



WISCONSIN YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

“Y1” CERTIFICATE

(FORMERLY THE “G” CERTIFICATE)





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Characteristics of U6, U8 and U10 Children

Although children differ significantly, there are some common traits that all coaches need to be familiar with and take into account when “coaching” children. If we observe young children closely, we see that many of these characteristics inhibit their ability to play “real soccer” and practice activities are adjusted accordingly. Activities should fit the developmental levels of the children; the children should not fit the activities.

U6 Children (Run with the ball; Turn with the ball; Kick the ball)

- Short attention span – get to activities ASAP
- Most are individually orientated - me, mine, my ball ... I'm not going to pass!
- Psychologically easily bruised – we must consider: how to give feedback, being positive, being the odd one out, our reaction to losing, etc.
- Little or no concern for team activities – teamwork does not exist
- Boys and girls physical development is similar
- Eye hand and eye foot coordination is primitive – simple activities designed to help them gain more coordination are needed
- Love to run around, jump, etc. - so let them (not every activity has to have a ball, try an activity without a ball and then with it)

U8 Children (Dribble; Run with the ball; Turn; Pass; Receive; Shoot; etc.)

- Attention span beyond U6 but still not extended – we can expand slightly on skill repetition
- Some children inclined toward group activities (pairs) - i.e., passing



- Some children become quite astute and rule conscious – varied abilities
- Still very sensitive – we must consider how to give feedback, etc.

Growing awareness of space and freedom – soccer must be fun

- Many children still unconcerned with team activities – team practices futile
- Beginning to develop physical coordination – will vary amongst the players
- Boys and girls physical development still similar – but do girls like playing with girls?

U10 Children (As U8's plus Heading, Shielding and Goalkeeping)

- Memory ability develops – players can be asked to recall/perform tasks or ideas taught earlier, i.e., 1 v 1 moves, passing technique
- Can focus on tasks longer – more skill repetition, longer activities, etc.
- Ability to sequence thoughts and/or actions – 'if I do this, then this can happen,' A passes to B and B passes to C leads to a pass from C to A
- Become more serious about play – but it's still "play time"
- Think like adults – need a reason to do something
- Association with "team" – but ability to play in large groups primitive
- Motor performance improves significantly – potential to learn new techniques very rapidly
- Differences between girls and boys appear – separate programs preferable
- "Stronger" players may dominate – speed, strength and size can help a player dominate at U10, but this is often a poor indicator of who will develop into the best soccer players

COACHING ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

1. Are the activities fun for the children? Are they enjoyable to participate in and will they keep the children's interest?
2. Are the activities organized?
3. Are the players involved in the activities? **(NO LINES!)**
4. Is creativity and decision-making being used? Are decisions ever changing or are they just repeating things without thinking?
5. Are the activities developmentally appropriate?
6. Are the spaces used appropriate?
7. Is the coach's feedback appropriate? For younger players feedback should be positive and frequent. **(NO LECTURES!)**
8. Are there implications for the game? Are the objectives of the activities related to the demands they will face in the game? **(NO LAPS!)**

Remember soccer is a unique and dynamic game that involves decision-making. Soccer practices should be active and involve playing the game and SHOULD NOT look like a baseball or football practice.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Accepting a coaching position means accepting responsibilities. Important points to remember:

1. Exercise Reasonable Care (use tried/tested activities, have a first aid kit, take a Red Cross first aid course, have an emergency plan, etc.)
2. Fulfill Your Duties (Be safe, appropriate and reasonable)
3. Use Common Sense to Foresee Potential Problems

ADDITIONAL POINTS

- Never leave a player alone after training or games.
- Be certain that players depart with their parents or designated individual.
- Avoid being left alone with players who are not your children.

COACHING GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of youth soccer coaches to create a positive and enjoyable learning environment that ultimately makes playing soccer a rewarding experience for our young players.

How do coaches know if they have achieved these aims? First, youngsters should still be playing when they are 18 years old and beyond. Second, when a player moves from youth soccer to another playing environment, their soccer playing abilities are the best they can be based on their natural capacity. Consequently, it is vital that coaches take a long-term approach. Developing soccer players is a marathon and not a sprint . . . winning in recreational soccer isn't indicative of future success!

To create a positive and enjoyable learning environment in soccer, coaches must focus upon three key concepts:

COMPETENCY - Players will put forth more effort if they feel they have the skills required to excel. Coaches can help players naturally put forth 100% effort by: teaching them the skills needed to excel at the game, having them participate in activities that promote skill development that are not boring drills, using activities that are "unregimented" and involve 360 degrees of movement, organizing half of the practice so it looks like the real game, etc.

CHOICE - Player participation is hurt if our youngsters feel a lack of ownership or freedom. Players will have a sense of ownership and freedom if coaches: allow players to make decisions, ask questions rather than tell the players what to do, allow youngsters the opportunity just to play, avoid creating an overly structured training/playing environment, give players some control, etc.

CARE - Young players need to feel cared for and respected. Coaches play a vital role in this area by: being a good role model, inspiring players to love the game, keeping winning and losing in perspective (children know winning is important and they don't benefit at young ages by coaches making soccer more stressful), treats all players fairly, making sure players are safe, etc.

IF COACHES FAIL TO PAY ATTENTION TO THESE THREE AREAS, THE PLAYING ENVIRONMENT WILL BECOME TOXIC!

A toxic playing environment manifests itself in many ways: players don't enjoy soccer anymore, "win at all costs," cheating, fear of doing something wrong, anxiety, burnout and ultimately PLAYERS STOP PLAYING.

One key element in avoiding the creation of a toxic playing environment is to understand the true meaning of competition. Typically competition is referred to when we compete against other teams for a plastic trophy!! However the word "competition" is derived from the Latin words *com* (with) and *petere* (to strive) and means "to strive with." Hence, competition occurs over time and has some nurturing and cooperative elements. Competition involves coaches: encouraging players to outperform their best, valuing effort regardless of the outcome, encouraging cooperation between team members, allowing players to learn from mistakes, encouraging skill mastery, allowing the players to have fun, etc.

