hand, then one arm, then one foot, leg, etc. Keep switching to different body parts.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Balance

- A. Each player has a ball at his feet. On a given signal players touch the ball with their hands as often as they can in 10 seconds. Same activity with elbows, then with feet.
- B. With the ball between their feet, have players play it back and forth from foot to foot. Use 10-second intervals as time limits for count of touches.
- C. Holding the ball with both hands, have players hop on one foot then the other. Do the same activity with players holding the ball as low as possible, then behind them.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Be sure to praise creative efforts.
 - B. Here we are looking for body control and foot/hand speed.
 - C. Observe those who can successfully shift their center of gravity and those struggling with their balance.
-
- A. Use hands and elbows as the confidence builders. It's the foot touches that require balance.
 - B. Emphasis is on lower body control and quick footwork.
 - C. Switching weight from foot to foot requires strength and coordination with balance as the end result.

ACTIVITIES

Games (10-15 minutes)

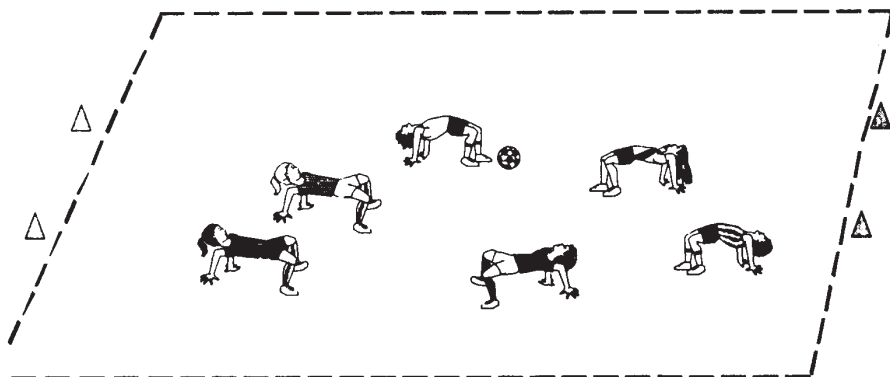
- A. With a ball in both hands have a pair of players "chicken fight" trying to knock each other off balance by hitting one another's ball.
- B. In an "elephant walk" position (bent at the waist, knees stiff, hands clasped, and arms hanging down) have pairs of players move around in the center circle knocking the ball back and forth with their "trunk" (clasped hands) to each other.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have two teams going for each other's goal in a "Crab Soccer Game". The crab position is hands behind the back on the ground, belly up, and knees bent. Throw in a second ball if it gets boring.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Match up stronger players with stronger players. Try this with players balancing on one foot.
 - B. This is a fun activity where the coach must have all of the players moving. Use a 20-second time count and have them tell you the number of successful passes. Rest assured, they'll exaggerate.
-
- A. Some little ones don't have enough stamina to play this more than 30 seconds at a time. That's okay; play sixteen 30-second periods.



SESSION 16 | All Skills

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Have players dribble in and out of each other in a confined area. Use cones to designate an area 15 x 20 yds. Vary the field size based on numbers.
- B. Continue the activity. On occasion stop the players and demonstrate a pose you would like them to copy, e.g. one foot on ball, sit and spin on your ball, stand on one foot with your hands out.
- C. Assemble all players with their ball in hand. On coach's command they should all throw their ball in the air and duck. Chase any ball, dribble and repeat.
- D. Place all balls in an area by the coach. Coach kicks balls in different directions 10 to 15 yds. away. Each kick should be accompanied with a player's name. That player should chase down that ball and quickly dribble it back to coach.

Individual activities Emphasis - All Skills

- A. Ask players to roll their ball away, chase it, and control it with whatever soccer body part is appropriate. After they've shown coach a few, show them a few, e.g. bottom of the foot, inside, outside, etc.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Ask players to move at various speeds and in different directions. Don't let them run in a circle.
 - B. Stress balance and muscular development in the poses you choose.
 - C. This is simply to get them laughing and in a great mood for training.
 - D. Stress dribbling quickly and reacting to the proper ball when their name is called.
-
- A. In this activity body control is being developed while the feet are being used to control a ball.

ACTIVITIES

- B. Ask players to toss their own ball in the air and attempt to bring it under control without using hands.
- C. Show players how serve air balls and ground balls to each other. This is difficult at first but, this skill will develop over time.

Game

- A. Set up a small field with small goals (no goalkeepers). Teams must have different colored shirts. Play 2 v. 2 for about a minute and then alternate another group of 2 v. 2. Keep rotating players every minute or so.

Final game

- A. Mark out an area 30 x 30 yds. Divide players into two groups (two colors) and play "keep away" (no goals).
- B. Add goals and allow the kids to play!

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. This improves foot/eye coordination and also will improve ball control over time.
 - C. This activity introduces the concept of working with a partner and will eventually lead to group cooperation.
-
- A. Games of this nature are fun, relevant, and provide maximum contact with the ball.
-
- A. You won't see much teamwork but, that's fine for now.
 - B. Don't coach now. Let them play.

SESSION 17 | Eye-foot coordination

ACTIVITIES

Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have players with feet together jump forward, backward or sideways to the number of jumps called by the coach.
- B. With the same idea, coach calls out a number of skips (not less than five). See how far a player can travel with so many skips.
- C. Create an obstacle course out of anything you have available. Tell players they must go over, around or under anything they find. First on their own, then the same course, same conditions with their ball.

Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Eye-Foot Coordination

- A. Ask players to play their ball from foot to hand and from thigh to hand. For a greater challenge, ask them to try foot to thigh to hand. The one who does this successfully will really have a sense of achievement.
- B. In a large area each player sends his ball in the air with either hand or foot. The objective is to recover the ball with the feet in less than four bounces and dribble to the starting position.
- C. Have each player play his ball on the ground with his hands. Before the ball stops, he must do a forward roll, jump over his ball and let it pass between his feet.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Observe the coordination exhibited by the players.
 - B. Encourage players to extend their bodies and reach greater distances.
 - C. With or without a ball the more physical or athletic types will do well. They should be praised and the others must be encouraged.
-
- A. See which players are willing to risk a little failure. It's good for the spirit. Have players try these skills while standing still and while moving around.
 - B. Observe eye/foot coordination with emphasis on foot speed to the ball.
 - C. Encourage players to plan ahead. Observe how some of the thinkers sort this out.

ACTIVITIES

Games (10-15 minutes)

- A. With three to four players per team, set up cones 20 yards away from each team. The challenge is for each team member to play a ball, with his feet, to a cone. The team with the three team balls closest to the cones wins.
- B. Have pairs of players stand around the coach. Each pair has one ball. Coach points to a pair. They give their ball to coach who serves it on the ground or in the air. The partners chase it with the first one to touch the ball winning the points. Play the best four out of five serves.

Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Combine the ideas in Small Group A and B. Each team member strikes a dead ball, a rolling ball, a bouncing ball and a hand held ball to established targets. Keep team scores.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Observe the stroke used by the players in this accuracy activity. Some will kick, not push the ball.
 - B. This encourages speed off the mark and eye/foot or soccer body (no hands) touch. Active players like this kind of activity.
-
- A. This is a total team effort and an activity in which some very non-athletic children can get lucky and be heroes. Have teams try to improve their score at a future session.



SESSION 18 | Striking

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area. Coach calls out "stop!" and "go!"
- B. Have players continue dribbling in a defined area. Coach calls out a color of any player's shirt. At this time all players should look for and move to a player with that color shirt. They must touch that player's ball.
- C. In pairs, ask players to balance a ball between their foreheads while standing face to face.
- D. Ask players to tap dance with the ball. They should alternate tapping the ball lightly with the right and left foot. Then ask each player to pass the ball (with himself) back and forth, from one foot to the other.

Individual activities

Emphasis - Striking a Ball

- A. Demonstrate a proper instep kick.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This exercise will work on dribbling skill and will help develop body control involved in stopping the ball.
 - B. This causes players to make a decision under pressure and act instantly. Instead of a color, you could call players names.
 - C. Among other things this stresses cooperation between players.
 - D. Emphasize tapping at different speeds. (Slow, slower, fast, faster).
-
- A. Let players try to imitate. Don't talk; have them try.

SESSION 19 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Organizing Activity

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area like cars in a crowded parking lot.
- B. Ask players to try to move around their ball with one foot on top of it. Repeat with one knee, one hand, the forehead, etc.
- C. Ask players to skip, jump off one foot or both feet and fly, jump and roll, etc.
- D. Ask players to throw or kick the ball out of their hands, as high as they can. Everybody duck! Retrieve any ball. Repeat.

Individual activities Emphasis - Dribbling

- A. Ask players to dribble to a well-defined line of cones 10 yds. away, turn any way they can, and return to the starting line with their ball. Repeat
- B. In an area 20 x 20 yds., ask players to dribble away from you, the shark (coach).
- C. Make a circle with cones and ask the team to dribble around them. After a short time, ask players to reverse directions. Change directions faster and faster.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. No collisions. Honking is permitted.
 - B. All these positions will aid in body control.
 - C. Varied movements like these develop balance and strength in the legs.
 - D. Let them enjoy!
-
- A. The emphasis is on body control and turning with the ball. Give rest as needed.
 - B. Just keep moving and telling them not to get caught.
 - C. Observe ball control with changes in directions.

ACTIVITIES

- D. Set up a short and simple obstacle course with cones. Demonstrate the pattern and ask players to go through it as quickly as possible.

Game

- A. Set up several small 20 x 15 yd. fields with 2 yd. goals. Have players play a series of 1 v. 1 games. The first goal wins, then rest. They should then be ready for another game.

Final Game

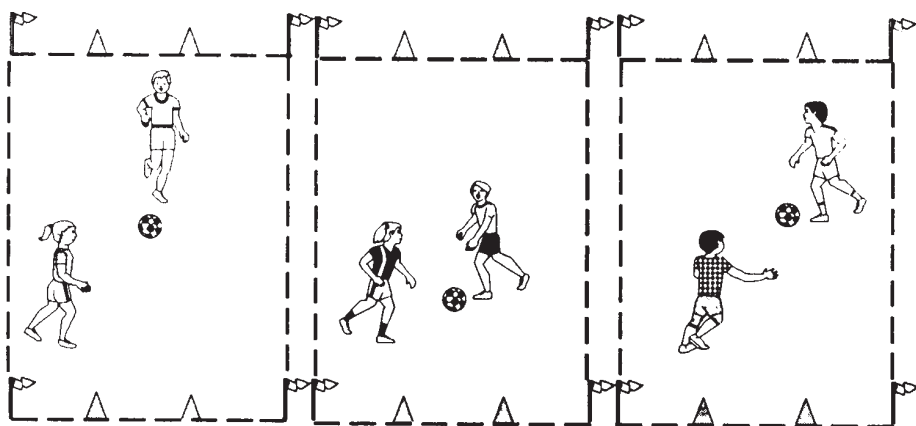
- A. Enlarge the field to about 30 x 20 yds. and play a series of 3 v. 3 games. Keep moving players on and off field.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- D. Don't make the course too elaborate. Time them if you want. This will create a line of those doing nothing unless you plan another activity, be creative.

- A. Define enough fields to keep players active. They'll love this forever.

- A. Change teams regularly so that everyone becomes a winner. Get them excited!



SESSION 20 | Bonus

For this particular training session you (coach) must invite all of the parents in advance. Tonight will be the soccer game of all soccer games. Tonight we will play Brain and Brawn v. Brawn and Brain.

In this activity, the adults come onto the field (properly attired -- sneakers that is), and participate with the children. The rules go like this:

1. Each adult pairs with one child.
2. Two teams are formed with an equal number of adult/child partners.
3. Use US Youth Soccer Modified Playing Rules to define the field.
4. The referee's whistle sounds and the game begins.
5. If the adults are designated as Brains, they must take the child by the hand where they think he should be, but they (the adults) may not touch the ball.
6. All striking of the ball, including and not limited to scoring, is done by the children.

Caution, Caution, Caution: Sometimes the adults become over zealous. Slow down any adult who tries to move faster than the child can move.

A word to the coach: Observe the bunching that goes on during the game. How can you ever blame the players again, it must be in the genes? It's the adults who are telling them where to go!

7. Now reverse roles by letting the players be the Brain and pulling the adults' Brawn to where they belong.
8. Be sure the adults know that the ball may only be struck below the waist.

Final statement:

Is this really soccer? Perhaps not, then again it is a heck of a lot of fun and for a 5-, 6-, or 7-year-old that's really what soccer should be about.

Stretches



Up on toes. Don't bounce!



Thigh stretch. Younger players may need to rest their free hand on a partner's shoulder for support.



A. With knees slightly bent, reach for your ankles and hold for a few seconds.

B. For fun, swing like a rag doll in and out.



Back on heels. Bend forward slightly for balance.



With knees slightly bent, swing to one side, hold your ankle for a few seconds. Swing to the other side hold your ankle for a few seconds.



Toe touch. Have knees bent slightly and don't bounce.

How to play Small-Sided Games with “large” rosters

Easy! Play two games of 4 v. 4 or 3 v. 3 at the same time on adjoining fields. Coaches name their teams of four and play begins! Ideally the coach and substitutes will occupy the space between fields with the spectators on the opposite sidelines. Two teams each with a roster of 12 and two mini fields allow eight to play at once! With three mini fields all 12 can play at once. The size of your roster is not as important as how many children get to play and for how long. Remember, no one comes to play only half a game! Worried about coaching three games at once? Don't! Let the children play!

US Youth Soccer Official Under 6 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees. Please also note the U6 addendum and appendix.

Law 1) The Field of Play

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 20 yards maximum 30 yards

Width: minimum 15 yards maximum 25 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: None.

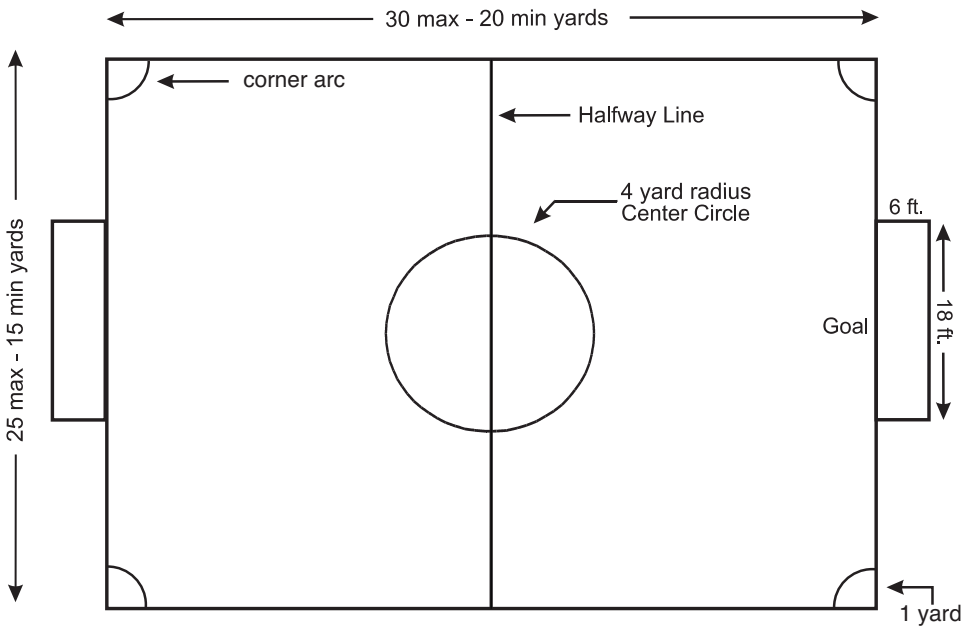
The Penalty Area: None.

Flagposts: None.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

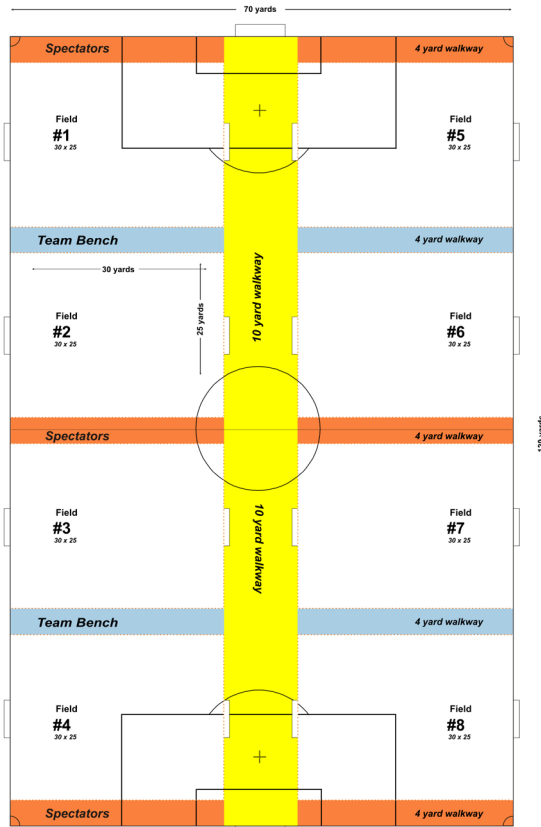
Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



Suggested Set-up for 3v3 Fields

Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 8 - 30 x 25 fields (maximum field size)



Law 2) The Ball - Size three (3).

Law 3) The Number of Players - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than three players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and games may be coed.

Law 4) The Players Equipment - Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5) The Referee - An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6) The Assistant Referees - None.

Law 7) The Duration of the Match - The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, six (6) to eight (8) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8) The Start and Restart of Play - Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9) The Ball In and Out of Play - Conform to FIFA.

Law 10) The Method of Scoring - Conform to FIFA.

Law 11) Offside - None.

Law 12) Fouls and Misconduct - Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

Law 13) Free Kicks - Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all free kicks are direct and opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 14) The Penalty Kick - None.

Law 15) The Pass-In - A pass-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 16) The Goal Kick - The goal kick should be taken within 2-3 yards of the goal line anywhere across the width of the field of play at the nearest point from where the ball was retrieved. Opposing players must be four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

Law 17) The Corner Kick - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U6 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.

US Youth Soccer Official Under 8 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees. Please note the U8 addendum and appendix.

