



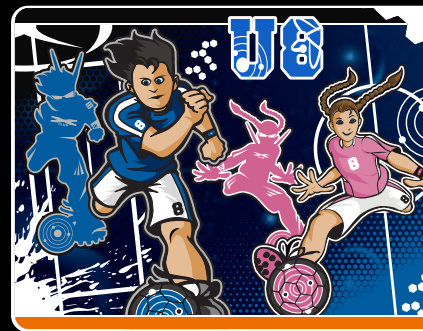
ADVANCING  
THE  
CORE EXPERIENCE  
IN  
SOCCER



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## AN AGE SPECIFIC APPROACH TO THE GAME.



Xara Soccer offers an Age Specific approach Player Development for soccer organizations who run programs for U5, U6, U8 and U10 players. These age appropriate programs offer the following benefits to your organization;

- ◆ Age Specific Programs U5, U6, U8, U10.
- ◆ Developed with child development experts and educators.
- ◆ A 10 week curriculum to support coaches.
- ◆ Weekly activities that engage parents.
- ◆ Stories that excite players.
- ◆ Free online support materials.
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- ◆ Products to create a “total” experience.
- ◆ Soccer Safe ball & equipment.
- ◆ Offer consistent approach to player development.
- ◆ Increase your volunteer coach numbers.



# INTRODUCTION

## Summary



For young players up to the age of 10 the priority in practice should be on technical development. Tactical ideas can be introduced but you should cover only the basic elements of tactical play.

Developing fast footwork drills, using discs or ladders are fun and an excellent way to develop footwork and fitness. Laps and long runs should be discouraged.

To build confident "Mentality" in your young players, you should set up lots of intrinsic game related challenges in which they can succeed.

It is critical they develop fast, stable, confident technique. Playing freely and creatively in games and practices provides thousands of touches and is the best way to develop technique.

Children do not have the same physical or mental capacity of adults, yet some coaches treat their players as if they were small adults. Remember the adage:

**"Tell me and I will forget,  
Show me and I will remember,  
Involve me and I will understand."**

## Characteristics of a U-10 Player



Large and small motor skills are becoming more refined and reliable.

- Boys and girls begin to develop separately.
- They cannot judge speed and distance as well as adults.
- Ability to stay on task is lengthened. They have the ability to sequence thought and actions.
- At this age, there is greater diversity in playing ability and physical maturity.
- Their skills are emerging. They are becoming more predictable and recognizable.
- Some children begin moving from concrete thinking to abstract thinking. A good number will still be at the concrete learning stage.
- Able to pace themselves, to plan ahead.
- They are capable of increased self-responsibility. They remember to bring their own equipment.
- They can begin to recognize basic tactical concepts, but they are not exactly sure why certain decisions are better.
- Repetition of technique is very important, but make it dynamic, not static.
- They learn best from continued positive reinforcement.
- Explanations should be brief, concise, and mention "why".
- Becoming more "serious". Openly, intensively competitive, without intention of fouling.
- Still most intrinsically motivated. Peer pressure starting to be a factor.
- Adults outside of the family may take on added significance.
- They begin to identify with a team.
- More inclined towards wanting to play instead of being told to play. Will initiate play more.



# INTRODUCTION

## Responsibilities of Teaching Young Players



The sessions must be safe and remember it's playing first, winning second.

### Why are you coaching?

You need to ask yourself this question.

Aim to be yourself, natural, spontaneous, show good traits and behavior.

Kids need to know you are enjoying yourself. If you are not, your players will sense it.

How you treat fellow coaches, referees and players will be watched by each and every one of your players. You are a role model and they will copy your behavior.

The following is a list of attributes that the youth coach should adopt.

- **Show Interest**  
Try to know each player and treat them as the individual they are.
- **Be a Motivator**  
Be positive and encourage the players to try new things.
- **Character**  
Have a positive personality. Build the self esteem and confidence of a young player and you will have achieved your most important goal.
- **Communication**  
Make sure you follow through on everything you say you are going to do. Be honest and instruct clearly.
- **Sense of Humor**  
Have fun, and the players will, too!



**Soccer is a simple game. There are 2 basic challenges:**

- 1 Score a goal before your opponents can take the ball away from you.
- 2 Take the ball away from your opponent before they can score on you.

### Aspects to Coaching

(There are 4 main aspects in coaching soccer)

#### 1 Technique

Ball control, skill, your players need to be comfortable with the ball, they should be balanced with the ball, they need to be able to move fast with the ball. You will help to develop different ways to dribble, pass, receive, shoot, tackle and head.

Technique should be the main focus of the Under 10 player.

#### 2 Tactics

Decision making, understanding situations, anticipating situations in the game, does the player read the game well? Do they make good decisions?

This should not be over emphasized. The U10 player will struggle at times to understand the concept of tactics but they should begin at this age to understand the concept in game situations.

#### 3 Fitness

Strength, endurance, speed, quickness, agility, power, flexibility. Is the player a good athlete? Again, all fitness work should be done with a ball.

Although this should not be over emphasized at the Under 10 level, good basic introduction to activities that increase the above are encouraged.

#### 4 Psychological Dimension

Mentality, aggressiveness, mental toughness, resiliency, competitive spirit, sportsmanship. Does the player combine spirit with a great sporting attitude?

This is an age of huge developmental growth, both physically and mentally. The environment you create at practice is very important. Ten-year-olds are competitive but also sensitive. Choose the words you use with your players carefully. The old adage of "sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me" does not apply to a ten-year-old!





# INTRODUCTION

## Coaching Tips



### Tips for coaching the under-10 player

- Use small-sided games as the main teaching vehicle. This will result in more touches of the ball and more involvement in the game. 11 vs 11 is too complicated for them to understand.
- Grouping players during training takes an added significance because of the inevitable wide range in ability levels. Mix players often.
- Stretching becomes more important. A good appropriate warm-up is also important.
- Safety and preventative measures take on an added significance. Good proper fitting shin guards and footwear are important.
- Training twice a week is plenty. Sessions need not to go longer than 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- Players should all come with their own ACES size 4 ball. They should be encouraged to play with it at home. Set them personal goals, how many juggles can they do in a minute, how many parts of their body can they use when they are juggling etc.
- Put your players in as many competitive environments as possible. This will not only keep them focused, but allow the game itself to teach them. It will also keep things fun and allow the game itself to teach them.
- You should begin to teach them positional play, with the expectation that they will “get it” some of the time. It is vital that you do not allow players to specialize in any one position. Having them play all the positions is best for their individual development. Your first responsibility is to develop players and let them have fun!

Where possible, have the players solve their own problems. Don't always give them an immediate solution, ask them what options they had, and what they could have done differently.

Remember - Highlight the good things you see. Encourage, guide and inspire your players.

## Basis of a Season Long Program



You can select from the following list of activities to suit your team needs and objectives. It is important that you continue to introduce all of the aspects of soccer listed below.

- 1 Ball skills - First Touch
- 2 Ball Skills II
- 3 Passing
- 4 Shooting
- 5 Possession
- 6 Heading
- 7 Defending
- 8 Attacking Play
- 9 The Art of Goalkeeping
- 10 Coaching in the Game



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## ❖ Balls in the **Safety Series** are;

Made to provide a softer touch when kicked.

Made to provide a softer feel when kicked.

Made to offer more forgiveness when the player is struck.

Made to offer a more enjoyable playing experience.

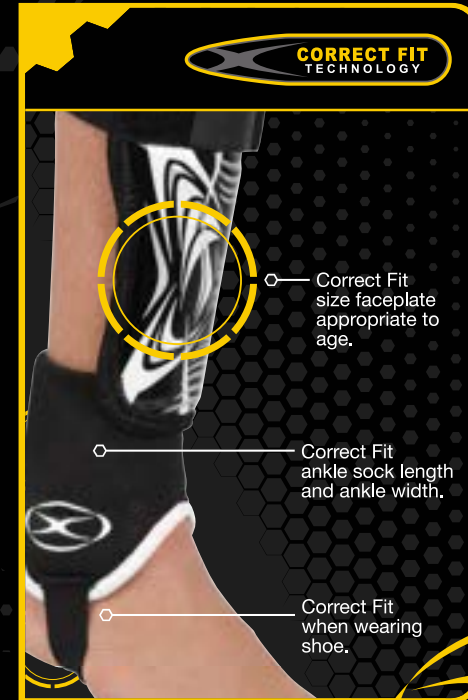


## ❖ Shoes with a **safe stud configuration** have;

Conical studs not blade studs. Blade studs can cause injury.

More studs for healthy support of growing feet.

Correct spacing of studs for even support.



## ❖ Shin guards with **Correct Fit Technology** ensures;

The ankle area is properly protected.

Correctly sized ankle support means the shoe can be correctly fitted.

Correctly sized ankle support means the Face plate is correctly positioned.

The Face plate wraps & protects the leg.

# BALL SKILLS - FIRST TOUCH ACTIVITIES

## Ball Skills, Ball Control and the First Touch



Developing dynamic balls skills and in particular a good first touch is often the difference between average players and the best players.

To achieve good ball control a player must first understand the principals of ball control and he/she must practice.

- You must move the controlling surface into the line of flight.
- Select the controlling surface early.
- Be relaxed.
- Keep your head steady.

Ball control is always a means to an end, the better the ball control, the better the end performance.

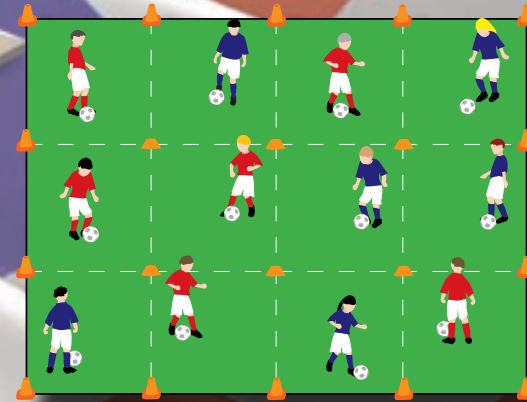
Having a good first touch is a vital skill for all soccer players. When players take too many touches to take control of the ball or allow it to get away from them, the offensive game collapses.

There are 7 surfaces of the foot that we can use. Young players should practice using all 7 surfaces. Inside, outside, instep, top of foot, toe, heel, sole of foot.

Every session you do at this age should incorporate ball skills and developing a good first touch. Encourage your players to practice as much as they can at home as well as at practice. Give them challenges like how many juggles can they do, how many parts of their body can they use when juggling, how many touches can they do in 30 seconds etc..

Challenge your players to have 100 touches of the ball each and every day. The more they touch a ball, the quicker they will master it.

## Warm Up - Square to Square



**ORGANIZATION:** 40x30 grid, one player per grid. Players each with a ball inside a grid. Players should practice all their moves, tricks and skills inside their square.

**OBJECTIVE:** To develop fast footwork and ball control.



### ACTIVITY FOCUS:

Each player must take 4 touches in each square inside and outside of each foot before moving onto the next square. The last outside touch should be dynamic and take them into the next square. You cannot move into a square if there are already two players in that square.

How quickly can they get to all 12 squares?



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Players should stay balanced. Knees bent, head steady.
- 2 Use quick touches on the ball with the inside and out side of the feet.
- 3 Move the ball 2-3 feet with each touch.
- 4 Make the last outside touch a big dynamic one to take the ball into the next grid.
- 5 Accelerate to the next square.



# BALL SKILLS

## Inside & Outside Cuts



**ORGANIZATION:** In a 20x30 area, set up the cones as shown in the diagram. Four groups of four lined up behind the cones. The first player in each group has a ball.

Players dribble the ball to the center cone and then cut the ball tightly across their bodies using the inside and outside of their feet.

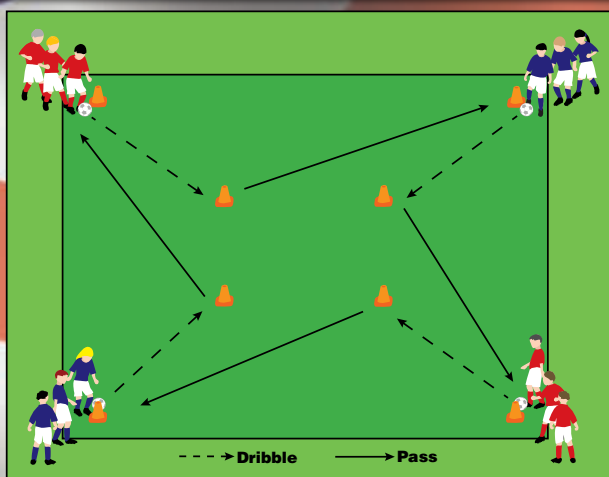
Once the player performs a cut the next touch should see them pass the ball (inside of the foot) to the group on the left. The player then sprints to join the back of the group.

The player receiving the ball needs to be on their toes, eyes focused on the incoming ball.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Players must keep the ball close to cut the ball across the body.
- 2 Keep your head up.
- 3 Practice using both feet, inside and outside.
- 4 After the cut play a solid pass with the inside of the foot and sprint to the back of the next line.
- 5 Players receiving the ball face the direction of the ball concentrate on a good first touch getting the ball out of your feet so you can run onto the ball.



### PROGRESSIONS:

- 1 Switch the direction of the game.
- 2 Have the players use their weaker foot to cut and make the pass.
- 3 Have the players do the drill at full pace.

### HELPFUL HINT:

Start slowly and then progress to full pace. Your players will want to rush but concentrate on good technique.

#### Inside Cut



As you approach the ball, shorten your strides



Reach around the far side of the ball with the inside of your foot.



Using one sharp cut with the inside of your foot, turn your body 180°



Pivot on your standing foot to face back in the direction from which you came

#### Outside Cut



Reach around the far side of the ball with the outside of your foot



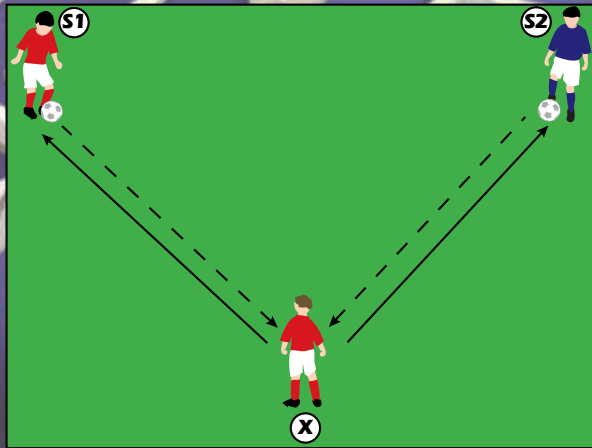
Turn your toe up and turn your right foot as far to the right as possible



Using one sharp cut with the outside of your foot, flick the ball 180°



# BALL SKILLS - FIRST TOUCH ACTIVITIES



**S1** plays the ball to the inside of the right foot of player X. Player X plays the ball back with one touch to S1.

**S2** Plays the ball to the inside of the left foot of player X. Player plays the ball back with one touch to S2.

**S1** Plays the ball to Player X Player x Plays the ball back with the outside of the left foot.

**S2** Plays the ball to Player X Player X plays the ball back with the outside of the right foot.

As soon as Player X plays a pass back the next pass should be played into player X

## COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Player X has to be on their toes and have quick touches back to the 2 servers.
- 2 Have player X Square their hips to the flight of the ball.
- 3 Get the controlling surface (foot, thigh) out early and in line with the ball.
- 4 Keep your eyes on the ball at all times.
- 5 Cushion the ball with the 1st touch in front of you.



## PROGRESSIONS:

- 1 Make player X take two quick touches, one to control the ball and one to pass back. Focus on the speed of the foot movement.
- 2 Have the servers feed the ball in underhand have player X take 2 touches 1 to control the ball to the ground and one to play the ball back.

(For advanced players)

- 1 Have the servers throw the ball in underhand and player X volleys the ball back with the top of the foot.
- 2 Have the servers throw the ball in underhand and player X volleys the ball back with the inside of the toe.
- 3 Have the servers serve the ball a little higher, control on the thigh and play the ball back.
- 4 Have the servers throw the ball higher in the air, player X controls the ball on the chest and plays the ball back on the ground.



## COMPETITION:

Set a time limit and see who can have the most ball controls and passes back in the allocated time period.

## HELPFUL HINT:

If the players struggle to keep an equal distance from player X, mark their points with cones.

## COACH'S NOTES:

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# BALL SKILLS

## First Touch Triangles



### ORGANIZATION:

Group the players in pairs - Lay out a triangle of cones 3 yards apart as shown above.

### OBJECTIVE:

To develop rapid control and movement of the ball out of feet.  
**Player 1** plays the ball through the triangle to player 2  
**Player 2** plays the ball beyond the cone either side of him / her using the inside or the outside of the foot and follows the ball.  
**Player 2** who is now beyond the cone passes to player 1 who repeats the activity.

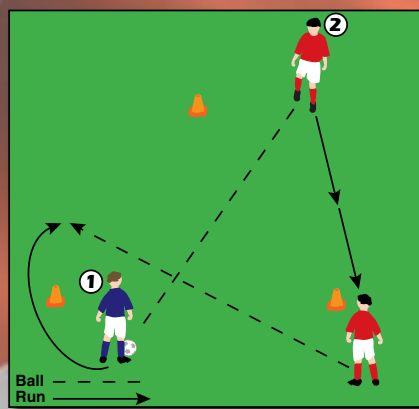
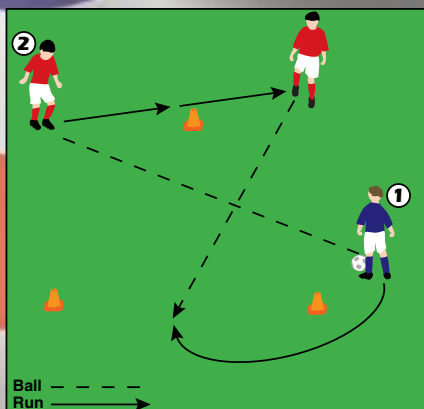
### COMPETITION:

Create a competition with pairs against other pairs. How many times can you go round in 1 minute, 10 points per pass.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Stay balanced select the controlling surface early (know which direction you going to play the ball).
- 2 Be on your toes, eyes on the ball.
- 3 Look for a positive first touch beyond the cones.
- 4 Younger players allowed 2 touches to get beyond the cone.



## Circle Training/First Touch/Faking



### ORGANIZATION:

Mark out a circle 25 yards in diameter, players split into pairs and numbered 1 and 2.