In order that coaches can achieve these and have their players "compete" better, they need to pay attention to points 1-5 and follow the competency, choice and care strategies detailed below:

- 1. Concern yourself with only those things you can control.** Coaches cannot control the referee's decisions, how good the opposing team is, the final outcome of the game, etc.
- 2. Set simple goals for your players.** This might be as simple as five juggles by the end of the season. However regardless of how simple or informal the goals set, they need to be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, have some time orientation, be evaluated and rewarded.

3. Help players to become intrinsically motivated . . . encourage players to work hard (effort is a choice and can be controlled), encourage skill development, allow children to enjoy just playing, discourage ego-orientated behaviors (e.g., soccer's only fun if I win or if I'm the top scorer or if I'm the MVP, etc.), etc.

4. Communicate effectively . . . **be careful what you say and how you say it.** Be positive, ask open-ended questions, praise effort, give simple feedback/corrections, tell athletes what you want not what you don't want, praise the things you want repeated, give non-contingent feedback (i.e., the nature of feedback should be similar regardless of the outcome), be consistent, be aware of non-verbals, etc.

5. Words of wisdom - Stay positive, compliment others (not just your team), focus on important things (things you control), be humble/gracious, treat others fairly and have fun.

COMPETENCY, CARE AND CHOICE STRATEGIES

Competence - give good instruction

- Encourage the pursuit of skill mastery.
- Give good feedback (see above).
- Provide opportunities for children to achieve success.
- Don't compare young athletes to each other.
- Show how players can learn from mistakes.
- Use activities where everyone is participating.
- Reward and encourage effort.

Choice - provide appropriate/meaningful opportunities for choices/control

- Allow athletes to have ownership . . . it's their game.
- Share decision-making.
- Don't constantly yell instructions . . . get players thinking for themselves.
- Use activities and play games that challenge players to solve problems.
- Ask for athlete opinions regularly.
- Focus athletes on what they control.

Care - Be friendly and warm with all players . . . show equal care and concern for all players

- Keep winning and losing in perspective.
- Create a climate of belonging amongst the team.
- Deal with negative behaviors that hurt the team's experience.
- Listen and be observant.
- Make sure facilities and equipment are safe.
- Provide proper supervision.
- Provide reasonable selection of players for activities.
- Deal with injuries promptly and guard against post-injury aggravation.
- Respect opponents and referees.

MEETING THE PARENTS

All coaches should take time to meet briefly with their players' parents. This meeting should take place after at least one practice. Important things to remember include:

- Prepare information ahead of time.
- Use "we language" when talking about the team, not I/me language.
Example: We are all responsible for making this season a success for the kids. We need to make sure that the kids have the proper equipment.
- Your expectations of the kids (sportsmanship, commitment, work ethic, attitude)
- Your expectations for parental behavior
 - Communication with you
 - Champion behavior for yourself & for them on the touchlines
 - Clarify their role to team (schedules/locations, attendance, equipment, transportation, snacks, positive support)
- Clarify how your role is different in terms of the 3C's.
- Your Philosophy
- Share your personal coaching goals for the season.
- Share team goals with parents once you've set them *with your team*.
- Outline communication processes and boundaries.
- Discuss playing time philosophy and system for playing time.
- Share team rules and consequences (e.g., coming late, missing practice, poor sportsmanship, violation of team code) once you've set them *with your team*.
- Gather information from parents in survey form (e.g., their concerns/issues, expectations, priorities, goals for child). Short answers.
- Facilitate realistic expectations for their child. (statistics/odds for college, pro participation)
- Decide together how inappropriate adult behavior on the touchlines will be addressed and consequences.
- Ask for volunteers if needed.

Advantages of Playing Small-Sided Games

"Kids get tied up in the emotional level of the game. A little one playing 11-a-side says, 'We won!' but he touched the ball three times today. Our responsibility is DEVELOPMENT! So we must play 4 v 4 and 7 v 7 with plenty of time and space to learn – to learn combinations, skills, awareness, 'smartness'." - Rinus Michels, Former Dutch National Team Coach.

The Child Has:

- More practical space to be successful
- Increased number of contacts with the ball
- More actual playing time
- Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense
- To make more decisions
- Experience repeating game situations more frequently
- To learn both offense and defense a player will become more complete and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates
- More time with the coach

The Small Field Enables:

- More efficient use of space
- Games to be played simultaneously across a full size field
- Children to be physically more efficient in smaller space
- Young players to achieve a shot at goal or advance to goal more easily
- Children to be more actively involved for a longer period of time

Goalkeeping

Many law changes in soccer have been centered on goalkeeping. How many steps, how quickly the ball is released, what is allowed in the pass-back, etc. More than ever before the goalkeeper cannot detach themselves from the game. They have become vital elements of the attack as well as their more traditional role as the last line of defense. They must be accurate passers of the ball when distributing (feet as well as hands), reliable in receiving the ball under pressure and even show capability in heading when dealing with errant back passes.

In essence, goalkeepers must be as competent with their field skills as any player in the field. Most goalkeeping skills are specific to the position (catching low medium and high balls, diving, throwing). Older players are more likely to take on goalkeeping as a permanent position. How well these players combine the physical and mental skills of both field player and goalkeeper will determine their effectiveness in being the first line of attack and the last line of defense. Goalkeeping starts at U10.

Key Considerations:

- Players at the U-10 level and up should be encouraged and exposed, but not forced, to goalkeeping roles in practice. Many goalkeeping skills are developed at older ages. Exposing many players to the position could help identify a hidden talent ... a player who had never considered trying it before. Exposure to the goalkeeper position may help field players understand the difficulty of the position.
- Goalkeeping should become an active part of every practice. Unfortunately we often set up practices where goalkeepers work by themselves and call on them only for shooting practice. Goalkeepers should be involved early in training when working on technical development with the ball at their feet, and either as targets or in their primary role in front of the goal. They should not only play as shot

blockers and distributors of the ball, but as an active communication link with the rest of the team.

