



## WHAT IS THE SKILL OF THE WEEK

The skill of the week is an important part of our soccer program that focuses on helping children learn and improve their basic soccer skills. It is a common curriculum that all teams and divisions participate in. Each week, we introduce a new skill in a 20-minute practice session prior to each game. This ensures that all participants have the opportunity to learn and practice the skill before putting it into play during the game.

To further support children and parents in practicing these skills at home, we have provided online videos demonstrating the proper technique and execution of each skill. It is important to note that becoming proficient in these skills takes practice and repetition. Children will not learn the skill in one night or perfect it over one season.

The purpose of the skill of the week is to show participants the proper technique and way to perform each skill. It is then up to the player to practice the skill and continue to do so consistently. As the saying goes, "practice makes perfect", and this is especially true when it comes to improving soccer skills.

By implementing the skill of the week in our program, we are providing children with the foundational skills they need to become successful soccer players. We encourage parents to support their children in practicing these skills at home, as it will only further enhance their development and enjoyment of the sport.

We hope that you and your child enjoy the Skill of the Week curriculum, and we look forward to seeing the progress of our players throughout the season.



## SKILL OF THE WEEK BY WEEK

Please refer to our website for the online video demonstration for ALL "Skill of the Week" skills listed below.

**WEEK 1: Switching – Managing Player Shifts on the Field:** The rotation of players during a game can significantly impact its outcome, and proper bench organization is crucial for success. Therefore, we have developed an efficient and streamlined approach to managing player substitutions. In recreational soccer, all players pay the same fee and deserve equal playing time. Thus, no player should sit out for two consecutive shifts.

Each team can have up to two full lines, including a goalkeeper position. Once the referee signals for substitution, teams have **only 30 seconds** to switch players before play resume; ready or not. To ensure a seamless substitution process, players should know their positions before the shift change. The players waiting on the bench should be positioned on the left side of the coach and instructed to enter the field when signaled. The players coming off the field should exit the field at centre field and to the right side of the coach. When the whistle blows, all players on the field should exit at centre field and go to the right side of the coach on the sideline, and all bench players should take their pre-assigned positions on the field. Play will resume where the play left off.

If a team does not have enough players for a full two lines, coaches may fill the field with players who have just come off. However, coaches must keep track of the number of shifts each player has played to ensure that playing time is distributed equally among all team members. Additionally, in the beginning, all players should be given the opportunity to try different positions until they find their strengths. Goalies must be rotated, and no player should play the goalkeeper position for more than two shifts per half. Finally, all players should have the opportunity to play the goalkeeper position throughout the season. **LINK: <https://youtu.be/cgjx0BnQZ94?t=4>**



## WEEK 2 – THROW INS

In soccer, a throw-in is a method of restarting play after the ball has gone out of bounds over the side touchline. The proper technique for a throw-in involves several key steps:

- The ball must be thrown from behind the touchline and with both hands.
- The player performing the throw-in must keep both feet on the ground and may not jump or lift a foot until the ball has been released.
- The ball must be thrown with a smooth, continuous motion and released from both hands simultaneously.
- The throw-in must be taken by the team that did NOT touch the ball last before it went out of bounds.
- If the player taking the throw-in steps on or over the touchline, the opposing team is awarded a throw-in.
- If the player taking the throw-in does not release the ball properly, the opposing team is awarded a throw-in.
- The player taking the throw may not touch the ball until another player has touched it first.
- The ball is considered in play as soon as it enters the field of play and is touched by another player.
- The opposing team may not interfere with the throw-in and must remain at least 6 feet away from the throw-in until the ball has been released.
- The player taking the throw-in should aim to throw the ball towards a teammate who is in a good position to receive the ball and maintain possession.

Remember that a throw-in is a valuable opportunity to restart play and move the ball up the field. Proper technique and accuracy are essential to ensure that the ball is thrown to a teammate and stays in play. Practice and proper form can help to improve your throw-in skills and benefit your team during games.

**LINK:** [https://youtu.be/erb\\_KFjPU08?t=5](https://youtu.be/erb_KFjPU08?t=5)



### WEEK 3 – PASSING

A proper soccer pass requires good technique, accuracy, and timing. Here are the steps to perform a proper soccer pass:

- Approach the ball with your non-dominant foot placed next to the ball and your dominant foot slightly behind.
- Plant your non-dominant foot firmly next to the ball and use the inside of your dominant foot to pass the ball.
- As you make contact with the ball, use the inside of your foot to direct it towards your intended target.
- Keep your body over the ball, and your hips and shoulders facing your target to ensure accuracy and control.
- Use the appropriate amount of power depending on the distance of the pass and the position of your target.
- Follow through with your kicking foot, extending your leg towards the direction of your target.
- Anticipate the movement of your teammates and aim the pass where they will be when the ball arrives.
- Be aware of defenders and obstacles in the way and adjust your pass accordingly to avoid interception.
- Communicate with your teammates, using verbal cues or hand signals to indicate where you are passing the ball.