**Player 1** has a ball on the perimeter, **Player 2** lines up opposite 5 yards inside the circle, as shown in the diagram.

### OBJECTIVES:

Development of the first touch and faking an opponent.

**Player 1** passes the ball to **Player 2** who controls the ball away from **Player 1**. **Player 2** tries to get out of the circle before **Player 1** tags him/her.

**Player 1** cannot enter the circle until **Player 2** has touched the ball. Players score 1 point for the getting the ball out of the circle untouched. Rotate the players after 3 attempts.



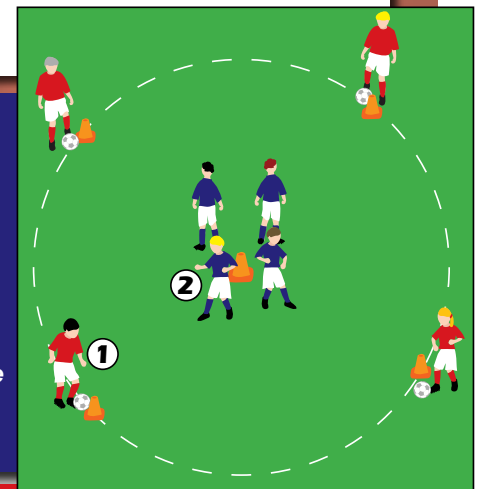
### PROGRESSION 1:

Vary the feed into **Player 2**.

- Balls on the ground.
- Balls bounced in.
- Balls chipped in.

### PROGRESSION 2:

**Player 2** now stands 10 yards away when the ball is played in **Player 2** has to now fake before moving around **Player 1** to get to the perimeter of the circle.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 The receiving player must get in line with the ball. (Be on your toes)
- 2 Control the ball away from the pressure.
- 3 Be dynamic with the first touch, change the speed and direction of the ball and yourself.
- 4 Control the ball to player 1's weaker foot side.



# BALL SKILLS

## Circle Training/First Touch Ball Control

## Game Development



### ORGANIZATION:

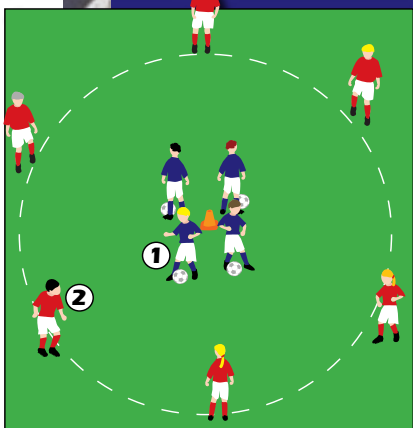
Set up 6-7 players on the outside of the circle, 4 players on the inside each with a ball.

### OBJECTIVE:

To develop passing interplay with the focus on a good first touch.

**Player 1** dribbles the ball to one of the **Player 2's** on the outside of the circle. **Player 1** then makes a rapid movement away from **Player 2**. **Player 2** then passes the ball back to **Player 1** who controls the ball using different surfaces of the foot. **Player 1** then turns and repeats with a different **Player 2** on the outside.

(Re-introduce the turns) Cruyff and drag back.



### PROGRESSIONS:

- 1 Let the ball run through your legs instead of turning with the ball.
- 2 Vary the feed into and out of **Player 2**. Tell **Player 2** to hold the ball run around **Player 2** and back into the circle to receive the ball back.
- 3 **Player 1** plays the ball to **Player 2**, **Player 2** plays it back to **Player 1**. **Player 1** plays it straight back to **Player 2** who replaces **Player 1** in the middle. (3 passes)



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Players on the outside need to be on their toes ready to receive the ball.
- 2 Communicate with the outside player both verbally and visually.
- 3 Explode with the first touch towards the player on the outside.
- 4 Play the pass with the inside of the foot, look at the speed of the pass in comparison to the distance away from the player on the outside.



### GAME DEVELOPMENT:

Regular scrimmage. No throw ins - ball must be passed in, to focus on the first touch.

### DURATION:

10-15 minutes.

### OBJECTIVE:

To develop game play, possession of the ball and movement.

### ORGANIZATION:

30 x 50 area; play 5v5 or 6v6 dependent on your roster.



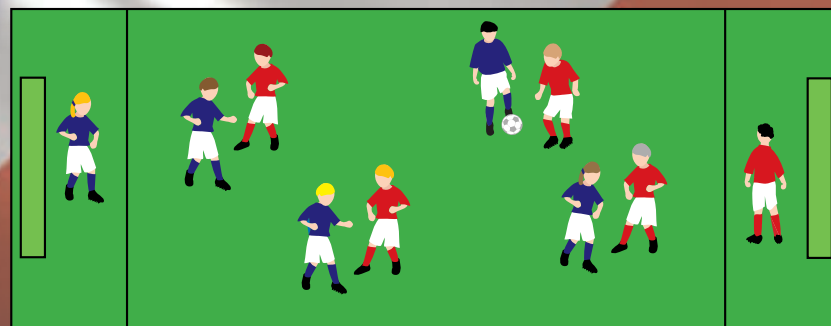
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Look to get a good first touch and get the ball under control.
- 2 Get your head up and look for another player to pass the ball to.
- 3 If you cannot get the ball, move into a space where another player can pass it to you.
- 4 Good, accurate passes ensure the opposing team doesn't get the ball. If you cannot pass, protect the ball until another player moves into a passing position.



### PROGRESSIONS:

Reduce the touches the players have to control the ball. Make it 3 touches, and then play a regular game.



# BALL SKILLS

## Dribbling & Moving with the Ball



Soccer is a team sport, but without individual creativity the game loses a good deal of its excitement and teams often lose opportunities to create space and score goals and ultimately win games.

Individual skill on the ball, flair, creativity and dynamic moves are vital for the emerging player to develop. Players that can dribble well are a tremendous asset to a team. We have great examples available to us each and every week on TV. Cristiano Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Kaka and many, many others. These are the players that excite us, bring games to life and in many cases these are the players who win games. No defender relishes being constantly taken on by an accomplished exponent of the noble art of dribbling.

Often in their pursuit of “team development”, coaches discourage dribbling. They encourage passing when a good dynamic dribble in the right part of the field could open up a defense. Nothing draws defenders toward the ball more than a good dribbler.

All players should be able to run with and dribble the ball well. To make space for themselves, to get past opponents, to make angles to pass and create chances to score. It is important however to appreciate when to dribble and when to release the ball.

It is important to be able to improvise and be inventive in tight and difficult situations. Coaches should try to create these situations in practice for players.

Great dribblers are balanced, dynamic and have great agility. We need to encourage not just two footed players but four footed players. The ability to use the inside and outside of both feet. To move the ball out of pressure into space. We need to encourage our young players to develop these skills and use them in the correct parts of the field.



When developing dribbling skills the following need to be addressed:

- The ability to run at pace with the ball
- Play with your head up
- Change of direction
- Change of speed
- Using different parts of the foot
- Deceptions (fakes and feints)
- The willingness to take a player on
- Shielding the ball
- Taking multiple players on

The correct teaching environment and how you develop the session is crucial.

**Basic instruction:** Introducing the player to the various techniques of dribbling

**Free Form:** Activity with no pressure

**Conditioned:** Activity with restrictions (space, time, touches, passive defenders etc)

**Competition:** Activity with pressure and game situations

Every coach loves to be able to have an attacker on the ball in a 1 vs.1 situation. These are great opportune moments to create chances to score. Encourage positive attitudes with your players especially in these situations. As a coach the key directive to your young players should be that in the right parts of the field “take them on”. Encourage them to be positive with the ball. Reinforce their self belief and build their confidence. Even if a defender gets the better of them, encourage them. The attacking third of the field is where we have to encourage creativity and take risks as the rewards can win games.



# BALL SKILLS

## Dribbling & Moving with the Ball



### ORGANIZATION:

Set up 20x20 Grid with several gates 2 feet apart scattered randomly around the area. Each player has a ball.

**OBJECTIVE:** To warm the players up with as many touches on the ball, reviewing key skills, turns and fakes.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Keep the ball close to your feet.
- 2 Keep your head up.
- 3 Once through or at a gate use a rapid change of speed and direction, with the outside of the foot.
- 4 Shield the ball if necessary from the terminator then turn away using your drag back or cruyff turns.



### ACTIVITY FOCUS:

- 1 Each player dribbles the ball around the area using different surfaces of the foot.
- 2 How many touches can they have on the ball in 30 seconds? Moving to all parts of the grid.
- 3 Using the gates how many can they dribble through in 30 seconds-1 minute
- 4 Using the gates, they now have to go back through the gate and around a cone 360 degrees. How many can they dribble around in 30 seconds - 1 minute.
- 5 Using the gates players now have to dribble up to the gates and turn away from the gate. How many turns can they do in 1 minute. Review the turn's minute.
- 6 Using the gates players now have to dribble up to the gates and fake away from the gate. How many fakes can they do in 1 minute?

### PROGRESSIONS:

- 1 Add a passive defender (coach, assistant coach) during any of the activities to provide an added thinking point for the players.
- 2 Defender(s) are now live and can be a "terminator" he/she can kick out as many balls as possible. (If a player's ball is kicked out they can wait at the side practicing juggling, or do a move to come back in.)

Last player left is the winner.





# BALL SKILLS

## Dribbling Transition Game



### ORGANIZATION:

25 x 25 area. One 4 ft goal in the middle of the field, players can shoot from either side. Nine players with a ball, three thieves without.

### OBJECTIVE:

To develop dribbling technique under pressure.

**ACTIVITY FOCUS:** Players with a ball, keep the ball away from the three thieves. The thieves try to steal a ball to score a goal. If they steal a ball, the player whose ball is taken can try to win back the ball before the thief scores. If a goal is scored, the player whose ball they stole also becomes a thief. Play continues until the last player with a ball wins.

If play is tough at first for the thieves, the coach can assist to help get them started.



### COACHING POINTS:

**Players with a ball –** Keep the ball close, head up, be aware of the thieves around you and space where you can move into. If a ball is lost, recover quickly and win the ball back before the thief plays the ball through the goal.

**Thieves –** Be aggressive - move quickly to a player with the ball. The last three strides, slow down and move in low. Once you have won the ball, transition quickly to offense and score between the cones.

If the player with the ball cannot move away from the thief they should shield the ball to protect it and then turn away with a rapid change in speed and direction. Encourage the players to use moves to get away from the defenders. Drag back, Cruyff Step Over.



### PROGRESSIONS:

Play once, review some moves for 2-3 minutes and play again. Introduce the Matthews Fake.

1. Player takes 2-3 touches with the inside of the foot, playing the ball in one direction. (Picture 1, 2 & 3)
2. Player drops left shoulder over the ball. (Picture 4)
3. Player makes a rapid movement in the opposite direction (right) playing the ball with the outside of the right foot. (Picture 5 & 6)

### Matthew's Fake



1



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3

Using the inside of the right foot, tap the ball 3-4 times across the body. The ball moves to the player's left.



4

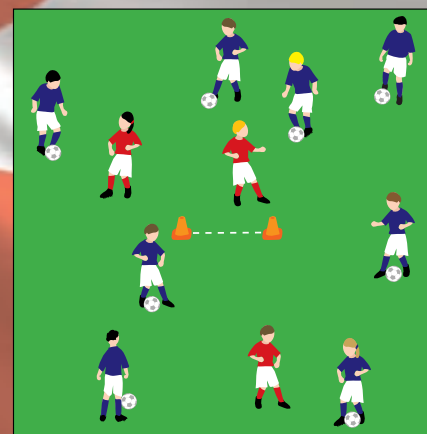


5



6

Player makes a rapid movement, playing the ball with the outside of the right foot to the player's right.



# BALL SKILLS

## Two-Team Battle



### ORGANIZATION:

30x40 grid 4 goals located one on either side of the area. Split the team into 2 groups 1 group in the middle of the area each with a ball, 1 group spread out on the outside of the area each with a pinny on.

### OBJECTIVE:

To develop decision making into protecting the ball/moving with the ball or passing.



### ACTIVITY FOCUS:

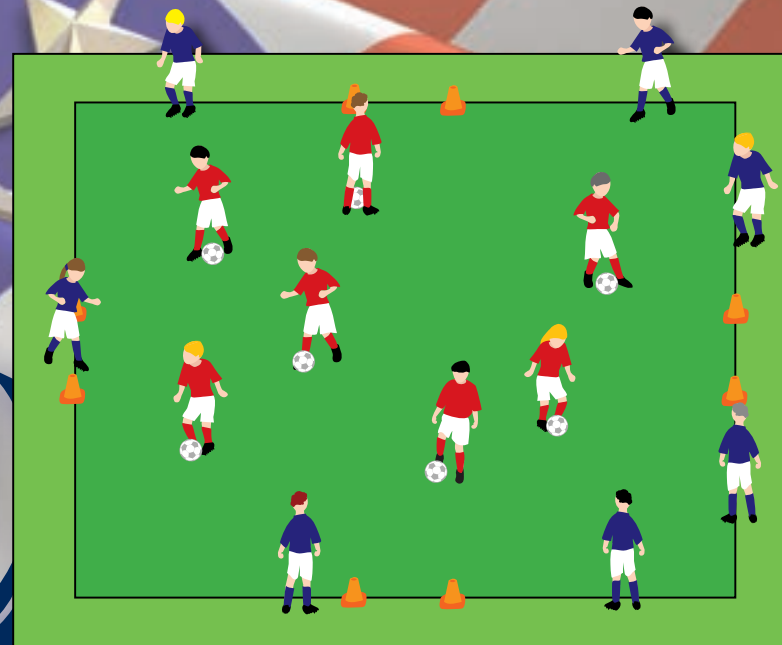
Players on the outside run into the area and try to steal a ball. Once they have stolen a ball they can score in any goal around the outside marked by the cones.

Players with a ball attempt to keep the ball away from the defenders by dribbling/shielding, or passing to a teammate who has lost their ball.

If a player has his/her ball stolen they can steal it back before the defender scores.

The game is over when all of the balls have been kicked into the goals. The two teams will then swap roles. Keep a track of how long it takes each team of defenders to successfully get all of the balls into the goals.

If a ball is kicked out of bounds it goes to the red team.



### COACH'S NOTES:

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### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 The players have to make a decision dribble with the ball/shield the ball/pass the ball.
- 2 Stop play where you see a player making the incorrect decision and let them have a "do over".
- 3 Discuss the angle and depth of support from the attacking team player who does not have a ball.
- 4 Focus on good communication on both teams, player have to call loudly if they don't have a ball.



# BALL SKILLS 1V1

## Technique Under Pressure



**DURATION:**

10 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:**

To develop quick turning and dribbling skills.

**ORGANIZATION:**

30 x 40 area. Position cones on the outside as shown in the diagram, two feet apart around the outside of the area. Each player has a partner - one ball between the two.

**ACTIVITY FOCUS:**

Players play 1V1 and try to dribble the ball between the cones. When a goal is scored or possession is lost, the other player has a turn.



**COACHING POINTS:**

- 1 If your opponent gets close, turn and go in a different direction. Turn and then explode away.
- 2 If you cannot turn, shield the ball first and then look to turn.
- 3 Don't let your opponent get the ball.

**Helpful Hint:** Ensure to split the pairs up into equal abilities. To start, the opposing players can only use their weaker foot. Players cannot go back to same goal after they have scored.



**PROGRESSION:**

- 1 Develop into 2v2 then 4v4 and have mini games.
- 2 2 teams and 2 balls.



# GAME DEVELOPMENT



**DURATION:**

10 - 15 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:**

To develop game play, possession of the ball and movement.

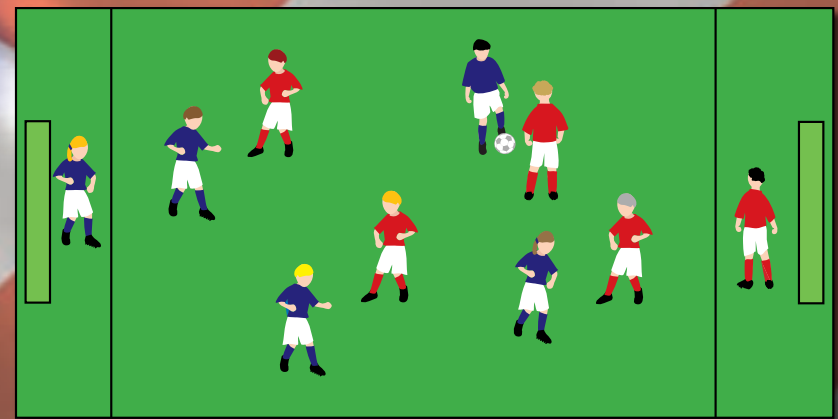
**ORGANIZATION:**

50 x 35 area; Play 5v5 or 6v6 dependant on your roster.



**COACHING POINTS:**

- 1 Look to get a good first touch and get the ball under control.
- 2 Get your head up and look for another team-mate to pass the ball to.
- 3 If you cannot get the ball, move into a space where another team-mate can pass it to you.
- 4 Make good accurate passes to ensure the other team doesn't get the ball.
- 5 If you cannot pass, protect the ball until another team-mate moves into a passing position.
- 6 If you find yourself with the ball in the oppositions half, attack the player with a dribble at pace.



# PASSING



One of the most important techniques in soccer is passing. Over 80% of the time a player receives the ball his/her next action is to pass to a teammate.

Good accurate passing can open up games and win matches, inaccurate passing will in most cases when done too often, lose you matches.

For the youth player the following cannot be denied:

- If a player cannot pass accurately without pressure (opposition), there is no reason to expect they can do it with pressure (opponents).
- If a player can't pass accurately over short distances, they should not be expected to pass accurately over long distances.
- If a player cannot pass accurately over the ground then it is unreasonable to expect them to pass it in the air.

It is important that the coach develops the different skills that encompass passing.

The push pass, outside of the foot, instep drive, lofted pass, chip pass, disguised pass can all be developed.

These need to be done in a no pressure, passive pressure environment, developing into a conditioned game.



**COACH'S NOTES:** Refer to the U-8 Curriculum for many passing activities with no pressure. Do not be afraid to go back to basic passing in pairs.

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# PASSING

## Warm Up



### ORGANIZATION:

20 x 20 square each player with a ball

### OBJECTIVE:

To develop quick passing of the ball and movement of the ball out of feet.