- Whenever possible, goalkeepers should distribute the ball. Often coaches do not allow the goalkeeper to distribute the ball, instead ending play on a save or missed shot or the coach handling the distribution. This denies the goalkeeper work in their key offensive role, that of first line of attack.
- Be active. Concentration by the goalkeeper is vitally important to their effectiveness. Goalkeepers who stay on their line or who are not attached to the rest of the team will soon be reacting to a desperate situation instead of a relatively safe one. Encouraging goalkeepers to be involved and ready goes a long way in reducing dangerous situations.
- Goalkeeping is a tough job. Much is expected of goalkeepers, but they receive very little praise. In many ways, goalkeepers are subject to open and unforgiving exposure. Mistakes are clearly showcased and become very personalized, and psychologically deflating. Mistakes will be made. Encouragement and understanding mixed with sound coaching advice will go a long way in creating a stimulating and fun playing environment.
- When to begin is a frequently asked question. It is widely felt that initiating goalkeeping in games prior to age nine is inappropriate. Children should be exposed to body movements that simulate what goalkeepers do, but to put them under the pressure of being a goalkeeper before they have developed some basic psychomotor and cognitive skills is inappropriate.

Under 6 Modified Rules and Field Structure

The Field:	30 x 20 yards (approx.) recommended 4-5 yard (approx.) arc in front of goal Two equal sized fields next to one another are recommended to set-up 'side by side' format
The Goal:	6 feet wide by 4 feet high (approx.) Cones or flags can be used if goals are not available
The Ball:	Size 3 is recommended
Players:	Number on the field at one time: 3 (no goalkeeper) Roster Size: Single team rosters of 5-6 players are recommended or a maximum of 8-10 players for clubs using the 'side by side' game method.
The Kick Off:	One team will be designated to kick-off at the start of the game. Kick-off is intended to insure possession and can go forward or backward to a teammate. The ball is not kicked 'football' style to the other team.
Playing Time:	Games for this age should last approximately 30-40 minutes. The use of quarters is recommended, but thirds or halves can be utilized. There should be a 2-3 minute break between periods for water and physical recovery.
Ball Out of Play:	When the ball goes completely out of the boundary lines, a player from the opposite team should place the ball at a point near where it went out of play and dribble or kick it back into play. Opposing players must be five yards away. Once the ball has been reentered, it can be touched by anyone. Throw-ins are not utilized.
Equipment:	Players should wear athletic type shoes. Soccer shoes are not necessary but are OK. Players must wear shin guards and should be covered by a pair of high socks. Shorts are recommended. Clothing should not be restrictive. Every player should have a soccer ball or have access to one at practices and games.
Referee:	A referee is not necessary at this age group. Coaches should monitor play on each field and enforce rules regarding rough play, handballs, and rule violations approved for this age group. All fouls result in an indirect free kick for the opposing team. Use the rules as per US Youth Soccer's U6 and U8 Official's Handbook.

Under 7/8 Modified Rules and Field Structure

The Field:	40 x 25 yards (approx.) recommended 4-5 yard (approx.) arc in front of goal (optional) Two equal sized fields next to one another are recommended to set-up 'side by side' format.
The Goal:	6 feet wide by 4 feet high (approx.) 12' x 6' maximum Cones or flags can be used if goals with nets are unavailable.
The Ball:	Size 3 is recommended.
Players:	Number on the field at one time: 4 (no goalkeeper) Roster size: Single team rosters of 6-8 players are recommended or a maximum of 11-12 for clubs using the 'side by side' game method.
The Kick-Off:	One team will be designated to kick-off at the start of the game. Kick-off is intended to insure possession and can go forward or backward to a teammate. The ball is not kicked 'football style' to the other team.
Playing Time:	Games for this age should last approximately 40-45 minutes. The use of quarters is recommended, but thirds or halves can be utilized. There should be a 2-3 minute break between periods for water and physical recovery.
Ball Out of Play:	When the ball goes completely out of the boundary lines, a player from the opposite team should place the ball at a point near where it went out of play and dribble or kick it back into play. Opposing players must be five yards away. Once the ball has been reentered, it can be touched by anyone. Throw-ins are not recommended but can be used.
Equipment:	Players should wear athletic type shoes. Soccer shoes are not necessary but are OK. Players must wear shin guards and should be covered by a pair of high socks. Shorts are recommended. Clothing should not be restrictive. Every player should have a soccer ball or have access to one at practices and games.
Referee:	A referee is not required, but recommended at this age group. Coaches should monitor both fields and enforce rules regarding rough play, handballs and rule violations approved for this age group. All fouls result in an indirect free kick for the opposing team. Use the rules as detailed in US Youth Soccer's U6 and U8 Official's Handbook.

Under 9/10 Modified Rules and Field Structure

The Field:	50 x 35-40 yards (approx.) recommended Two equal sized fields next to one another are recommended to set-up 'side by side' format
The Goal:	18' x 6' recommended (21' x 7' maximum)
The Ball:	Size 4 is recommended
Players:	Number on the field at one time: 6 (5 plus a goalkeeper) Roster Size: Single team rosters of 10-11 players are recommended or a maximum of 14-18 players for clubs using the 'side by side' game method.
The Kick Off:	One team will be designated to kick off at the start of the game. Kick off is intended to insure possession and 'football' style kick offs are to be discouraged.
Playing Time:	Games for this age should last approximately 50 minutes. The use of two 25 minutes halves are recommended.
Ball Out of Play:	When the ball goes completely out of the boundary lines, throw-ins are utilized.
Equipment:	Players should wear soccer shoes and other appropriate soccer gear (shin guards, etc.). Every player should have a soccer ball to practice with at home.
Referee:	A referee is necessary at this age group. The referee should use the US YOUTH SOCCER modified U10 rules. Offside does not need to be enforced

U6 Coach's Guide

Coaching Emphasis – Individual Play and Fun

Coaches of U5 and U6 children should ensure that their players enjoy their soccer experience and are eager to come back.

Soccer Knowledge

Not using hands (during the game), in & out of play, direction to attack, etc.

Team Positions

NONE – Shape can be addressed, i.e., 'Magic Triangle'. The kids can be set up in a triangle to start the game and at other natural breaks in the game (kick offs, goal kicks, etc.). During the game, children must be allowed to run around freely. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOULD CHILDREN BE MADE TO STAND IN POSITION, STAND ON A LINE OR STAY IN A CERTAIN AREA, ETC.

Technical Emphasis

The following techniques should be covered indirectly through the use of developmentally appropriate GAMES (NO DRILLS):

1. Running with the ball
2. Changing direction while running with the ball
3. Kicking the ball (with multiple surfaces)

Tactical Emphasis

Players should be aware of the direction they are attacking. In addition, coaches should develop players to be ball-orientated (i.e. always moving toward the ball, always wanting to be involved in the action, etc.)