Law 1) The Field of Play

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 25 yards maximum 35 yards

Width: minimum 20 yards maximum 30 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line three (3) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of three (3) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

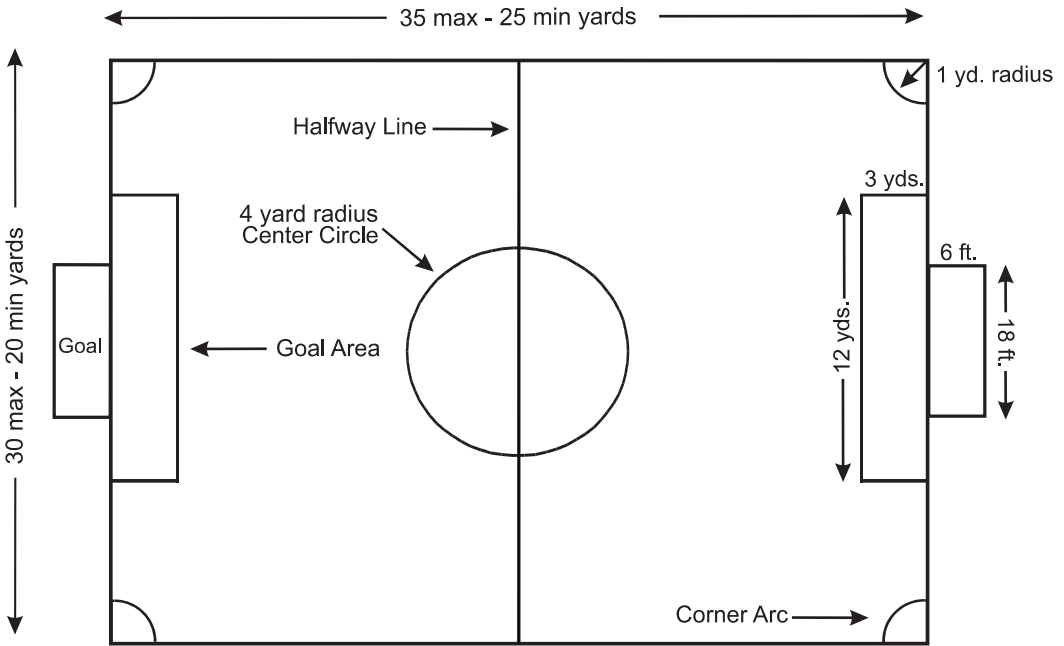
The Penalty Area: none.

Flagposts: none.

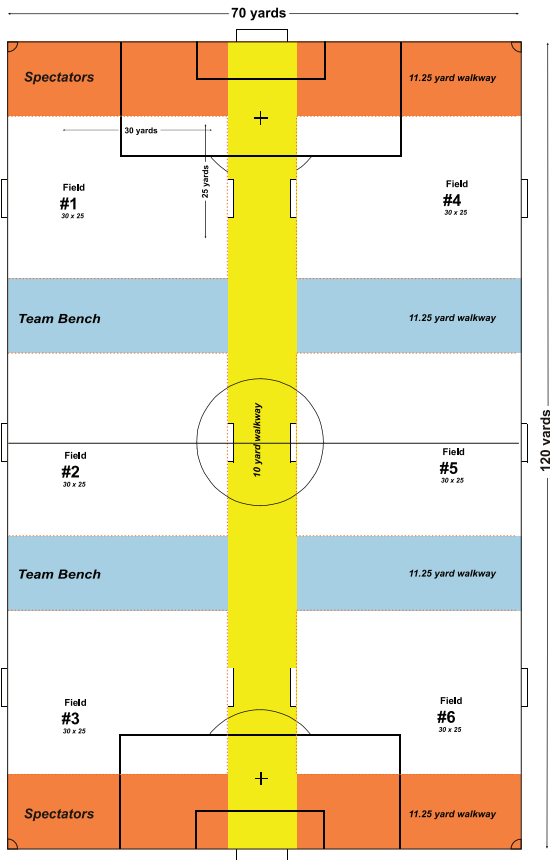
The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



Suggested Set-up for 4v4 Fields
Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 6 - 30 x 25 fields (maximum field size)



Law 2) The Ball - Size three (3).

Law 3) The Number of Players - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than four players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage of play and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

Law 4) The Players' Equipment - Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5) The Referee - An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6) The Assistant Referees - None.

Law 7) The Duration of the Match - The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, twelve (12) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8) The Start and Restart of Play - Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9) The Ball In and Out of Play - Conform to FIFA.

Law 10) The Method of Scoring - Conform to FIFA.

Law 11) Offside - None.

Law 12) Fouls and Misconduct - Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

Law 13) Free Kicks - Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all kicks are direct and all opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 14) The Penalty Kick - None.

Law 15) The Pass-In - A pass-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 16) The Goal Kick - The goal kick should be taken anywhere within the goal area. Opposing players must be outside the goal area AND at least four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

Law 17) The Corner Kick - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play. PLEASE ALSO READ THE U8 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.

Coaching Education Programs

US Youth Soccer offers coaching courses and training for all coaches. For a course schedule contact your local State Association or US Youth Soccer.

Youth Coaching Modules

There are a number of Youth Coaching Modules offered to improve your age-appropriate coaching from US Youth Soccer. Each module offers classroom and field sessions designed for the parent/coach or novice coach with an emphasis on the age group of your players. Techniques, psychology and FUN are introduced with an emphasis on player development. Check out your State Association website or USYouthSoccer.org for more courses on coaching education. Some states offer the course online as well!

Available Modules include: U6/U8, U8/U10 and the U12 Youth Module

Also available from US Youth Soccer:

The Novice Coach DVD

Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual

The Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer

Assistant Coach Series: U10 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

Assistant Coach Series: U12 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

For additional information contact US Youth Soccer or your State Association.

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US YOUTH SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION
ASSISTANT COACH SERIES

U10

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

for the Parent Coach

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this activity guidebook is to give you the youth coach, an idea of what should be covered throughout the typical season. The activities reflect the philosophy of the original US Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer. Sessions focus on development in a low-stress, fun-filled environment giving you an organized structure to apply to the particular needs of your team. You will be able to create your own sessions once you understand the essential ingredients.

Each practice session has four main areas:

1. Warm-up: Emphasis on preparing the player both physically and mentally for the training session. General motor ability (i.e., balance, coordination and flexibility) should also be enhanced. All of the above should be followed by stretching of the various parts of the body. Young players don't need stretching, but it's a good habit for them to begin early.

2. Individual Activities: This portion will cover fun-filled methods that can improve a young player's technique in a playing, non-drill manner.

3. Small Group Activities: These games will challenge the player (without the pressure of high numbers) to improve a variety of the needed skills. It also gives players the opportunity to touch the ball more often.

4. Large Group Activities: This time will be used to familiarize the player with the different aspects of playing in a match situation. Each section should last between 10 to 15 minutes (take rest when needed). All activities should start with a brief demonstration, followed by the players moving quickly into activities.

The successful coach at this level is the one who can imagine these activities through a player's eyes. A coach at this level must create a fun-filled environment that will have players excited to return.

Learn more about Small-Sided Games at
www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/SmallSidedGames/

CHARACTERISTICS OF U-10 CHILDREN

There are some basic characteristics of U-10 players that a coach should consider for the training sessions.

- Lengthened attention span compared to the U-8 player.
- Are far more team oriented.
- Still in motion, but not as busy. Will stay in place long enough for a short explanation.
- Psychologically becoming more firm.
- Boys and girls beginning to develop separately, girls at a faster pace.
- Overall and small motor skills becoming much more refined.
- Prefer balls and equipment with team identification.
- Pace factor becoming developed. (They do think ahead.)

Implications for Coaching Soccer

Age	Time for training sessions and number per work week
U-6	45 Minutes or 1 hour each. 1 session, plus 1 game per week.
U-8	1 hour each. 1 or 2 sessions plus 1 game per week.
U-10	1 hour to 1.25 hours each. 2 sessions plus 1 game per week.

THE PLAYER

The needs and capabilities of players set the philosophy and methods of coaching that are employed. We can look at the desired final product, a high level world class soccer player, and create a progressive developmental program that will, over time, allow some to reach the highest standards. At the same time, the soccer experience must be a positive and rewarding one to all those who participate. Each player that steps on the field has different needs and potential. Each plays for a variety of reasons and will succeed at very different levels. As coach, you can accomplish this by setting individual levels of expectation.

Try as a coach to be open to the needs (physical and psychological) of your players. Understand that soccer is just another vehicle through which we all try to add to the lives of those who participate. Certainly we hope to develop players with a wealth of talent, but at the same time, we hope to promote good character and responsibility in young people.

Don't let the value of winning completely overshadow the value of learning. Don't assume that every training method must directly correlate with the game of soccer. For example, games that involve movement and the use of hands can be of value to the coordination of your players. The two are not meant to be the same. A young player must go through years of preparation before he can begin to imitate top flight soccer. Give players a chance to learn and enjoy the very special years of their growth.

Don't let the notion of demonstration scare you. Use that good old American ingenuity that has gotten us where we are today. Bring in a local high school or college hero to demonstrate, or for that matter, a player at least two (2) years older than your players. They'll love him. After all, he really knows everything; he's two (2) years older. Most importantly - have fun!

SESSION 1 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up (10-15 Minutes)

- A. Start by having players dribble in and out of each other with their hands. At your command, have them stop their balls with various parts of the body as identified by colors. Example - red is right hand, blue is left foot, rainbow is forehead, etc
- B. Have players jog with a ball at their feet in the same direction. When you call a number, that many players must come together with balls touching each other. Example: the call is three, the units of three must be formed by the players. Those players unable to form a unit of three do three half-push-ups
- C. On command, have the players throw the ball from behind through their legs, do a forward roll, and retrieve it.
- D. Throw the ball in the air, clap three times, leap in the air and catch it. Change the variables to suit your objectives, e.g., throw ball and touch the ground or throw ball and touch the ground with an elbow, etc.

Individual Activities (10-15 Minutes)

- A. Have players dribble their ball in large spaces and try to cover the space. Example: several may choose the penalty area, while others the center circle, etc. Demand that they be creative.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Getting players organized and functioning as individuals and within a unit
 - B. Encourage players to dribble with their eyes up.
 - C. Watch for coordination and agility with emphasis on ball control.
 - D. Watch for upper body control and vision.
-
- A. Look for and highlight players making creative moves.

SESSION 1 (continued)

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- B. Bring the above activity to designated places on the field with all of the players dribbling in that particular area.
- C. Once in the designated area, have half the players place their balls outside the area and act as passive defenders. Intensify defensive pressure as you see fit.

**Small Group Activities
(10-15 minutes)**

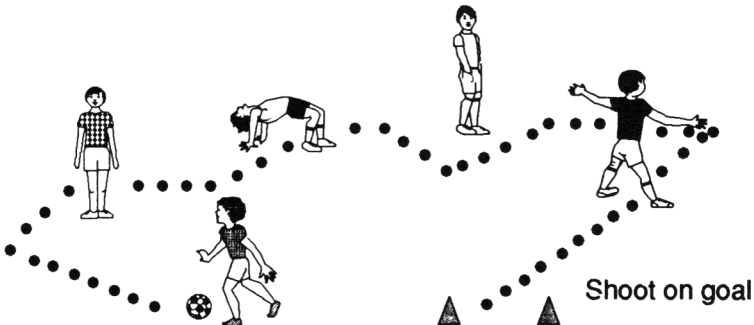
- A. Start a dribble tag game in which several players without the ball are it, and they must tag a dribbler to get his ball. They exchange and the game continues.
- B. Create a human obstacle course where half of the players are stationary in all kinds of weird positions and the rest of the group dribbles around them.

**Large Group Activity
(10-15 minutes)**

- A. 5 v. 5 or more playing across the field. Award points for proper or creative dribbling, but always one point for a goal.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. Emphasize body swerves.
- C. Encourage directional change.
- A. Watch and congratulate players that scheme (not cheat).
- B. Sportsmanship opportunities, or lack of, are quite apparent.
- A. Free play with coach stopping play briefly to reiterate points made earlier about dribbling. Be sure to highlight and congratulate good dribbling technique.



SESSION 2 | Receiving

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up

- A. In pairs, with two balls, ask players to play catch with two balls at the same time. They can bounce the ball, arc it high or throw it to the side of the other ball.
- B. Challenge players to the same task with their feet.
- C. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other, changing speed and direction. On your signal each player should stop his ball and move on to any other ball. Repeat as above except that on your signal players should throw their ball in the air and get any other ball.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. In threes, ask one player to stand in the middle of two others who are about 12 yards apart. The player in the middle will receive a pass from an outside player. Their challenge is to accept the ball with either foot and turn with it to pass to the other player. Repeat in the opposite direction.
- B. Put one player in the middle of four. Ask the player in the middle to receive the ball from any outside player and then turn and pass it to any other player. They would then get the ball back from that person and turn and pass to any other. The outside players should create a square about 12 yards on each side. Vary the size as you see fit.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Activities like this are fun and stress working together. Challenge them to go fast.
 - B. Let them figure out a solution.
 - C. On the exchange, ask players to move to, and control the ball as quickly as possible.
-
- A. Show them how to receive the ball with the inside, outside or sole of the foot and then get them going. Let them know that they should receive and turn in a smooth motion. Don't expect miracles.
 - B. Ask players to move to the ball, receive and turn as smoothly as possible. With time it will come.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Ask player B to receive a ball from player A, turn and beat player C and play the ball to player D. Repeat in the opposite direction..

Small Group Activities

- A. Organize players in groups of three, with one ball. Ask the player with the ball to keep it from the other two as long as he can. If he loses the ball he should immediately try to get it back.
- B. Again with three players, have two players play keep-away from one. Ask players to dribble and to short pass to keep possession.

Large Group Activity

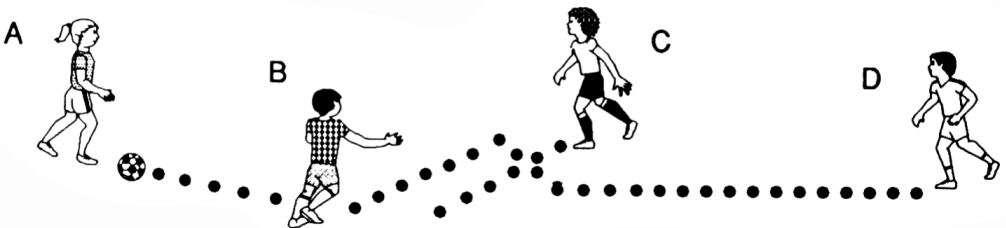
- A. Set up a six hole golf course and get them excited about playing with whatever rules you choose.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Balls can be rolled in by hand if accurate passing is difficult for the outside players. Change roles regularly.

- A. Just let them play. Give rest every 30-40 seconds or as needed.
- B. Change the groups of two, to give everyone a chance to play both roles. Alternate as above.

- A. Make it fun!



SESSION 3 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up (10-15 minutes)

- A. Coach stands in the center of the field and throws or kicks the ball in any direction. All players must jog, shuffle, hop or whatever to the ball where each player must touch it (without moving the ball), then all players jog back.
- B. Divide the players into four equal groups and do the same as A but designate body parts and make it a competition, e.g., right shoulder touch and first group to return to coach.
- C. All players in a circle holding hands. Coach strikes the ball to anywhere he chooses: All of the players must run and join hands in a circle around the ball. If the players can circle the ball before it stops moving, the coach must run one lap around the penalty area. (Smack that ball coach).
- D. All players in the center circle with balls between their ankles hopping in various directions. At a given signal, all players release their ball and collect, with ankles, somebody else's ball and continue.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Players standing 6-8 yards apart, striking the ball with their laces to one another.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Running or moving with speed to a designated area then touching the ball without having it move requires body agility and coordination.
 - B. Small group teamwork in a competitive environment. Which players are willing to give a bit more?
 - C. Sheer fun for a bunch of kids that would love to tell their peers in school that their coach had to run four laps.
 - D. Agility, flexibility and coordination are observable in this warm-up. Some can; some can't.
-
- A. Observe the non-kicking foot to see if it is flat or if the player is up on the ball of the foot.

ACTIVITIES

- B. Have players run or jog into the goal area and strike a ball with their laces on the open goal. No keeper - he'll get drilled.
- C. Player stands on the penalty mark and must deal (two touch) with an air ball, a bouncing ball, and a ground ball.

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Coach serves balls into the penalty box where players may shoot them. Players who are shooting the ball may strike a full volley (laces) for 3 points, a bouncing ball for 2 points, or a rolling ball for 1 point.
- B. Four goals with two teams playing in any direction. A goal can be scored if the player shooting on goal uses laces.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. 5 v. 5 plus goalkeepers playing to two goals in the penalty area. The objective is two touches with the second touch being a shot on goal.

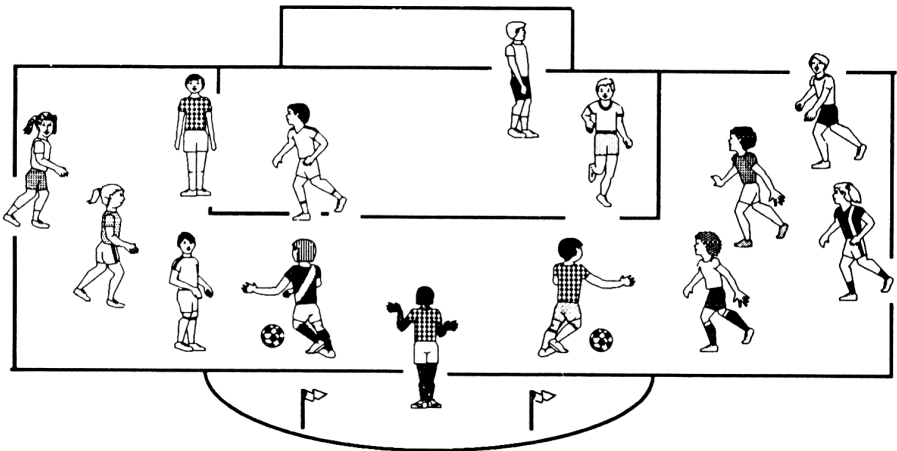
EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. Eye, foot coordination and time of the shot should be observed.
- C. Body preparation is the key to getting a good shot on goal. How well has the shooting player positioned his body?

- A. The further out from the goal a player is standing the more imperative it is that his/her knee be over the ball.

- B. Observe the line of the shoulders. Since shoulders that are held parallel to the ground usually means a high shot, emphasize dropping the shoulders.

- A. Look for speed in the players body adjustments to accommodate the two touch objective. Some can; some can't.



SESSION 4 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a restricted area; no collisions.
- B. Ask players to turn with the ball and move in the opposite direction every time another player occupies the space in front of them. Turn and go!
- C. Ask players to burst (with the ball) into any open space around them. As players dribble in and out of each other, spaces always open and close.
- D. Take two balls out of the playing area. The players without a ball must quickly try to get one. If a player doesn't have a ball, he should get one. If they have one, they should try to keep it.

Individual Activities

- A. Ask players to dribble towards a cone 10 yards away. Just before they reach the cone they should turn the ball with the bottom, instep (laces), or outside of the foot and burst back to their starting point. A partner will then perform the same activity.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This will warm them up and get them functioning in a game environment.
 - B. Ask players to avoid moving into closed spaces. Play tag, touch others but don't get touched.
 - C. Players must begin to recognize open space and activate themselves to move into it.
 - D. Players will develop the ability to shield and move with their ball.
-
- A. Show (slowly) how to dribble forward and make a turn with each of the parts of the foot. The let them go!