### ACTIVITY FOCUS:

Each player has their own ball that they can pass towards any other opponents ball.

Each time you hit another persons ball you score 10 pts. Each time your own ball is hit you lose 5 points. Players keep their own scores. Play for 1-2 min and review the coaching points 3 at a time



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 *Keep the ball close to your body when dribbling.*
- 2 *Keep your head up when moving with the ball*
- 3 *Use different surfaces of the foot when dribbling and passing.*
- 4 *Look to disguise passes. Make quick passes against opposition*
- 5 *If evading another players pass move the ball out of your feet quickly.*
- 6 *Technical point – when using the inside of the foot to pass keep your toe up and head steady, lock the ankle and follow through with your foot in the direction you want the ball to travel.*



### PROGRESSIONS:

When coming to end of the drill.

- 1 *Once their ball is hit they step out and get a drink.*
- 2 *Winner is the last one left*
- 3 *Play just number of hits this encourages the players to pass as many times as they can under some pressure to perform.*
- 4 *Provide a pre-determined time limit ie 1 min.*



# PASSING

## Angles and Distance



### ORGANIZATION:

Group players in groups of 4/5 each group in a 15 x 15 square. One ball active per group (keep 2-3 balls as spares outside of the square).

### OBJECTIVE:

Develop decision making in passing when under pressure.

### ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS:

3 players start on three separate cones one player has a ball. Play without a defender to start, so that the players get used to the angles. (after progression one defender will move into the middle (place bib on the defender). In the initial stages, restrict the defender to using their weaker foot only to challenge.

The ball must be passed down the lines and may not travel through the square in the middle.

The player on the ball should always have 2 options if not the remaining players are not working hard enough to get open.

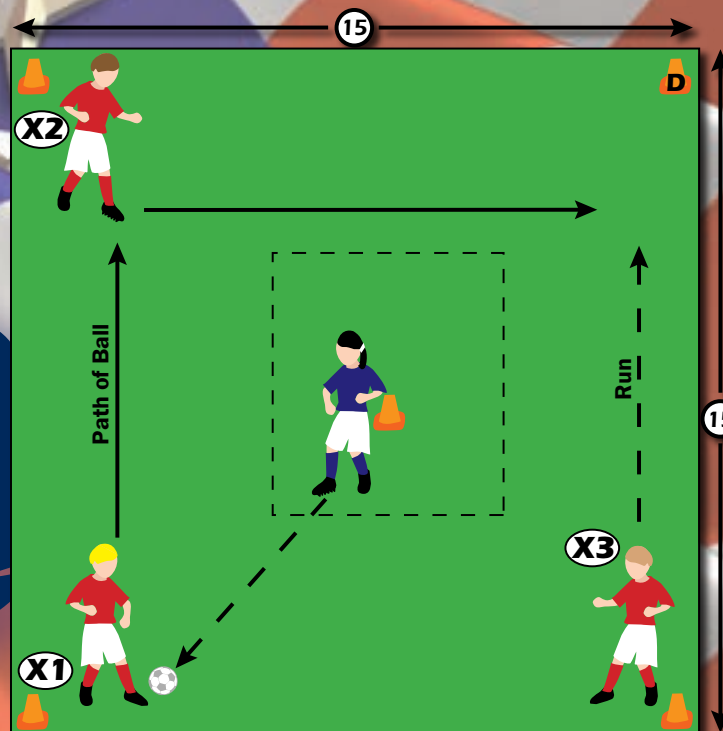
For example -

X1 passes to X2 - As the ball is passed X3 must run to cone D to offer the second option.

X2 can now pass to X1 or X3

Either way the player receiving the ball must have 2 options.

After the defender is added the player on the ball must draw the defender towards them before passing. This will allow the player receiving the ball more time to make decision before they are closed down by the defender. Work the defender for 30-45 seconds and then swap.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Make a decision early on where to pass.
- 2 If you are not receiving the pass make a move quickly (sprint) to the open cone to support the player receiving the ball.
- 3 When the defender is added draw the defender towards you before passing
- 4 Try a no look pass to fake the defender.

ADVANCING  
THE  
CORE EXPERIENCE  
IN  
SOCCER



# PASSING / Possession #1

3V1



**ORGANIZATION:**

Group players in groups of 4/5 each group in a 15x15 square. One ball active per group (keep 2-3 balls as spares outside of the square).

**OBJECTIVE:**

Develop decision making in passing.

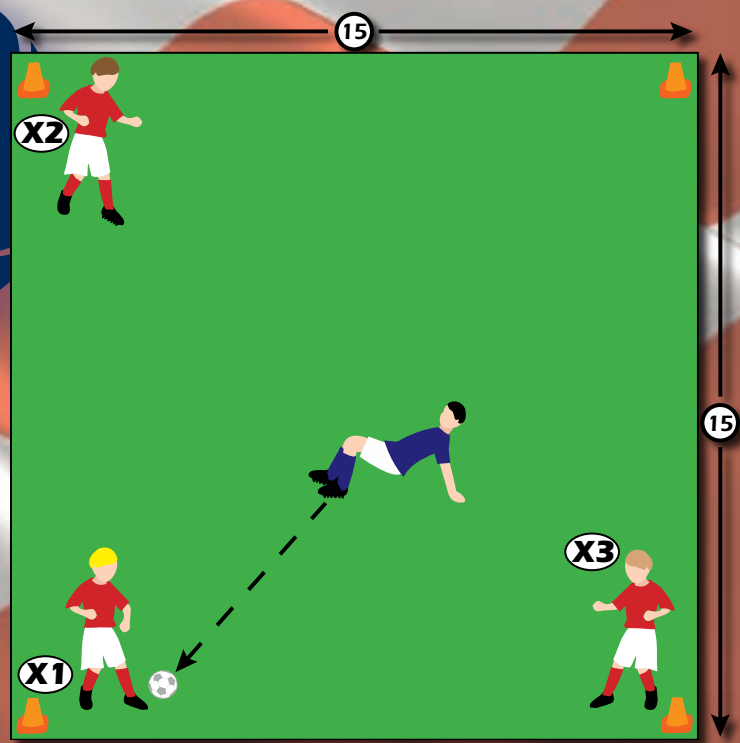
**ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS:**

- 1 3 players start in the square one player has a ball. One defender per grid, swap the defender after 30- seconds to 1 minute.
- 2 Using the same concept as in the previous drill the player on the ball should always have 2 options.
- 3 The defender begins as a crab (hands and feet on the ground).
- 4 Players may now pass through the center of the square.
- 5 As offensive players become more proficient the defender can progress to walking then jogging (have them only able to challenge with their weaker foot).
- 6 Set targets for offensive team 5 passes 10 passes.
- 7 If defender wins the ball their reward is to swap positions with a player who did not give the ball away. At this age it is very important that you do not put the person making the mistake as the defender. If you do, it is possible that the person making the mistake will spend more time in the middle as a defender. This person is generally the person who needs to develop the first touch and passing the most.



**COACHING POINTS:**

- 1 *Good positive first touch*
- 2 *Be patient draw the defender in towards the ball, then pass around him/her.*
- 3 *The space behind the defender is the space we need to exploit.*
- 4 *Introduce the disguised pass, (pretend to pass in one direction, change the surface of the foot and pass in another).*
- 5 *Players off the ball must work hard to provide a good supporting position.*



# PASSING / POSSESSION #2

5V2

Goal Game



## ORGANIZATION:

30x30 playing area.

## ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS:

Blues play keep away from the red defenders; 1 point for each pass; 5 points for a pass that passes between the red defenders "penetrating pass"; blue's attempt to get 20 points.

If reds get possession they must try to get 3 passes in a row. Rotate the red defenders every one minute.



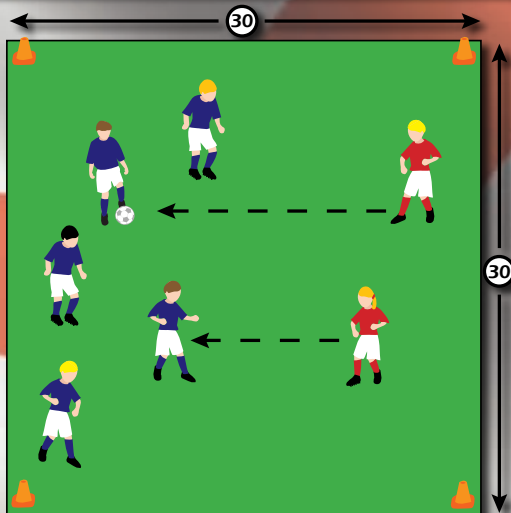
## COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Focus on the angle and distance of supporting players
- 2 Blue's concentrate on first touch into space or direction of next pass
- 3 Patience – draw the defenders to the ball pass it around them
- 4 Keep possession at all costs, but can you penetrate (split) defenders
- 5 Speed of passing – start slowly and then build up speed.



## PROGRESSION:

- 1 2 touch to 1 touch.
- 2 Play 4v3



## ORGANIZATION:

40x60 Goals placed in each corner of the field.

## ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS:

Initially teams can score in any of the goals. Progress to each team defends two goals at one end and attacks the other two at the far end.



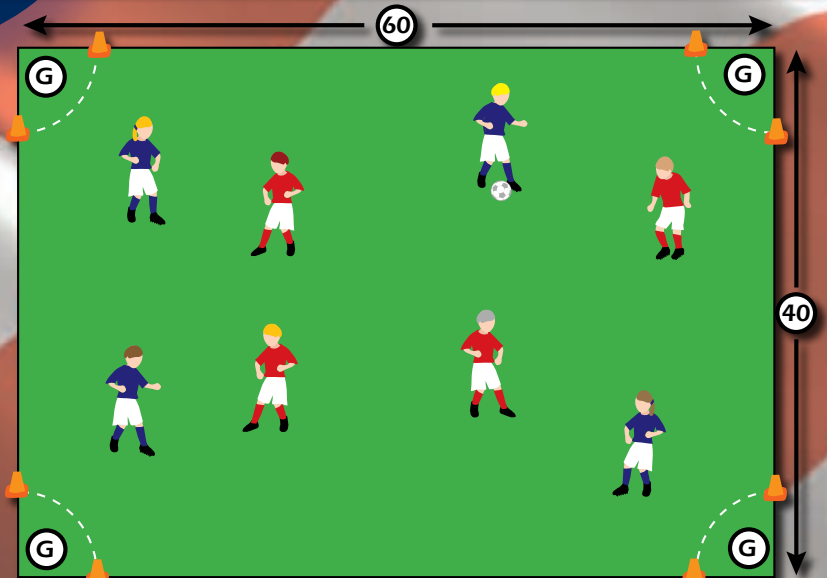
## COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Supporting positions of players off the ball – they have to work as hard if not harder than the player with the ball, want the ball at all times, you should be in a position to receive the ball at all times.
- 2 Vary the passing long and short; change the point of attack quickly.
- 3 Concentrate on the speed of the passing and movement.
- 4 Create space (overlaps, blind side runs, crossovers, etc.)



## PROGRESSION:

Play one or two touch and then revert back to regular game. Reward combination plays (wall pass, overlaps, crossovers etc)





# SHOOTING



There can be no doubt that shooting is the most important aspect of attacking play. Everything an individual or team does is designed to create a shooting opportunity. It is therefore surprising the high number of shooting opportunities that are missed at all levels but especially at the youth level.

Shooting is the most fun technique for a player to develop and learn. Scoring goals is always fun, and it is important that every player has the opportunity to experience it, especially at under 10 level. No player should be pigeon holed into a position at this age. Even if you have a player who insists he or she is a defender, give them the opportunity to play up front and have a chance at scoring.

One of the most important areas for a coach to develop in his/her players is their attitude toward shooting. Coaches need to make players aware that shooting is indeed the major factor in attacking play and that failure is failure to shoot not to score. Missing shots is a part of the game but you can't score if you don't shoot.

Here is how a coach can unwittingly play a part in this trend.

● **By reducing shooting to a secondary consideration**

It is easy when coaching other aspects of attacking play to lose sight of the fact that we are trying to score a goal! We get satisfied with creating a scoring opportunity and a poor shot, or worse no shot passes without comment.

Emphasis must always be on taking your scoring opportunities.

● **By praising unselfish play**

Players who pass when they in a position to shoot are more anxious to pass the responsibility than the ball!

Where scoring goals are concerned, unselfish players do not win matches. Educate players to have an aggressive approach to shooting. Reward players who take responsibility for scoring and missing. It is fundamental to developing the right attitude in front of goal.



● **Providing unrealistic goals**

Many coaches set up goals that are too small or with no real goalkeeper. At 8 vs 8 they play with 6 x 18 goals (recommended). They should practice shooting and playing into this goal as often as they can in shooting practices and game play.

● **Failure to improve technique**

Shooting is performed in the most pressurized of situations. Typically players with poor technique "crack under the pressure". We need to develop a players shooting / finishing techniques under no pressure to get success. Increase the pressure continually to game condition pressure.

As vital as good technique is, the ability to develop the right attitude to shooting is equally as important. Improvement in attitude will bring about the biggest and quickest improvement in performance.



**COACH'S NOTES:**

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# SHOOTING

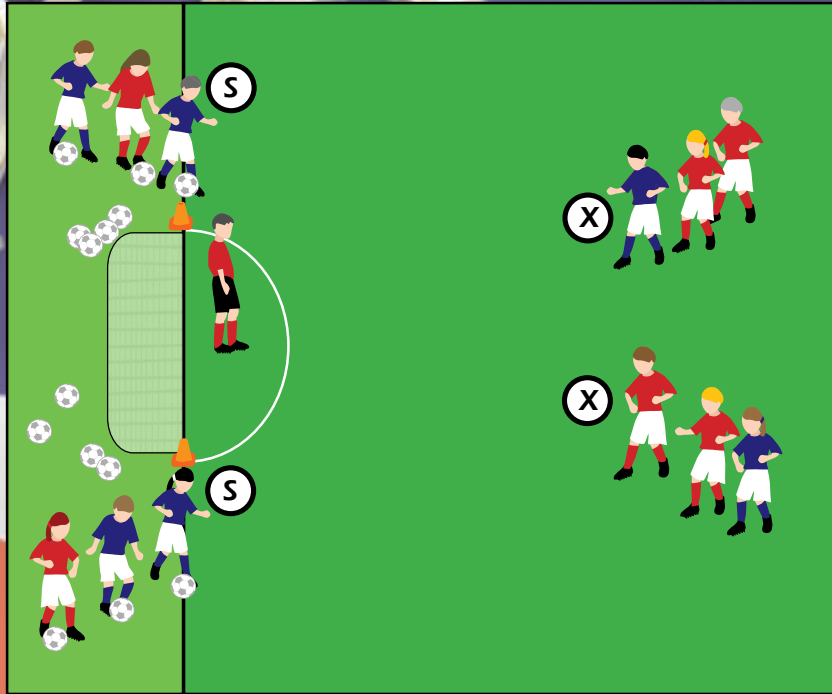


## ORGANIZATION:

Set up 2 areas as shown in the diagram. Flat goals work best for this drill. Two servers 'S' stand a few yards from each post.

## ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS:

The X's receive a pass from 'S' and shoot on goal - try and strike the ball first time without stopping the ball. The attacker will follow through on the goal and become the server. The server follows through and joins the X team.



## COACHING POINTS:

- 1 The attacker approaching the ball needs to attack the ball do not wait for the ball to come to them.
- 2 Try not to break stride, make the last 3 strides shorter
- 3 Concentrate on having the hips facing the goal at the moment of impact on the ball.
- 4 The attacking player should always strike the ball with the foot nearest to the feeder.
- 5 Following through on the goal develops good habits (encourages the player to follow in for rebounds.)
- 6 Keep the head steady, eyes on the ball not the goal. "The goal won't move - the ball will, dummy."\* Strike through the ball.

\* Quoted to one of the editors in a practice session lead by Ray Clemence who won 90 caps for England.



## PROGRESSIONS:

- 1 Vary the service in ground balls
- 2 Balls in the air
- 3 Bouncing balls



# SHOOTING

## Shooting Technique



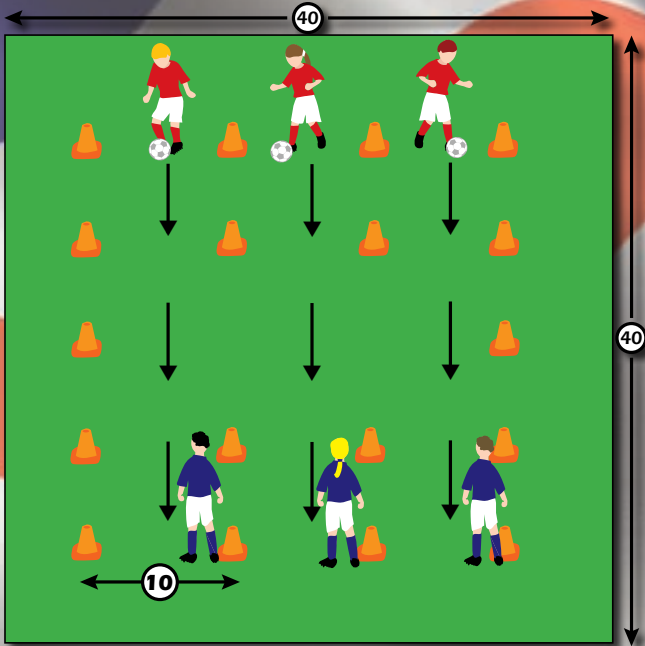
### ORGANIZATION:

After a brief warm-up and stretch.  
40 x 40 area set up as in the diagram. Split the players into pairs.  
Each of the pairs has a ball. Players will shoot the ball back and forth to each other.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 For shooting the ball on the ground (See pictures 1 & 2) – Approach the ball and place standing foot 4-6 inches from the ball. Point your toe down and strike through the ball at 11 and 5 o'clock on the ball. (See picture 3) Get your head and knee over the ball. (See picture 3)
- 2 For chipping the ball, approach the ball the same as above – Strike the ball at the base of the ball. Lean back slightly. (Picture B & C)
- 3 The coach can challenge more advanced players by restricting them to use their weaker foot only to shoot the ball.