Practice Schedule

One '45 minute' practice per week.

Recommended Activities

One player-one ball activities (Tag games with/without the ball, target kicking games, maze races [no dribbling around cones set up in a straight line!!!], etc.), 1 v 1 games and small sided scrimmages.

Player Equipment

Size 3 ball, athletic shoes, appropriate clothing, shin guards, water bottle, etc.

Coaching License

"Y1" or "Y2" Certificate

U7/U8 Coach's Guide

Coaching Emphasis – Individual Play with “some” passing and fun

Coaches should continue to emphasize fun and encourage their U7/8 players to be ball-orientated. 1 v 1's continue to be important. Older/more insightful children should be gradually encouraged to move away from the 'swarm' around the ball and to recognize moments to pass.

Soccer Knowledge

What constitutes a foul, throw-ins (for players at some clubs), what we do when we lose the ball, etc.

Positions

NONE. Shape can be addressed, i.e. 'Magic Diamond' (one back player, two wide players and one forward). The children can be set up in a diamond to start the game and at other natural breaks in the game (kick-offs, goals kicks, etc.)

During the game, children must be allowed to run around freely. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOULD CHILDREN BE MADE TO STAND IN POSITION, STAND ON A LINE OR STAY IN A CERTAIN AREA, ETC.

Technical Emphasis

The following techniques should be covered with children (most indirectly) through the use of developmentally appropriate GAMES. The key techniques to be covered are:

1. Dribbling and running with the ball
2. Short passing (with multiple surfaces)
3. Shooting the ball (with multiple surfaces with emphasis on striking the ball with the 'laces')

In addition, the following techniques can be addressed indirectly through games:

1. Turning with the ball
2. Receiving the ball
3. Shielding the ball

Tactical Emphasis

Several areas can be covered with U7/U8 players gradually by the recreational coach:

1. Players need continual reinforcement to be ball-orientated.
2. Once most players are ball orientated, coaches can also focus on those players (it is very rare that it will be all players) who show a willingness to break out of the 'swarm' around the ball. As coaches see this happen, they need to encourage it and help teammates recognize a moment to pass.

3. Encouragement and indulging of players that run with the ball and/or dribble past defenders to move the ball forward.
4. Everybody attacks together and everybody defends together. If players are ball orientated this should happen naturally.
5. When the team is not in possession of the ball, what do the players do ... work to get the ball back (this is not an invitation to run defending clinics, but coaches need to clarify the difference between defense and attack with their players).

Practice Schedule

One or two '1 hour' practices per week.

Recommended Activities

Tag games with (and without) the ball, gate games, maze games, target games, 1 v 1 games, 2 v 2 games and small-sided scrimmages.

Player Equipment

Size 3 ball, athletic shoes, appropriate clothing, shin guards

Coaching License

"Y1" or "Y2" Certificate

U9/U10 Coach's Guide

Coaching Emphasis – Individual technical development, small-group decision-making and fun

Because of the cognitive and psychomotor abilities of U9/10 children, coaches should focus on teaching their players the key fundamental soccer techniques. Special emphasis should be placed on developing players who are willing and able to go 1v1. Coaches should not sacrifice their players' technical development in order to win games, regardless of what the parents want. Players' decision-making can be enhanced through small group play in small-sided games.

Soccer Knowledge

'Spreading Out' to create length and width when we have the ball, the 'moves' used by professional players and greater awareness of professional teams/players through watching 'pro' games.

Team Positions

Players can be exposed and asked to play a position. Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association recommends 3 defenders and 2 attackers. The goalkeeper should be encouraged to "join in" when the team is in possession and make a diamond on the ball side of the field by positioning between the two defenders on that side. However, coaches must remember that positions are 'fluid' not fixed and that, developmentally, many children will still have a difficult time playing a position. Coaches must make allowances for these children, enable them to roam and adjust their team accordingly. Rotate those players into the goalkeeper position, who are willing to go in goal.

Technique

The following techniques should be covered with children through the use of developmentally appropriate games (especially conditioned small-sided games). Drills are to be avoided by inexperienced coaches (drills focusing on intricate individual technique can be used for short periods by qualified, experienced soccer coaches). The techniques to be covered in the order of importance are:

1. Dribbling the ball (coaches should place special emphasis on developing the skills to go 1v1 and beat defenders).
2. Running with the ball to attack space.
3. Turning with the ball to elude a defender or change direction.
4. Shooting (nurture an aggressive attitude towards shooting and cover multiple shooting skills while stressing the volley and driven techniques).
5. Passing (with inside and outside of foot).
6. Receiving the ball (wedge and cushioning techniques to minimize the number of touches needed to control the ball).
7. Heading (to be introduced in a 'user friendly' manner).
8. Shielding the ball for possession.

Tactics

Below are some tactical considerations for the U10 coach. Coaches must remember that our players' technical development is vastly more important than tactics at this age. However, coaches can help players make better use of their greater technical prowess by making superior decisions. Team tactics can be addressed one practice out of every ten.

1. 1v1 or individual attacking tactics. Players must first be coached to be aggressive to take on defenders 1v1. In addition, they need to learn the techniques used to beat defenders 1v1. Players should be taught an array of 1v1 moves (ball feints, body feints, fakes, turns, etc.). Only then can we guide players to apply them effectively by learning how, when and where to beat defenders. Players need help becoming more comfortable when playing with their back to the opponent's goal.
2. Creativity. Players need to be encouraged to improvise and take risks in solving tactical problems. Coaches and players need to remember the difference between creative decisions (good/unique ideas...that might not always work out) and bad decisions (making the same mistake twice!).
3. Vision. Players should be encouraged to 'get their heads up', to 'see the field' and to scan for options before receiving the ball, so they already know upon controlling the ball what their next action will be.
4. Play quickly but with purpose. Coaches are compelled to discourage 'kick ball'. Players should not be allowed nor encouraged to kick, 'send' or 'dump' the ball aimlessly down the field. However, our players have to be encouraged to play (think, execute) quickly.
5. Small-group play. Focus on support play. Do players move or stand still when not in possession? Do they move into open spaces at the right time? Players should be encouraged to 'find' new positions to help their teammates, rather than be told where and when to move.
6. Individual defending. Do players try to recover the ball after losing possession? Encourage players to defend actively with caution, rather than over pursue the ball. Do not use a sweeper, since this will hinder individual defending development.
7. Team play. Does the team attack and defend together as a large group? Does the team transition quickly (on their own) from attack to defense after losing the ball and from defense to attack after winning the ball?