ACTIVITIES

- B. Ask players to circle around you or a cone 10 yards away. Ask them to dribble at you and then turn the ball away just before they reach you. Use the same parts of the foot to turn the ball as above.
- C. Again, ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area. When another dribbler bars their path, they should turn as you've just shown them.

Small Group Activity

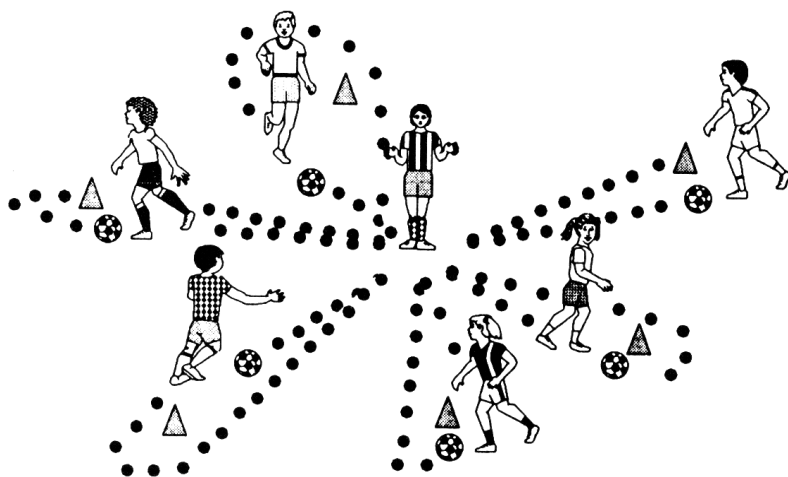
- A. Ask two players to play 1 v. 1 to a cone. Beat your opponent and hit the cone.
- B. Play 1 v. 1 between two cones 12 yds apart. The objective is to hit your opponents goal.

Large Group Activity

- A. Divide into two teams, (two colors), and play unrestricted soccer, to two goals, with goalkeepers.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. Act like a monster in the middle try to keep them away from you. Have fun!
- C. Watch and see what they've learned.
- A. Encourage goals! Change partners about every minute. Rest as needed.
- B. Each pair should have an area of their own to play on. Change opponents every minute or so.
- A. Let them play!



SESSION 5 | Passing

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have players moving about in the penalty area or the center circle hand passing, (one ball per two players).
- B. After establishing movement and motion by the players, transfer the activity to feet, then back again to hands.
- C. With one player in a standing position, feet spread apart), have his partner some 7 or 8 yards away strike the ball to go between the standing player's legs. If successful, the passing player scores a point.
- D. One player strikes the ball with the inside of his foot. His partner must do a forward roll and get to the ball before it stops. Reverse roles.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Emphasize vision of the player. (If they are running into each other, go to slow motion).
- B. When using hands, check their choices; when using feet, watch their technique.
- C. Look for accuracy of passes.
- D. Observe the technique used to strike the ball; which surface of the foot.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have two cones set up as goals five yards apart. With two players on each team some 6-8 yards on either side of the cone goals, have players strike the ball through the cones for points. Players must alternate shots and may not strike a dead ball.
- B. Play soccer golf. A player and a partner each with a ball attempt to score points by striking accurate balls. First player strikes the ball (on the ground) as far as he likes. Second player has two shots to hit the first player's ball.

- A. Have players use different surfaces of the foot.
- B. Observe placement of standing foot.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Arrange players in groups of three. After a practice period of a few minutes for each group, have the teams of three take turns one touch passing for the most completed passes.

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Divide the players into groups of three and place them in a line with the first player in each line facing each other. One touch is all that is permitted as players strike the ball to one another and go behind the opposite line.
- B. Play 3 v. 1 keep away in a large enough area for passing success. Have players count the number of connected passes. Set records.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. 6 v. 6 or more in an area with lots of width. Put three touch restrictions on one team and no restrictions on the other. Switch restrictions and change them to maintain player interest.

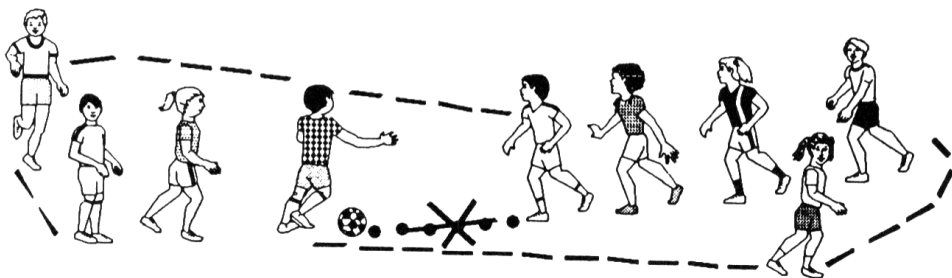
EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Air balls occur when the ball has been chipped or the player is leaning back.

- A. Pace of passes is very important.

- B. Some players will force the use of their good foot. Don't get excited. Situations will dictate the use of the weaker foot. Congratulate and highlight the reasons for successful passes.

- A. Passes are made for penetration or possession, identify when each is in order.



SESSION 6 | Shielding

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Ask players to move in and out of each other by moving the ball with their hands on the ground. They need to avoid collisions and steer the balls in and around each other.
- B. Same as above but now ask players to protect their own ball and at the same time grab for any other ball they come near.
- C. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a confined area until you call out a number. This signal tells players that they must quickly touch their ball with that many body parts. For example, if you call 4, they should quickly tap the ball with the right hand, the left knee, the right foot and the left hand. Then start dribbling again.
- D. Ask players to Dribble Sit.

Individual Activities Emphasis - Shielding

- A. In pairs, ask one player to protect the ball from his partner. If the partner gains possession, he tries to keep the ball. Don't let this activity go much more than 30 seconds. Have them stop and get a new partner for rest.
- B. In a defined area 10 yds x 10 yds. Play the same game with three players. Whoever has the ball should play against the other two people.
- C. Set down a cone between two players, with one ball. Ask them to try to beat the other player and hit the cone.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This forces players to change directions in a position that is unbalanced. It helps players develop the ability to move with knees bent!
 - B. Protect your ball; snatch any other ball.
 - C. Ask players to go through the tapping as quickly as possible. Encourage players to use different body parts like the elbow, forehead, knee, hand, etc.
 - D. Have them dribble until you call sit. At that point they should sit down on their ball and quickly pop back up and dribble.
- A. Give a quick demonstration of the proper way to shield a ball with your body sideways between the ball and the defender. Don't expect anything near precision. Just play keep away.
 - B. Let them play and learn!
 - C. Encourage shielding and turning to beat the opponent. Ask them to go to the goal (cone).

ACTIVITIES

Small Group Activities

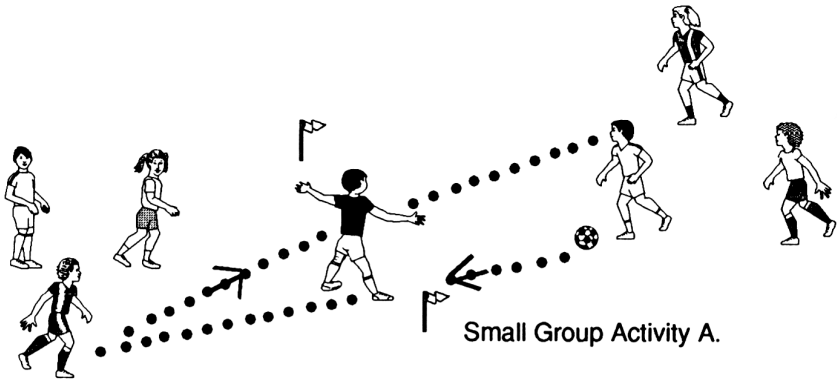
- A. Divide into groups of three. Each group should be on either side of a 5 yard goal with a goalkeeper. Players take turns shooting back and forth through the goal.
- B. Add some competition by saying that whoever can get to the ball first should try to beat the other two players and score a goal.

Large Group Activity

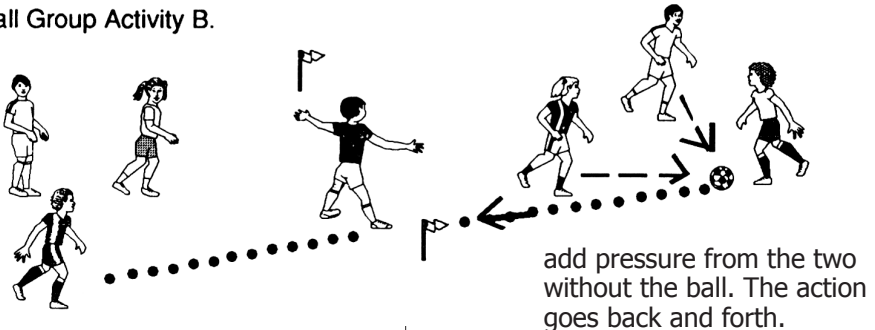
- A. Divide into two teams, (different colors), and have them play regular soccer.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Encourage good shots and speed in taking the shots. Alternate keepers regularly. If the keeper makes a save, he should turn and throw it to the other side.
 - B. Encourage all players to be active and either attack or defend. If a defender wins the ball, he should then try to score.
-
- A. Let them play!



Small Group Activity B.



SESSION 7 | Heading

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- A. Players move about at a walking pace in a large area throwing and heading the ball back to their own hands. (Increase speed with player success).
- B. At a jog pace, players throw to themselves, head the ball, catch it, sit down, get up and continue.
- C. On hands and knees, players move the ball around on the ground using only their heads.
- D. Have the player toss the ball in the air, head it once to himself, then head it to a partner. Partner repeats the activity.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. While in a sitting position, players try to keep the ball up with head only. Proceed to kneeling.
- B. From a one-knee position, throw the ball into the air, let it bounce once then head it as many times as possible.
- C. Place the ball behind the player's head, supported by their shoulder blades; no hands. Have the players move about from this position.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. In control heading, legs act as shock absorbers.
 - B. Some players are frightened at first. Don't force it.
 - C. Observe the way players accomplish this. Compliment those who do well.
 - D. The first head touch is cushioned while the second touch is with force and redirected.
-
- A. The body must move to accommodate ball motion.
 - B. Eyes must be open.
 - C. A body awareness and coordination activity that requires control of different body parts.

ACTIVITIES

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

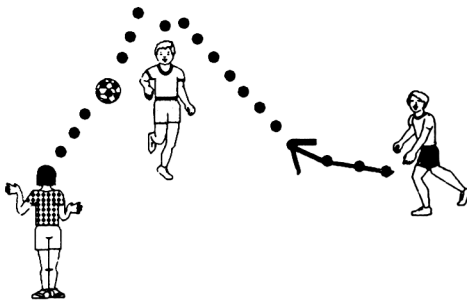
- A. In groups of three, have one player hand serve (under hand) to another player who must head to a third player.
- B. Player one throws the ball to himself and heads it over player two. Ball must be caught by player three. (Success equals points; points kept by individuals).

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

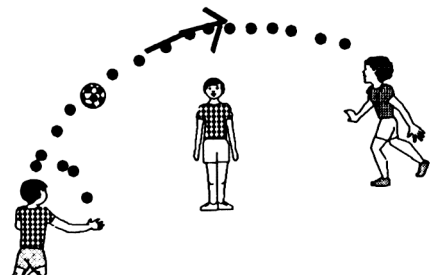
- A. 5 v. 5 or more with two goals playing hand passing and heading. Begin at walking pace, goals must be scored with the head and additional points are awarded for successful heading in any part of field.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Use forehead, not top or side.
 - B. To propel the ball with the head, other body parts must be used, (back, legs, even arms for thrust).
-
- A. Does this mean they'll hand the ball on Saturday morning? No. Players with glasses can head the ball successfully if they use the proper place on the forehead.



Small Group Activity A.



Small Group Activity B.

SESSION 8 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

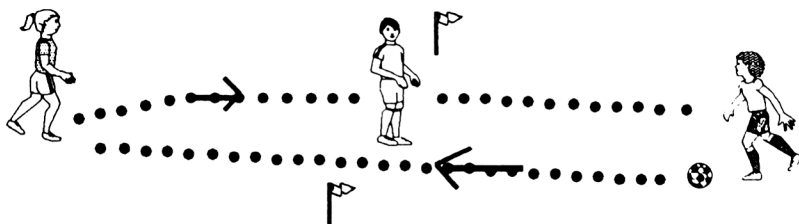
- A. Start by having players run in and out of each other with their ball in hand. On your signal they should switch balls with any other player near them. Run, switch, repeat.
- B. Same as above, except that now the feet should be used. On your signal, each player should stop their ball and move onto any other available ball.
- C. Execute a variety of simple stretches.
- D. Have players dribble around in a defined area, (20 yards x 20 yards). Occasionally you should call a number, e.g. 1, 3, 4, etc. Then they should all rush to form a pile of balls. (The same number as the number you called). They can either dribble or hand carry their ball as you see fit.

Individual Activity

- A. Set up goals 4-5 yards apart. Each goal should have a keeper and a shooter on each side. Ask players to alternate shooting back and forth through the goal.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Let them solve the exchange problem in their own way.
 - B. Hasten the exchange!
 - C. Emphasize the holding of a stretch as opposed to bouncing.
 - D. Try to get them to solve the number problem as fast as possible. Impose a joke penalty on those who don't get into a proper sized group. (e.g., touch our nose and knee and hop five times).
-
- A. Give a quick demonstration of an instep drive and then get them shooting. Have the strike stationary balls initially. Rotate keepers.



ACTIVITIES

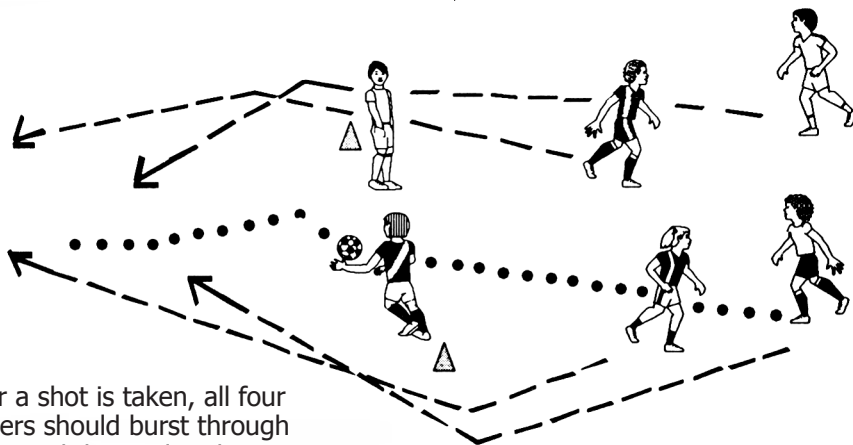
- B. Same set up but now ask players to move a bit further out. When they receive the ball, they should roll the ball ahead of them, chase it and strike it on goal. Shoot, shoot, shoot.
- C. Introduce the concept of faking or feigning before a shot. Each shot should be preceded by a change of direction, change of speed or a quick movement of some sort.

Small Group Activities

- A. Set up a couple of full-sized goals with cones or flags. Each shooting area needs 6 players. Two should be in the goal. The remaining four should play 2 v. 2 back and forth through the goal. The object is to score goals, goals, goals. If the goalkeepers catch the ball, they should throw it to the vacant side of the shooting area. This will spread players out and add to the movement

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. No lines; more shots! Ask players to roll the ball ahead at various angles.
 - C. Show a fake--a false change of direction-- to get them going then let them come up with their own.
-
- A. This is very taxing physically. Play for a minute or so and then rotate one team into the goal. Repeat. Take additional rest as needed.



after a shot is taken, all four players should burst through or around the goal and repeat play in the opposite direction.

ACTIVITIES

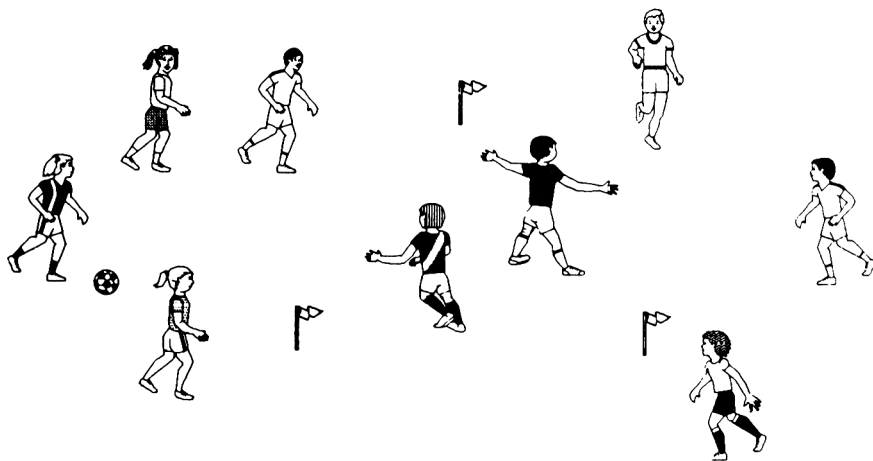
- B. Combine groups and use a larger goal (12 yards) with four goalkeepers. Play the same game with 4 v. 4 in a larger area. Rotate as before.

Large Group Activity

- A. Create a triangular goal 6 yds x 6 yds. Use 1, 2, or 3 goalkeepers. Divide into two teams and play around the goal. Players can attack any side of the three-sided goal. When goalkeepers get the ball, they should throw or kick the ball well away. Keep track of the score.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. Attack one side of the goal then go through and attack from the other. Emphasize shooting. Let them play!
- A. Use colors to separate the teams. Let them play! They'll shoot, learn and have fun!



SESSION 9 | Juggling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Players run about in the center circle playing body tag. When one player tags another player's body part, the tagged player must hold that body part and try to tag somebody else.
- B. Same activity as in A, but introduce the ball. Have players move the balls about with either their feet or hands.
- C. Body parts control is played by having players dribble in an area until the coach calls a color. Let different colors represent different body parts e.g., red is right foot, blue is left foot, and so on until rainbow is forehead.
- D. Various objects (bags, jackets, cones) are placed about in half the field. Players dribble at a slow pace within the half field. On command players must leave their ball and sprint to the object called out by the coach.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. With plenty of space between them, players throw their ball into the air and catch it with their elbows, knees, or sit and catch it with ankles.
- B. Players roll the ball with their hands, then must run past it and lift it in the air with their foot.
- C. Have players moving about while playing the ball from hands, to head, to thigh and back to hands.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Which players are constantly getting caught standing straight up?
 - B. Player agility and flexibility plus ball technique can be observed.
 - C. Here the coach can observe the mechanical speed of players reacting to a verbal command.
 - D. Coach can observe the natural speed of players since the ball is left behind.
-
- A. Watch the eye/body part coordination and timing.
 - B. If they roll it too far, they can't catch the ball, too slowly and they can't lift it: understanding pace.
 - C. Success from the thigh is only achieved if the thigh is parallel to the ground.