# SHOOTING

## Shooting 1V1



### ORGANIZATION:

Use a 10x20 area set up as in the diagram. Split the players into pairs. Players will attempt to shoot the ball past their partner defending the other goal.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 For the ball on the ground – Approach the ball and place standing foot 4-6 inches from the ball. Point your toe down and strike through the ball. Keep your head and knee over the ball.
- 2 Fake to shoot and move the ball out to the side and then shoot. The coach can again challenge more advanced players by restricting them to use their weaker foot only to shoot the ball, or ...
- 3 Pass the ball into the goal where possible with the inside of the foot. This is more accurate.

**Note:** The player acting as the goal keeper must stay on the goal line. The striker may move to the halfway line.

## 2V2 Shooting



### ORGANIZATION:

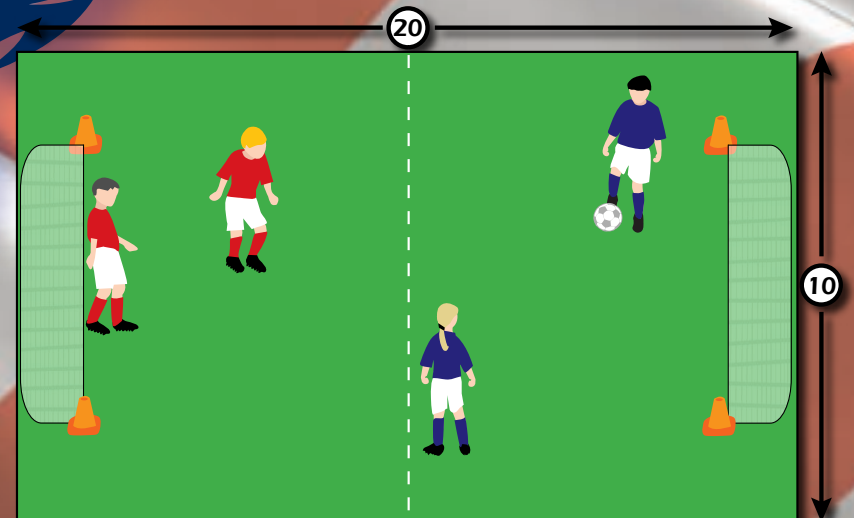
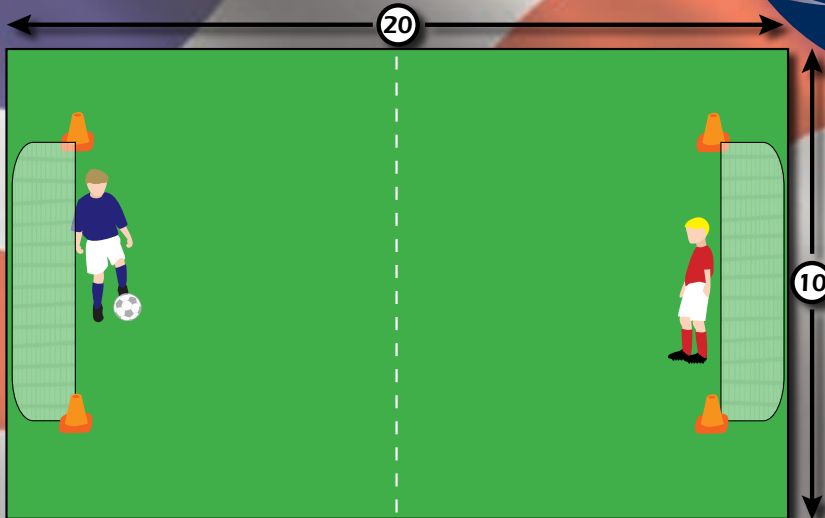
Using 10x20 area set up as in the diagram. Split the players into teams of 2. Have balls in the nets to use. When the attacking team has the ball, they play 2V1. The remaining defender is on the goal line as a goal keeper and has to stay there. They may stop the ball from going over the line, but they may not use their hands. Repeat in the opposite direction for the other team.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Attack the defender at a quick pace.
- 2 Make a decision: does your fellow teammate have a better shooting angle?
- 3 Can you fake a pass to a teammate to move the defender and then shoot?
- 4 Get a quick shot away as soon as you get a sight of the goal.

**Helpful Hint:** The coach can make it easier for the attackers by restricting the defenders to use their weaker foot only.



# SHOOTING

## Shooting Games



The following is a list of Shooting games that you can adopt throughout the season, Players love to play shooting games, it can create team bonding with players trying to put each other off or in the case of some games knocking each other out. This is the only time when we would recommend a "line drill" where all of your team is standing in one line awaiting their turn. If you have a big squad 18+ you may want to split the line into 2 groups.

Shooting games can foster competition between players and develop shooting under pressure, however shooting games should not be conducted without a thorough warm up especially of the thighs and hamstrings.

### Shooting Games I-3



Knock Yourself Out . ELIMINATION GAME

When players are knocked out they may try and put other players off (verbally only) or practice their individual skills with a ball, or players who are out can collect balls.

There are several versions of this game, the basis being if you shoot and miss the goal you are out. The last player in wins.

- 1 The coach feeds balls on the ground from either side of the post for the player to run onto. To start with have the players take one touch in front of them and strike the ball with the second touch. Progress to striking the ball first time.
- 2 The player starts with a ball on a cone 10 yards from the edge of the box. As soon as they enter the penalty box they shoot.
- 3 The coach stands on the edge of the penalty box. Each player passes the ball to the coach who lays the ball off either side for the player to shoot 1st time.

In each of the games above you want to encourage the player to run onto the ball at pace. If possible the player can pass the ball (far more accurate) into the corners as opposed to striking the ball with the laces.



In the previous drills, there is no pressure applied from a defender. For each one you can progress the drill and create pressure by adding a defender. You can add a defender in the following ways:

For Game 1 Add some defenders on the opposite post to the coach.

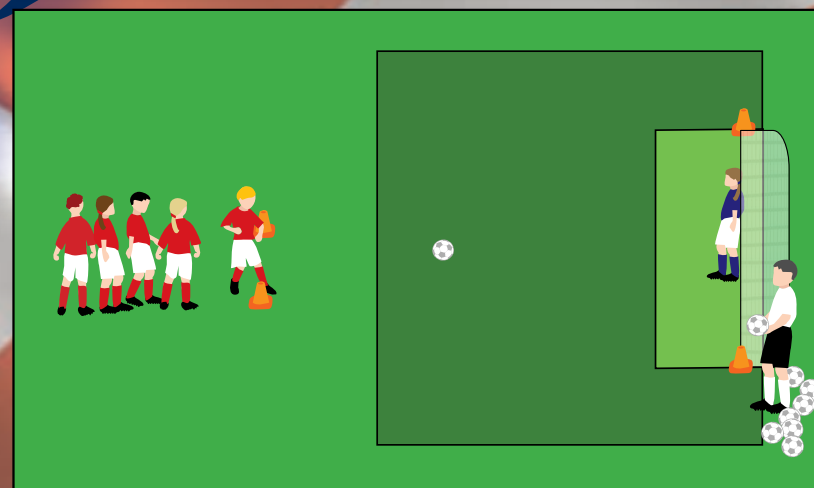
- The defender can attack the player once the player has taken the first touch
- The defender can attack the player as soon as the coach passes the ball
- The defender can move as soon as the attacker moves.

For Game 2 The defender starts on the post again.

- The defender can move to attack the attacker as soon as the attacker touches the ball.
- The defender can attack as soon as the attacker moves

For Game 3 Add some defenders on a post.

- The defender can attack the player as soon as the coach has laid the ball off.
- The defender can attack the player as soon as the player passes the ball to the coach.
- The defender can move as soon as the attacker moves.



# SHOOTING

## Shooting Game 2 - 4V4V4V4

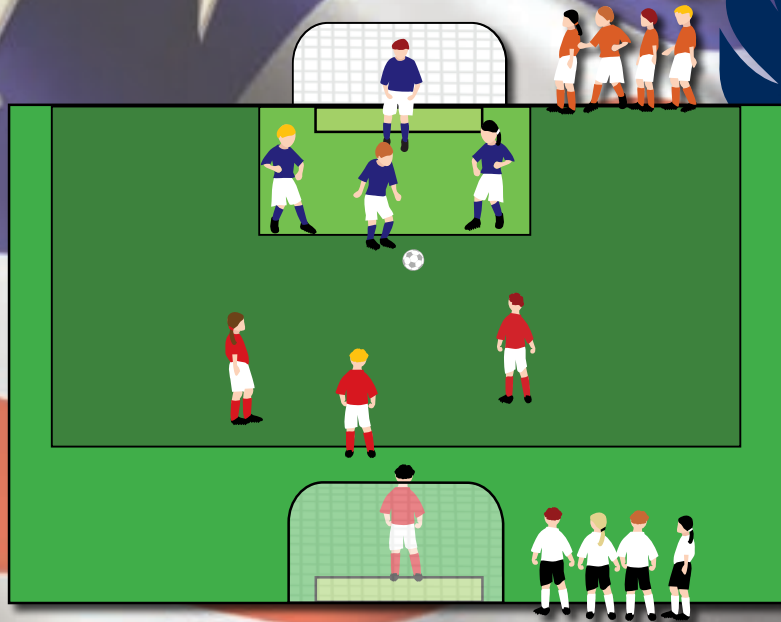


This rapid fire shooting game can be played at any stage in any practice session.

Players play in teams of 3 or 4 inside the penalty area. Set 2 goals up 1 for each team to shoot into. 1 player plays in goal (if you have 2 dedicated keepers the keepers can stay in goal and play for all teams) If your team scores you stay on, if you lose another team comes on. The team that scores starts again immediately from their own goalkeeper.

For example the red team scores against the blues, blues go off oranges run on and defend, reds start with the ball from the bottom goal and try and score against the oranges.

Don't give too much technical instruction just let them play and have fun with this drill.



## Individual Shooting Under Pressure



This drill tests the stamina and accuracy of shooting with both feet.

Set up as shown in the diagram with 5 feeding stations where the ball is passed in from.

The 4 blue players on each cone start with a number of balls. The red player on the cone outside the penalty box starts play by running towards the goal. Player 1 on the bottom left cone plays a pass across the top of the penalty area for the player strike first time with the right foot. The player runs back and touches the cone that he/she started from.

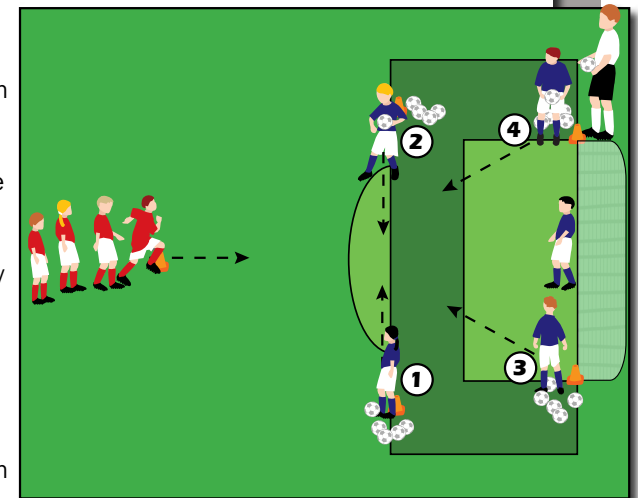
Player 2 on the top left cone then plays a pass across the top of the penalty area which the red player runs onto and strikes at goal with his/her left foot.

The player runs back and touches the cone that he/she started on. The red player runs towards the goal again. Player 3 on the bottom right cone plays a pass towards the top of the penalty area (by the penalty spot) for the player strike first time with the right foot.

The player runs back and touches the cone that he/she started on. The red player runs towards the goal again. Player 4 on the top right cone plays a pass towards the top of the penalty area (by the penalty spot) for the player strike first time with the left foot.

The player runs back and touches the cone that he/she started on.

The red player runs towards the goal again. The coach who is standing by the goal can feed a ball into the player around the edge of the 6 yard box who heads the ball towards goal.



# POSSESSION

## Warm Up/Passing Practice



As important as the technical area of passing is, the players off the ball need now to begin to understand their importance as your team begins to understand possession and keeping the ball.

There are two major areas for the players off the ball to understand. Their angle and distance from the player in possession. If the angle of the support player is good but the distance too close or too far way this is no good. If the distance is good but the angle is bad this too is no good.

Players need to be relaxed. Think about simple decisions of who and when to pass. Prepare the ball towards an option and away from pressure with the first touch.

Keep the ball moving when you receive it. Emphasize on passing to a player who is ready to receive the ball. Look for visual cues eyes up looking at you means they are ready to receive the ball. Can you put defensive players out of the game with your pass?

After you have made the pass move to a place where you can see as much of the field as possible and possibly receive a pass back.

The ability to keep the ball is important but there must be a purpose to the play. If a player is available in a forward position then this should be encouraged. The closer to the opponent's goal we are with the ball the better.

Remember the 3 P's of soccer:  
Position, Possession, Penetration.

### COACH'S NOTES:

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### ORGANIZATION:

Divide the team in half; Blues are on the inside of the grid; Reds are on the outside of the grid

### TRAINING OBJECTIVE:

To develop passing of the ball with the inside of the foot (left and right foot)

### ACTIVITY FOCUS:

- 1 On the coaches signal, the red team dribble into the grid and try to pass the ball to hit the opposition players on the knee or below.
- 2 Passes should be made with the inside of the foot encourage players to use both feet.
- 3 Players on the blue team who are hit with a ball must leave the grid. They must practice individual skills or juggling if knocked out.
- 4 Coaches time how long it takes each group to get the whole team knocked out. (Play through 2-3 times.)



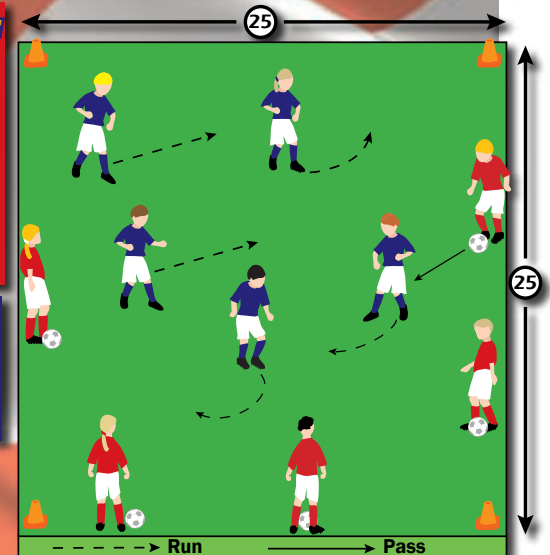
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Keep your head up.
- 2 When striking the ball curl your toe up (inside of foot)
- 3 Play the ball in the middle of the ball
- 4 Keep your head steady



### PROGRESSIONS:

Team is only allowed to use the outside of the foot.



# POSSESSION

## Coaches Combat I



### ORGANIZATION:

Set up as shown in the diagram, three groups of 4/5, number each player 1-4/5. The object of the game is for groups to pass through the sequence while moving throughout the grid. 1 passes to 2, 2 passes to 3, 3 to 4 etc.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 The player passing the ball should call out players name who is receiving the ball
- 2 The passing player must be aware that the ball is coming to them
- 3 Concentrate on the passing technique
- 4 The players first touch should take him/her towards the player receiving the next pass.

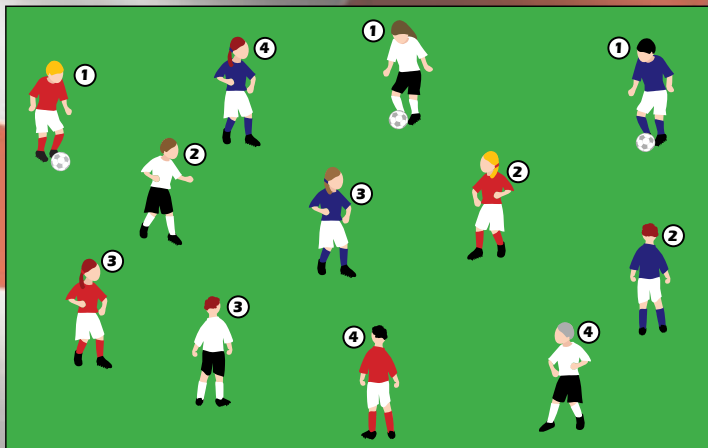


### TRAINING OBJECTIVE:

- 1 First team to pass through sequence sits down
- 2 Go forwards and backwards through the order
- 3 Go through twice

### PROGRESSION:

- 1 Add balls to players 1.
- 2 Use left foot only. Ensure players are moving around the area at all times.



## Coaches Combat II



### ORGANIZATION:

Divide the teams into 2. 2 different colors. Organize the teams as shown in the diagram.

The coach throws out a ball –

- 1 If he says nothing both teams send out 3 players
- 2 If he calls out a color that team sends 3 players out and the other one send 2.

The object is get the ball back to the coach



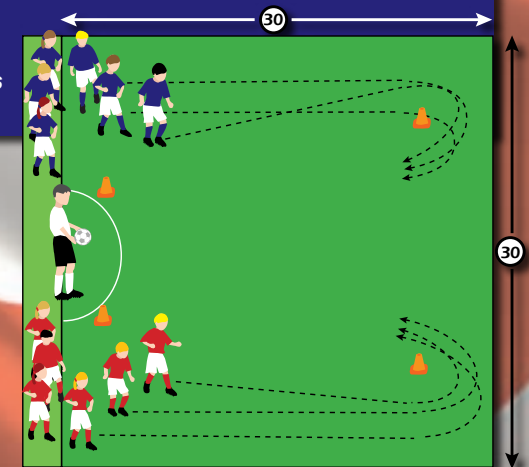
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Keep possession of the ball
- 2 Players off the ball work hard to get into an open position
- 3 Concentrate on the angles and distance of supporting players. Don't get too close to the player with the ball.
- 4 The player on the ball can you play to the target coach, if not keep possession
- 5 The quality of passing and control must be good.



### PROGRESSION:

- 1 Change the number of players
- 2 Change the coaches position therefore changing the location of the target
- 3 Change the coach to be a goalkeeper. Now the players shoot on goal.





# POSSESSION

## 3V3 Plus 3

## Game Format



### ORGANIZATION:

20x20 yard grid, 3 groups of 3 (or 4) depending on roster size  
 - each group has 3 different color pinnies.

One group starts on the defense the other two combine to make the offense

If the defending team obtains the ball the team that gave the ball away becomes the defensive team.

Any ball played out of the grid is considered a loss of possession by that team and they have to be the defense.