Practice Schedule

Two 'one hour' practices per week. Practices should not last more than 70 minutes. Players can be encouraged to attend a third 'skills' practice if it is offered by the club.

Recommended Activities

Tag games with the ball, 1v1 games, small group activities, small-sided conditioned games and small-sided scrimmages.

Player Equipment

All U10 players should have their own ball (size 4) to take home and practice, soccer shoes, appropriate clothing, shin guards.

Coaching License

"Y1" or "Y2" Certificate

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

U6

Ball Retrieve

Each player has a ball.

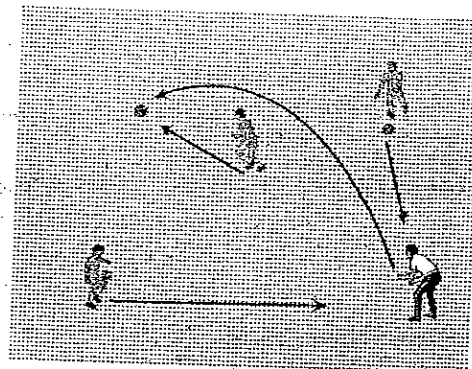
The player hands the coach their ball. (The coach can only handle one ball at a time).

The coach then tosses the ball away and the player must retrieve the ball as quickly as possible, bringing it back to the coach anyway they want. The players are encouraged to bring the ball back a different way each time.

After several opportunities to bring the ball back, the coach then calls out a number between 1 and 15 as the player gives the coach the ball. The player's challenge is to bring back the ball touching the ball that number of times.

VARIATION:

The coach can also move, so that the players must look up to see where the coach is now standing.



Body Part Dribble

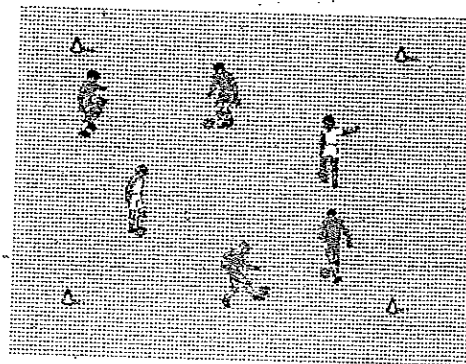
Within a confined area, players stand in random formation, each with a ball.

On the command, players dribble to keep control while avoiding touching others. While they dribble, coach calls out a body part and player immediately stops the ball with that body part. Call 'right elbow', 'chin', 'left knee' etc.

Vary by playing "Simon Says"

Key Points

- Dribbling in a confined area, close control, changing direction, changing speed.
- Reaction time, reinforce knowledge of body parts.
- Reading the environment, looking and moving into open spaces.
- Working within a group, positive interaction, listening skills, tuning into exactly what the coach/leader is saying.



Gates

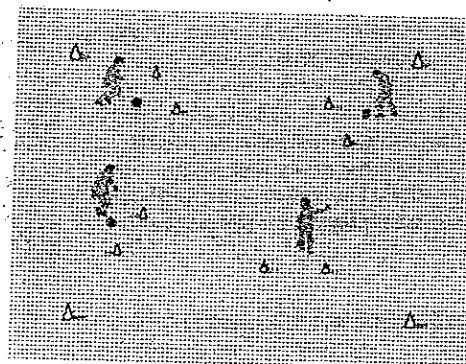
Place cones three yards apart as small goals or 'gates' randomly spaced in a 30 x 30 yard area. Each player has a ball.

On the signal, players must dribble their ball through as many gates as possible in 60 seconds. At the conclusion, ask the players "How many gates did you dribble through?" (Be ready for their answers.)

Then pose the next challenge: "Can you go again and improve on your last try?"

Key Points

- Dribbling to many targets
- Changing direction, agility, running
- Deciding which gates to do in the shortest amount of time
- All players are able to participate and improve at their level.



The Blob

This is a variation of an age old tag game.

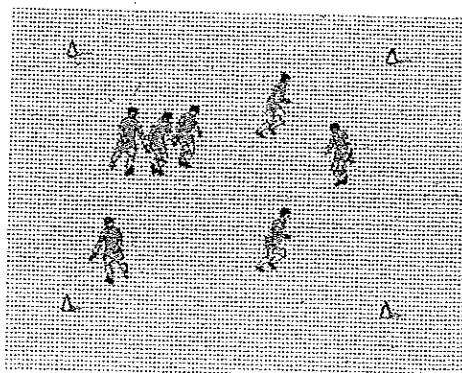
Players are randomly spaced on a half field, or an area of 30 x 40 yards.

The player that is "it", runs and tries to tag the other players. As a player is tagged, they join hands and begin to form 'the blob'. Joined players try to tag others.

When the blob reaches six players, it can break up and mutate into 2 blobs of 3. Continue until all players are caught.

Key Points

- Running, changing direction
- Decision making
- Group Success, giving players a sense of belonging



U6 (cont'd)

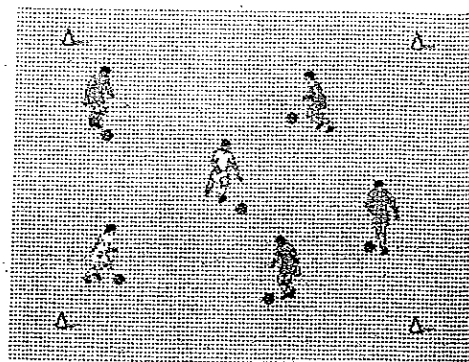
Everybody's It

Within a confined area, players stand in random formation, each with a ball.

Each player dribbles within area attempting to tag anyone while maintaining control of the ball. Each time a player tags someone, he/she receives a point.

