



## COTTAM SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Coaching soccer for kids under 7 is a mix of organized chaos and pure joy! At this age, kids are brimming with energy, excitement, and curiosity, but their attention spans can be fleeting. Practices typically focus on teaching the fundamentals of soccer—like dribbling, passing, and teamwork—through fun, engaging games rather than formal drills. It's less about strategy and competition, and more about fostering a love for the game, building confidence, and helping them learn how to work together.

You'll find yourself celebrating the smallest victories, like a perfectly executed pass or just getting all the kids to run in the same direction. Patience, creativity, and a sense of humor are key, as each session might come with its own set of surprises—be it impromptu cartwheels or someone stopping mid-play to chase a butterfly. It's as rewarding as it is entertaining!

### **Passing Basics:**

Passing is a great way to build a player's confidence and chemistry with their teammates. To start show the kids how to properly make a pass: You want the player to use their dominant foot to make the pass using the inside of the foot. (no toe-poking) non-dominant foot should be placed beside the ball before the ball is kicked.



-This illustrates a player using their dominant (right) foot to make a pass. See here how their left foot is placed. The left foot should be planted on the ground before the ball is passed.

## How to Receive a pass:

When a player receives a pass, they should first stop the ball using their dominant foot. To do this, teach the player to raise their foot (sole) to stop the ball. Called **“trapping the ball”**. This allows for the player to control where the ball will go next.

Other methods of stopping the ball can be used by having the player use the inside of the foot, if players do this and effectively stop the ball allow them to continue.



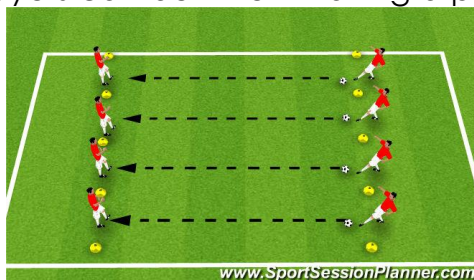
### Exercise #1.

## Partner Passing:

Pair up the players and have them spread out. Have them stand 5 yards apart facing each other. (Use cones to help show where the player stands.) One player has the ball. The coach will show them how to properly use the inside of the foot to pass to their partner. Have the kids start off by using their dominant foot. After a few minutes ask the kids to use the opposite foot (you may see the kids struggling but again the coach can remind the players how to properly pass). For those kids who can properly pass back and forth have them back up a further distance (10 yards).

### Goals for this Exercise:

- to see the player's, make a proper pass
- having those receiving a pass properly stop the ball before passing
- to see how accurate the players can be when making a pass.



-This illustrates how the exercise should look before starting. It's important to note that the player's body position will determine where the ball will go. Therefore, it's helpful to make sure players are facing their partner before passing the ball.

## Exercise #2.

### Triangle Passing:

Like partner passing but with more movement. Have the players get into groups of 3 or 4. Only 1 ball per group. Players make a triangle or square ranging from 5-8 yards apart. Each player goes to a cone which represents a defender ("bad guy"). Players are to pass in any direction but are not to hit the cone. They are to move to the side of the cone before properly passing the ball.

Goals for this Exercise:

- a) have players receive a pass then dribble around their cone and pass to their teammate
- b) make sure players face their teammate to ensure accurate passing



- o This illustrates the movement of the ball. To add difficulty put a player in the middle (player D) of the triangle and have them try and break up a pass. Remind the attacking player to remain inside the triangle.

## Exercise #3.

### Person in the Middle:

Coaches are to separate players into groups of 3 if possible. One ball per group. After the coach assigns a number to all players in the group (1-3), players will be assigned where to go and their role in the exercise. Number 1 and number 3 players are the passers, that are separated from 2 who will remain in the middle. Player 1 starts with the ball and then passes it to number 2 who will receive the pass turn with the ball and pass to player 3. It is helpful to place pylons so players know where to lineup and be used as defenders (bad guys) that will allow players to dribble to the side of the cone before passing. Repeat for several passes at the coach's discretion before changing the layer in the middle.

## **Coach can teach players how to turn the ball:**

Players in the middle can receive the pass using their dominant foot and with the same foot they can pull back the ball to go into the opposite direction and then make a pass to the opposing teammate.

### **Goals for this Exercise:**

- a) good strong passes
- b) player in the middle (player 2) to turn the ball or dribble to the side of the cone/pylon
- c) for each player to get a chance in the middle to practice turning the ball



## **Dribbling Basics:**

Having players dribble the ball allows them to familiarize themselves with the many different touches a player can use on a soccer ball.

You want to remind players not to use toe pocking to dribble the ball while on the field. Players should be using their inside foot to make the ball move in front of them. Players are to maintain control and not have the ball leave their proximity. Developing players will keep their head down and watch the ball, coaches are to encourage the players to lift their heads to see where they are going.