### PROGRESSION:

*If the defense has a hard time winning the ball back or players are less experienced rotate every 1-2 minutes*

*You may also adjust the field size to make it bigger or smaller to make it easier or harder respectively.*

*Restrict the number of touches per player.*



### ORGANIZATION:

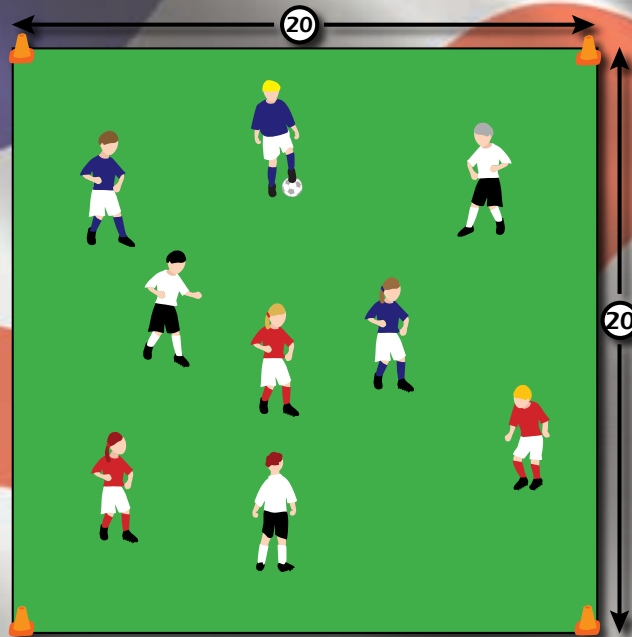
Set up as shown in the diagram  
 40 x 30 grid

Play 3/4v3/4 with target players in each corner of the grid.

On each side of the grid is an extra player Y who combines with whichever team is in possession . Y's can move along the touchline but not move into the grid.

Players in the middle are not allowed into the target players areas (corners).

In the example in the diagram Reds must reach the target players T1 or T2. if the Reds achieve the goal of reaching the T1 or T2 players pass across to other players now feeds Blues who attempts to get the ball to T3 or T4. This activity is very physically demanding . After 3-4 min. rotate the 6 players on the outside for the 6 players in the middle, and repeat.



# HEADING

## Overview



Heading is a skill that needs to be introduced to the Under 10 player but it must be emphasized it should not over coached. You should not spend a lot of time on heading in a session but it has to be part of your season schedule.

How heading is introduced is important as it is the one technical skill that if taught incorrectly can leave a player intimidated and unwilling to perform the skill when necessary. Heading may be taught in the initial stages with a soft ball to get the correct technique. Each player may have a beach type ball or sponge ball which limits the pressure if the technique is not completed in the correct manner to start with.

There has been many discussions over the past years on "Is heading safe?" "Should we teach it at all"? We can strongly say it is far safer to teach correct technique than not teach it at all. A player who is intimidated with a ball around the head is far more likely to end up injured than one who heads it correctly.



**Standing position:** The feet should be spaced apart, forming a good base, 12-16 inches wide. The feet should also be staggered, to provide balance when the upper body arches backwards as the ball arrives. The trunk of the body should snap forward to give power to the header as the forehead contacts the ball. Point of contact on the ball can vary depending on whether the player is attacking or defending.

Remember the following adages when heading the ball:

- 1 The ball never hits your head; your head hits the ball.
- 2 Chin in, chin out.
- 3 Elbows out when heading the ball
- 4 Keep your eyes open, mouth closed



There are basically 3 types of header:

### Defensive Header

The importance of this skill is to clear the ball away from dangerous areas of the field. The ball must be headed high, wide and long. The ball should be hit with the forehead below the midline of the ball allowing it to move high through the air.

### Attacking Header

This technique is used to try and score goals. The idea is to head the ball above the mid line and have the ball go downwards toward the goal or in the direction of a supporting player.

### Passing or Controlled Header

This technique is an advanced skill that will in all likelihood be beyond the u10 player. This is when the player cushions the ball as softly as possible off his/her head to themselves to maintain possession or directs a controlled header to a teammate.



# HEADING

## Introduction



### Heading Introduction

- 1 Each player has a ball, lightly bounce ball off forehead.
- 2 The player holds the ball with their hands by the side of the ball. (See picture 1 below) Stance side on, one leg in front of the other. Teammate stands 5 yards away. Pull the ball back towards your own head and head the ball through hands to partner. (See picture 2 below) As the player pulls the ball back and head hits the ball this puts the player in good heading position with elbows out, good body position, head through the ball. Players do this back and forth a few times getting the technique correct.



1



2



### COACHING POINTS:

Arch back, chin in. Eyes on the ball and mouth shut as you head the ball, move body forward in a snapping motion, chin out as you head it.



- 1 Progress to the player throwing the ball to themselves and heading the ball back to partner.
- 2 Player begins on his/her knees. Partner with ball 2-3 yards away. Player on knees falls forward onto hands. Do this without the ball first. Now have partner lightly toss ball on to player's forehead as he/she falls forward. Players need to keep their **heads up, eyes on the ball, mouth closed**. Player tries to head ball back to partner. (See pictures below.)



- 3 From standing now progress to partner throwing under arm toss to partner who now heads ball back. Remember eyes open, mouth shut, chin in, chin out.
- 4 Players now try to head back and forth (juggling) to see how many they can do.



# HEADING

## Warm Up - Heading in 3's

After completing the activities listed before and getting the basic techniques correct, players may progress to the following activities.



### ORGANIZATION:

Set up several 10x10 areas players play in groups of 3.

#### Defending Headers

Player 1 stands in the middle and serves the ball to player 2. Player 2 makes a defensive header of the ball over player 1 to player 3. Player 3 controls the ball selecting the body part most applicable and plays the ball on the ground to player 1. Repeat for 30 seconds - 1 min. Switch positions.

#### Attacking Headers

Player 1 feeds the ball to player 2 who now heads above the midline to try and score against player 1 who becomes a goalkeeper.



### PROGRESSION:

Player 1 now becomes a goalkeeper. Player 1 stands in the middle and serves the ball to player 2. Player 2 makes a defensive header of the ball over 1 to player 3. Player 3 may now make an attacking header at player 1 who uses the cones as a goal.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Keep your eyes on the ball at all times
- 2 Keep your mouth closed
- 3 Move in line with the flight of the ball
- 4 Head the ball below the midline for defensive headers.
- 5 Head the ball above the midline and down to the ground for attacking headers
- 6 Keep your body side ways on when heading
- 7 Drive off the back foot
- 8 Chin In chin out movement - use your neck muscles.



# HEADING

## Coconut Shy - Attacking Headers



### ORGANIZATION:

Divide players into equal teams, The server stands behind 4 balls placed on cones that are 18" apart. Players line up 10 feet from the balls.

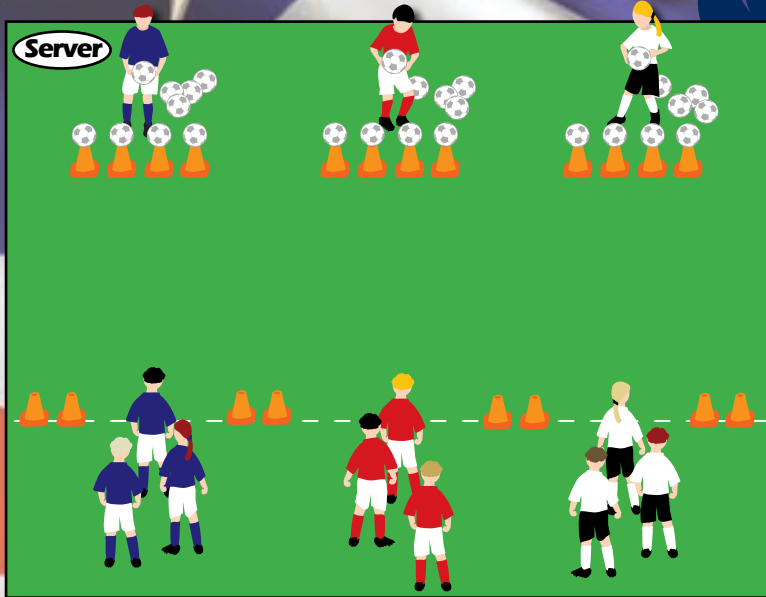
Mark this line clearly with cones to stop and encroachment.

The server throws the ball underhand to the first person in line who heads the ball down to knock the balls off the cones. The player immediately goes to the back of the line after heading.

The first team to knock the balls off all of the cones wins.

Rotate the server to play a new game.

(if you have enough assistants, use them as the servers. This way, all the kids get to play)



## 2V2 - Attacking Heading



### ORGANIZATION:

Set up a 10x10 areas as shown in the diagram with 4 players in each area. Each player has their own goal Player 1 starts with the ball and throws it to player 2 opposite. Player 2 may then head the ball at either player 3 or 4's goal.

The ball must be below shoulder height to score. (waist height as they improve)

You may choose to say the players can play goalkeeper or are limited to use their feet only (representing a player standing on a post for a corner kick)



### COACHING POINTS:

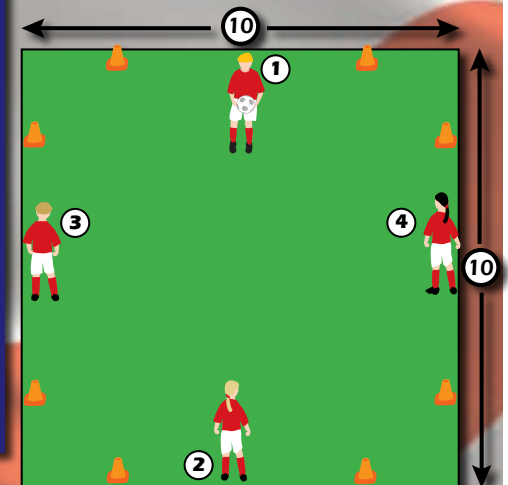
- 1 Focus in on body shape as the ball comes in, angle your body toward the target.
- 2 Keep your eyes on the ball the ball will move the target will not.
- 3 Mouth Shut, Chin in Chin Out.
- 4 Head above the midline of the ball.
- 5 Head ball downwards.
- 6 Attack the ball.



### PROGRESSION:

- 1 Players may head into any goal
- 2 If defending player can get a head on the ball they get 1 point, If defending players can head it straight back score 3 points.

Rotated the Servers. 1 passes to 2, 3 to 4 - 2 to 1 - 4 to 3 etc



# HEADING

## Heading Throw / Head-catch



This is a classic game that can be used to start or finish any practice session.

### ORGANIZATION:

Players advance the ball through a series of "Throw" "Head" "Catch" progression.

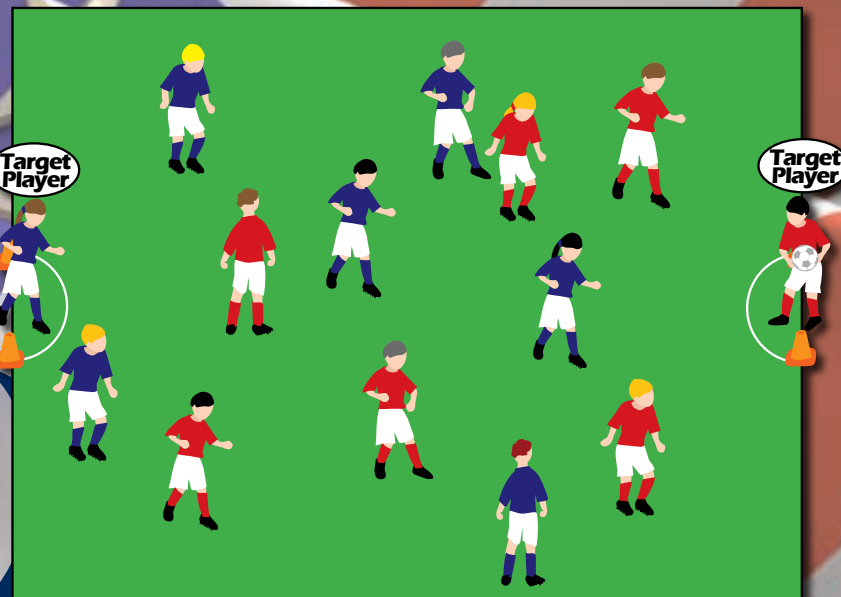
A goal is scored if a target player can catch a headed pass from his/her team or red end line.

After the ball is headed the ball is live and anyone can intercept it.

After a throw must be a header. If the progression is throw - catch the other team gains possession.

If the ball hits the ground it is live.

Players may run 3 paces with the ball. Any more than 3 and they lose possession of the ball.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Call for the ball if in space
- 2 If not in space move to support the thrower or anticipate a headed ball
- 3 Think ahead to where your teams are - head the ball towards a team mate.
- 4 Cushion headers to team mates
- 5 Attack the header to score
- 6 Look for directional headers



### PROGRESSION:

Target players are removed. A goal is now scored with a header that goes in the goal.

### COACH'S NOTES:

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# DEFENDING

## Overview & Fundamentals



The main goal with defending is to decrease the time, space and options an attacking player has to pass, dribble or shoot on goal. To make the opposition's play as predictable as possible.

To defend well as a team, it is important that players can defend well as individuals. The challenges with young players are at times they get sucked in toward the ball leaving spaces available for the opposition to attack.



### Fundamental - Tackling

The coach will want to introduce the block tackle for timing, and rhythm. The coaching points for the block tackle include-. Low center of balance, knees bent, ankle locked. To start with stand face to face with a hand on their partner's shoulder.

Develop a rhythm, 3, 2, 1 go. Then develop to take a step. Both players make contact with the ball, with the inside of their foot and the same time "block the ball".

All players will find it necessary to compete for the ball at some point during a game. There are three possible objectives in challenging for the ball.

- 1 To prevent opponents from moving with the ball.
- 2 To win possession back for your team.
- 3 To prevent opponents from scoring.



**The Block Tackle**



It is important that defenders where possible stay on their feet. The only exceptions are when by doing so the player can play the ball dead (play it out of bounds) or they are the last man and an attacker has broken away and it is a last ditch attempt to clear the ball away.

The best defenders always keep the ball and their opponents in front of them or "goal side" as the term is better known.

When the defender is goal side they should either mark a player or space. The position he/she puts themselves in is guided by the position of the ball, opposition and the goal.

Marking a player is not a matter of man to man marking, or zonal defending. It is a matter of marking players and space at the same time. This can be a particularly tough thing for young players to understand initially. Their eyes are naturally drawn to the ball and this often draws them into bad positions.

The blue player is Goal Side of the orange player. (Picture left)



# DEFENDING

## Fundamentals



Players should now be slowly introduced to three basic Defending principles of the game.

### Pressure

The players nearest the ball “the first defender” needs to quickly get close to the ball and put immediate pressure on the opposing player with the ball. They need to learn the proper angle and speed of the challenge. The goal is to delay, deny penetration and where possible win the ball back.

Using little phrase can help the young player understand how to defend as a first defender

- Start tall, end small.
- Approach attacker with speed then lead (one foot slightly in front of the other).
- As you get close get lower and slower, bend your legs, eye on the ball.
- Touch tight – Get close enough where you can touch the attacker with your finger tips

### Delay

This is a crucial principle for young players to learn. Younger players tend to over commit to the ball and try and win it too quickly. Delay means slowing down an attack by the opposition. If this can be done it allows other defenders to organize behind the ball.

### Depth

This involves the organization of players behind the ball and primarily the nearest teammate to the first defender who we call the second defender. They provide help to the first defender who is pressuring the ball.

The principles of balance and concentration can be shown at a later time.

Perhaps the most important thing with young players is to establish a team attitude to defending. That defending is not just the job of the back four but every player on the field will have some responsibility to defend when the opposition has the ball.

## Warm Up - Quick & Strong



### ORGANIZATION:

Each player has a ball and in the area.

On the command “Change” players must leave their ball and find a new one. The last player to a ball does a forfeit. (push ups star jumps etc)

After a few of these remove the balls from 2 players, the others still dribble around.

On the command “change” all the players compete for a ball. The last 2 players without a ball become the 2 without balls.

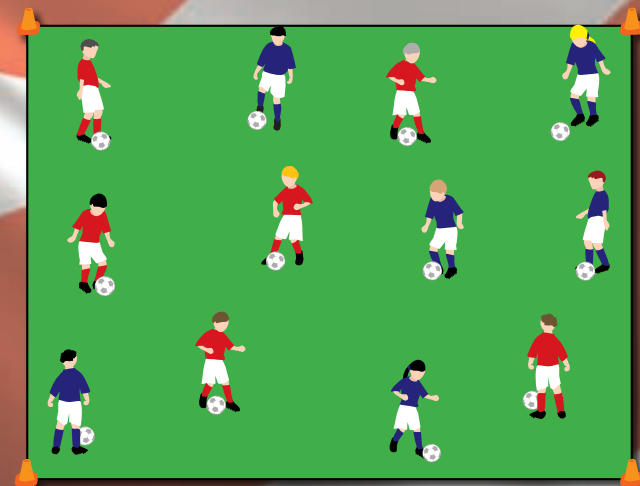
Introduce the Coaching points above for the “Block tackle” and practice for 2-3 min.

Repeat above removing 4 balls. On the command “change” players now have to attempt to dribble their balls and stop them on the outside line of the 4 square. The 4 players without a ball have to attempt to tackle the other players, steal a ball and make it to the outside.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Focus on the speed to the new ball
- 2 If you do not have a ball be aggressive to challenge for a new one.
- 3 Coaching points for the Block tackle previously.





# DEFENDING

## 1V1 Defending & Attacking

## Pressure Cooker Defending



### ORGANIZATION:

10 x 10 area.

- 1 Group the players in pairs.
- 2 Have a supply of balls per pair
- 3 Players start on their cone and rush in to compete for the ball in the middle.
- 4 Players try to hit either of the cones that they start from.
- 5 1 point per cone hit
- 6 First to 3 wins

By attacking both cones it forces players to re-think the field of play and attacking and defending positions.

Although the focus is defending this can clearly be used and developed as an attacking drill.