Key Points

- Dribbling, changing direction, changing speed. Using all foot surfaces, close control.
- Balance, expanding peripheral vision, agility.
- Shielding, getting away from players, looking to attack players. Quick decision making.
- Positive interaction within entire group.
- Developing an attack and defensive posture.



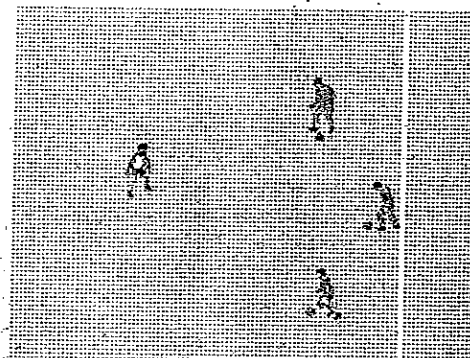
Red Light, Green Light

Two lines 20-30 yards apart. All players have a ball, except the player who is "IT". Players with a ball start at one line, the player that is "IT" is at the other.

"IT" is facing away from his or her teammates and calls "Green light". Players begin dribbling their ball towards "IT" and the other line. When "IT" calls "Red Light", players must freeze by placing their foot on top of the ball, before "IT" turns around and catches them still dribbling. Anyone caught must go back to the starting line. The first player to cross the end line, becomes the new "IT" or is permitted to pick someone else who may not have been "IT".

Key Points

- Dribbling under close control.
- Promotes quick reaction time and balance.
- Anticipation of stop signal.
- Everyone can play and allows for the observation of different personality types. Observe to see which players are risk takers and move quickly or which players are more cautious and may move slower, but under more control.



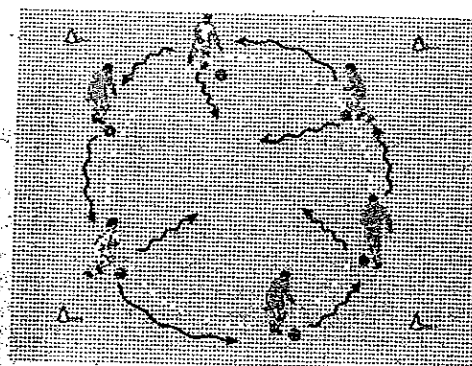
Cross Over

Players work in a circle formation, each with a ball.

Players dribble around the circle. On the coach's signal, the players attempt to cross through the circle without touching each other. If group is large, have players count off by two. When the coach calls number one or two, players quickly turn and dribble across the circle without touching other players or their soccer balls.

Key Points

- Dribbling, changing direction, close control.
- Balance, agility, quick reaction time.
- Looking for space, reading the environment.
- Working within a group.



I Can Do Something, Can You?

This is a fun, creative and empowering activity.

The challenges from the coach can be with and without a ball.

Examples:

The coach says, "I can do something without the ball, can you?" and begins skipping, at which time the players skip in a random fashion within a defined area.

The coach then repeats the challenge and demonstrates another movement.

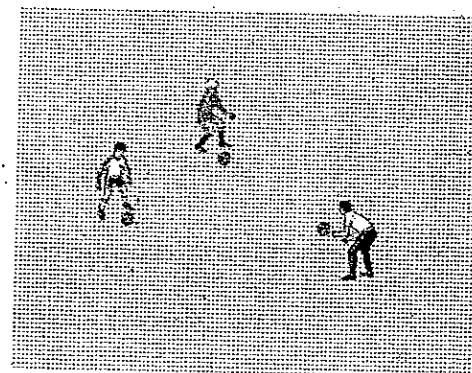
Hopping, running and clapping, walking backwards, whatever you can think of.

After the players get the hang of it, the coach then asks the players, "Who can show us something they can do without the ball? (Be ready for anything)"

After several opportunities for the players to express themselves, the coach now goes through the same challenging phase, but this time with a ball.

i.e., "I can do something with the ball, can you?"

And then again, involve the players with the chance to show what they can do with the ball.



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

U8

Ball Retrieve - In Pairs

Each pair has a ball

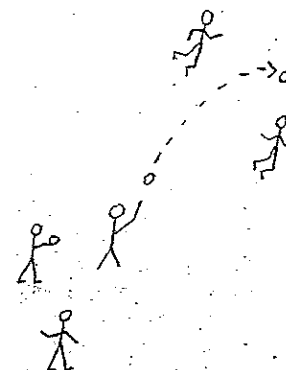
The player hands the coach their ball. (The coach can only handle one ball at a time).

The coach then tosses the ball away and the pair must retrieve the ball as quickly as possible, bringing it back to the coach anyway they want. The players are encouraged to bring the ball back a different way each time.

After several opportunities to bring the ball back, the coach then calls out a number between 1 and 15 as the player gives the coach the ball. The player's challenge is to bring back the ball touching the ball that number of times.

VARIATION:

The coach can also move, so that the players must look up to see where the coach is now standing.



Pac Man

Players work in a 20 x 20 yard area, with one player with the ball.

Player with the ball dribbles and attempts to hit the other players below the waist by passing the ball at them. Players try to avoid getting hit with the ball. Once a player is hit, he gets his ball and becomes the second 'Pac Man'.

Game continues until all players have been hit and have a ball.

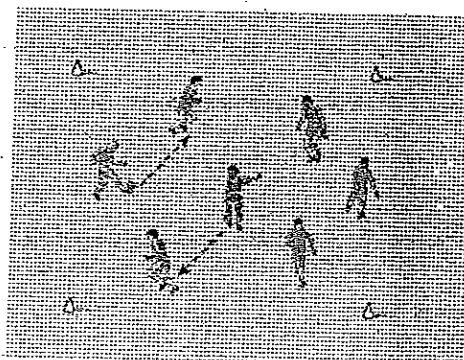
Key Points

Dribbling and passing, trying to hit a moving target. Encouraging quick preparation and passing of the ball. Deceptive passing and use of either foot.

Cardiorespiratory endurance, fitness, agility, jumping.

Looking for players, chasing, tracking, playing to a target. The first step in teaching players to attack someone with the ball. Emphasis on creating an assertive and attack posture with the ball.

Allows all ability levels to play equally. Allows each player to be successful. If players are hit early, they will dribble longer. If they manage to avoid getting hit until the end, their challenge greatly increases.