ACTIVITIES

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. In teams of 3 or 4 players, set up juggling competition and count numbers of successful touches. No one player may touch the ball more than twice before he must play the ball.
- B. With one player on his knees, the other two players play head or juggle tennis over him. The player on his knees acts as the net and keeps the score of successful touches. The moment a drop occurs, players switch their positions.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Two teams of 5 v. 5 or more play to four goals, each team defends two of the goals. Only goals scored from a juggle count. The ball is hand passed about and any player running off a number of juggles gets points (or goals) for each ball touched. Transition is made intercepting by hand or tagging a player on the opposite team.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Players vision and timing are imperative for team success
- B. This activity is done on a 30 second basis and total touches account for the scoring. It requires cooperation by all three players and switching positions lends itself to transition speed.
- A. Coach can observe how effectively the players can juggle under pressure of an opponent in short time periods.

SESSION 10 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area. Change directions and pace.
- B. Same activity but add these movements:
 - 1. Ask players to stand over the ball and alternate touching it with the left and right knee.
 - 2. Players lie on their backs and roll their ball under their back and over their stomach, round and round.
 - 3. Players jog in place as they hand a ball back and forth between their scissoring legs.
- C. Players stand back-to-back with a partner. Alternate passing the ball between legs and then over head. Move the ball in a circular manner between the legs then overhead.
- D. Same as above except players will now pass the ball side-to-side. Each player turns back and forth in conjunction with is partner.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Dribbling

- A. Stand in the middle of a circle of your players (10 yds). Each player has a partner; one ball per group. The first group dribbles to the middle and returns to the outside. On signal the second group repeats.
- B. Ask one player to serve the ball (7-10 yds) to his partner. The server should rush toward his partner and continue to move in a straight line to the ball. The partner with the ball must evade the server.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Ask players to look for and dribble into spaces that have just opened.
 - B. All these movements and others stress the systems related to balance, and strengthen growing bones and muscles. Have fun with it. Put your players in positions that will make them laugh.
 - C. Cooperation with a partner is the goal of this activity.
 - D. Ask players to pass the ball smoothly (hand the ball off, then turn).
-
- A. Ask them to move quickly and emphasize the proper ways to turn the ball (i.e. instep, outside, bottom, heel and inside of the foot). Same but players in pairs.
 - B. At this point the server should not defend, he should just run straight at the dribbler. This will improve a dribblers sense of timing without worrying about losing the ball.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Set up a defined area (5-10 yds.). Have two groups of 3 or 4 players on both sides of the grid. A will pass to B at the far side of the grid. A and B will play 1 v. 1. B's objective is to get across the area with the ball under control while A must defend. Switch lines.

Small Group Activities

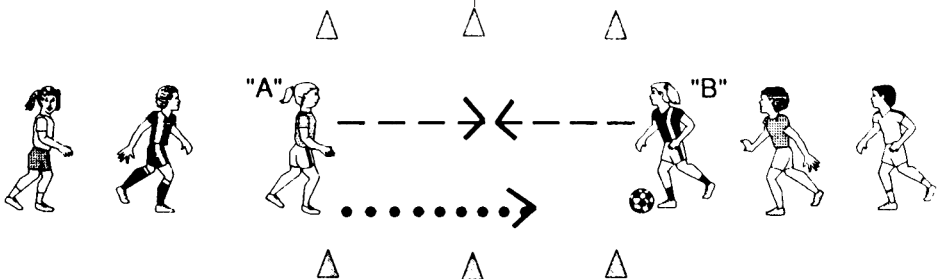
- A. Keep away Ask players to get in groups of 3 with one ball per group. On your signal they should play for possession. (Whoever has the ball, keep it. Whoever doesn't, try to get it and keep it).
- B. Ask the various groups of three to keep the ball away from each other (3 v. 3). Use two separate colors for identification. Play for about a minute, then rest.

Large Group Activities

- A. Set up an area (40 by 30 yds) with two goals and a few cones across the center line. Divide into two teams and play soccer with one restriction: any player who crosses the center line with the ball cannot pass. They must dribble at goal and shoot or lose the ball trying.
- B. Remove the restriction.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Set up the proper number of grids to avoid long lines. You can deal with defensive problems but emphasize dribbling.
- A. Let this go for about 30 seconds and then give them a rest. Repeat several times.
- B. You won't see a lot of passing but that's okay. Dribbling is the area to be improved.
- A. This will improve those who are good dribblers and also force those who normally won't dribble to goal to give it a shot.
- B. Let them play!



SESSION 11 | Passing and Receiving

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- A. On half of the field, players are jogging about with a ball in their hands. When the coach calls out a number, all players must throw the ball into the air and clap the number called.
- B. In the center circle, players are moving the ball about with their hands. When coach gives the command each player must strike his ball to go outside the circle then retrieve it before it stops rolling.
- C. Standing with feet wide apart and a ball in hand, the player throws the ball between his own legs then turns and chases it down. After stopping his ball, he does the same exercise to return to his starting point.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Passing/Receiving

- A. Two players facing each other must play the ball back and forth with one touch. More advanced players can do this while moving close together, then going farther apart.
- B. Use a wall at the field or put benches on their sides to create a rebound surface. Players stand one yard from the wall and must play the ball as many times as they can in a given time period.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Have players leap to catch the ball at its highest point.
 - B. Players must move about with eyes up or they collide with one another. This is another lesson in proper pace when they must chase the ball too often too far.
 - C. Body flexibility and agility are most noticeable in this activity. Stiff players struggle here and must chase a lot.
-
- A. Touch and pace are emphasized here. Accuracy occurs when the proper technique is employed.
 - B. Agility and non-striking foot balance are two things to observe in this activity. Pace is the key to success.

ACTIVITIES

- C. All of the players are in pairs with one ball per pair in the center circle. One of the partners dribbles about while the other (without the ball) moves freely among all of the others. When eye contact is made between partners, the pass is delivered. This only happens if the player with the ball wishes to execute.

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Inside the penalty box with 3 v. 3, have players play keep away with successful passes being counted as points. Have them play in short 90-second sets, then bring in a new 3 v. 3 group. Other players line the outside of the box to keep the game moving.
- B. In this activity the means of scoring is based on receiving the ball. Played on half the field in a 5 v. 5 situation, each player that receives and redirects the ball in one motion scores a team point.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. In an area 40 x 30 yds play keep away with points scored for good passes or balls being properly received and redirected. Further, passes of 20 yards placed accurately deserve bonus points.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Passes should be made crisply and played to the feet of the oncoming partner. Vision must be stressed.
- A. True passes are those made accurately to feet or timed to a space where a player is running.
- B. Properly receiving a ball requires body preparation prior to touching the ball. If a player's body is in a balanced position upon receiving the ball, his chances for success are heightened.
- A. In order to encourage more passes, have a 3 or 4 touch requirement.

SESSION 12 | Heading

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Start by dribbling in and out of each other in a defined area.
- B. Dribble as above. Give the signal - Sit and Switch. At this point all players should quickly sit down on their ball, pop up, run to any other ball, and continue dribbling until the signal is given again.
- C. Give a number to each side of your defined area. Ask all players to dribble randomly until they hear a number called. At this point they should sprint to that side and stop their ball on the line. Continue dribbling. Repeat.
- D. Create two teams within the area. Use three balls. The challenge is for either team to possess all three balls at the same time. They must work to gain and keep position.

Individual Activities

- A. Create several small goals with cones. Have a keeper in goal and a player on each side. Have players try to head the ball from their own hands through the goal. Score, score, score. Change keepers regularly.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Ask players to explore (dribble to all areas within the defined space).
 - B. The sit-down, stand-up movement is one that will develop explosive power in the legs and add variety to the movements.
 - C. Ask them to move freely and then burst to the appropriate side. Emphasize making a decision and then acting quickly.
 - D. Keep the action going. If you see that one team possess all three balls, yell freeze. Award that team one point. Keep score. (Use two colors for two teams).
-
- A. Give a quick demonstration or have a player show the proper form. Emphasize the points of contact to be used and a good motion (arch the back and snap forward).

ACTIVITIES

- B. With the same field set up, ask pairs to be on the same side. One player serves the ball by hand to his partner who tries to head through the goal. Both players should then rush through and change roles. Change keepers regularly.
- C. Create a defined area 20 x 20 yds. for about 12 players. Ask the players to move randomly heading the ball to each other, from their own hands. Start with four balls. Add or subtract points based on success rate.

Small Group Activities

- A. Create teams of two. Have them play back and forth between two cones (goals). The objective is to score goals by knocking over the opponents cones. As soon as a goal is scored, reset the cones and continue.
- B. Devise a Mini World Cup Competition. Ask the teams of 2 to pick a name for their team (a country, a pro team, a goofy name) Have them play the same as above. First goal wins, winners advance to championship.

Large Group Activity

- A. Divide into two teams (two colors) and set up a field 30 x 40 yds. The object of this game is to simply dribble over the opponents goal line (under control).

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. The hand-serve may prove difficult but it needs to be developed. Emphasize moving to the ball and avoid heading from a stationary position. The serve should be tossed just short of the header.
 - C. Emphasize quick movement and using the entire area. Head for power and accuracy.
-
- A. Play a series of short games. Take a rest between each game and change opponents regular.
 - B. It's imperative that those who didn't win are kept active. Don't let them feel like losers. Get them excited about next time.
-
- A. Emphasize free spirited dribbling. Add another ball if you want more involvement. Keep score.

SESSION 13 | Receiving

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- A. Players move about a large area, tossing the ball in the air and playing from their thigh to hand.
- B. Players continue to toss the ball, but head the ball to play to thigh and back to hands.
- C. A kneeling player bounces the ball on the ground. He must then get up and control it (no hands). Repeat.
- D. Players sitting on the ground must keep the ball live by using only their feet.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. A player strikes the ball firmly against a wall or another player. With the first receiving touch he must re-direct the ball with control.
- B. A player bounces the ball behind him between his own spread legs. He must turn to retrieve it before the second or third bounce and return with the ball to the starting position.
- C. One player tosses an underhand pass to another and calls a body part (include hands). The receiving player may not use the body part called.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Cushion is the key word in this session.
 - B. This creates an awareness of various body parts used to receive the ball.
 - C. The body must be supple to accommodate the ball.
 - D. Players must develop a sense for the ball, otherwise they'll chase the ball a great deal.
-
- A. A player's first touch is one of the most important.
 - B. Total body coordination should be emphasized.
 - C. Players must function with mental and physical speed.



ACTIVITIES

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Half of your players are standing around the lines of the penalty box with the other half inside the box. Inside players move about at random, then, per their own decision, run at one of the line players who must serve a ground ball to the running player. The running player must receive the ball with one touch and shoot on goal with the second touch.
- B. With the same field arrangement, this time those on the line use a throw into the upper body of the moving players.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Four goals are set in a random matter, so that players can score in any one they choose. You determine when a team may go to goal based on a particular ball that you feel was well received. Points (or goals) can be awarded for very well received and redirected balls.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Players receiving the ball must make body adjustments to receive, turn and shoot the ball.
 - B. Timing is very important here, with players turning their shoulders to redirect the ball toward goal.
-
- A. Players must receive and, where possible, redirect balls with emphasis on cushion.

SESSION 14 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Ask two players to tap dance gently on the same ball. If they have some success, ask them to move around the ball right or left.
- B. Ask each player to pass the ball back and forth between their own feet. Right to left to right, etc. If they can accomplish this activity ask them to move in and out of each other at the same time.
- C. Use a variety of static (non-bouncing) stretches, to increase flexibility. This is mostly for education in proper stretching techniques.
- D. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other until you signal. At this point they should pick up their ball, kick it out of their hands, do a forward roll, and control and dribble the first ball they get to.

Individual Activities

- A. In groups of 3 or 4, ask players to follow a leader (dribbler) around the field. Each player has a ball.
- B. Assign numbers to four or five objects near your training area (garbage cans, fence, goalpost, etc.). When you call a number, every player should sprint dribble to that object and wait for the next number to be called.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This will improve coordination and the ability to work with a partner.
 - B. Good touch on the ball will be enhanced. Ask players to increase speed as they master this technique.
 - C. Stretch ankles, lower legs, hamstrings, thighs, lower back, and neck. (see illustrations on page 46.)
 - D. This activity will increase a variety of motor skills. Let them do it at their own pace.
-
- A. Don't allow the leaders to move in straight lines. Change leaders every once in a while.
 - B. Allow adequate rest before you send the players to the next object.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Put the players in an area, like the penalty area, that has quite a number of marked lines. Instruct players to dribble until they come to any line. They must touch the line (with hand or foot) and then move on to any other line.

Small Group Activities

- A. Create several 10 x 10 yd areas. Have one chaser and three dribblers in each box (shark and fish). The shark (with no ball) should try to catch the fish for about 30 seconds. The fish should dribble away and protect their ball without going outside their box.
- B. Have half of your team line up on either side of a 15 x 15 yd area. Assign each player a number. Each team should have a player with the same number on the opposite side. Call a number and kick out a ball. The object is for each player to win the ball and dribble it back to their side.

Large Group Activity

- A. Divide into two teams (different colors) and play full field soccer.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Crossing lines is not permitted. Administer a gag penalty to those who goof up! Example: 1/2 sit-up, chase a ball that you kick out, etc.
- A. Change chasers (sharks) regularly. Ask them to count the number of tags they achieve in a 30 second period. If a dribbler goes out of the defined area, they must stay out for the remainder of that 30 seconds only.
- B. Try to keep the score even or close. Call out more than one number and kick out more than one ball.
- A. Let them play!

SESSION 15 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- A. Played in the penalty box, 4 players join hands to become the it players in chain tag. Their hands must be together when they catch another player. The caught player becomes an addition to the chain.
- B. Two players lie on their backs with their knees bent and toes touching: one player has the ball in his hands. When both players sit up, the ball is exchanged.
- C. Do activity B using 4 players positioned at the main points of a compass. Begin with two players in the ball exchange position with the other two lying on their backs. At the sound of go, players should perform as quickly as possible to catch the other pair in the ball exchange position.
- D. Standing back-to-back about one yard apart, two players execute a ball exchange by twisting their bodies. Do not let them move their feet, it defeats the purpose. Progress from side to side to an over and under exchange.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have players standing on the perimeter of the penalty box facing away from the goal. On signal, players must throw the ball over their head and shoot on goal before the second bounce of the ball.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Observe which of your players are clever enough to get positioned behind the chain. These are schemer types who can usually score goals for you.
 - B. Simply a sit-up with a little variation--the ball. Abdominal strength is important to soccer players. Since the emphasis is on exchanging the ball, the drudgery of doing sit-ups is reduced.
 - C. Observe those who can successfully shift their center of gravity and those struggling with their balance.
 - D. Individual coordination and pairs timing make this activity happen smoothly. Switch partners after 30 seconds, it keeps the interest higher.
-
- A. The ball should be struck with laces on the full or half volley. Knee over the ball will help keep the ball under the bar.

ACTIVITIES

- B. Try activity A with this variation: Same set up only the player throws the ball to the coach who begins back peddling with the player chasing him. Coach must release the ball before being tagged. The player must turn and shoot the released ball before three bounces.
- C. Each player gets a turn at being on the hot spot. The hot spot is the penalty mark where 3 or 5 balls are served to a player from various directions. He must try to score using only two touches or less.

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. With an arbitrary number of players (3 to 6) in the penalty box, coach sends all kinds of weird balls in to be shot on any one of 4 goals placed around the box. The last player to touch the ball going into the goal gets credit. A real every man for himself activity.
- B. Have two players on their knees facing the goal. Coach does not give them a verbal signal but rather serves the ball into the box. The moment either player hears or sees the served ball, both race to shoot. Real cut throat or 1 v. 1 in the box.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. In the same situation as Small Group Activities B, send as many as 8 players after the same ball in 5 v. 3 mode.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. Here the player is not controlling the flight or pace of the ball and must react quickly. Emphasis on technique of shooting.
- C. The positioning of the body prior to receiving the ball is very important.

- A. Described as a small group activity, this is really an individual matter but then so is goal scoring.
- B. Active players will use their ears as the first sense to detect the start of the activity. You'll see tenacity on the part of your goal getters.

- A. This is a match-related situation where players must play off one another to score.

SESSION 16 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Ask players to start by lightly tapping their ball with the bottom of the left and right foot. Ask players to move clockwise around their ball as they tap. Reverse direction.
- B. Guide players through a variety of stretches.
- C. Call out one body part after another. Players must figure out three different ways to touch their ball with that body part. They can use different surfaces of the body part. They can touch different parts of the ball. They can touch the ball from different balancing positions, etc.
- D. Ask them to dribble in and out of each other until you call out the name of an object, an animal, or a plant. At this point the players should freeze and imitate whatever you called out.

Individual Activities Emphasis - Shooting

- A. In pairs, ask players to shoot back and forth through a 4 yd. goal. Shoot, Shoot, Shoot.
- B. Ask players to head the ball back and forth through the same goal. Players should head the ball out of their own hands. If they can handle it, let one player be a goalkeeper who serves the ball by hand to the header, who tries to beat the keeper. Alternate roles.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Emphasize a light tap. Don't let players put too much weight on the ball because they will surely fall.
 - B. Try to educate players in the areas that they are stretching.
 - C. Test their imagination. Give them examples of how to touch the ball with the knee or elbow or nose, three different ways. Now activate them.
 - D. Make it fun. Point out particular good and bad impressions.
-
- A. Show how to shoot with the instep (shoe laces) and then get them going quickly.
 - B. Give a quick demonstration of the correct body motion and the proper striking surface of the forehead.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Ask two players to play back and forth between two cones approximately 12 yds. apart. The object is to protect your cone and knock over that of your opponent.

Small Group Activities

- A. Play keep away with teams of 3 v. 3. They can dribble or run with the ball.
- B. Add two goals and allow players to throw the ball through the goal for a goal. Use goalkeepers if you like.

Large Group Activity

- A. Set up a playing area 30 X 30 yds with two teams in different colors. You (coach) should be outside the area with a pile of balls at your feet. Serve a ball into the area and ask the players to attempt to win the ball and dribble over any boundary line (under control). If they succeed, they get one point. Play until all balls are used. Collect the balls and repeat!

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Play a series of 30-40 second games. Change opponents often.

- A. Don't enforce too many rules except those to prevent dangerous play!
- B. Encourage passing and scoring but let them play!

- A. Keep score. Encourage winning the ball and aggressive dribbling in a logical direction. Tell players to re-enter the area quickly after they've scored!