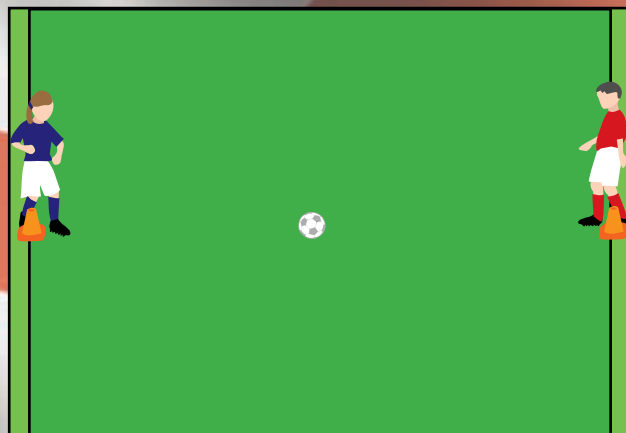
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Be quick to the ball
- 2 Close down the person with the ball and make a challenge for the ball
- 3 Eyes on the ball not on the man.



### PROGRESSION:

Hit the opposite cone



### ORGANIZATION:

In a group of 3 Use 1 ball 10x10 area.

- 1 Player A passes the ball to player B.
- 2 Player B controls the ball and tries to pass to player C.
- 3 Receiving player B must take 2 touches.
- 4 Player A immediately challenges player B and tries to win the ball back.
- 5 Rotate positions.



### COACHING POINTS:

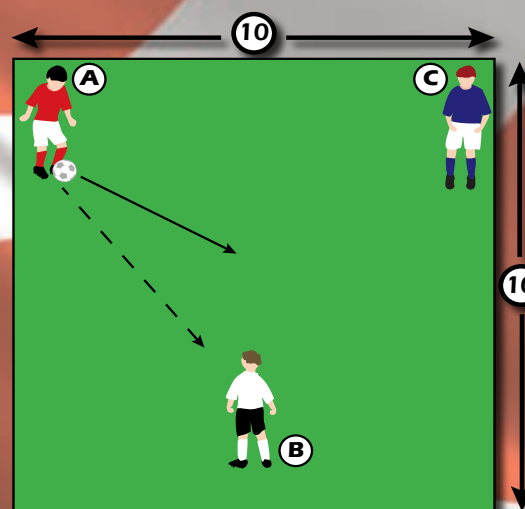
- 1 Encourage defender to pressure quickly after the ball is passed.
- 2 Look for body shape of defender, angle and speed of approach.
- 3 Can they deny penetration.



### PROGRESSION:

After B plays the ball to C player A continues to challenge until the ball is won. (2v1)

Focus on player B moving into space to support player C after he/she has made the initial pass.



# DEFENDING

## 2V2 Pressure Cooker Defending

## Numbers Game I



### ORGANIZATION:

Players play 2V2 regular game. 15 x 15 area.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Pressure the ball. Try and keep first attackers head down.
- 2 Second defender must cover the goal as well as the second attacker.
- 3 Keep the play in front of you.
- 4 The first defender channels the attacker to the sideline, away from the second attacker.
- 5 Ensure the defenders are balanced and cannot get split.
- 6 Transition immediately from defense to attack once the ball is won.
- 7 When the first defender has made the play predictable the 2nd defender double teams.



### ORGANIZATION:

Set out a 50x40 area as shown. Play 3v3 in the middle.



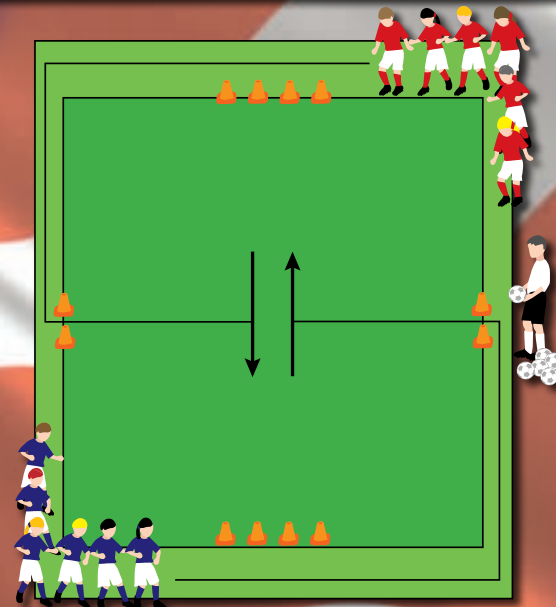
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 The team with the ball should always be moving. If you do not have the ball, move into a space where you can receive it. Pass the ball, then move to an open space to receive the ball back.
- 2 Time your run into the area to get a good shot on the cones.
- 3 If you can, pass the ball into the cones.
- 4 Receive the ball side ways on to the goal. Get a good first touch so that the ball is out of your feet.
- 5 When you don't have the ball, move to mark a player to make it difficult for Reds to receive the ball.



### PROGRESSION:

Add more players to each team.



# DEFENDING

## Numbers Game II - Restricted Tackling



### ORGANIZATION:

In a 15x25 yards play 4v4 and create a small goal at each end.

Number each player 1,2,3,4 on each team. Each number can only tackle their opposing number.

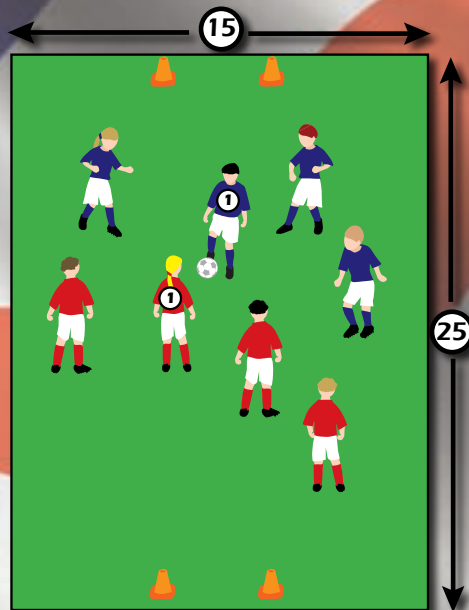
Other defenders can shadow attackers to give the defender time to recover.

Progress to free play – Look at the roles and positioning of 1st, 2nd and third defender.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Be aware of your opposite number.
- 2 Recover quickly if you are beaten – NEVER GIVE UP
- 3 Focus on communication between team members, are they helping each other, encouraging.
- 4 If your team loses possession get behind the ball to support the other defenders.
- 5 Mark your player get goal side. Do not mark space.



All of the players in blue are Goal Side of the orange attackers who are shooting to a goal to the right of the picture. As the orange players move towards the ball, defenders move with them.



# ATTACKING PLAY

## Overview



Attacking play is about creating opportunities to shoot and score goals. For many players these are their favorite activities. Scoring goals is always a fun part of the game.

The most important element at the Under 10 age continues to be technical development. No matter how good your tactics are they will always break down with poor technical execution. Emphasis on a good first touch, accurate passing and shooting must be continually developed and coached. Without these technical elements attacking play will almost always break down frustrating you and your players.

Attacking play in its concept means both individually and collectively taking the ball at the opposition and creating space to find scoring opportunities.

The players at this age are now beginning to understand the game. Positions need now to be explored and formations experimented with. You should always base your formation on your players abilities not position your players on the formation you want to play.

The Under 10 players should be playing 8 vs. 8 on smaller fields. When a player gains possession of the ball on these fields he/she should have the confidence and developing knowledge to know what they should do when they receive the ball.



The basic principles of attacking play need to be slowly introduced.

- **Penetration**  
The direction of the ball and players into the opposing defensive area, in behind opposition defenders.
- **Width**  
Getting players wide when in possession so as not to bunch up and to spread out the opposition defense.
- **Mobility**  
Movement by the attacking players to move the opposition defenders and create space.
- **Depth**  
Both in front and behind the ball. To stretch opposing defenders to create space and spread them out and to allow for switching the point of attack.

The principles above should be intrinsic in all of the attacking exercises you run with your players. When you create scoring opportunities and goals are scored it will be evident that these principles will have been involved at some point.



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# ATTACKING PLAY

## Warm Up



### ORGANIZATION:

Players move freely with a ball each in the 20x20 area. Set up the area with small goals around the outside of the square.

### OBJECTIVE:

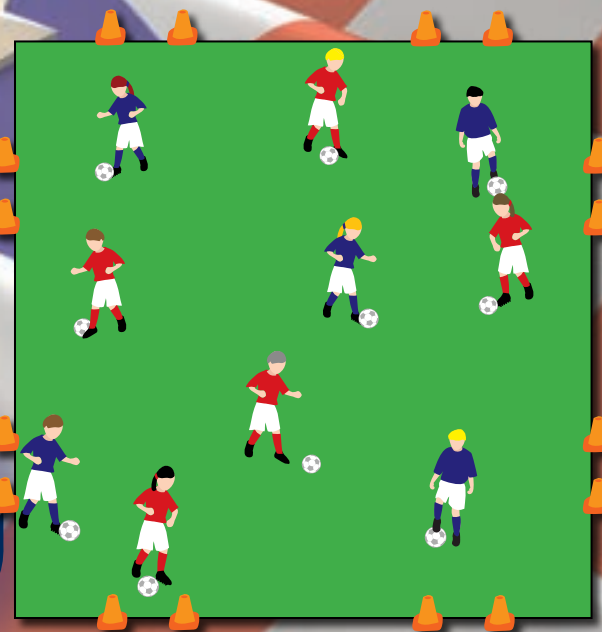
To develop individual imagination

- 1 Players are instructed to use the following moves
- 2 Dribble with the inside of the feet only
- 3 Dribble with the outside of the feet only
- 4 Dribble – pull the ball back with the sole of the foot, push the ball forward with the inside of the foot.
- 5 Dribble – pull the ball back with the sole of the foot, push the ball forward with the laces (top of the foot).
- 6 Step Over Move – dribble the ball and move the little toe around the ball. Take the ball away with the other foot. Use the other foot as well.
- 7 Dribble - move the big toe around the ball and take the ball away with the same foot.
- 8 Dribble with the inside and outside of the feet.

**! - Encourage the players to do their own moves.**

Coach encourages – how many touches in a minute?

On command move through as many goals on the outside as possible.



### COACH'S NOTES:

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### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 *Keep the ball moving at all times*
- 2 *Keep the ball in front of you*
- 3 *Keep your head up*
- 4 *Use fast feet, get as many quick touches on the ball as possible*
- 5 *How many times can you touch the ball in 30 seconds challenge*
- 6 *How many goals can you get to in 30 seconds?*



# ATTACKING PLAY

## Lose Defender Drill

3V1



### OBJECTIVE:

One of the key components of attacking play is the ability to "loose" or get away from the defender who is marking you. This drill is the first in a series of exercises to teach to your team.

Split the team into 3 groups - One group on the outside who each have a ball.

The other 2 teams - one are the Attackers one are the defenders.

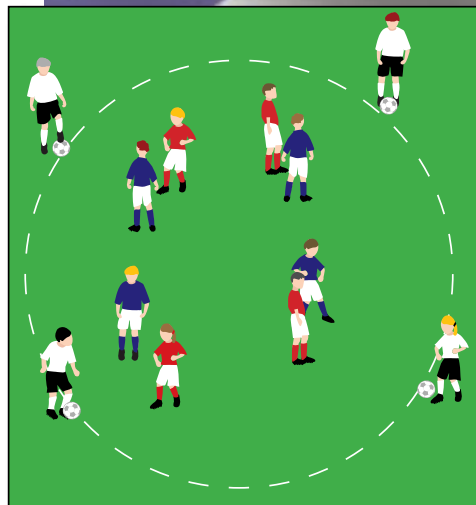
Play for 45 seconds - 1 minute each time, as this drill is intensive for younger players

Each of the attackers (Red) has to loose their defender (Blue) receive a pass and play the pass back to the SAME player they receive the ball from. Restrict the defenders to start. Defenders can only use their left foot to make a challenge.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Take the defender away from where you want to receive the ball, check back with a change of speed and direction.
- 2 Get a good first touch either in front of you or away from the defender.
- 3 Ensure that the first touch and the pass back are quick.



### PROGRESSION:

- 1 Play the ball back first time
- 2 Play the ball to a different person on the outside
- 3 (advanced) Feed the ball from the hands in the air and pass back.



### ORGANIZATION:

10 x 20 area - Groups of 4 (5 with one resting) Begin with player (A) on the ball as shown in the diagram. Have a supply of balls at each end.

X - Moves to receive the ball from player A. Player A tries to pass the ball to player X who in turn plays it to player B.

Each time the pass is completed a point is awarded.

If the attacking team loose possession or the ball goes out of the area Start the ball with (B) & the defender become the attacker.

Players A & B may move along the lines.



### COACHING POINTS:

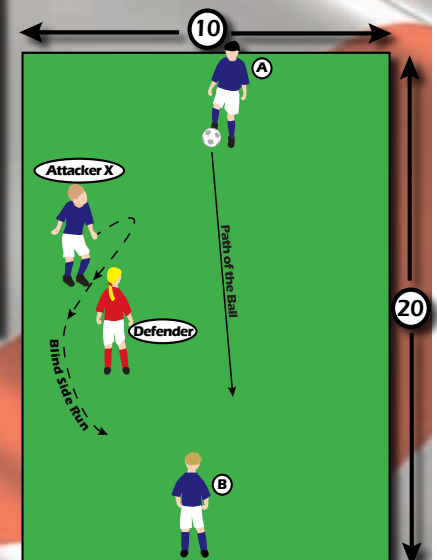
- 1 The Attacker should check away from the ball and move back to create space.
- 2 Check back at an angle.
- 3 Receive ball sideways on where possible.
- 4 Encourage positive play.
- 5 Use your body to protect the ball & moves learnt to get around the defender.



### PROGRESSION:

Introduce the blind side run behind the defender. Indicated by the broken line. The attacker makes a fake to run across the front of the defender cutting back behind them.

The timing of the pass (straight arrow) is key from player A



# ATTACKING PLAY

## 2V1 - The Lions Den

## 2v1 To Goal



### ORGANIZATION:

3 - 10x10 yard grids in a row, As shown in the diagram.  
 Two lines of attackers in each line at one end. (no more than 3 in each line start another grid.) One line starts with a ball each.  
 Place one defender in each grid.  
 2 Attackers enter the first grid and try to beat the first defender who cannot leave the grid. (Restrict the defenders to start with they can only use their weaker foot to challenge for the ball) Lift the restrictions as the players get better.  
 If the attackers are successful move to the next grid. Give 5 points for each defender they beat, if the defender knocks the ball out of the grid plays stops.  
 Swap the defenders after 2-3 Min.



### ORGANIZATION:

Play in one half of the field. Full size goals (relative to age) with a goalkeeper and defenders placed wide as in the diagram.  

- 1 Defenders set up alongside the post
- 2 Attackers set up 25/30 yards out from the goal.
- 3 Defenders start with the ball and pass to one of the attacking players.
- 4 The defenders follow the pass and try to win the ball back and clear towards the two goals.
- 5 Attacking players play 2v1 to score past the keeper. (One from each line)
- 6 Introduce and play the offside rule.
- 7 Rotation - The player who takes the shot or loses the ball rotates to the defensive line. The other two go to the attacking line.



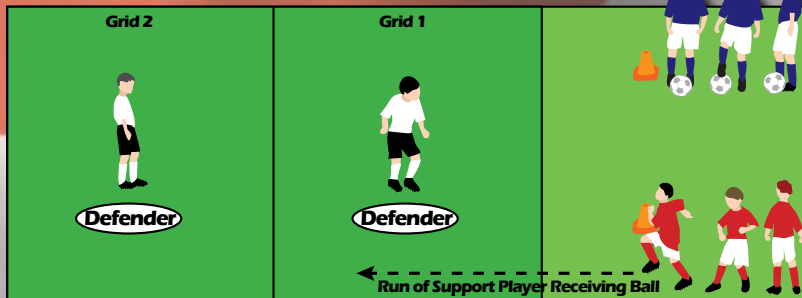
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Focus on the role of the 1st Attacker (player with the ball) when to dribble and when to pass.
- 2 Role of the 2nd Attacker - (player in immediate support) Angle and depth of support. The supporting player must be far enough away from the defender and preferable slightly behind the defender.
- 3 The player with the ball wants to draw the defender to them to give the receiving player more time on the ball. Play the ball around them.
- 4 Give a good solid pass when you feel it is the right time.
- 5 Receiving player should be sideways on so that they can receive the ball and see both ways.
- 6 Time your run to the pass of the ball or pre-empt the pass with the run.



### COACHING POINTS:

- (in the initial minutes restrict the defenders to use their weaker foot only)
- 1 Defending team must give a good honest pass.
  - 2 Attacking team get the ball under control quickly and in front of you
  - 3 Dribble at the defender
  - 4 Pass the ball once the defender is committed to you
  - 5 The Supporting player can vary runs, Overlap, Blindside, Wide support, Show for a wall pass.
  - 6 Remember the goal is to get a shot on goal. Once the 2nd attacker receives the ball look to get a quick shot on goal.
  - 7 If the defender gives the 1st attacker too much space "attack it" and shoot.
  - 8 (ADVANCED) Give the 1st attacker the opportunity to fake to pass, go around and shoot.



# ATTACKING PLAY

## Position, Possession, Penetration

## 4V4 One Goal



### ORGANIZATION:

Set up a 40x30 area as shown in the diagram.

Initially play 6v6, a goal is scored if an attacking player dribbles the ball into the target zone or receives a pass in the zone.

Once you score immediately attack the other side (defenders are not allowed in the zones)

Progress to placing a target player in each zone. The goal of each team is to get the ball to each target player. The player who passes the ball joins the target player. The first team to get all players in their zone wins.



### OBJECTIVE:

To develop small sided team play and shooting skills.

### ORGANIZATION:

Set up a 40x30 area with a goal in the middle as in the diagram.

The keeper plays both sides of the goal.

Reds score from one side Blues from another.

Play re-starts with a throw in every time the ball goes out of play.

When the goal keeper makes a save from one team he throws the ball to the opposition team.



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Keep possession, look for angles & distance of support players.
- 2 Play forward quickly.
- 3 Zone players should move to provide a better passing option.
- 4 If you do not have a passing option protect the ball.



