

## **PRE-PRACTICE ROUTINE**

### **Warm ups – 5 Minutes (max)**

Every practice should start with a short warm up to get the kids ready to focus. A quick jog around the field and toe-taps are an easy warm up. TRY TO ADD USE OF THE BALL DURING THE WARM UP AS SOON AS THE CHILDREN ARE READY FOR IT.

### **Stretches – 5 Minutes**

Candies aged children don't need to stretch as much as the older age groups, but a quick head to toe stretch routine will help kids loosen up and learn a healthy practice habit. All of these stretches are in the STANDING position.

Ankles – With the toe touching the grass and the heel raised, have the kids rotate their ankles in small circles. Five circles in each direction with each foot is good.

Knees – With the knees together and slightly bent, have the kids put their hands on their knees and rotate five times in each direction.

Hips – Have the kids put their feet shoulder width apart and have them place their hands on their hips. Have them rotate their hips (like a hula-hoop motion) five times in each direction.

Ground touches – Have the kids place their feet more than shoulder width apart. Have them try to touch the grass for five seconds. Make sure they don't bounce while trying to touch the grass. Have the kids reach for the sky after the five seconds. Repeat two or three times.

### **Water break –**

Candies aged kids need frequent water breaks and recovery times. Have a quick water break after every activity.

## **PROPER TECHNIQUES TO TEACH**

### How to dribble the ball –

The player should use the top (shoelace) portion of their foot to dribble in a straight line and use the inside and outside portions of their foot to maneuver while dribbling. Players should kick the ball with short, controlled kicks to avoid losing control of the ball.

### How to pass the ball –

Players should use the inside portion of their foot for short-range passes. The player should try to keep the ball on the ground during the pass.

### How to do a throw-in –

The player must be behind the line, keep both feet in contact with the ground, and use both arms to throw the ball overhead onto the field. The thrower cannot score off of a throw-in, and the thrower cannot be the first person to touch the ball.

### How and when to do a goal kick –

Rule: A goal kick happens when the opposite team kicks the ball out of bounds behind your goal.

The ball should be placed in corner of the goalie box. Players should use the top portion of their foot during a goal kick for added power. The player should avoid kicking the ball into the middle of the field.

### How and when to do a corner kick –

Rule: A corner kick is granted when the ball exits the field behind your goal after being kicked by one of your players (and vice versa for the other team).

The player should place the ball in the corner of the field. The player should try to kick the ball toward the opponent goal or to an open teammate near the opponent's goal.

## **PRACTICE DRILLS**

Coaches should try to choose drills that avoid eliminating players. Usually the ones first eliminated in those types of drills need the most practice.

Candies aged players usually have a short attention span, so keep drills fun and short. 10 minutes is usually the maximum.

Try to avoid drills that make the kids wait in lines.

### **Drill #1: Red Light, Yellow Light, Green light.**

Create a boundary that allows the kids to move around freely and make sure every kid has a ball.

Tell the kids to stay inside the boundary and do an action for each color called:  
Green light = dribbling – Start slow and increase speed.

Red light = Stop and do toe taps – Have them tap the top of the ball once with the bottom of each foot.

Yellow light = You can use a fall down drill (simulates recovering from a fall during a game), rolling ball backwards with foot, or any other drill you can think of.

### **Drill #2: Kick the Coach.**

Create a boundary that allows the kids to move around freely and make sure every kid has a ball.

Tell the kids to stay inside the boundary, dribble their ball, and try to hit the coach's feet with their ball. The coach needs to be a constantly moving target so that the kids have to dribble the ball toward you and take shots at your feet. If a kid hits the coach's feet, the coach has to make an animal sound (or something silly).

### **Drill #3: Sharks and Minnows**

Create a boundary that allows the kids to move around freely and make sure every kid has a ball. Have at least two people in the middle of the area to act as attackers/defenders (can be coaches/players/both).

Players (the Minnows) start on one end of the established area with their ball and attempt to get to the other side of the area without getting their ball taken away by a defender (The Shark). If the player makes it to the other end with their ball, they are safe and get to continue as a Minnow. If the player has their ball taken away AND kicked out of the area, they become Sharks.