Remember that practicing your passing technique is key to becoming a proficient passer. You can practice passing with a teammate, a wall, or by yourself using cones as targets. Good passing skills are essential to maintaining possession, creating scoring opportunities, and winning games.

**LINK:** <https://youtu.be/yOXrf0Tlphg>



## WEEK 4 – DRIBBLING

Dribbling a soccer ball is a fundamental skill that involves moving the ball with your feet while maintaining control of it. Here are the key steps to dribbling a soccer ball:

- Start with your feet shoulder-width apart, and your knees slightly bent.
- Use the inside of your dominant foot to make small touches on the ball, keeping it close to your body.
- Keep your head up and your eyes on the ball and your surroundings to anticipate the movement of your teammates and defenders.
- Then do the same with the other foot, again keeping the ball close and the touches quick and light.
- As you get comfortable with dribbling, alternate between using the inside and outside of your feet and maintain control.
- Use the outside of your feet to dribble the ball when changing direction or making sharp turns.
- Use quick and light touches with both feet to control the ball and maintain a fast pace.
- Use the sole of your foot to stop the ball or to change the direction of the ball quickly.
- Practice different moves and feints, such as step overs, fake shots, or body feints, to deceive defenders and create space.
- Be unpredictable and keep the ball moving, changing direction and speed, to make it difficult for defenders to anticipate your movements.
- Maintain a good pace while dribbling to keep the pressure on the defense and create opportunities for your team.

Remember that practice is key to improving your dribbling skills. You can practice dribbling with cones or other obstacles, in small spaces, or with a partner or teammates. The more you practice, the better you will become at dribbling the ball and controlling it in game situations. **LINK:** <https://youtu.be/oooHAiDlao4?t=28>



## WEEK 5 – 10 DRIBBLING MOVES TO BEAT A DEFENDER

Dribbling to beat a defender and maneuver the ball involves using different techniques to deceive the defender and create space to move the ball forward. Here are some key steps to dribble to beat a defender:

- Approach the defender at an angle, rather than head-on, to make it more difficult for the defender to anticipate your movements.
- Use quick and light touches with the ball, alternating between using the inside and outside of your feet to change direction and maintain control.
- Be unpredictable and keep the ball moving, changing direction and speed, to make it difficult for the defender to anticipate your movements.
- Maintain a good pace while dribbling to keep the pressure on the defense and create opportunities for your team.
- Use body feints, such as a fake shot or a shoulder drop, to deceive the defender and create space to move the ball forward.
- Use a step-over move, in which you fake moving the ball with one foot and instead move it with the other foot, to trick the defender.
- Use a scissors move, in which you step over the ball with one foot and then move it with the other foot, to create space.
- Use a drag-back move, in which you stop the ball with the sole of your foot and then move it back behind you, to change direction.
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Watch the video and practice these techniques and moves to improve your dribbling skills and ability to beat defenders. With practice and experience, you will become more confident in your ability to maneuver the ball and beat defenders.

**LINK:** <https://youtu.be/uuqsGCiM9I?t=56>



## WEEK 6 – GIVE AND GO

A give and go in soccer, also known as a one-two pass, is a passing sequence between two players in which one player passes the ball to a teammate and then immediately runs forward to receive the ball back from the teammate in a different position. The idea is to create space by passing the ball to a teammate and then quickly moving into a better position to receive the ball back and continue the attack.

The give and go is a quick and effective way to move the ball up the field and bypass defenders, as it requires good timing, coordination, and communication between the two players involved. It is often used in fast-paced situations, such as counterattacks, to catch the opposition off-guard and create scoring opportunities.

To execute a give and go, the player with the ball passes the ball to a teammate who is running into space ahead of them. As the teammate receives the ball, the first player continues their forward run, looking to receive the ball back from the teammate in a better position. The second player then passes the ball back to the first player, who can continue the attack with more space and time to make a play.

The give and go is a common tactic in soccer and is used at all levels of the game, from youth to professional. It requires good communication, timing, and coordination between the two players involved, as well as an understanding of each other's movements and tendencies on the field.

**LINK:** <https://youtu.be/S4EDBmx-lb4>



## WEEK 7 – SHOOTING TECHNIQUES

Shooting is one of the most important skills in soccer, and there are several techniques that players can use to improve their accuracy and power. Here are some key shooting techniques in soccer:

- **POWER UP:** This is the most common type of shot in soccer. To perform this shot, approach the ball at an angle, plant your non-shooting foot beside the ball, and strike the ball with the inside of your foot using the instep (the part of your foot where your laces are). Follow through with your kicking leg to generate power and accuracy.
- **OUTSIDE CURVE SHOT:** An outside curve shot is a shooting technique in soccer where the ball is struck with the outside of the foot, causing it to spin and curve away from the player's body. This type of shot is often used to bend the ball around a defender or to place the ball into the far corner of the goal. To execute an outside curve shot, the player should approach the ball at an angle and strike it with the outside of their foot, using the side of their foot to generate spin on the ball. The player should aim to strike the ball with the correct amount of power and direction to create the desired curve, while also keeping their body balanced and maintaining good form throughout the shot.
- **CURVE SHOT:** A curve shot in soccer is a technique where the ball is struck in a way that causes it to spin and curve in the air. This technique can be used to bend the ball around defenders, to hit the ball into the top corner of the net, or to change the direction of the ball mid-flight. To execute a curve shot, the player must strike the ball with a specific part of their foot and at a specific angle. Using the inside of the foot, the player will apply spin to the ball, causing it to bend in the air. The direction and degree of curve will depend on the angle of approach, the power of the shot, and the amount of spin applied.