Gate Passing In Pairs

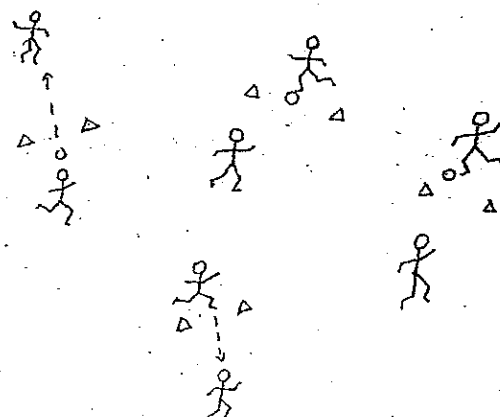
Each pair has a ball, stand opposite each other with a cone 'gate' between them. Players practice passing between the cones after demonstration by the coach (gates placed randomly around area).

After a bit of practice see how many they can get in 15 seconds, then let them try to beat that score.

Coach may need to emphasize key technical points after first round.

Try one touch. Change distance between players or gate size to make more or less difficult.

Now let players move about and pass through gates, see how many they can get in 15 seconds (they can't go through the same gate twice).



Knock the Ball Off the Cone

Two balls per pair, one set on top of a disc cone. Players take turns trying to pass the ball into the one atop the cone, score a point every time they are successful. Progress to two points if they can hit it with one touch.



U8 (cont'd)

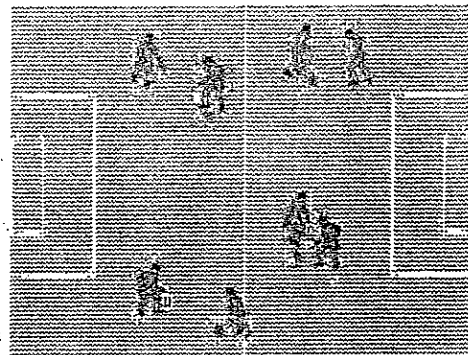
Balls Galore

Play on a half or full field with goals. Divide the players into two teams of 6-11 per team, including goal keepers, with 3-6 balls.

Play a normal small-sided game, with the exception of playing with more than one ball. If the players always chase after one ball in a beehive fashion, give them more honey!

Key Points

- A high degree of dribbling, passing, receiving, heading and shooting during a game.
- All the physical demands of a game. Short and long distance running. Changing direction, fighting for the ball, etc.
- A great opportunity for the execution of individual and group tactics. The game breaks down into many 1v1 duels, 2v1, 2v2, 3v1, 3v2, 3v3, and so on under real pressure of a match. Some players will stay in the back and defend calling for help; some players will track others the length of the field; some will take leadership roles.
- A very high opportunity for success in scoring goals and becoming very involved in the game. Players call for help from teammates. Opportunity for creativity through a highly motivating game. Problem solving and risk taking skills.

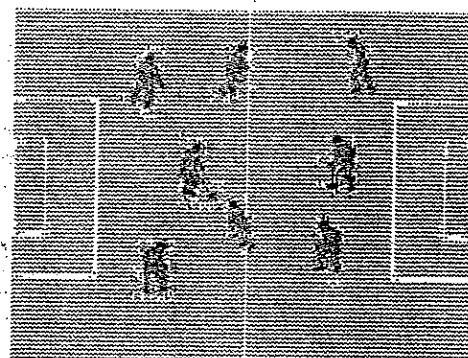


Small-sided 4v4, no goalkeepers

The final activity of every practice session should be a small-sided match randomly selected by the coach (do not pick captains to choose teams). The coach should simply divide by shirt colours, count off, or just split the group in two.

This small-sided match should ideally be a four vs four scrimmage without goalkeepers. The feedback from the coach should continue to be positive, but reduced to let children play. This is their time and their game. The coach should concentrate on observing player behaviours and to make sure that the players are safe.

The area should be adjusted to meet the needs of the players, but generally an area 25-30 yards wide and 35-40 yards in length should work.



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

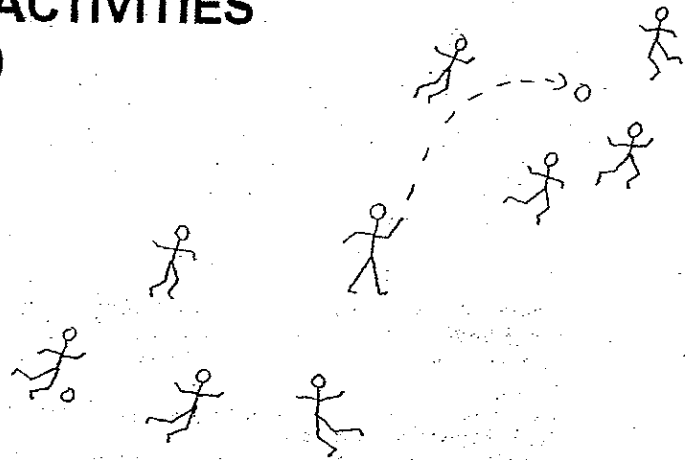
U10

Ball Retrieve – In Groups of Four

Each group has a ball and hands it to the coach. The coach then tosses the ball and calls out a number. The group must retrieve the ball and complete that Number of passes before finishing with the last pass at the coaches feet.

VARIATION:

The coach can move, so that players must look up to see where the coach is now standing.

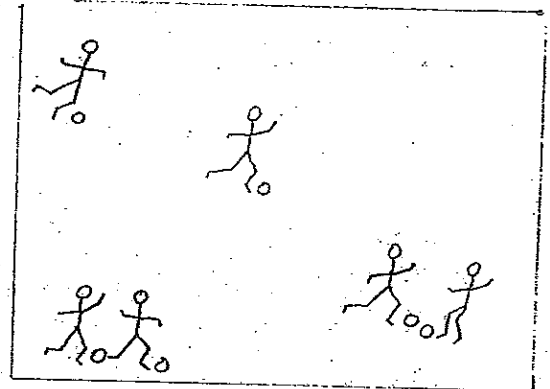


Knock Out

Each player with a ball in an area. While dribbling, players try to kick others' balls out while maintaining possession of their own. **Two rules:** players cannot leave their ball to kick another out, and everyone must keep moving at all times. Once kicked out, players must work on ball skills, juggling, etc. until there is a winner/s OR set up another area but smaller than the first. When a player is kicked out of the first area, they go to the other, then back again if kicked out again. This makes the game continuous and no one is 'eliminated'.