Coaches can demonstrate how to properly dribble the ball using their dominant foot, making soft touches with their inside foot.

### **Exercise #1.**

#### **Through the Cones:**

The coach is to set up 6-8 cones or pylons in a row. (Set up two different sets and divide the players to ensure players don't wait long for others to finish) as this can lead to having a race to see which group can go through the cones the fastest before moving on to the next exercise

Each player gets to use their own ball.

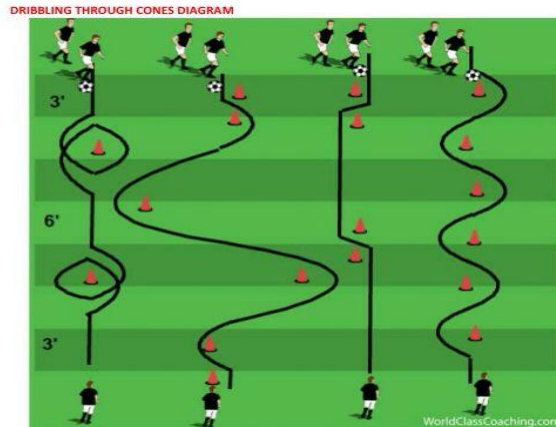
One player at a time goes through the cones.

Have the players go through 2 or 3 times using both feet, then change it up.

Coaches can instruct players to only use their weaker foot, or the dominant foot but only the outside, etc.

### Goals for the Exercise:

- a) players should get use to the technique of dribbling around the cones
- b) players want to keep the ball close and maintain control of the ball
- c) if a player keeps knocking the cones over re-teach how to use their feet



- o This illustrates the different variations of the drill; all can be incorporated while conducting the drill on the far right (main exercise). Each adds a little more difficulty.

### Exercise #2.

#### Fun in the Box:

Have the coach create a large space for the players to dribble around in using cones as boundaries. (20 yards by 20 yards)

Have the players grab their ball and enter the zone created by the coach. Remind the players to stay inside the cones.

This drill allows the coach to give players instructions, while learning ball control.

Have the players start in the trapped position (sole of the foot on the ball)

Players dribble around freely until the coach yells freeze (players are to trap the ball)

The coach can instruct different instructions: knee on the ball, sit on the ball, put your head on the ball, use only one foot, use both feet.

### Goals for the Exercise:

- a) allows the players to roam free using quick touches while listening for commands
- b) make sure players stay in the boundaries while maintaining ball control

## B) Fun in the Box Game:

As a game the coach can set up mini nets using left over pylons.

**#1.** Coach is to instruct the players to dribble in the zone and go through the pylons that are used as mini nets. Each player represents their own team.

Tell the players when the dribble through the pylons they receive points. Make the goal of achieving 10 points in 30 seconds.

**#2.** Coach can pair up players and have them collect points by passing through the cones.



- This illustrates the boundary box players are to stay within. Players can move around and listen to coach instructions. To make it more challenging but fun, make small mini nets like shown above and have (a) players dribble through them or (b) pair players up and have them pass the ball through the cones to collect points. Example: first team to reach 10 points wins. Challenge the winning team to get 20 points next time.

### **#3.**

Using the same boundary ask the players to each get their ball and begin to dribble around, tell the players you the coach are trying to hit their soccer balls with the pylons. Ask how the players can properly protect their ball.

1. To protect the ball the player can dribble in the opposite direction of the coach

2. The player can shield the ball by turning their back to the coach before dribbling the ball again.

### **Exercise #3.**

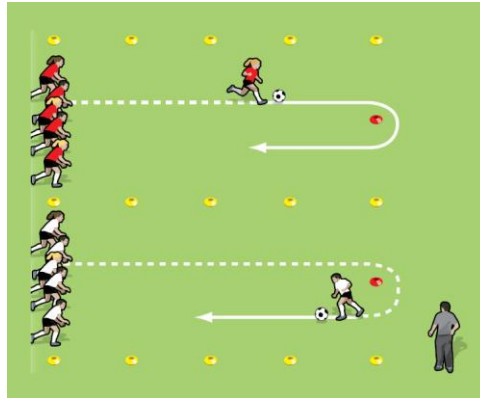
#### **Chain Gang:**

Divide the players into groups. Have each group line up the first player in each group to possess a ball. Have the coach place a pylon or cone 15 yards away from each group and another pylon 5-8 yards away from where the players start. On the coach's whistle, the first player in each team dribbles to the cone that is 15 yards away, dribbles around the cone and back to the cone that was placed 5-8 yards away where they will then pass to the next person in line, and they will do the same until each member has gone.