- **INSIDE SHOT:** An inside foot shot in soccer is a shooting technique where the player strikes the ball with the inside of their foot. This technique is commonly used to shoot the ball accurately and with power, while also maintaining control and keeping the ball low to the ground. To execute an inside foot shot, the player approaches the ball with their non-dominant foot placed next to the ball and their dominant foot slightly behind it. They then strike the ball with the inside of their dominant foot, using the inside of their foot to create the desired amount of power and accuracy.
- **LOB OR CHIP SHOT:** A lob or chip shot is used to lift the ball over the goalkeeper or defenders. To perform this shot, approach the ball with a slight angle, plant your non-shooting foot beside the ball, and strike the bottom of the ball with the middle of your foot. This will create a backspin that lifts the ball over the goalkeeper.

Each shooting technique requires different skills and techniques, and the choice of which technique to use will depend on the situation and the player's strengths and weaknesses. With practice and experience, players can become proficient in several shooting techniques and use them effectively in game situations.

**LINK:** <https://youtu.be/UXwUQmVLzik?t=12>



## WEEK 8 – CONER KICKS

A corner kick is awarded to a team when the defending team last touched the ball before it went out of bounds over the endline. The attacking team then has the opportunity to put the ball back into play from the corner of the field by taking a corner kick.

To take a corner kick, the attacking player must place the ball within the corner arc on the side of the field where the ball went out of bounds. They can then kick the ball into the penalty area, where their teammates can attempt to score a goal.

The advantages of a corner kick are that there is no offside and the kick is a direct kick meaning that the kicker may score directly from the corner. It provides the attacking team with a set-piece opportunity to create a scoring chance. The ball is placed close to the goal and typically in a dangerous area, making it more difficult for the defending team to clear the ball out of danger. Additionally, the attacking team can use different tactics and strategies, such as having players make runs into the penalty area or positioning players to take advantage of any rebounds or deflections.

It's important to note that corner kicks can be a double-edged sword. If the attacking team fails to convert the corner kick into a goal, the defending team may be able to quickly counterattack and create their own scoring opportunity. Therefore, it's important for the attacking team to be organized and prepared defensively in case the corner kick doesn't result in a goal.

**LINKS:** <https://youtu.be/efdxdNxqBQI?t=12>



## WEEK 9 – PENALTY KICKS

A penalty kick in soccer is a direct free kick that is awarded to a team when a foul or handball occurs inside the penalty area by a player from the opposing team. It is a one-on-one opportunity for the attacking team's designated penalty taker to attempt to score a goal against the opposing team's goalkeeper from the penalty spot with no interference from any other players.

To take a penalty kick, the designated player stands at the penalty spot and waits for the referee's signal. The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line until the ball is kicked. Once the referee blows the whistle, the player kicks the ball towards the goal in an attempt to score.

The goalkeeper's objective is to make a save and prevent the ball from going into the goal. The goalkeeper can move horizontally along the goal line, but they cannot move forward until the ball is kicked. If the goalkeeper moves off the goal line prematurely and the penalty kick results in a goal, the kick may be retaken.

### Here are the basic steps for taking a penalty kick in soccer:

- **Choose your spot:** Before taking the penalty kick, decide where you want to aim the ball. Some players prefer to aim for the corners of the net, while others prefer to shoot down the middle.
- **Approach the ball:** Stand a few metres behind the ball and take a few deep breaths to calm your nerves. Start your run-up towards the ball and aim to strike the ball with the inside of your foot.
- **Strike the ball:** Aim for your chosen spot and hit the ball with power and accuracy. Keep your head down and your eyes on the ball as you strike it.
- **Follow through:** After striking the ball, follow through with your kicking foot and land on your non-kicking foot. This will help you maintain balance and accuracy.



- **Watch the ball:** After you've taken the penalty kick, watch the ball to see if it goes in the net. If it does, celebrate with your teammates!

It's important to note that penalty kicks are a high-pressure situation, so it's important to stay calm and focused. Practice your technique regularly and try to simulate game-like scenarios in training so that you're prepared when the time comes to take a penalty kick in a match.

**Watch the video to see different Penalty Taking Techniques and find your style:**

- Technique #1: Watch the Goalie
- Technique #2: Panenka
- Technique #3: Bottom Corners
- Technique #4: Top Corners
- Technique #5: Smash down the middle

**LINK:** <https://youtu.be/YrH-Hky1WI0?t=13>

**WEEK 10, 11 & 12 - Coaches' Practice**