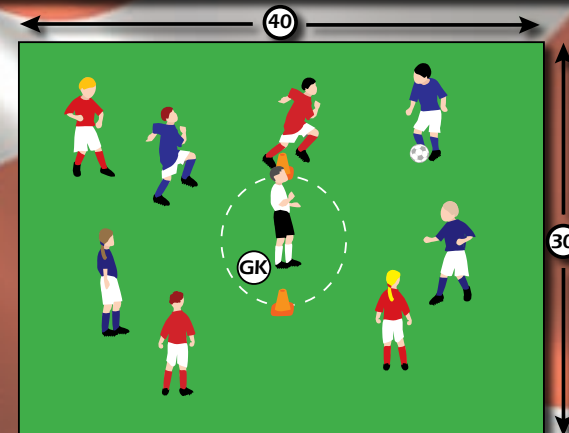
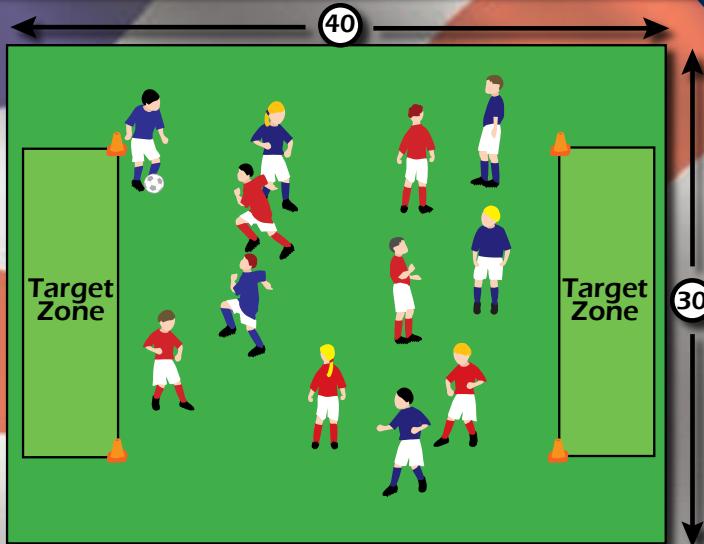
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Emphasize shooting on goal at the earliest opportunity
- 2 Look to pass the ball into the corners of the goal.
- 3 Players combine to create scoring opportunities
- 4 Look for good supporting positions from players off the ball



### PROGRESSIONS:

- 1 Any team can score from any side.
- 2 Play re-starts with a kick in. This way players can cross the ball straight into the goal area and score with a header or first touch.
- 3 Restrict player to a set number of touches.





# ATTACKING PLAY

## 4V4 To Target Players

## 6V6 Wide Play



### ORGANIZATION:

40 x 25 area as shown in the diagram with 3 small goals on each side

Divide players into 2 teams.

Field set up wider than longer

4v4 with 2 players standing behind the end line that their team is attacking

1 point is scored for the ball being passed through a gate

3 points scored for a ball passed through a gate that is received by a team mate.

Players behind the end line can cover any of the 3 goals.



### ORGANIZATION:

40 x 25 area as shown in the diagram. Play 6v6. Goals can be scored in any of the 2 opposing teams goals.



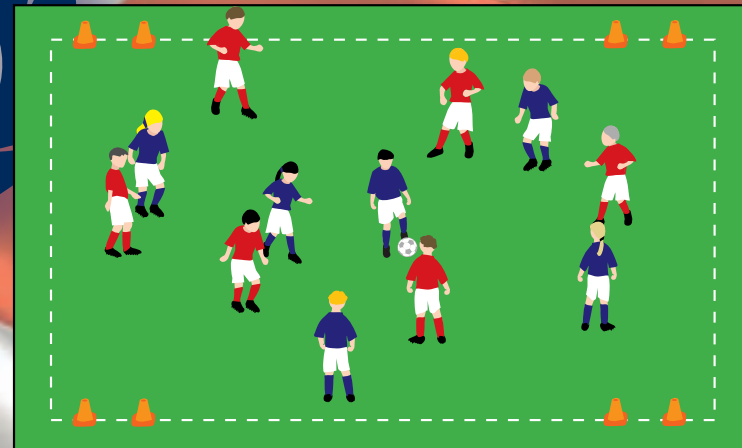
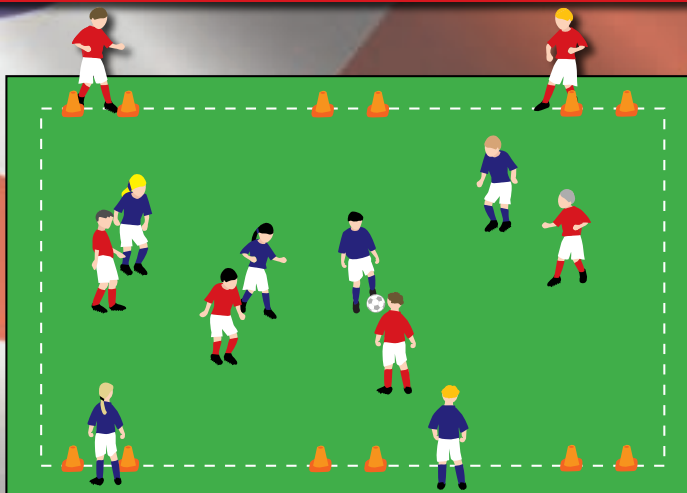
### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 *Keep possession*
- 2 *Focus on movement off the ball.*
- 3 *Recognize where pressure is coming from and where the space is.*
- 4 *Switch the point of attack (move the ball to another side where the pass can be made)*
- 5 *Keep the tempo of play quick*
- 6 *Supporting players on toes to move quickly and all players communicate with each other.*



### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 *Keep possession*
- 2 *Focus on movement off the ball.*
- 3 *Switch the point of attack (move the ball to the other side where the pass can be made)*
- 4 *Keep the tempo of play quick*
- 5 *Supporting players on toes to move quickly and all players communicate with each other.*



# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING

## Overview



The following is a demonstration of the basics of “the art of goalkeeping” The list of activities should be introduced throughout the season and not taught in one session. If you have a person(s) who’s main interest is goalkeeping you may cover more of the material or repeat as necessary.

The role of the Goalkeeper is one of high reward and responsibility. You can walk away being hero or villain. They are the team’s last line of defense and first line of attack. The goalkeeper can do nothing all game and make a save in the dying seconds to win the Championship or they can make a dozen saves during the game and let the ball slip through their hands in the last minute to give it all away. Some kids thrive on this others are petrified of it. This is what makes it one of the most psychologically demanding positions. Mistakes are final.

This specialist position is typically neglected by coaches because of a lack of understanding/experience (the greatest percentage of coaches were field players) about the role, and how to teach the techniques it requires. This is why we have developed this section of the curriculum.

Here are a few ideas to help the goalkeeping experience.

### When Do I Introduce the Position?

Consider the field/weather conditions. It is of little fun to introduce young players to this position when the fields are rock solid.

### Should Everyone Experience Goalkeeping?

Yes – except – if a player is adamant about not playing the position, don’t force it. Perhaps another opportunity will present itself to provide them with the chance and a star will be born!

### How Do I Help The Goalkeeper When Our Team Concedes a Goal?

- In most cases it is not the keeper’s fault. It’s important to explain to the young player that every goalkeeper concedes goals now matter how good you are.
- Goalkeepers need to be able to put mistakes behind them quickly and recover. Never criticize them for letting in a goal. Put a positive spin on things or say nothing, most of the time they know if they have made the mistake.



- Credit the shooter. Sometimes the opponent has simply made a great play
- Look for the technique that needs improvement and make a mental or written note on what to cover at the next practice. Very often it’s just basic footwork or catching that needs brushing up.

### Look For The Positives In The Goalkeepers Performance.

Goalkeepers can contribute to a quality performance apart from making match winning saves.

- Communication and organizing the defenders. Telling defenders who is open and where to defend.
- This is difficult with young players but it is a skill that should be introduced.

### Developing Good Habits & Maintaining Them.

As with field players technical development comes through repetition. Don’t allow any lazy or sloppy technique, even when they’re not officially doing drills or playing. Good habits will show themselves in games just like bad habits.

- Repetition is the key; doing it right every time is what separates a good goalkeeper from a great one.

Every shot deserves an attempt at a save, even the basic ones. Eventually, the shots that seemed impossible to stop before will start coming into range. When the effort is there, the results will follow.

### When Do I Pull The Goalkeeper?

Many coaches will pull a keeper when the team has conceded several goals, but be aware of the repercussions of this. Some players may believe you lack confidence in them. Stay positive and explain why you’re making the change. Perhaps it’s not their day, be sure they know it’s not their performance. Try not to pull any player immediately after a mistake, this can be a psychological blow that is too much too handle for a young player.

### Encourage Additional Training

There isn’t always time to properly train a keeper in normal practice sessions, especially when that player needs to develop foot and field skills as well. Encourage them to attend club or private training sessions, goalkeeper camps, rent or buy books or videos, or visit this and other web sites. A player who is serious about goalkeeping needs all the extra training and practice they can get.



# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING



## ORGANIZATION:

30x30 Grid  
Ball each  
Follow Coaches Command

### Ball Handling – ALL NOVICE GOALKEEPERS

- 1 Figure of 8 – Roll the ball with the finger tips around the feet in a figure of eight motion.
- 2 Around the waist – Each player moves the ball around the waist as quickly as they can - maintain control of the ball
- 3 Moving around the area drop the ball and collect.
- 4 Moving around the area throw the ball up in the air and jump to collect it.
- 5 Roll a ball in front of you and follow the ball sliding behind it to stop it.

## PAIR ACTIVITIES:

First get in basic gorilla Position. – ALL NOVICE GOAL KEEPERS

### Basic Stance- Gorilla Stance

- Goalkeeper should be on the balls of their feet with their weight forward
- Knees are slightly bent
- Slight bend at the waist
- Head should be still
- Arms should hang naturally with hands in a ready position



### Footwork & Shadow Drill - ALL NOVICE GOALKEEPERS

Place cones in 2 parallel lines. Cones should be 6 yards apart and the lines should be 10 yards apart. The number of goalkeepers being trained will determine how many gates should be used. The keepers all face the coach who will make hand movements and the goalkeepers will follow the coach's command.

- When the coach points to the right with his right hand, the keepers shuffle right
- When the coach points to the left with their left hand, the keepers shuffle left
- When the coach points up, the keepers make a high save (diamond shape with hands)
- When the coach points down, the keeper makes a low save (basket)

Use the same area as before. The keepers turn and face each other.

- Partners throw the ball (basketball style) back and forth to one another to work on the diamond catch.
- Partners then switch to throwing the ball underhand to work on the basket catch. See next page for photos.

## Warm Up



Next Set up 4 or 5 cones in a line.

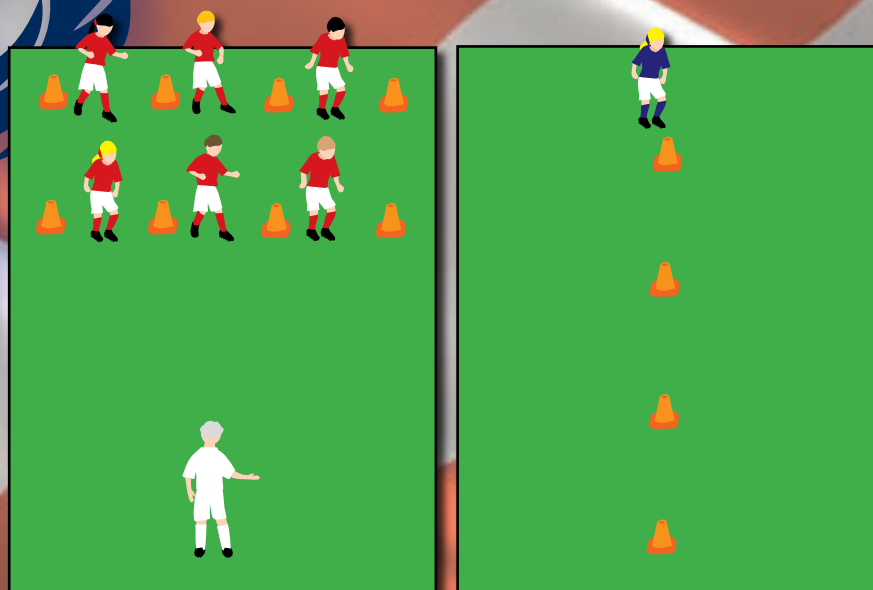
Sets of 4

- 1 one step between each cone
- 2 two steps between each cone
- 3 four steps between each cone
- 4 face sideways and two steps between each cone
- 5 face sideways zig - zag back and forward through the cones
- 6 face forwards side to side shuffle through the cones circle around each cone



## COACHING POINTS:

Be sure goalkeeper has a good stance and they use proper footwork to make the saves. Keepers should move to the ball to make a save, not reach for a ball.



# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING

## Basic Catching Methods - Set Up Two Parallel Lines as in the Previous Page



**ACTIVITIES:** ALL NOVICE GOALKEEPERS  
**Diamond Catch with Hands – demonstrate. -**

- 1 Diamond for catching balls chest high and up
  - Thumbs should be close together and index fingers slightly towards each other
  - Elbows in front of body for a better base and balance
  - Fingers extended like playing a piano in the air

Always receive the ball with arms extended – don't allow the ball to get into the body

The body should always be behind the ball and square

**Diamond**



**Catch**



**Basket** - Again, demonstrate the proper catching technique for beginners.

- 2 Basket for catching ball from the chest down
  - arms extended out for ball to 'welcome' ball into the body
  - arms close together but not touching
  - arms are always leading to the ball
  - 2 sounds – ball hitting arms and then ball hitting chest

**Basket**



**Catch**



- 3 Move to rolling ball pickups. If you have four or more players, have them get in two lines facing each other about 6-7 yards apart; players in one line have balls and the first player serves to the opposite line; players then switch lines. This serving technique reinforces the need to move forward when receiving a ball.

- Teach the goalkeepers to shuffle side to side
- Teach the goalkeepers to take small steps forwards and backwards
- Always tell them to move their feet to get to the ball



### COACHING POINTS:

*Check proper hand position and decision making when to use basket catches and when to use the diamond, and make sure keepers are using good footwork to get behind the ball and are moving forward to meet the ball. Remind them that anything above the chest requires a "fingers up" ("diamond") catch, below the chest is a "fingers down" (basket) catch. For balls on the ground and the goalie should be moving towards the ball, the goalkeeper should step 1 foot next to the ball while lowering the other knee low to the ground without actually touching the ground and continue forward through the ball*

**FOR ALL SAVES, THE GOALKEEPERS HANDS SHOULD ALWAYS MOVE TOGETHER**



# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING

## 2-3 Ball Circle Passing

## Ground Ball Pickups



### ORGANIZATION:

SOME UNDERSTANDING OF GOALKEEPING RECOMMENDED  
Six to Ten players.  
Players stand in 10- to 12-yard diameter circle.

- 1 Pass one ball around the circle at shoulder height; it can be passed to anyone except the player next to you.
- 2 After a minute or so, add a second ball being passed simultaneously.
  - For beginners, keep the passes going slowly
  - For more advanced groups see how quickly they can move the balls and still keep things going smoothly.



### PROGRESSION:

- Allow balls served at the knees or rolled balls to be mixed in
- Increase circle size
- Throw balls off target to allow for footwork
- Use two or more different type of balls e.g. a mini-ball or a football.
- Players must be on their toes, physically and mentally ready.
- They need to be scanning constantly with their eyes to keep track of both balls, while maintaining good catching technique.
- Communication-calling names as they throw the balls



### ORGANIZATION:

SOME UNDERSTANDING OF GOALKEEPING RECOMMENDED  
15x15 Grid; Scatter balls inside grid – ideally two more than the number of keepers.

- Keepers wait outside the area until the coaches signal.
- At the signal keepers move in and pick up the balls, one at a time, each time securing the ball with a proper moving ground-ball pickup and then placing the ball on the back of their neck before releasing it (this assures the proper pickup).

**If you don't have a lot of balls or have lots of keepers, have some of the keepers resting while others are working or when a player has picked up a ball have them serve a keeper on the outside of the grid and that keeper secures the ball and places it back inside the grid. This could also be a progression.**



### COMPETITION TIME:

- Pick up as many balls as possible in 30 seconds.
- Challenge keepers to beat the count of other keepers
- Do several rounds and beat their own previous score.
- For advanced keepers, reduce the number of balls in the area so they have to compete to get them.

### COACHING POINTS:

- 1 Don't stop when picking up balls, bend at the knee and move through the ball as they gather it in. This is the key to getting as many balls as possible.
- 2 Watch for proper hand position (pinkies together, behind and under the ball, not grabbing the top of the ball).
- 3 Head up throughout.

**This is a high-intensity exercise, so allow rest in between rounds.**

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# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING

## Small Goal Game



### ORGANIZATION:

SOME UNDERSTANDING OF GOALKEEPING RECOMMENDED  
Pairs, set up two cones approximately 6 paces apart. Server has good supply of balls.

One keeper stands in the "goal", the other 8-10 yards away with the ball.

Server attempts to throw the ball between waist and head height past the keeper through the small goal

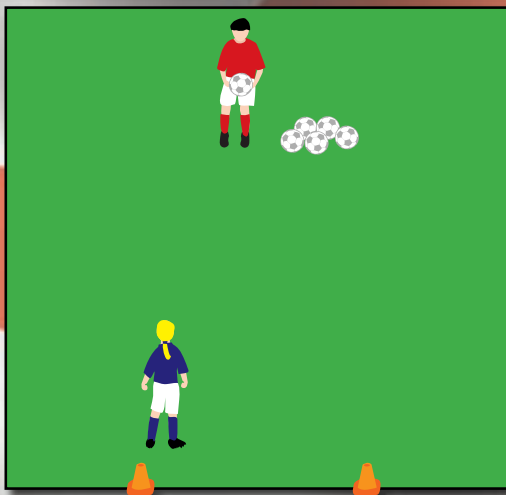
Use proper footwork and catching technique (at this stage do not allow dives). Get them working on moving their feet.



### PROGRESSION:

- Widen the goal
- Move the server back.
- Make each save count as a point; a save or a miss by the server allows the keeper to stay in the goal, and if the server scores 3 goals they get to become the goalkeeper.
- Make two goals and when the keeper catches it allow them to immediately serve the ball back – Keepers Wars!!

Servers should vary the height, angle and pace of the balls. The reduced size of the goal allows for more catches and fewer balls out of reach. Insist on good, quick footwork and proper hand position.



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# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING

## Diving



### ORGANIZATION:

#### SOME UNDERSTANDING OF GOALKEEPING

Diving can be intimidating. Young or beginning goalkeepers may be afraid of the landing. Tell them not to think too much on the landing and focus on the ball!

Focus on getting to the ball and staying square - then landing will take care of itself. This can be tough to get past, so be patient. You can always allow them to start on their knees or provide a mat.