The coach can modify this exercise, having players only use one foot to dribble with, or both, and go backwards for the 1<sup>st</sup> half etc. Again, like other drills, the coach can make it a competition.

## Goals for the Exercise:

- a) team support
- b) ball control
- c) proper dribbling around the cone
- d) good passes before the other player dribbles.



- This illustrates what the players do and where the coach can position themselves. Make a note that coaches should place another cone/pylon 5-yards away from where each player starts to allow players to pass to one another.

## Shooting Basics:

At such a young age you can't expect the players to shoot accurately. Instead, show the players the passing technique but using the nets. Again, inform the players to not toe poke the ball!

- As a safety measure when allowing the players to shoot on the net, please inform them to wait until the player retrieves their ball from the net before allowing others to shoot! \*

### Exercise #1.

Start by having the players stand beside the net but a *safe distance* away\*. Set a cone 10 yards from where the players line up.

Have the players dribble around the placed cone and then dribble to the net and have them shoot at the net. Remember to have their bodies facing the net before shooting to control where the ball goes.



## Exercise #2.

### Pass N Shoot:

Have players getting into groups of 3 or 4.

Create a square boundary 5-8 yards in front of the net.

Place a player 1 in the square boundary without a ball. That player will receive a pass turn and shoot on the net.

Have 2 players stand on a 45-degree angle 5- 8 yards away from player in the boundary square with a ball.

The two players that are passers will pass the ball one at a time. Once the player in the square has shot twice or three times that player will retrieve the balls and another player will take their place while the former shooter now becomes a passer.

It is recommended to separate the team using both nets and if necessary, to use the bigger net.

### Goals for the Exercise:

- look for the accurate passes
- look for the shooter to properly stop the ball use soft touches to turn the ball and shoot.
- not necessary for the coach to improve a players' shot but can make sure the proper techniques are being used.



-For this exercise focus on the positioning of players 2, 3, and 4. To make it easier for the players have a square box placed around the yellow player that will ensure the player stays in the box while receiving passes before shooting.

### **Exercise #3.**

#### **Partnered Shooting:**

Pair the players up, start them at half of the field where they start 10 yards apart facing each other. One side starts with the ball. They pass to one another moving closer to the net, the last player that receives the ball before the goalie crease (white lines) must shoot the ball, the other player retrieves the ball.

Players must remember to not shoot the ball while other players are retrieving their ball. \*

#### **Goals for the Exercise:**

1. Good passing
2. Players properly stopping the ball
3. Good dribbling control
4. Teammates cheer when players score

### **Exercise #4.**

#### **Pass to the Coach the Shoot:**

Have players lineup facing the net on half of the half. The coach can stand by the white goalie line. Players are to pass the to coach run to the white line for a one-time pass and shoot without stopping the ball. If players need to, they can stop the ball for control before shooting it on net. This exercise allows the players to have some fun on the net while the coach encourages them to score.

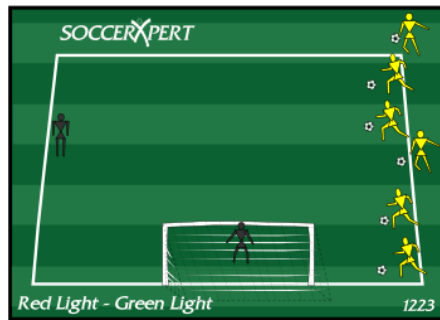
### **Activities to play at the end of the Practice:**

#### **#1. Red Light Green Light:**

Make a boundary square using the pylons or use the bigger net crease as a boundary. Have the players each with their own ball lineup on one side. Explain to the players what you the coach are expecting such as: ball control, crisp touches, proper trapping technique, staying within the boundaries.

Coach then says green light (players move fast) yellow light (players walk with ball) red light (players trap the ball, unless otherwise stated by coach)

Some players may not get how to play so for those players who are experienced and almost make it to the other side the coach can tell the players to turn around and make it the place where they started.



- Ignore the player in the net, players are to make it from one side to the other unless the coach changes the direction before players reach the opposing side.

## #2. Catch and Release:

The coach should get all the players to the center of the field each player with a ball. The coach is going to explain the ball is the fish and that the player must go catch the fish and bring it back using the players feet. While at half the coach will take each players ball and throw/roll it away from half field. Once the player brings the ball (fish) back the coach throws/rolls the ball back and the player runs out again and brings the ball back again. Challenge the kids to bring back the ball 5 times in a set amount of time.

## #3. Duck Hunt:

Divide the players into 2 separate teams.

Create a place for the players to stand where they will be given 3 chances to knock down pylons.

Coach is to place 3 pylons all in different proximities. 1 cone 5 yards away from the player, 1 cone 8 yards away perhaps on a different angle opposite of the first cone, and a third cone a long distance away for those players who are want a challenge.