#### **Drill #4: Knockout/Everybody's it.**

Create a boundary that allows the kids to move around freely and make sure every kid has a ball.

Each player dribbles their ball around, staying inside the boundaries, trying to kick away as many other player's balls while at the same time trying to not get their balls kicked away. It's a game of total vision, requiring the players to have full awareness of what's around them. They need to learn how to move into spaces to attack, and out of space to retreat. When a kid's ball is kicked away, they retrieve their ball and rejoin the game. NO ELIMINATIONS.

#### **Drill #5: Fetch and score.**

Use your whole half of the field and make sure every kid has a ball to use. Place an object that can be knocked over with a ball (cone, water bottle, etc) near the goal. Place all of the player's balls at the mid field line.

Have all the players stand behind the goal. When the coach gives a signal, all the players will run to the mid-field, get their ball, dribble it back to the object, and attempt to knock it over with their ball. The coach(s) should be there to guard the object from being easily kicked over by the kids.

#### **Drill #6: Monster Coach.**

Create a boundary that allows the kids to move around freely and make sure every kid has a ball.

Stand in the middle of the area and challenge the players to try to dribble inside the space without being caught by the monster coach. Ham it up a bit to have more fun. Have them try to dribble their ball while the coach tries to kick their ball out of bounds. Their re-entry back into the game can be done in many ways, (i.e. three foot taps on the ball, throw the ball in, etc). NO ELIMINATIONS.

#### **Drill #7: Throw-in Target Practice.**

Place all the kids in a row on a boundary line and make sure every kid has a ball.

Place a cone about 5 to 10 feet in front of each kid. Tell each kid to try to hit the cone in front of them with his or her ball, while doing a proper throw-in. Have the kids retrieve their ball and repeat on their own. Make sure they are focusing on technique and not speed.

### **Drill # 8: Follow the leader.**

Create a boundary that allows the kids to move around freely and make sure every kid has a ball. Create several “gates” by placing two cones 3-4 feet apart.

Have a coach start off as the leader. Have the kids follow you around the field while dribbling their ball. Go through as many gates as possible, and switch up your speed occasionally. Add in other adaptations if the kids are ready for it: Use only non-dominant foot, roll the ball backwards, etc.

### **Drill # 9 – Shooting Drill.**

This is one of the very few single person/wait in line drills you should do.

Have all the kids line up single file somewhere mid-field, and make sure every kid has a ball.

Easy – Have the kids dribble to the goal and shoot. Once they have made a goal, have them return to the line. The kids can start with the ball, or have one passed to them by a coach.

Medium – Set up a line of cones that the kids have to weave through on their way to the goal. Once the kids have reached the goal, have them shoot a goal, then return to the line.

Hard – Have a coach stand near the goal and act as a defender. Try to steal the ball while the player attempts to dribble to the goal and score. Make sure the kid retrieves any rebounds and have them keep trying until they have scored. Once they have scored, have them return to the line.

### **Drill # 10: Scrimmage**

Every practice should end with a scrimmage. Scrimmages are the best way for kids to apply what they learned at practice. Work with you field partner to set up your scrimmages.

**Additional drills: Google, Pinterest, YouTube, etc. all have many fun drills to try. Look up “U6 Soccer drills” and find drills that will fit your team.**

## **TYPICAL PRACTICE ROUTINE**

Candies aged kids lose interest and focus after about 45 minutes.

As a coach, you can run your practice your own way, but here is an example of a typical practice schedule:

Warm-up and Stretching – 5 Minutes

Water Break

Drill – 5-10 Minutes

Water Break

Drill – 5-10 Minutes

Water Break

Drill – 5-10 Minutes (if time permits)

Water Break

Scrimmage – 15 Minutes

Play with another team or split your team in two. Focus on what they learned from the drills during the game. Make sure to give the kids a water break during the game.

Wrap up – 5 Minutes

## **CANDIES GAME GUIDELINES**

Coaches are on the field with the kids acting as referees and coaches.

Each game has four 7-minute quarters (use a parent on the sidelines as a time keeper so the coaches can focus on the kids).

Each quarter should be followed by a water break.

Try to avoid having too many players per team play at a time. Coaches should work together to determine how many players to play at a time.

Candies games don't have goalies.