SESSION 17 | Goalkeeping

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- A. With feet wide apart and stationary, players move the ball with their hands in a figure-eight fashion around their feet. Coach calls right ankle and the ball is moved around it, then left ankle and back to figure eight.
- B. One player rolls the ball between his partner's feet then goes between his partner's legs to retrieve it. After four such moves, the roles are reversed.
- C. While one player is on his hands and knees, the other must dribble up to him, strike the ball under him then run around the kneeling player to retrieve the ball. Four successions then switch.
- D. Same as C only now the kneeling player must get up and retrieve the ball that was sent under his body. Put this one to the clock for most times accomplished.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. In pairs, players on their knees about 5 yards apart throw balls back and forth to each other with a push-pass.
- B. Still in pairs but lying on their stomachs, have players practice the same push-pass. They will need to raise their bodies from the ground to execute.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Be sure the body sways from side to side during the figure eight, otherwise it's a basketball warm-up.
 - B. Stress agility and speed. Put them on the clock for quicker responses.
 - C. Emphasis here is on controlled dribbling, accurate striking of the ball and acceleration without the ball.
 - D. As a matter of body mechanics, how fast can players get from a kneeling to a running position?
-
- A. Note: the ball may not spin. After success is realized, have players get farther apart. Look for upper body strength and control.
 - B. This requires upper body coordination to keep the ball off the ground.

ACTIVITIES

- C. Each player with a ball in a sitting position throws the ball into the air then jumps to his feet to catch it before it hits the ground. Do this from a kneeling position too.

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

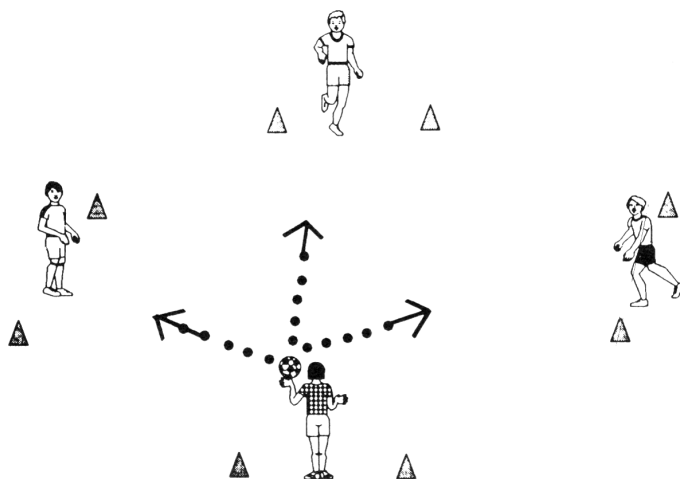
- A. Using four goals about 20 yards apart, have a goalkeeper in each try to score a goal by throwing the ball into one of the other 3 goals.
- B. With two goals 20 yards apart and each with two goalkeepers, now the objective is to score a goal off a full or half volley foot shot.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. With 6 to 8 players in the penalty box, coach serves balls in to be touched on goal. Lots of shots results in lots of goalkeeping action.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. Stress accurate throwing and speed of body reaction.
- A. Emphasize the need for a transition from defending the goal and attacking quickly.
- B. Here we are attempting to establish accuracy from the ball struck with the foot.
- A. How well has the goalkeeper positioned himself and how well has he caught rather than slapped balls played at his goal.



SESSION 18 | Passing

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Ask players to run in and out of each other with their ball in hand.
- B. Same activity but on your signal each player should throw their ball high in the air, close their eyes, duck and count to two out loud. At this point players should sprint to the nearest ball and continue dribbling.
- C. Ask players to bend and stretch in a variety of ways. Stretch legs, lower back, neck, etc.
- D. Ask players to continue moving in a confined area, (15 x 15 yds.) with ball in hand. As they move in and out they should occasionally make solid eye contact, then these players should exchange balls simultaneously and continue running.

Individual Activities

- A. Players should be paired up with one ball per pair. Challenge them to move about in an area 20 x 20 yds. passing at the proper time. Ask them not to run around next to each other but instead to get apart and explore all of the playing area.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Ask them to dodge and dart in and out of each other. Stress balance and directional change as well as variance in pace.
 - B. This should prove fun and exciting. Be sure to ask players to duck and cover their head! Let this go until the excitement wears down.
 - C. Stretch and hold. Don't bounce and twist.
 - D. Emphasize looking at another player and then making the ball exchange. This is the beginning of non-verbal communication.
-
- A. Demonstrate quickly how to pass with the inside, and the outside of the foot, then get the players started. Occasionally, when rest is needed, ask players to pass back and forth (5 yds.) as quickly as possible.

ACTIVITIES

- B. Players should be in pairs with one ball. Set up 6 or 7 goals (4 yds) in all parts of a 30 yd. square. Instruct players to rush to any goal and set up with a player on each side of the goal. They should execute 5 accurate passes back and forth through the goal and then move on to any other goal.
- C. Set up an area 25 x 20 yds. All players should be in the area, each with a ball. Instruct players to move around in the area and try to pass their ball at any other ball. Keep track of the number of balls they each hit.

Small Group Activities

- A. Create teams of 3. Set up 3 cones on each team's endline (no goals). The object is to knock over all 3 cones on the opponent's endline. When all 3 cones have been toppled by the ball, start a new game with different opponents.
- B. In the same area, let the players try a little 3 v. 3 keep away. The object is to dribble and pass to keep possession of the ball.

Large Group Activity

- A. Divide into 2 even teams (different colors). Set up a suitably sized playing field with 2 goals and goalkeepers. Play!

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. Introduce competition by asking players how many goals they got to in 45 seconds.
- C. Emphasize passing for accuracy. The inside or outside of the foot is the preferred surface.
- A. Set up as many playing areas as are needed to keep everyone active and busy. Change opponents regularly.
- B. Don't worry if a lot of wonderful passing doesn't occur. This is just the beginning.
- A. Let them play and enjoy!

SESSION 19 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have players in the center circle moving the ball with their left hand (or right hand if left handed) while holding their ankle with the other hand. On command players try to knock other player's balls out of the circle using their left hand while protecting their own ball.
- B. With their ball, players get on one of the straight lines on the field. Players begin dribbling. If two players meet on the same line, the one nearest an intersection must turn, with ball, and get to the intersection for a safe base. If caught or tagged, he must get off the line and execute four juggles to get back in the game.
- C. Have players stand inside the penalty area or smaller area, each with a ball at his feet. On command the players toe tap (Mexican Hat Dance Style) a stationary ball five times, then run to another ball and touch it with their knee, then stop at the third ball. Build this up by using various body parts.
- D. Play hand behind the back tag by having 2 players chasing the others who are running about with one hand behind the back. An it player catches another when he tags a hand behind the back.

Individual Activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Dribbling

- A. Play hand behind the back. Now those being chased must also dribble a ball.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. By going immediately to a competitive type activity you may get more enthusiastic participation.
 - B. Players can't play this game with their eyes down. Stress vision, vision, vision.
 - C. Stress agility of motion as they move through one another. Discourage straight up running in favor of short step shuffling.
 - D. This activity calls for body swerves and deception on the part of those players being chased.
-
- A. Now players must accommodate the ball while avoiding the it player.

ACTIVITIES

- B. Two players stand about one yard from the ball. When coach calls right, each player must try to get his right foot on the ball first. The same is so for left and left foot.
- C. Have players dribble with every step being a touch of the ball. On command players must step very lightly on the ball and change the direction of their dribble.

Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)

- A. Place teams of 5 or 6 players in an area with 6 to 8 goals set up in various places (use cones). In order to score a goal a player must dribble through one of the goals.
- B. In dribble to take on, goals are scored by beating an opponent rather shooting. 4 to 6 players on a team play. When a defender is attacked, he may only retreat 3 steps then he must tackle.

Large Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

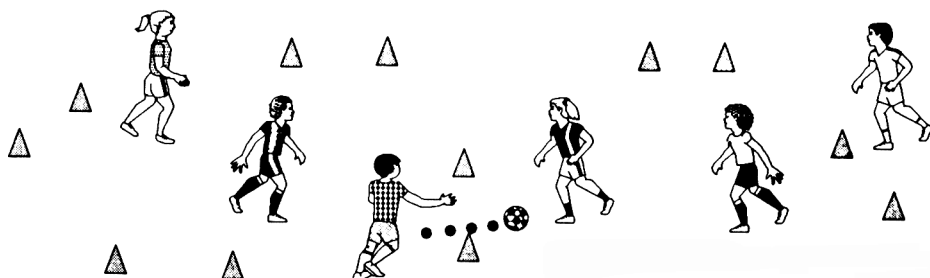
- A. Set up goals across the field for a 5 v. 5 or more game. Additional goals can be awarded for excellence in dribbling.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- B. This activity encourages foot speed and quick mental responses.
- C. Balance and correct ball touch is necessary for success in this activity.

- A. No shooting in this game. With so many goals, players must be encouraged to change direction continually on the dribble.
- B. This match related activity promotes dribblers taking people on, which is imperative in soccer.

- A. Emphasize creative and daring dribbling. Also praise players for dribbling at the appropriate times.



SESSION 20 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other until you call out the name of an animal. At that point they should begin to imitate that animal until you signal. They should then grab the closest ball and continue dribbling.
- B. Ask players to play the old game of Hot Potatoes. Pass the ball back and forth by hand until you call freeze. The player with the ball in hand has the hot potato.
- C. Try the same activity as B with the feet.
- D. In pairs, ask players to stand back-to-back and alternate passing the ball between their legs and over their heads.
 - 1. Same as above except players should pass the ball by twisting side to side.
 - 2. All players have a ball and exchange balls at the same time. One should pass over while another passes under.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Initial warm-up and fun are involved in this type of activity.
- B. This is just fun!
- C. Don't get caught but pass accurately.
- D. These activities involve coordination and cooperation with a teammate.

ACTIVITIES

Individual Activities

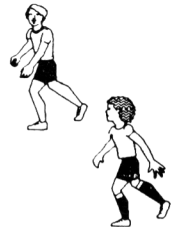
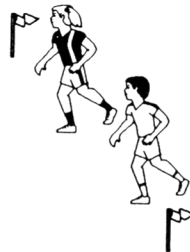
Emphasis - Shooting

- A. Set up 2 or 3 goals (cones) with 20 yds. of free space on either side. Each goal has a goalkeeper and two shooters on either side. The activity will involve shooting back and forth between the two groups of shooters. You will define the types of shots to be taken, i.e.:
1. Whoever gets the ball should pick it up and run behind his partner (the shooter), who has his legs spread. The ball is rolled between his legs toward the goal. He then chases the ball and shoots on goal. The ball then goes to the other side.
 2. Ask the player who gets to the ball first to pick it up, run to one side of the goal, turn and roll it back to the shooter who must now strike a ball that is rolling towards him.
 3. Whoever gets to the ball first should run wide and half-way to the goal. The ball should be rolled across the goal to provide a square pass.
 4. The player who gets the ball should now run behind his partner and toss the ball just over his head. The shooter must now chase and strike a bouncing ball.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

Group Activity

- A. In this environment you can show all the players the type of shot to be taken and then let them go at it. Change keepers often.
1. Ask shooters to be far enough away so that shots aren't taken too close to the goal.
 2. Emphasize a good, slow roll that isn't bouncing all over.
 3. Make sure players alternate shooting and rolling.
 4. You can invent and work on a variety of shots. The key is to get cooperation between the partners.



ACTIVITIES

Small Group Activities

- A. With the same field set up as Individual Activity A, 3 players will be on each side of the goal. Have players play 1 v. 2 on one side of the goal. When the ball goes to the other side, they should play 1 v. 2 to goal. The player who gets the ball first or wins the ball must try to beat the other two and score.
- B. Now play with both teams on one side of the goal, 3 v. 3. The object is to shoot through the goal. If the goalkeeper makes a save, the ball will be thrown to the other side. At this point all 6 players will rush through and play 3 v. 3 back through the goal.

Large Group Activity

- A. Set up a square 25 x 25 yds. with a 4 to 5 yd. goal in the middle of each side of your square. Have one player in each goal as a goalkeeper. Divide the remaining players into two teams (different colors) and tell them to play regular soccer except that they can score at any of the four goals.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Each group of three should be of a different color than the three on the opposite side of the goal. Change goalkeepers regularly. Shoot, shoot, shoot.
- B. The movement will take a while to understand but they'll pick it up. Be sure to give ample rest periods because this activity involves a lot of hard work.

- A. Let them play! Keep balls ready to be played in. Change the goalkeepers regularly. For a change let one team attack two goals and the other team attack the other two goals.



US Youth Soccer Official Under 10 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees. Please note the U8 addendum and appendix.

Law 1) Field of Play

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 45 yards maximum 60 yards
Width: minimum 35 yards maximum 45 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than five inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight yards is marked around it.

Goal Area: A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, six yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of six yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

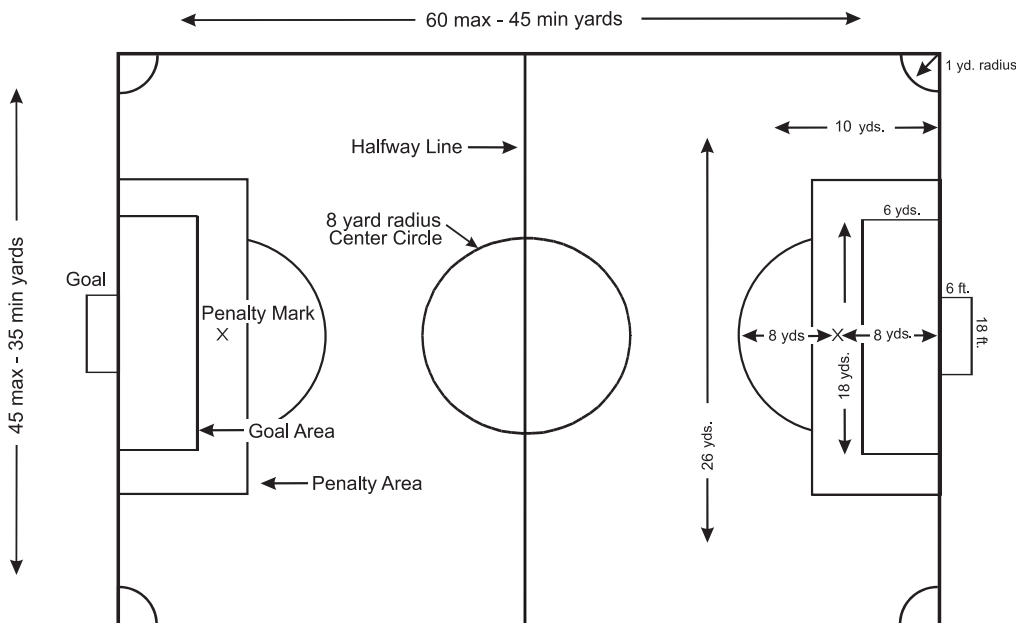
Penalty Area: A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 10 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 10 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made eight yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of eight yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Flag posts: A flagpost, not less than five feet high, with a non-pointed top and a flag is placed at each corner.

Corner Arc: A quarter circle with a radius of one yard from each corner flagpost is drawn inside the field of play.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flag posts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The maximum distance between the posts is 18 feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six feet.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



Law 2.) The Ball - Size four.

Law 3.) The Number of Players - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than six players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than five players.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum to 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

Law 4.) Player's Equipment - A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player, including any kind of jewelry. The basic compulsory equipment of a player is:

- A jersey or shirt
- Shorts
- Stockings
- Footwear
- Shinguards are covered entirely by the stockings, are made of a suitable material and provide a reasonable degree of protection.

Each goalkeeper wears colors that distinguish him/her from other players, the referee and the assistant referees or linesmen/women. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5.) Referee - Registered referee, especially Grade nine or parent/coach or assistant coach. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6.) Assistant Referees - Not required. May use club linesmen/women if desired.

Law 7.) Duration of the Match - The match lasts two equal periods of 25 minutes. There shall be a half-time interval of five minutes.

Law 8.) Start and Restart of Play - A coin is tossed and the team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match. The other team takes the kick-off to start the match. The team that wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half of the match. In the second half of the match, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals. A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off. After a team scores a goal, the other team takes the kick-off. A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- At the start of the match
- After a goal has been scored
- At the start of the second half of the match
- All players are in their own half of the field
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight yards from the ball until it is in play
- The ball is stationary on the center mark
- The referee gives the signal
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward
- The kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player

Law 9.) Ball In and Out of Play - The ball is out of play when:

- It has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
- Play has been stopped by the referee

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- It rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play
- It rebounds from either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

Law 10.) Method of Scoring - A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.

Law 11.) Offside - None.

Law 12.) Fouls and Misconduct - A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four offenses:

- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area)
- Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his/her own penalty area, commits any of the following four offenses:

- Takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his/her hands before releasing it from his/her possession
- Touches the ball again with his/her hands after it has been released from his/her possession and has not been touched by another player
- Touches the ball with his/her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him/her by a teammate
- Touches the ball with his/her hands after he/she has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands

The indirect free kick is taken from where the offense occurred.

- No ball may be directly punted or drop kicked in the air by the goalkeeper from one penalty area into the opponents' penalty area. The infraction is punished by giving the ball to the opponents for an indirect free kick taken at the center spot on the halfway line.

Law 13.) Free Kicks - All free kicks are direct and opponents are at least eight yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player. If the free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal a goal is awarded. If a free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Law 14.) Penalty Kick - A penalty kick is awarded against a team that commits one of these offenses inside the penalty area:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately

Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball.

A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick. Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half. When a penalty kick is taken during the normal course of play, or time has been extended at half-time or full-time to allow a penalty kick to be taken or retaken, a goal is awarded if, before passing between the goalposts and under the crossbar, and/or the goalkeeper. The ball is placed on the penalty mark (the penalty mark is eight yards from the center of the goal line.) The player taking the penalty kick is properly identified. The defending goalkeeper remains on his/her goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked. The players other than the kicker are located inside the field of play, outside the penalty area, behind the penalty mark and at least eight yards from the penalty mark. The referee does not signal for penalty kick to be taken until the players have taken up position in accordance with the Law. The referee decides when a penalty kick has been completed. The player taking the penalty kicks the ball forward. He does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.

Law 15.) Throw-In - A throw-in is a method of restarting play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in. A throw-in is awarded:

- When the whole of the ball passes over the touch line, either on the ground or in the air
- From the point where it crossed the touch line
- To the opponents of the player who last touched the ball

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- Faces the field of play
- Has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line
- Uses both hands
- Delivers the ball from behind and over his head

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. The ball is in play immediately as it enters the field of play.

Law 16.) Goal Kick - A goal kick is a method of restarting play. A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team. A goal kick is awarded when:

- The whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the attacking team, passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored.