Be careful not to over train younger keepers when working on diving. Introduce the basics of proper technique, but don't push keepers who aren't ready for the physical aspects of diving.

If they don't come up with the ball, the keeper should be ready to spring back to their feet immediately to make another save (the ball doesn't always end up in the goal when we miss!). If possible, they should get back up without using their hands. Once the hands are put down on the ground to push off, they can't be used to make the save, a quick recovery, with hands ready, can often keep the ball out of the net.



### Start with the Collapsed Dive

The collapsed dive or "cradling" is used on balls fairly close to the goalkeeper but far enough to the side that just reaching out to make the catch does not get any of the body behind the ball. The intent is to move the entire body behind the ball and get the hands in good catching position.

#### Collapsed Dive Sequence:

- Use quick footwork to get into proper diving position
- Step forward at an angle
- Use the near leg to push to drive to the ball
- Get both hands to the ball to make the catch, using a good "Diamond" catch
- Collapse softly to the ground, cushion the fall and landing on the side (hip and shoulder)

Start with two players working opposite each other and start with both players on their knees, this reduces the impact of the body falling on the ground. From here you can progress to working from one knee and then standing.

- 5 balls each side on the ground (pass or roll)
- 5 balls each side in the air (2 handed underarm throw)
- Off one knee 5 balls each side in the air - keepers should push off the bent knee into the save - feed the ball same side as the knee that is bent (2 handed throw) (See pictures right)

### Collapsed dive without ball



### Collapsed dive with ball from knees



# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING

## Triangle Goal Game I

## Triangle Goal Game II



### ORGANIZATION:

SOME UNDERSTANDING OF GOALKEEPING RECOMMENDED  
4 -5 players

Make an equilateral triangle with sides 6 yards long

Place servers on each side approximately 10 yards away with a supply of balls

One Keeper is in the triangle.

The keeper moves out beyond the cones or sticks to face the first server, who strikes the ball at the keeper and then quickly moves to the next side of the triangle and saves a shot there, etc.

- This can be a timed activity—who can make the most saves
- OR**
- A counted activity—most saves per a fixed number of shots faced.

Ask servers to vary their shots – on the ground, low or high (but not over the keeper's head).

The keeper needs to move quickly from one “goal” to the next (footwork), finding good position and being ready to face the shot as soon as possible. Don't let the fact that the keeper is moving keep them from using proper hand position and getting their body behind the ball.

Let each goal keeper rest after 1 min of play.



### ORGANIZATION:

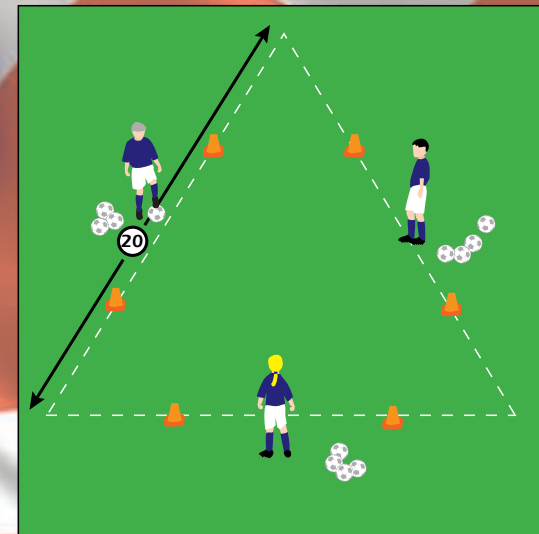
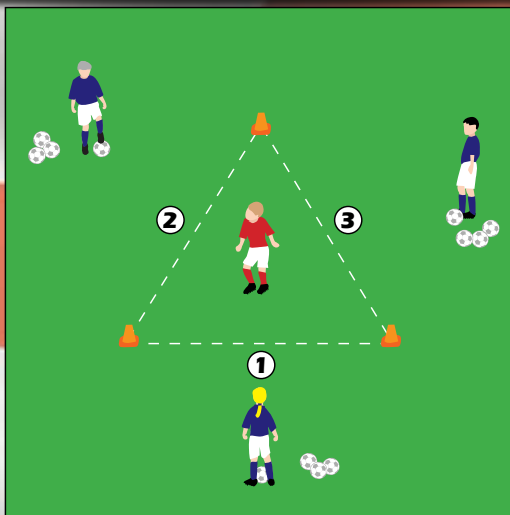
SOME UNDERSTANDING OF GOALKEEPING RECOMMENDED  
3 players

Good Supply of balls.

Set a triangle as shown in the diagram with a goal on each side 8 yards wide on each side.

Each player plays as a goal keeper and an outfield player but must stay on their goal line to shoot. Player 1 may shoot at either goal, both of the other players must be ready to save the ball. As soon as a save is made that goal keeper may shoot on either of the other two goals.

Play 5 points for goal 10 points for a save.





# THE ART OF GOALKEEPING

## Goalie Wars I



This is very exciting, fast paced fun game that all players love to play.

### ORGANIZATION:

Using an 18 yard penalty box set up 2 appropriate size goals as shown in the diagram. Split the players into 4 pairs. Each pair defends a goal at any time.

With a plentiful supply of balls – use the resting goalkeepers to act as ball retrievers.

Many areas of goal keeping and attacking play can be taught in this fast paced game.

- 1 Focus on the “ready” position of the goal keepers
- 2 Attempt to save every shot
- 3 The second keeper can follow up to save any rebounds.

For the keepers playing as a striker

- 1 Focus on accurate shots
- 2 Keep the ball low
- 3 Follow in for any rebounds.

Players may kick or throw the ball at the opposing goal but must stay behind the 6 yard or dotted line to shoot.

When a goal is scored the team conceding the goal move out the way for the team behind the goal to replace them.

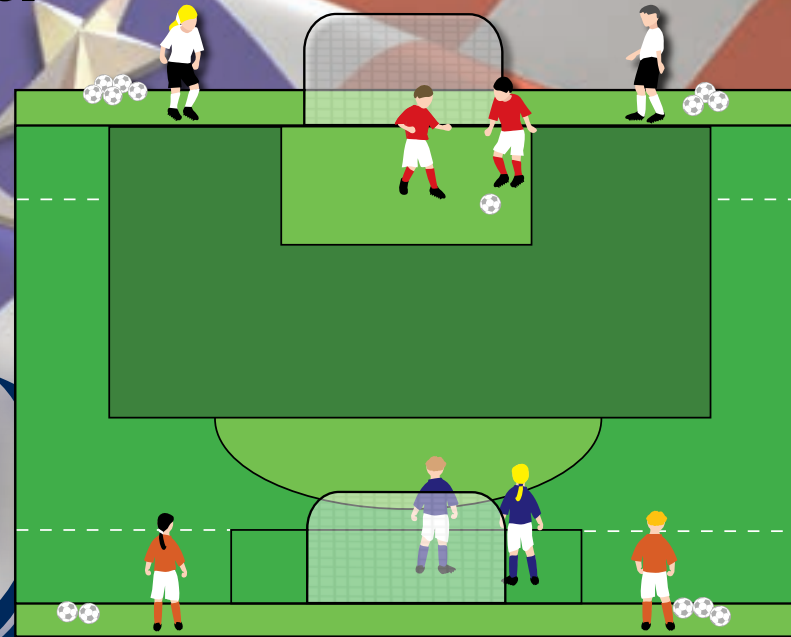


### PROGRESSION:

*If a shot or throw on goal is missed the team behind the goal replace them. If the ball hits the post or crossbar the team remains in.*

*Rebounds can be one touch finished over the 6 yard line.*

*The first team to 5 points wins – You score 1 point for every save or goal you score against another team.*



### COACH'S NOTES:

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# COACHING IN THE GAME

## Overview



*This is an age where tactical development is still a concept that many of players will find difficult. Making decisions under the pressure of a game will be a challenge for players at this age, so it will be important for the coach to have patience and be very understanding with his/her players.*

*Although winning is innate in all of us, it should never be the main focus of games at this age. The emphasis should be on your player's technical ability and how their developing skills relate to the game. It will be important to introduce skills in a more pressured situation as this is what the player will face in a game, but this must be done at practice. Remember if a player struggles to perform a skill in practice with no pressure then why would you expect the skill to be performed in a game with pressure!*

*Most of your players at U10 will be introduced to 8 v 8 for the first time on a field that is normally about 70 yards in length and 50 yards in width, other areas of the country play with reduced the numbers. The federation recommendation for U10 is 6 v 6 (see opposite for recommended field sizes if you play with smaller numbers).*



- 8v8 Length: 70 yards Width: 50 yards
- 7v7 Length: 60 yards Width: 40 yards
- 6v6 Length: 50 yards Width: 40 yards

*This increase in field size and players can be a challenge for players. Despite this it will be important to emphasize that the game is still played in small groups throughout the field. 2v1, 3v2, 4v3 etc.*

*Player's at this age may feel comfortable with a certain position on the field. It is crucial that player's experience all parts of the field. Defense, midfield and attack. This includes the goalkeeper who must have the opportunity to play on the field too.*

*Your role on game day is crucial to the success your team will have. Remember success is not winning. Success is creating a positive environment where your players have fun, learn sportsmanship and develop their abilities in a competitive arena. Your attitude and behavior will be watched and copied. Like it or not you are a role model when you put on your coaching gear and these young players will be looking at you for guidance.*

*Remember the saying "The future of a child is infinitely more important than the result of the game."*

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# COACHING IN THE GAME

## Overview



### BEFORE THE GAME:

Emphasize to your children that they must arrive at least thirty minutes before kick off. You can encourage punctuality by preparing a routine and making sure that every player and parent understands its purpose.

Don't forget to provide parents with written directions to unfamiliar grounds or you could find yourself starting with half your team still searching for the ground!

#### 30 Minutes Before Kick Off

As your players arrive you should greet each one by name and make sure that they:

- 1 **Are properly dressed, (shin guards, boots, waterproofs or an extra layer or two in cold weather),**
- 2 **Have a drink, (take a spare bottle for the one child who always forgets to bring their drink),**
- 3 **Are not wearing any jewelry.**

You should check the field to make sure it is safe. Do not rely on the referee, who may at this age be someone barely in their teen years,

Announce the starting line-up – and don't change it! Remember that over the course of the season, all players should have the chance to: 1) play different positions; 2) be captain; 3) start and finish games. These things are important to your players. Give a brief pep talk (tell them to get wide, pass the way they are facing etc., but – above all – tell them to enjoy themselves!). Try to keep your remarks to less than two minutes.



### POSITIVE COACHING:

*Regardless of the experience of the coach the one most vital aspect of coaching at this age is to remain positive at all times. Coaches need to be observers of player's performances. Looking to see if known skills, tactics and strategies that have been given to the player's are being played out on the field.*



*Observation is a silent activity, this doesn't mean you shouldn't encourage and cheer on your players. How you deal with the players, the referee and the game on the sideline is tremendously important. You set the tone for your players and indirectly the parents watching the game.*

*The coach who tries to introduce new skills, tactics and strategies during a game at this age is doing more harm than good. Do your coaching during the week! Sit back, relax and enjoy the game. There is a good chance that your son or daughter is playing, enjoy watching them play. Support the players and encourage them.*

*The coach who shouts out unfocused commands (Go get it John! Run after it Emily!) runs the risk of overloading the player. This is the most common mistake we see on game days at the youth level. Make notes and speak with your players one on one when they come off the field not during play.*

*The coach who says "Don't do" something is introducing a negative, conflicting message to the player. Remember the old Jimmy Johnson (Dallas Cowboys coach) adage to his wide receiver Michael Irwin. He would always say "Go and make a great catch today" he would never say "Don't drop it".*

*Watch players as they play to see if they are performing the skills and tactics you have shown them. If they are encourage it. Never miss the chance to teach others through praising.*

*When you see skills, tactics and strategies being used, focus on the execution and effect they had on the game. Players at this age are going to make mistakes as they learn and try new things. Do not discourage them as this will stop them being creative and learning more.*

*Make notes mental or written on successful and positive things you see on the field. Make notes on areas that could need to be improved. Remember you are not going to change a player's skill at half time so do not dissect every problem you see on the field. You may have to wait until practice to solve them.*



# COACHING THE GAME

## Half-time

## After the Game



The amount of time available will be limited. This is a valuable moment for a coach in a game and should be used wisely.

Planning begins before the half is over. Pick a spot where you can assemble the team, preferably away from distractions (parents, friends, siblings, etc.). Depending on the weather you may want to select a sheltered area out of the wind and sun. Send your team in that direction while you briefly talk with your assistants to confirm your opinions or get more suggestions.

Try and get the team to face you with no distractions behind you. They should be drinking or enjoying half time refreshments by now and your thoughts should be organized, perhaps on paper. Make sure that everyone has adequate fluids (note: 'adequate' is the word – not too much and no fizzy drinks!).

### Steps for Half-time Check:

- 1 Check for injuries.
- 2 Check for fun. In the younger age groups this is paramount. If they are not having fun, why are they there?
- 3 Praise - be brief and complimentary.
- 4 Announce the starting line up for the second half.
- 5 Make your points. They may just be a repeat of the topics you mentioned at the start of the game or a brief description of some problems you or the assistants noted. It should be limited to 2 or 3 points for U-10. More than that and you will run out of time or they will cease to hear you. Some coaches like to ask for players' opinions. Don't! All you'll get is a disruptive chorus of comments and/or complaints.
- 6 Praise and encourage again.
- 7 Send them out for the start of the second half. Be prepared to announce the line ups again since children in the younger age groups will have forgotten their positions by now. Count the players on the field before the whistle goes.
- 8 Enjoy the rest of the game!



At the end of the game make sure they shake their opponents by the hand and you congratulate your opposite number on a good game.

Thank the referee even if you have not always agreed with his/her decisions.

If you won the game, ensure that your players don't celebrate too obviously. Remember that anything that resembles gloating is not only poor sportsmanship, but will most likely come back to haunt you as the losers gear up for the inevitable return match. Don't give them a reason to work harder to beat you.

If you lost, you may want to attend to egos by making sure that no one accepts or places blame. Don't go into a long technical analysis of what went wrong. Consult with the manager, assistant coach, or other volunteer for any announcements. Avoid serious team meetings after a game, especially if you lose. One positive you can take from a loss is to ask what they thought the opposition did well, mention that you can work on this in the next practice.

### COACH'S NOTES:

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# COACHING THE GAME

## Spectators



You are responsible for the behavior of your spectators (parents and others) as well as your own and that of your team. Spectators must be educated about the proper place to stand to watch the game. Parents will typically be prone to shouting out instructions to their own child. Discourage this.

Ensure you have made every parent aware of the values of the club and your expectations of them in the success of the team. Parents want to be part of an enjoyable soccer season for their child. Show them how.



## The Referee



### Support and Respect the Referee:

*What can we say on this topic??? Refereeing is one of the most difficult jobs to do anywhere - no exceptions. How would you like it if 100+ people came to your work and criticized everything that you did? We all make mistakes! You have to be particularly sensitive around young referees, which is what you would typically encounter at this age group.*

*As the coach you need to set the example for your parents, however difficult it may be don't shout at the referee, if you have questions ask them at the appropriate time in the appropriate manner. At half time or full time you may approach and ask relevant questions but do not criticize.*

*If your players/ parents see you consistently arguing with the referee, it sends the wrong messages:*

- 1 That they can do the same thing
- 2 That it is OK for parents to shout at the referee
- 3 It may also have an adverse affect on the psychology of your team if they think "the referee is on the other teams side"

### Remember!

*Soccer is not a coach-centered game – you are there solely to support the players on the pitch.*

*If you find that you are drawing attention to yourself and away from the game, then step back and remember that the players you can help the most are the ones not doing anything – the ones on the sidelines.*

- Coaching should be done during practices, not during the game
- NEVER CRITICISE!
- Always praise!
- It's the kids' show – not yours!



# APPENDIX

## Basic Tactics



### Basic tactics for the under 10 player

- **Safety and Risk Factors.**

All good coaches break the field up into thirds. A defensive third, middle third and attacking third.

- **Defensive third.**

On a full-size field, the defensive third is 40 to 45 yards from your goal line.

- **Attacking third.**

On a full-size field, the attacking third is 30 to 35 yards from the opponents goal line.

- **Middle third is the distance between the two.**

Clearly you would need to adapt these distances to the size field you play on.

- **Defensive third.**

They should limit touches in this area. Losing the ball here often results in goals being scored against you.

This is the area where players need to play more safely. They should never let an opponent get close to the ball when they have it.

When they are defending they have to be very patient and never commit to a tackle unless they are certain they can win it. In all other circumstances they should close up space near and in front of the ball. Let the other team take the risk.

- **Attacking third.**

This is the area where successful teams play with utmost risk. They risk an interception of a pass as they draw defenders toward the ball and try to pass through and by them. They will attempt different types of pass to get beyond defenders, back heels, flicks etc..

They will risk being tackled. Every good coach loves it when he has an attacking player 1 vs. 1 with a defender in the attacking third. Players should be encouraged to take a player on when he/she is in this position.



Remember the idea in this part of the field is to score a goal. The best teams aren't afraid to lose the ball in this part of the field as they also recognize it is the worst part of the field for the opposition to have the ball. When they lose it they risk everything to get it back. Gambling, guessing and anticipating passes to intercept them and trying to tackle.

- **Middle third**

This is the area between the back third and the front third. Safety and risk factors are roughly in this part of the field in both attack and defense.

The better teams don't want to spend too much time in this part of the field but also realize that trying to force the ball into the final third could result in a long day of defending opponents counter attacks.

The goal therefore is to look for the most space in the attacking third and attack that space as quickly as possible.



# APPENDIX

## U.S. Youth Soccer Official Under 10 Playing Recommendations



U.S. Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at [www.ussoccer.com/referees](http://www.ussoccer.com/referees). Please also note the U10 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 (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, ten (10) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of ten (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 (8) 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.

**Flag posts:** Conform to FIFA.

**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 corner flag posts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. 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.

**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 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 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:** Registered referee, especially Grade 9 or parent/coach or assistant coach. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

**Law 6 – The Assistant Referees:** Not required. May use club linesmen/women if desired.

**Law 7 – The Duration of the Match:** Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into two (2) equal halves of twenty-five (25) 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 of the 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:** None.

**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 all opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

**Law 14 – The Penalty Kick:** Conform to FIFA with the exception that the penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

**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 from the ball until it is in play.

**PLEASE ALSO READ THE U10 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.**