Procedure:

- The ball is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team
- Opponents must remain outside the goal area and at least four yards from the ball until it is in play
- The kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched a second player
- The ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the goal area.

Law 17.) Corner Kick - A corner kick is a method of restarting play. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team. A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air.

Procedure:

- The ball is placed inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flagpost
- The corner flagpost is not moved

Coaching Education Programs

US Youth Soccer offers coaching courses and training for all coaches. For a course schedule contact your local State Association or US Youth Soccer.

Youth Coaching Modules

There are a number of Youth Coaching Modules offered to improve your age-appropriate coaching from US Youth Soccer. Each module offers classroom and field sessions designed for the parent/coach or novice coach with an emphasis on the age group of your players. Techniques, psychology and FUN are introduced with an emphasis on player development. Check out your State Association website or USYouthSoccer.org for more courses on coaching education. Some states offer the course online as well!

Available Modules include: U6/U8, U8/U10 and the U12 Youth Module

Also available from US Youth Soccer:

The Novice Coach DVD

Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual

The Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer

Assistant Coach Series: U10 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

Assistant Coach Series: U12 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

For additional information contact US Youth Soccer or your State Association.

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US YOUTH SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION
ASSISTANT COACH SERIES

U12

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

for the Parent Coach

INTRODUCTION

The Under-12 player, though still in need of technical training and playing experience, can be exposed to tactics. The U-12 coach should be careful not to go overboard with tactical training. A coach cannot invade the cranial recesses of U-12s and pour in reams of tactical information. Before describing beneficial activities for the emerging player, a discussion of tactics is in order.

What are tactics? Tactics are decisions made by players. This point warrants repetition. **Tactics are decisions made by players.** Soccer is as much a mental as a physical exercise. Tactics are the thinking part of the game.

Take for instance a grid situation of 4 v 2. Obviously all the players should be thinking, but the conceptual approach of each group must be different. The group of four players should think and play quickly while the group of two must attempt to slow the pace of the game.

Of course, breakdowns in concentration will occur during these sessions. This is to be expected. A coach must recognize whether the breakdown stemmed from a technical error or a bad tactical decision.

This book presents 20 training sessions for U-12 players in which technical training with tactical implications is emphasized. A U-12 coach must create an environment in which players can play and think. Be especially careful not to give all the answers during training sessions. Although players may take a longer time to find solutions to various tactical situations, lessons learned independently are far more effective. A coach benefits his team more by raising good questions and not providing all the answers.

Each of the following sessions includes stretching because of its fundamental relationship to physical performance on the field. The stretching is dynamic, which means players move while extending various parts of their bodies to a comfortable limit and hold the position. The players should hold the position for about 15 to 20 seconds, then shake out loosely and repeat the same stretch. Players should move about before stretching in order to stimulate their blood flow. Remember, the older the player and the colder the weather, the more stretching should be done. Regardless of age or weather, a 6-year-old in Florida should stretch in July for no other reason than that it's a good athletic habit.

Learn more about Small-Sided Games at
www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/SmallSidedGames/

SESSION 1 | Receiving and passing

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up (5-8 Minutes)

- A. Each player must kick his ball into the air, receive it and change direction with a dribble. This is done on the coach's count. Depending upon the ability of your players, the count will be short or long.
- B. Same as above, except the players must dribble 10 yards or get to the nearest line on the field after receiving the ball.
- C. This one takes partner cooperation. Two players with one ball. The player with the ball knocks it into the air. The other player receives it and passes it immediately back to the first player who dribbles 10 yards or to the nearest line. Make this one a competition if you wish.
- D. Take the above activity to a situation for groups of three or four using various conditions to challenge the players.
- E. Be sure to stretch at varying intervals during the warm-up. Players should become more responsible for their own stretching.

Technical Emphasis (Receiving and Passing)

- A. A coach plays a ball into an area of two or three players. The players control the ball and pass it to each other so that every player touches it at least twice.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Encourage players to move and visually track the ball at the same time.
- B. Observe the execution of receiving and dribbling.
- C. Players should select a player to receive their pass when the ball is in the air.
- D. Activities as sophisticated or as realistic as the situation dictates.
- E. Players should be able to stretch all body parts.

Technical Emphasis

- A. Observe the player's touch in both passing and receiving.

SESSION 1 (continued)

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Same as above, only now after a player plays in the ball they become a defender trying to disrupt the passes.
- B. Take this same activity to goal, using different numbers of attackers and defenders.

**Group Activity
(Tactics - Decisions)**

- A. Divide the number of players into two teams. Play on half field in a space that would challenge the skill level. A team must complete four, five or six passes before they shoot on goal. Each time a team loses possession the pass count begins again.

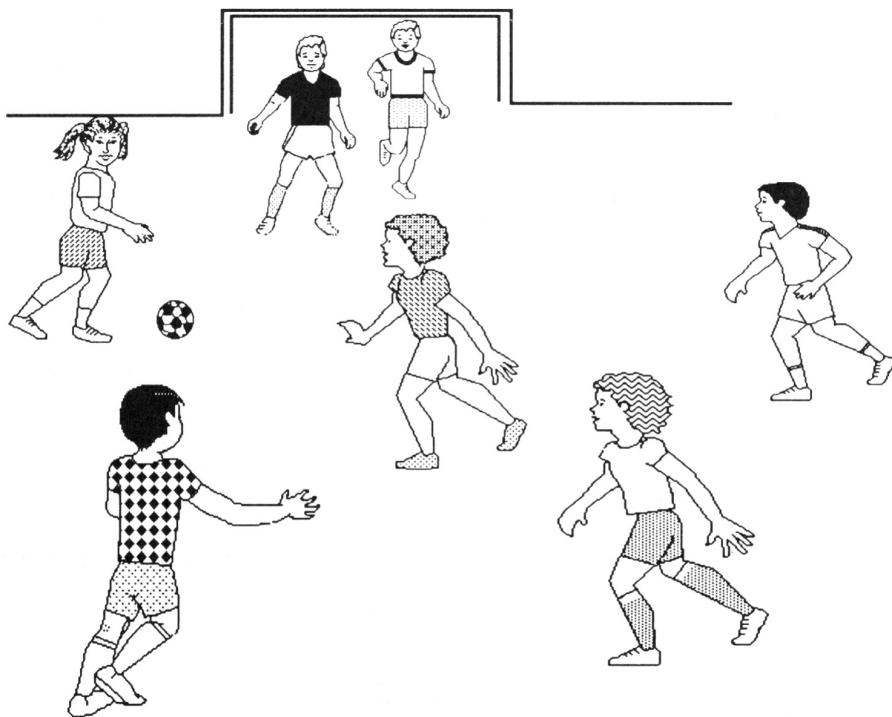
COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. See which players use the proper pass to get out of trouble.
- B. Encourage players to shoot when the opportunity arises.

Group Activity

- A. Look for good choices on the part of the players. See which players move without the ball (indicates thinking when and where movement).



SESSION 2 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Have each player dribble at his own pace in a large area. On a given signal he must dribble with the instep (laces), bottom of foot, inside or outside of foot. Make sure the players practice with both feet. Slow the pace at first, and then accelerate the speed.
- B. Players are told to dribble about in the center circle with feet. At the coach's signal, the players must run as quickly as possible to get out of the circle. They must maintain ball control.
- C. Stretch at varying intervals. Ask different players to give an example of various body part stretches. "Bobby, give us a lower leg stretch. Jimmy, how about an upper body stretch."
- D. Without a ball, have players dribble in an area in slow motion. In this instance, the slowest is the best. Accelerate the activity to full speed. Introduce the ball.

Technical Emphasis (Dribbling)

- A. Half the players have balls and take on other players who defend passively. After a short time, switch roles. Accelerate defensive pressure and confine the playing space.
- B. Break out into half field playing 1 v 1 and working toward the coach who is moving around on the half field.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Check for players that are dribbling with their heads up. Encourage the touch of the ball rather than watching the ball.
- B. Challenge players to be as creative as possible with their dribbling. "Straight line dribbling is boring."
- C. Make sure the examples given are proper. If they are not, correct them.
- D. Observe the body control and creativity of players.

Technical Emphasis

- A. Players must play with vision so they don't bump into each other.
- B. Now it is clear who wants to work and who is hanging out.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Move into a grid and play 3 v 3 with the condition that the players may not pass until they have made a successful dribble. Taking someone on and beating them earns big time points.
- B. Take the above activity to goals located at the end of the grid with the condition that a player must take on and beat an opponent before shooting on goal.

**Group Activity
(Tactics - Decisions)**

- A. Divide the team in half and set up as many as six or eight small sized goals randomly about the field. Condition: that no attempts may be made on goal until one of your team has successfully beaten an opponent. A player may only score by dribbling through the goal.

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. The coach acts as the referee and gives points for exceptional dribbling.
- B. Balls can be rolled in by hand if accurate passing is difficult for the outside players. Change roles regularly.

Group Activity

- A. Be particularly aware of the manner in which your player makes decisions (i.e. a crowded goal means go to another one). Look for good decisions and individual tactics.

SESSION 3 | Heading

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Players move about in an unrestricted area tossing their ball in the air and heading it to themselves.
- B. Continue by accelerating the speed of movement and the number of times the ball must be headed.
- C. Stretch once the players are moving with an increased heart rate.
- D. Have each player roll his ball on the ground, then run to it, stop and turn with it in the least number of touches.

Technical Emphasis (Heading)

- A. As in the above activities, each player tosses the ball in the air, heads it twice and then heads it to another player.
- B. In groups of three or four, players try to keep the headed ball alive. Condition - that no player can head the ball more than once before each of the other players head it.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Look for eyes open and mouths closed.
- B. See which players display confidence while moving.
- C. Let one or two players direct the stretching.
- D. Efficient players do this with one touch. Let them experiment. Encourage vision while not in possession of the ball.

Technical Emphasis (Heading)

- A. At first the balls will be all over the place, but they'll solve it. As soon as two players do it correctly, stop the session and praise them.
- B. Create a competition between groups of players. Encourage groups to move as they head the ball.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Using Small-Sided Games teams (3 v 3 or 4 v 4), play to a goal by hand passing to the head. Points are awarded for heading balls properly while progressing toward the goal. A grand slam is a goal scored from a headed ball.

Group Activity (Tactics - Decisions)

- A. Divide the players into two teams and play on half field with emphasis on completing a headed pass or scoring a goal with a head ball.

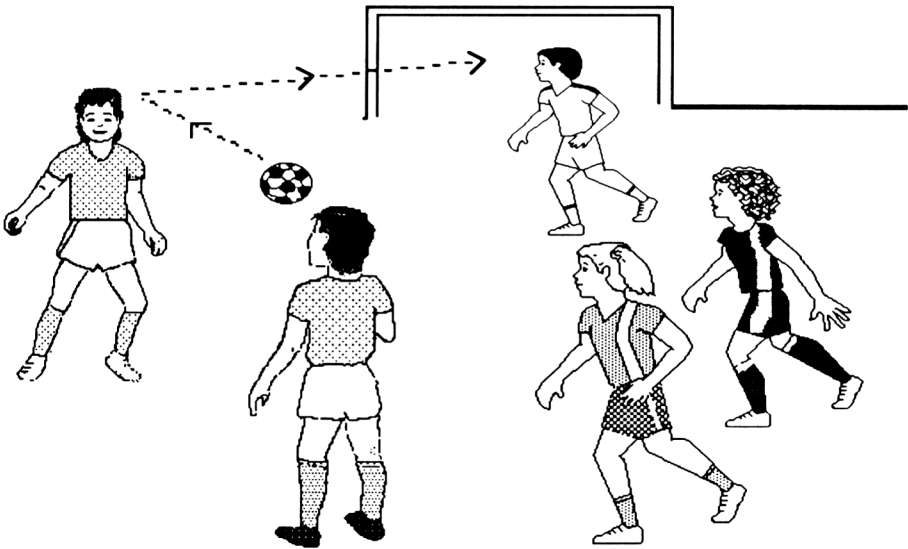
COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Since this is a game situation, tactics will be employed. Though emphasis is on heading, watch the choices made by the players.

Group Activity

- A. Watch for players who move to receive a headed pass. Successful passing indicates good decisions. Stop the play to praise players for sound tactical choices.



SESSION 4 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Have players jog inside the penalty box while juggling their ball in the air and catching it with their hands. When a player's name is called, the player immediately plays the ball with his feet and takes a shot on goal.
- B. With half of the players behind the goal, the other half tries to chip balls from varying distances in an attempt to hit the cross bar. This should be done in a given time period (two minute segments) to create a competition between the two groups. One condition for the team retrieving the balls is that they must get the ball back in ten seconds or the shooting team gets a point.
- C. At any time during the above warm-up activities, the coach calls out stretch and all the players respond with an individual stretch.

Technical Emphasis (Shooting)

- A. Each player has a ball in his hand and lines up approximately 12 yards from the goal line facing the coach who stands near the 18 yard line. When the coach points to a player, that player responds by hand passing the ball to the coach. In turn, the coach throws the ball over the player's head. The player must shoot on goal before the ball takes a third bounce.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-Up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Observe the time that it takes players to shoot. The goal scorers are those who get shots off quickly.

Shots on goal need not be pretty to get results.
- B. Chipping a ball properly requires the player to extend and strike below the middle of the ball.
- C. Make players responsible for their own stretching.

Technical Emphasis

- A. Observe the placement of the non-striking foot. Poor placement of this foot can often be the reason for missed shots. Encourage full and half volleys. Low full volleys must be praised.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Four attacking players in the box play against two defenders and a goalkeeper. The coach has a number of balls at his feet and serves them to various places in the box. The object is for the players to hit the best shot possible in the shortest period of time.
- B. Same as above, but with two attackers against four defenders. It is far more difficult to score, but it can be done.

Group Activity (Tactics Decisions)

- A. Bring the large goals to the distance of 20 yards apart. Have four field players on each team with a goalkeeper in each net. Since the emphasis is on shooting, the players are limited to only one or two touches. Good goalkeeper service is imperative for success in this activity.

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Passes to open space allow for the best shots on goal.

Quickness in shot release is vital. The decision to shoot on goal must be considered before the player receives the ball.

Group Activity

- A. If the player's hips are facing the goal, there is a good chance that the shot will be on goal.

SESSION 5 | Game Night

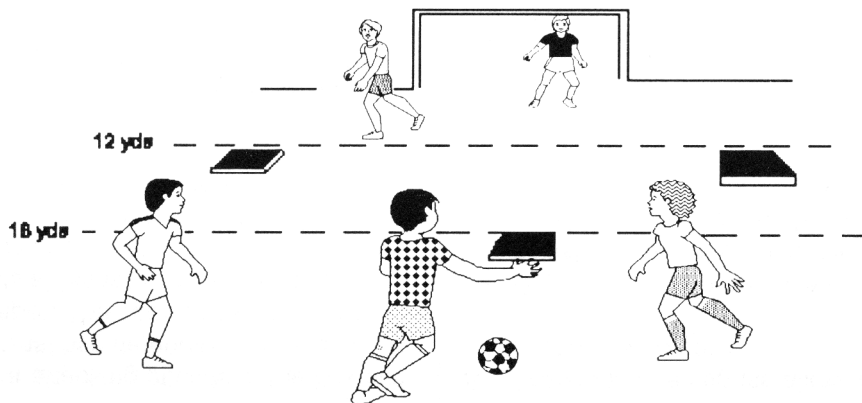
Sometimes a formal approach to training the players just doesn't work. In fact, there are times when some of the best thought out and prepared sessions just don't seem to fit. Let's say it is the middle of the season and the team has done particularly well, or for that matter, not well at all. Why should the coach worry about making the team wildly enthused about training? Why must the coach be the mid-season drill sergeant? Coach, it is time for Game Night. Some of these training games are directly related to soccer while others only have implications for soccer. These are four of hundreds of soccer related games that a coach can present to players for their development and their enjoyment. Emphasize player participation and fun.

Game 1: Soccer Golf

This game is played in pairs. Each player has a ball. The first player strikes his ball as far in any direction as he wishes. The ball must stay on the ground. When the first player's ball stops, the second player has two shots to hit the first player's ball. If he hits the first player's ball, then he receives one point and he serves the next ball. If the player who is shooting at the ball misses, he receives no points and must play his ball away. The first player to get five points wins! Players with low golf handicaps should be paired accordingly.

Soccer Implication - Observe the players' ability to strike a long ground ball and the players' ability to strike a ball with accuracy.

Game 2: Soccer Baseball



The player striking or batting the ball must keep the ball between first and third base for a fair ball. Once a batting player strikes the ball, he must round all the bases and get home before one of the field players shoots the ball from outside the 18-yard line and scores a goal.

One strike and a miss is an out. Two fouls is an out. Three outs constitute half an inning. The coach is the pitcher. The catcher plays the ball back across the 18-yard line if it misses the goal.

If the level of the team warrants, the players on the field must receive and control the ball with no hands. If the team is not able to compete with that condition let them use their hands.

Game 3: Soccer Volleyball

This game is played over any straight line on the training field. The game is played with all body parts except the hands. One or two bounces per side are permitted depending on the technical level of the players. Score is kept similar to volleyball in that a team must have the serve to score a point.

Coaching Points - Observe the players who receive the ball with proper cushion and those who strike the ball with accurate pace and direction. (Composure, vision, communication)

Game 4: Soccer World Cup

Divide the players into groups of three, four or five on a team. Each team is gathered around the goal in the penalty area. The coach has all the balls at his feet and controls the start and direction of play. One team plays with a goalkeeper and may not leave the line. The other team attempts to score goals. A goal is scored when the last touch before the ball crosses the line is made by a team member.

Example - Teams on the field are U.S.A., Brazil, Italy, Germany and Scotland. A shot is taken by Brazil and bounces off an Italian player and is finally netted by a player from the U.S.A. U.S.A. scores and their team leaves the field. The last team to leave the field now defends the goal and points are tallied.

Coaching Points - The implications are far from subtle. The game is won by the team which scores the most goals. The World Cup game focuses on game-winning situations and scoring under pressure.

SESSION 6 | Striking

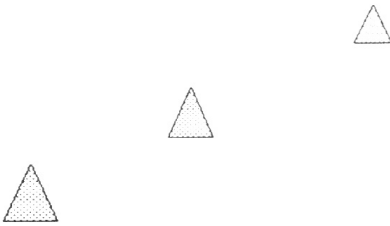
ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Players try to hit the other players with shots. Like a game of tag, when a player is hit, he is "it" and tries to hit someone else. Confine the space to the center circle or the goal area. Players may only hit below the waist.
- B. After the players have moved about for a bit, have them stretch.
- C. Move half of the group outside the circle and play soccer dodge ball. Players in the center must hop rather than run in this warm-up activity.

Technical Emphasis (Striking)

- A. Set up targets in various places using half the field. The players begin one at a time to hit the targets while on the move.



Small-Sided Games

- A. Play 3 v 1 in a confined space. The player in the middle is sitting and not trying to win the ball from the other three, but rather is the target for the other three to hit. The player in the middle may not leave the ground in his attempts to avoid being hit.

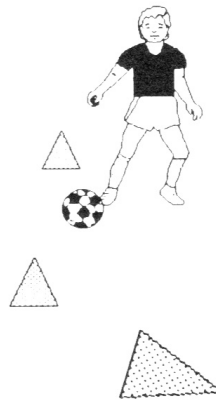
COACHING POINTS

Warm-Up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Look for players with fast feet trying to escape being hit. Encourage players with the ball to make fakes before striking the ball at someone. Players who properly strike the ball get the best results in this game (caution, don't blast).

Technical Emphasis

- A. Observe how fluidly the players accommodate going from the dribble to striking the ball.



Small-Sided Games

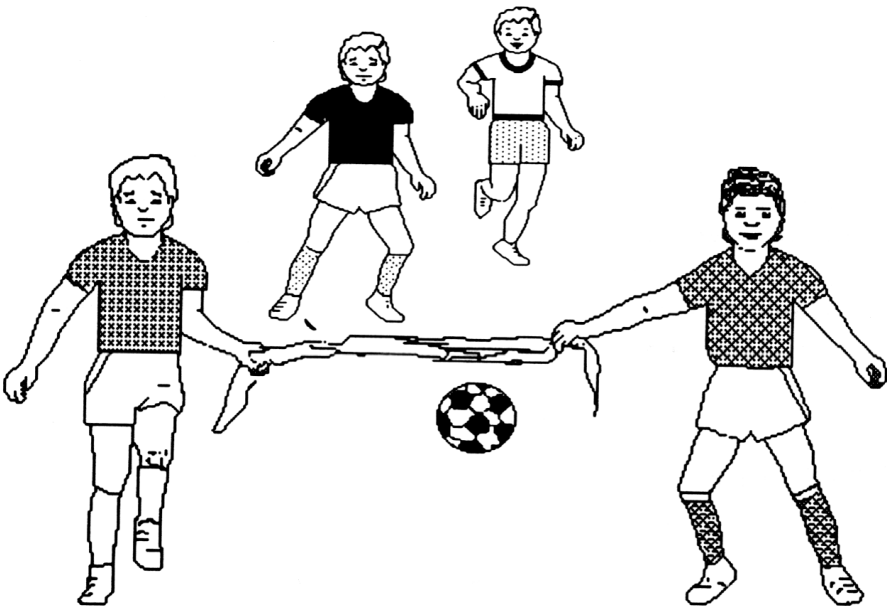
- A. See if the players figure out that trying to strike the target directly doesn't always get the best result. Perhaps a pass or two may get the job done.

ACTIVITIES

- A. Add to the above activity by using as many as three players in the middle and five on the outside. Make the space smaller and allow only two touch if you wish to have players execute more efficiently.

Group Activity (Tactics - Decisions)

- A. All players except two play on the same half of the field. The two players become the moving goal. These players take the opposite ends of a large bath towel or a pool noodle stretched out fully as they run. With one or two balls, the rest of the players try to score by striking a ball between the players and under the towel. For more changes, add another goal.



COACHING POINTS

- A. A properly struck ball is essential for success.

Group Activity

- A. Players must strike a moving ball accurately to score in this game. The coach can readily observe correct pass selection. With two goals moving about, the players must play with their heads up and look for more complex decision-making.

SESSION 7

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

- A. Assign four or five players to a group. Each group forms a circle about five yards in diameter. The groups have a ball and players jog in place. As soon as a player passes a ball to another in his group, he makes some kind of move (i.e. touches his knee, puts one hand over his head, touches his ear, jumps in the air, touches the ground, etc.). The receiving player must duplicate the action before he gets the ball and he must make another action as soon as he passes to another player.
- B. Stretch.
- C. Change the conditions of the activity by making the circle larger, but permitting only one or two touch. Players use correct throw-ins rather than foot passes.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Have players participate in a 2 v 1 activity within a 10 by 10 yard grid using their hands to pass. Passes may not be made over the head of the defending player.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-up

- A. Here coordination, agility, flexibility and mental quickness all play a part. Make this as competitive as you wish. Three mistakes and a player must run around his circle three times.
- B. Designate a group in charge of four or five different kind of stretches.
- C. Be certain to challenge illegal throw-ins.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Place the emphasis of your observations and concern upon the decisions made during the activities. By not allowing passes over the defender's head, the player without the ball must move. Once the players seem to be making good decisions while using their hands, go to the feet.

ACTIVITIES

- B. Take the above activity to feet with no conditions while still playing keep away.

- C. Using the same three players in a slightly larger grid. Put the ball in the hands of one of the players and tell him to keep it away from the other two. He will only lose it if he is tagged while in possession of the ball.

- D. Make the grid larger and use 3 v 2 groups of players.

Group Activity

- A. Divide the team in half and play to half-field goals. Though a point is scored for a goal, also award points for good tactical decisions. This activity can be done with hand passes first, then feet. This game can be played with or without goalkeepers depending on the conditions for scoring goals and the size and placement of goals.

COACHING POINTS

- C. Place value in keeping the ball away from the defender as long as possible.

Group Activity

- A. Stop the play and congratulate good decisions. Commending players in training can lead to excellent game results.

SESSION 8 | Receiving Air Balls

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

- A. This session is an individual ball gymnastic warm-up. At different intervals, the coach should stop the gymnastics and have a stretch.

Examples of ball gymnastics activities are:

1. Players roll a figure eight on the ground using their hands to push the ball around spread ankles. First right to left, then left to right.
2. Switch to moving the ball around one ankle, then the other ankle.
3. With two hands holding the ball behind the back, have players toss the ball over their heads and catch it in their hands without moving their feet.
4. In pairs, one player lies on the ground and the other player stands at his head. The player on the ground raises the ball pressed between his ankles and the standing player grabs the ball then runs around to place it between the other player's feet before they get to the ground.
5. At a one-yard distance, players facing away from each other must hand pass the ball to each other by turning right and left or over and under. Accelerate the speed of the activity after the players get the idea.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

- A. Ball gymnastics are designed to promote flexibility, coordination, ball touch and ball confidence.
- Be sure that the players become fluid in their body movement.
 - Though some of these activities are handed, the emphasis is on body flow and movement.
 - Right and left-sided activities help soccer players in their development.
 - Body speed can also be accomplished in ball gymnastics.

ACTIVITIES

Technical Emphasis (Receiving Air Balls)

- A. Have a player hand pass balls (or foot if capable) to a second player who must receive the ball and touch it to the third player. After a series of successful executions, have the third player move so the receiving player must first find him and then pass. At no time may the ball touch the ground.
- B. Same as above. The first player must make a leg touch (thigh or foot), then play the ball to the upper body of the second player who in turn must one touch the ball to the original server.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Divide the players into groups of five. Four players must keep the ball alive while one-player runs around the outside of the group. Each time he returns to his starting point without the ball touching the ground, a point is awarded. The first teams to have five players run successfully wins.
- B. Same as the above, but specific body parts are designated to keep the ball in the air.

Group Activity

- A. Divide the players into two groups and play on half the field with a goal at each end. Using hand passes, give points for players who successfully receive the ball. If a player with the ball is tagged, the ball goes over. Points are also scored if a player receives a ball and heads it into the goal.

COACHING POINTS

Technical Emphasis

- A. If the first touch has proper cushion, then success is likely.

Look for the player without the ball anticipating the play.

Observe the touch and especially the timing of the off player.

The object should be to keep the ball off the ground.

Small-Sided Games

- A. A team game with cooperation gets results.
- B. Observe technique and the decisions made by the players.

Group Activity

- A. In this game the coach must reward players who anticipate the play and get in proper position.

Who really cares who wins in this situation? How they play is what counts. Vision counts as well as assessing your environment.

SESSION 9 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

- A. Without a ball, all the players line up and follow the coach's directions. The directions are:
 1. Lie down on your back.
 2. Sit up.
 3. Lay on your belly.
 4. On your knees.
 5. Stand up.
- B. After several repetitions of these movements, have the players stretch.
- C. Same as the above, only now have the players perform the same movements with the ball in their hands.
- D. Again, same as the above, now have the players perform with the ball between their feet.

Technical Emphasis (Dribbling)

- A. At the coach's direction, the players dribble with various parts of their body. Coach calls right knee and players must dribble with their right knee. Coach calls bottom of left foot and players must dribble accordingly.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-up

- A. These are reaction type activities with body coordination and flexibility as the important objectives.
- B. Observe the fluid motion of the body parts.
- C. See what adjustments in coordination change with the ball in the player's hands.
- D. See what adjustments in coordination change with the ball between the player's feet.

Technical Emphasis

- A. Observe not only those that respond first, but those players that often respond last.



ACTIVITIES

- A. Same as the above, with players doing the activity in the center circle, goalkeeper box or any confined area. When the coach calls the body part, the last player out of the area must juggle five times to get back in the game and the first player out is given success points.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Create a dribbling game in which points are awarded for the various number of body parts used (hands not allowed) by a particular player while in control of the ball.

Group Activity (Tactics - Decisions)

- A. Create a full field activity with only five players per team including a goalkeeper. This may seem particularly punitive because the space is so large, but those players who are really thinking about the game will know enough not to give up the ball. Dribbling in this game is an imperative. Goals count as five points since the players are limited in number.

COACHING POINTS

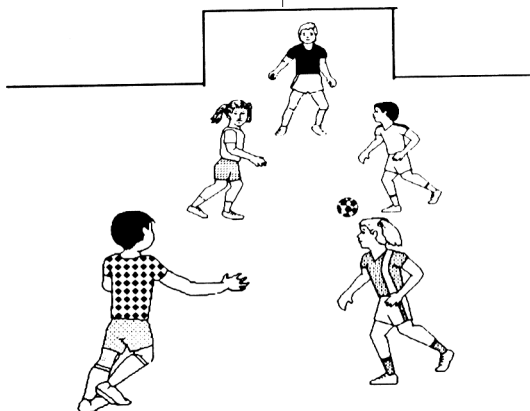
- A. By upgrading the activity, players having trouble will get worse. This is no problem. Expect it. Keep an eye on those battling to get out of the confinement.

Small-Sided Games

- A. This is an individual competitive game in which creative moves get results for the players. Observe and reward.

Group Activity

- A. In this instance there will be times to run quickly with the ball and other times to settle down and hold that ball. Observe the above and praise players when appropriate.



SESSION 10 | Small-Sided Games

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

- A. Form groups of four in which each group must keep a ball moving on the ground with their feet.
- B. Each group must maintain one touch passing.
- C. Same as the above, but keep the ball in the air with heads.
- D. Raise the level of difficulty by having three players put the ball on the ground while the fourth player must play it in the air to begin again.
- E. Stretch when the heart rate of the players is accelerated.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Create a 20 by 20 yard grid in which the players must play 4 v 0. The game is a matter of efficient ball movement without technical breakdown.
- B. Progress from 4 v 0 to 3 v 1 and allow the players to play in a grid with no restrictions. This is a keep away or monkey in the middle situation.
- C. Switch and give the ball to the single player, allowing him to play 1 v 3. See how long he can keep the ball.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-up

- A. Look for players that keep the ball on the ground and assist them.
- B. Try this at walking speed at the outset. As players become more successful, quicken the pace.
- C. Observe proper heading technique; eyes open and striking the ball with the forehead.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Playing against an imaginary opposition can make for creative play. Have each player imagine getting away from a defender.
- B. By adding real defenders, play with break down.
- C. Observe if the breakdowns are technical or tactical.

ACTIVITIES

Group Activity

- A. Play 4 v 4 in a group championship in which the team that wins games (across field) advances to the next game. Do not, however, let those teams who have lost, lose faith or think the tournament is over.

COACHING POINTS

Group Activity

- A. Sometimes in game situations a coach can pick out the most competitive players on the team. These players may not be the best players, but all teams need competitive players. Often through the enthusiasm of these players, the level of play from other players is raised.

SESSION 11 | Individual Skill

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

- A. Mix juggling, stretching and strengthening exercises (i.e. push-ups on the ball, sit-ups holding the ball, etc.).

Technical Emphasis (Individual Skill)

- A. Run players through an obstacle course that emphasizes individual skill. The following is just one example to use your imagination.

In half field:

1. Dribble through six cones that are spread wide apart to force change of direction.
2. Using three small hurdles pass the ball under and jump over each one. Dribble around a corner flag to the middle of the field.
3. Set up three jumping cords not more than eight inches off the ground. Players jump two footed side to side and forward and back over the cord (10 times each).
4. Sprint-dribble back and forth between two lines 10 yards apart. Emphasize turning the ball with the inside, outside and bottom of the foot.
5. Dribble on through six tight markers in a straight line.
6. Dribble around the corner flag, back to the middle of the field, and shoot on goal.

Rest and then repeat an appropriate number of times. Alternate directions around the course to stress development of both sides.

COACHING POINTS

Technical Emphasis

- A. This type of training will enhance skill development and fitness in a game oriented activity.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Set up as many small playing areas as needed for all to play 2 v 2. Play for two minutes, change opponents and play again. Repeat five to eight times.

Group Activity

- A. Divide into two teams and play in a restricted area. Instruct players to use only their weak foot. Play the game for 10-15 minutes and then allow them to play normal, unrestricted soccer for the balance of the training session.

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Play and learn.

Group Activity

- A. Non-dominant side development.

SESSION 12 | Receiving

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (5-8 minutes)

- A. Arrange players in pairs with one ball. Alternate between stretching, juggling with a partner, and playing soccer tag.
- B. When the chaser tags the dribbler, the roles reverse (chaser becomes the dribbler).
- C. Alternate the activities every minute. Repeat the series two or three times. This variety will get the players mentally and physically ready to train.

Technical Emphasis (Receiving)

- A. Use a server and receiver with one ball in a defined area. The receiver executes a technique and then to another server. The techniques could involve:
 1. Playing the ball back with the inside of the foot.
 2. Playing the ball back with the instep (shoelaces).
 3. Heading the ball back.
 4. Receiving with chest and playing the ball back with the inside of the foot.
 5. Receiving with the head and playing the ball back with the instep.
 6. Receiving with the foot and chipping the ball back.

Alternate roles about every minute. Keep the activity intense.

COACHING POINTS

Technical Emphasis

- A. Repetition of these skills in motion is critical for players to feel comfortable with the ball under game pressures.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Set up one or two 20-25 yard grids, depending on player numbers. Play 2 v 2 in the grid with four perimeter players as support. Outside players alternate with inside players every 60-90 seconds.

Group Activity

- A. Using two teams and half the field, play around a three-sided goal. Teams may score from any side. The goalkeeper should distribute the ball in order to cause a confrontation.

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Playing 2 v 2 begins to teach the art of combination play. Wall passing, overlapping runs, take-over should all be practiced.

Group Activity

- A. Players learn to attack from all angles.

SESSION 13 | Shooting

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

In a confined area, each player has a ball.

- A. Players dribble in and out of each other while changing direction and speed.
- B. Players jog in and out of each other with a ball in hand until they make eye contact with another player. At that instant they should exchange balls and move off to exchange with someone else.
- C. Continue as above with half as many balls as players. Players with a ball must find a player without a ball and allow him to take it over. A takeover occurs when one player with the ball dribbles at another and leaves for him to take in the opposite direction.

Technical Emphasis (Shooting)

In groups of three, with one on either side of a goal and a goalkeeper in the (5 yd.) goal, players take a variety of shots through the goal (i.e. shoot back and forth).

- A. Work on stationary drives for power and accuracy.
- B. Ask players to strike moving balls at goal.
- C. Ask players to receive the ball and beat an imaginary defender before shooting on goal.
- D. Invent different shooting situations.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Play 3 v 2 with a goalkeeper to a full size goal using half field. The goalkeeper initiates play. Change roles regularly. Use color differentiation of attackers and defenders. Keep each group together.

Group Activity

- A. In pairs, players remain in contact with each other as they move up and down the field playing soccer. Players can each hold a shirt or a piece of twine or something that does not bind them but keeps them together. If the bond is broken the players are penalized.

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Possession skills combined with finishing.

Group Activity

- A. Fun and Cooperation

SESSION 14 | Heading

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

Bring a tennis ball for each player.

- A. Start with basic stretching.
- B. Introduce the tennis ball and explain how its use can enhance ball skills.
 1. Have players dribble in and out of each other with the tennis balls in a confined area. Use the inside, outside and bottom of the foot.
 2. Remove two or three balls. The players who don't have a ball should attempt to gain possession. When a player loses his ball, he should try to steal another one.
 3. Ask players to drop the ball from their hands and play it back with the instep. If this can be done ask them to strike the ball twice. Increase the number of touches as ability increases.
 4. In pairs, ask players to pass back and forth with the inside of the foot. Add movement

Technical Emphasis (Heading)

- A. In threes, ask player A to serve a ball by hand to player B who heads the ball to player C. C plays the ball back to A who repeats by serving to C who heads to B. Repeat, changing the middle player regularly.

COACHING POINTS

- A. This is a different warm-up that aids the development of fine touch and better ball control.

Technical Emphasis

- A. High repetition of heading techniques is critical. If possible, use a slightly deflated ball.

ACTIVITIES

- A. In threes, set up in an area with one player in a small goal and a player on other side, approximately 5 yards away from the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper serves by hand to either player. The player must then attempt to score by heading the ball past the goalkeeper. Rotate from header to goalkeeper each time. Keep heading.
- B. Set up two lines approximately 18 yards from the goal. Use a goalkeeper server next to each goal post. Server A throws to line player A who heads on goal. Server B then serves to line player B. Make it competitive by keeping score.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Set up four 15 yd grids, which is part of a larger grid. Grid borders touch one another.
 - 1. Play 2 v 2 for possession in each. Change opponents every minute.
 - 2. Use only one ball with all four grids. The object is for each team to possess the ball in their own grid and pass it to a teammate in any of the other grids. Team color differentiation is critical.

Group Activity

- A. Divide into two teams and play unrestricted soccer in an appropriately sized area. Let them play!!

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Possession and decisions are the main point of this organization. Vision and environment awareness a must.

Group Activity

- A. Play and learn.

SESSION 15 | Chipping

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. For ball gymnastics, start with basic stretching. Each player has a ball.
 1. Each player passes the ball back and forth between the inside of his right and left foot as fast as possible.
 2. Player jumps side to side over his ball (10-20 times).
 3. Player jumps front and backwards over the ball.
 4. Player throws the ball up and as it bounces goes under it.
 5. Player throws the ball up and controls it with the right foot, left foot, right thigh, left thigh, chest, head, etc.

Repeat these and other such exercises over and over.

Technical Emphasis (Chipping)

- A. In threes, player A chips over player C to player B. Instruct players to drive the instep under the ball in order to lift it. Change middle player regularly.
- B. Chip over the coach/player. Form two lines, one chips over the coach/player to the other line, which receives the ball and goes to goal for a shot. Change lines and repeat.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Using pairs in a small-defined area, place cones at random. Players move in and out of the spaces created by the cones and pass with each other.

Work on all kinds of passing (i.e. inside of the foot, outside, etc.)

COACHING POINTS

Warm-Up

- A. This type of training helps develop body and ball control essential to high level play. Strive to perform smoothly.

Technique/Chipping

- A. This technique is difficult to master and must be repeated.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Passing technique, selection of passes, timing and pace of passes must all be addressed.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Same as above, except two players should be added to intercept bad passes. Defenders should play passes outside the area. Both players must sprint to regain the ball and get back in the game.

Group Activity

- A. Divide into two teams and set up four goals in a half-field. Each team tries to score points by passing through any goal. A pass through any goal to a teammate is considered a goal. Points can be scored from either side of the goal. Goals should be set up ten yards inside the field lines to allow play on either side of the goal.

EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

Group Activity

- A. Increased concept of the field and an intense playing environment are created in this activity. Demand that players look up and ahead.

SESSION 16

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Start with basic stretching. Break into two groups and play 5 v 2 keep away. As a player in the middle gains possession of the ball he leaves, while the player who lost the ball enters the middle as a defender. Play for 10-15 minutes.

Technique

- A. In pairs, line up on the sideline about five yards apart. The player's work on technique while moving both forwards and backwards to the opposite sideline and back.
 1. Line A plays a ball to B, which controls the ball with the foot while moving backwards. B stops the ball, leaves it and sprints backward. Line A then sprints to the ball and repeats the pass. Reverse roles and return.
 2. Players A and B pass while moving across the field. Use right and left feet.
 3. Player A serves by hand to B who is running backwards. B plays the ball back with the inside of the foot.
 4. Same as above using the instep.
 5. Same as above but the player moving backward serves while the player moving forward plays the ball.
 6. Moving back and forth, A serves to B who heads the ball back.
 7. Same as above but the player moving forward jumps and heads.

COACHING POINTS

Technique

- A. Players gain body control, and technique development in an active environment.

Player concentration is a key to the success of this activity.

Players should concentrate on communication, vision and their environment.

ACTIVITIES

8. Player B serves to the chest. Player A controls on the first touch and plays back to B with the second touch.

Invent your own series. Ask players to execute while moving both forward and backwards with both the right and left side.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Play with two teams on each end of a grid. Prior to each ball being served, the coach will call two numbers. The first dictates the number of the attackers, the second, the defenders. The coach controls the confrontations by calling these numbers. One team then serves to the other, which attacks and crosses the first team's line with control of the ball.

Group Activity

- A. In half-court soccer (similar to half court basketball), two teams play to a full goal with a goalkeeper. Both teams try to score on the same goal. If the ball is stolen by one of the teams, it must take the ball outside the 18 yard line before beginning its attack. Teams score 3 points for a goal from outside the penalty area, 2 points for a header goal and 1 point for a goal from inside the penalty area.

COACHING POINTS

Group Activity

- A. This game creates a high number of scoring situations. Scoring from the flank, defensive principles, 1 v 1, etc. can all be covered.

SESSION 17 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Start with a basic dynamic stretching educating program. Teach players the parts of the body (ankles, calves, thigh, hamstring, lower back, shoulders and neck), which need to be properly warmed prior to physical activity.
- B. Players juggle in a seated position. Challenge them to establish and break their personal record.
- C. Players throw their ball into the air, sit down, stand up, control the ball and speed dribble 5 yards.
- D. Same as above except the players do a forward roll before controlling the ball and sprinting 5 yards.
- E. Players throw their ball into the air, control it and then quickly turn and sprint 5 yards in the opposite direction.

Technical Emphasis (Dribbling)

- A. In pairs, stand face-to-face between two balls about 10 feet away. One player is the mover, the other the shadow. The mover attempts to touch either ball by hand after losing his shadow. Fakes, change of speed, etc. are used to lose the shadow. Allow the activity to continue 30 seconds and then change roles.

COACHING POINTS

Technical Emphasis

- A. Lateral movement and balance are the main goals. Body fakes and bursts of speed are developed. Remember to change the speed of play.

ACTIVITIES

- A. Seat half your group in a defined area. The other half should be at one end of the grid with balls. On your signal, players dribble through the grid trying to avoid the seated defenders. Initially keep defenders stationary and later allow them to move like crabs.
- B. Have all players dribble in and out of each other in a confined area 25 yards from the goal. Each player has a number between 1 and 5. Randomly call a number. Players called burst out of the area to take a shot on goal, retrieve their ball and get back to the dribbling area. Use a goalkeeper or an open net.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Set up grids suitable for 3 v 3. Place four cones randomly at both ends of the grid. Play 3 v 3 with the goal of knocking the opponent's cones over. The first team to knock over all four cones is the winner.

Group Activity

- A. Using half the field set up a defensive group including a few midfielders in front of a full-sized goal. The offensive group tries to score on the full sized goal while the defenders attack two small goals placed near the sidelines at midfield.

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Attacking in threes concentrates on the idea of near and far support to the ball.

Group Activity

- A. Discuss movement to open space and defensive cover and support.

SESSION 18 | Receiving and passing

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Set up two, five or six foot, ropes to serve as soccer volleyball net. The playing area should be large enough to hold four players on each side of the net. Each side gets three touches and two bounces before the ball must be played back. Players can use everything but hands to play the ball. Only the serving team scores points.

Technical Emphasis (Receiving and Passing)

- A. Form a line of servers and receivers facing each other. The servers play a ball to a receiver who performs a skill, plays the ball back and then repeats the exercise with the server to his right. The receiver returns to the beginning of the line after he has gone to the last server. The following skills can be performed:
 1. Play the ball back with the inside of the right foot, then the left.
 2. Same as above using the instep.
 3. Jump and head the ball back.
 4. Collect the ball with the thigh and play back using the inside of the foot.
 5. Collect the ball with the chest and play back using the instep.

COACHING POINTS

Technical Emphasis

- A. High repetition of specific techniques in an active environment.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

- A. Organize a small playing area with a goalkeeper in each goal and three groups of players. A attacks B. A tries to score until B gains possession. When B gains possession, A must exit the field. B then attacks C until C gains possession. Continue to rotate groups.

Group Activity

- A. Using half the field, two teams play to four goals. Players score at any goal, from either side. The coach may or may not place restrictions on the play.

COACHING POINTS

Small-Sided Games

- A. Non-stop attacking movement.

Group Activity

- A. This activity develops vision and the decision making process.

SESSION 19 | Receiving and turning

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. In two parallel lines, move around the field warming up South American style. Start by jogging, skipping, jumping to head, etc. Stop the group from time to time to stretch. Continue moving as a group at a higher speed. Mix short sprints with jogging.

Technical Emphasis (Receiving and Turning)

- A. In a line of 3 players, the center player receives the ball from an outside player, turns with it and plays it to the other outside player. Repeat in the opposite direction. The middle player should receive and turn with the following types of ball.
 1. Receive with the inside of the right and the left foot. Turn with it and pass smoothly to the other player. Repeat.
 2. Receive with the outside of both feet, turn and pass.
 3. Receive an air ball with the thigh, turn and pass.
 4. Receive with the chest, turn and pass.
 5. Receive with the head, turn and pass.

Small-Sided Games

- A. The coach serves a ball into the grid of 3 v 3 plays approximately 30 yards from the goal. When the coach gives a signal, the team with the ball attacks the goal while the other defends. If the defenders gain possession, they attack.

COACHING POINTS

- A. This is follow the leader with the two in front leading a rhythmic activity.

Technical Emphasis

- A. Work on receiving in a smooth manner. Reduce touches needed to turn.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Possession and attacking concepts are stressed.

ACTIVITIES

Small-Sided Games

Finish with a shot on goal. Instantly start another game of 3 v 3.

Group Activity

- A. Same as above but make the grid larger. Play 6 v 6 with the same rules. Rest after every attack. The coach starts each attack by playing the ball into the grid.

COACHING POINTS

Group Activity

- A. Possession and attacking concepts are stressed.

SESSION 20 | Finishing

ACTIVITIES

Warm-Up

- A. Jog as a group, with the ball. Stretch for a few minutes. Break into two groups and play 5 v 2 possession. The outside player who makes a mistake enters center while one defender comes out.

Technical Emphasis (Finishing)

- A. Start with attack from the flank. Plays a ball to B who passes wide to A. Player A sprints around a cone and serves a ball to B for a shot on goal with the foot or head. B makes an arched run away from the server in preparation for a good shot. Use both sides of the field.
 1. A plays to B for a wall pass. A immediately shoots on goal. Make sure shots are taken with both the left and right feet.
 2. A dribbles straight at B. A leaves the ball for B who immediately shoots after the takeover. Change lines, directions and require shooters to use both feet.
 3. A passes to B and then overlaps. B plays the ball to A who shoots on goal. Approach the goal from both sides of the field.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Set up four small grids, which form a larger square. Play 2 v 2 in each grid. Start with only one ball for all four grids. Players pass with their partners or teammates in the other grids. Color differentiation should be used.

COACHING POINTS

Warm-Up

- A. Warm-up plus practice of proper support techniques in 5 v 2.

Technical Emphasis

- A. Proper serving or crossing and shooting, shooting from wall pass and shooting from takeover.

Small-Sided Games

- A. Possession and passing skills.

ACTIVITIES

Group Activity

- A. Divide into two groups using half the field with two goals and goalkeepers. Divide the playing area into equal thirds by placing two or three cones across the field. Each team has:

Area 1 - Defensive third

Area 2 - Midfield third

Area 3 - Attacking third

Play with the following restrictions:

1. In the defensive area, one touch.
2. In the midfield area, two touch.
3. In the attacking area, unlimited touches.

Adjust the one and two touch restrictions to two and three touch if necessary.

COACHING POINTS

Group Activity

- A. This activity teaches the necessity of playing the ball out of your defense quickly as well as being creative in attack.

SUMMARY

In an effort to understand and improve the U-12 player we have to begin opening the player's eyes to the thinking aspects of the game. These areas that count on players seeing and responding depend on the concept of decision making. In the end, all players must constantly be evaluating the entire field and making decisions related to offensive and defensive situations that are occurring. Each player must add to the team effort. To accomplish this, each player must be astute enough to assist.

The philosophy behind this book is to provide activities that will place the U-12 player in an environment in which he will have to make proper decisions. If a player is placed in this type of environment over many years, he can develop the vision play at top levels. This decision making process does not develop in a training environment that is drill-like in structure. Fitness and technique are very important concerns as well, but tactical awareness can only develop with repeated practice in a thought provoking environment.

In closing, let's just remember that tactics involve a great number of factors, but that for the U-12 player, tactics are related to the area of decision making. Without thinking and proper decisions, we have something that resembles soccer, but not soccer!

US Youth Soccer Official Under 12 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees. Please note the U12 addendum and appendix.

Law 1) The Field of Play

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 70 yards maximum 80 yards

Width: minimum 45 yards maximum 55 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: Conform to FIFA.

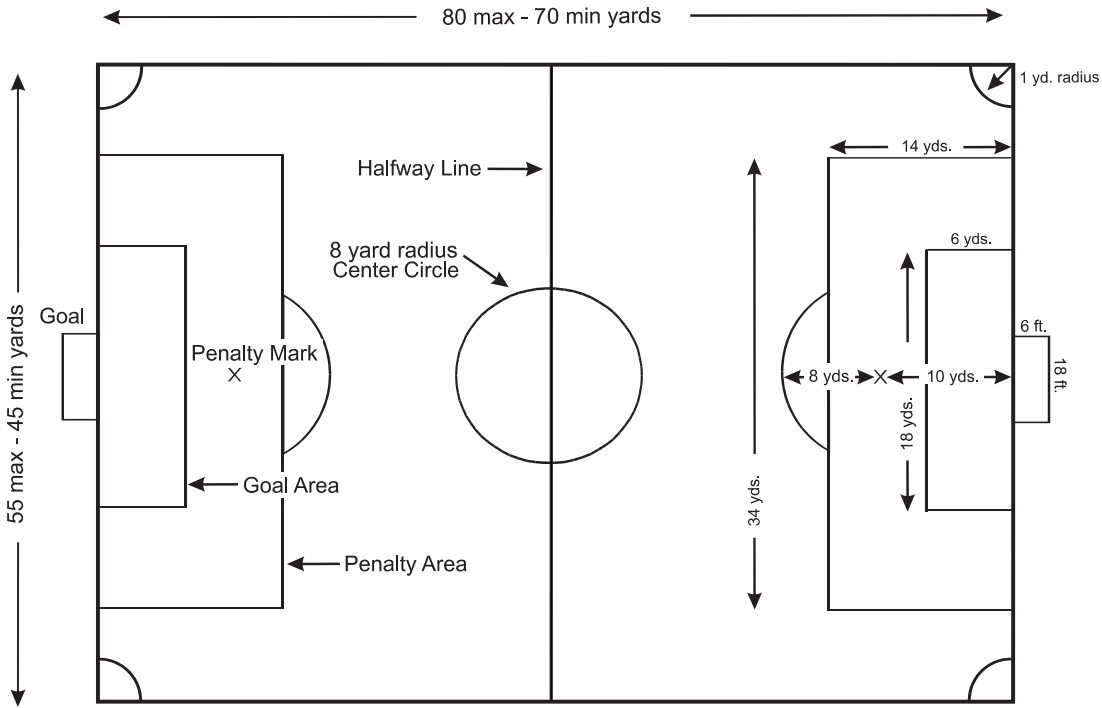
The Penalty Area: A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, fourteen (14) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of fourteen (14) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made ten (10) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of eight (8) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Flagposts: Conform to FIFA.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Conform to FIFA with exception that the maximum distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

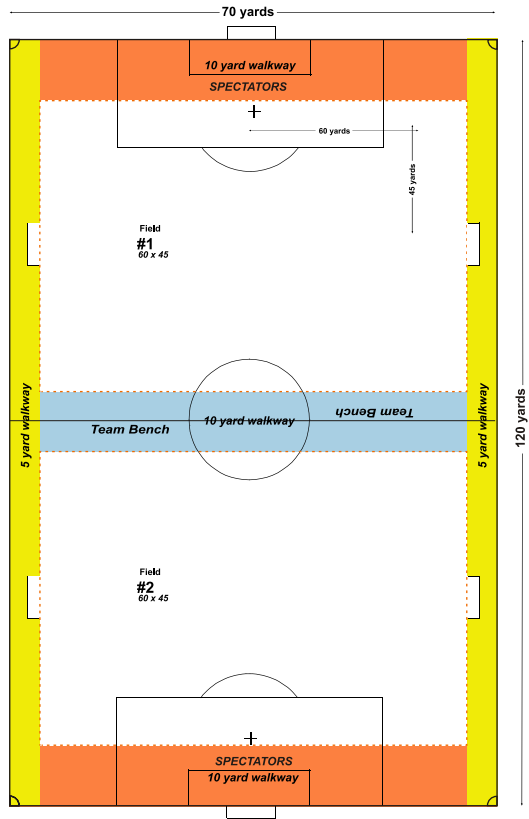
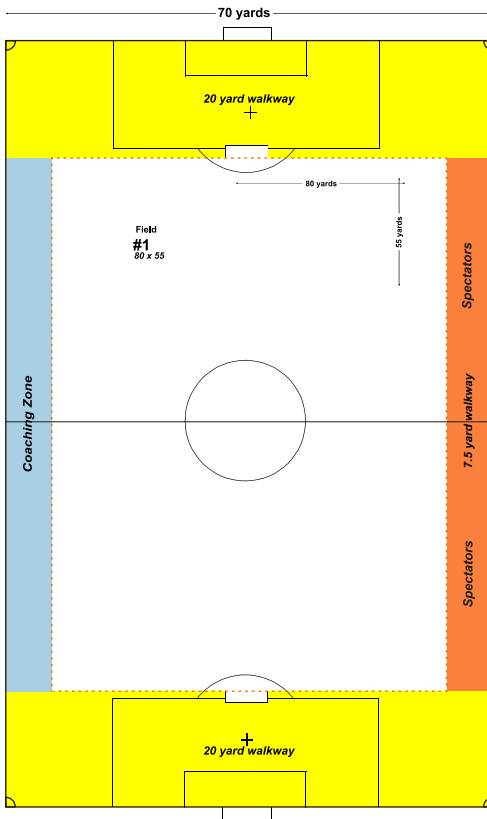


Suggested Set-up for 8v8 Fields

Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 1 - 80 x 55 field (maximum field size)

Suggested Set-up for 8v8 Fields

Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 2 - 60 x 45 fields (minimum field size)



Law 2) The Ball - Size four (4).

Law 3) The Number of Players - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eight players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited. Revised May 1, 2009

Law 4) The Players Equipment - Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5) The Referee - Registered referee.

Law 6) The Assistant Referees - Use U.S.S.F. registered referees or club linesmen/women.

Law 7) The Duration of the Match - Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into two (2) halves of thirty (30) minutes each. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8) The Start and Restart of Play - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9) The Ball In and Out of Play - Conform to FIFA.

Law 10) The Method of Scoring - Conform to FIFA.

Law 11) Offside - Conform to FIFA.

Law 12) Fouls and Misconduct - Conform to FIFA with the exception that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks the ball in the air from his/her penalty area into the opponents penalty area.

Law 13) Free Kicks - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

Law 14) The Penalty Kick - Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that the penalty mark is at ten (10) yards and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight (8) yards from the penalty mark.

Law 15) The Throw-In - Conform to FIFA.

Law 16) The Goal Kick - Conform to FIFA.

Law 17) The Corner Kick - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least eight (8) yards away from the ball until it is in play.

Coaching Education Programs

US Youth Soccer offers coaching courses and training for all coaches. For a course schedule contact your local State Association or US Youth Soccer.

Youth Coaching Modules

There are a number of Youth Coaching Modules offered to improve your age-appropriate coaching from US Youth Soccer. Each module offers classroom and field sessions designed for the parent/coach or novice coach with an emphasis on the age group of your players. Techniques, psychology and FUN are introduced with an emphasis on player development. Check out your State Association website or USYouthSoccer.org for more courses on coaching education. Some states offer the course online as well!

Available Modules include: U6/U8, U8/U10 and the U12 Youth Module

Also available from US Youth Soccer:

The Novice Coach DVD

Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual

The Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer

Assistant Coach Series: U10 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

Assistant Coach Series: U12 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

For additional information contact US Youth Soccer or your State Association.

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