Key Points:

Shielding, changing direction and speed, vision of the whole field. Refined skill requirements for smaller area.



Four Corners

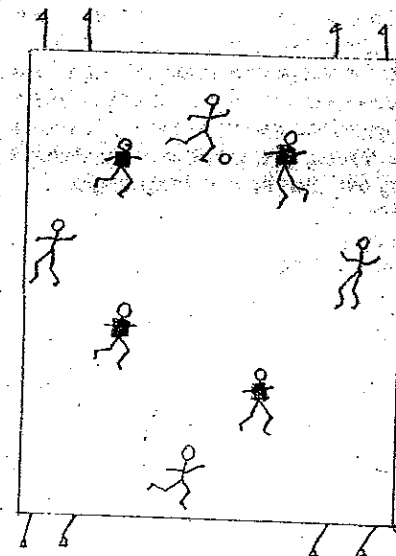
This is a small-sided game played with 4-8 players per team. The field size is 30-50 yards long and 20-40 yards wide. Goals are placed at each of the four corners of the field. These goals can be made with flags or cones and could be 4-7 yards apart.

The game is played with no goal keepers.

Each team must defend and attack two goals.

Key Points

- Dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting and heading.
- Cardiovascular endurance and quickness.
- Organizing and reorganizing an attack and defense.
- Collective play. Small group tactics of pressure, cover and balance.
- Teamwork and communication.



2 v 1

Divide players into groups of four, with one ball per group. Work in an area 10 x 20 with small goals. (use cones or shirts).

Play 2v1 with the second defender as goalkeeper. Once a goal is scored or the single player wins the ball, the goalkeeper comes onto the field and joins his partner. One player from the other team drops off and defends their goal, reversing roles with a 2v1 in favour of the other team.

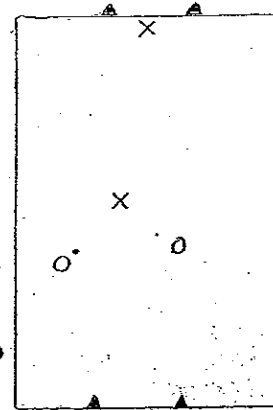
The team in possession of the ball always has both players out, while the defending team can only have one player on the field.

Variation:

Bring on the second player and play 2v2 emphasizing the transition from attack to defense and vice versa, as well as combination play.

Key Points

- Dribbling, passing, receiving under pressure of an opponent. All types of two player combinations - wall pass, takeover, double pass, overlap, and any variation thereof. Players will find a playing rhythm.
 - Quick short sprints, anaerobic fitness.
 - Decisions regarding angle and distance of support based on the amount of pressure (closeness) from the defender. The closer the defender is to the ball, the more support the second attacking player must provide to his teammate. When the defending player is not pressuring the ball the supporting player may run in advance of the ball to penetrate the defending area.
 - The player's abilities to read each other and the situation depends on the pressure on the ball.
- Cooperation between players when attacking and defending. Develops the ability to make quick decisions in small areas.



Triangle Goal

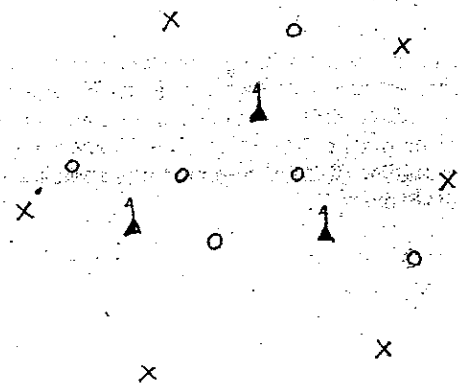
Organize players into two teams of 6-9 players. Using cones or flags create a triangle with each side approximately 6-8 yards apart. Placement of the three sided goal area should be in the center of your playing space. Outside boundaries are not that important, unless there are safety concerns with your space. The defending team places three players in the triangle who act as the goalkeeper for their triangle side.

The remaining players play with three players down on the field against the attacking team, i.e. 6v3 or 9v6.

If a goal is scored the attacking team retains possession. If the defending team wins the ball on the field or one of the three goalkeepers make a stop, there is a quick transition where three players from the new defending team must quickly take positions in the triangle.

Key Points

- Dribbling, passing, heading, receiving, shooting
- Cardiovascular endurance, sprinting, changing direction
- Playing with uneven numbers, team possession, changing the point the attack, develops transition play.
- Small group team play. Communication.



U10 (cont'd)

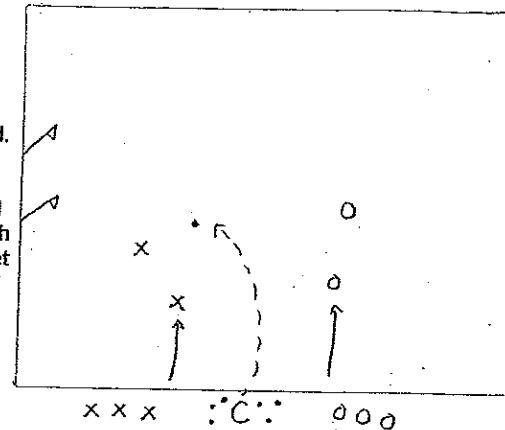
Get Outta Here

A modified playing area with two small goals and cones for the boundaries is all that is necessary to create the field of play. Next, all of the available balls are placed at the feet of the coach who is standing at the middle of the field on one of the touch lines. (This is absolutely necessary to keep the activity moving). Divide the players into two groups. The groups then line up on either side of the coach at the middle of the field.

The play is begun by the coach playing a ball onto the field and calling out a number. That many players from each team enter and play until the ball is out or a goal is scored. When this occurs the coach shouts "Get Outta Here.", at which point all players must return to the end of their line and a new number is called. The coach plays one of the balls at his feet into the game enabling him/her to pass a ball to a player who hasn't had a lot touches, or into an open space that might improve upon bunching. When the coach is completely out of balls, the game is halted and ALL of the players run with haste to get all the balls back to the coach so that the game can be resumed. Trust me, it works and they LOVE IT!!

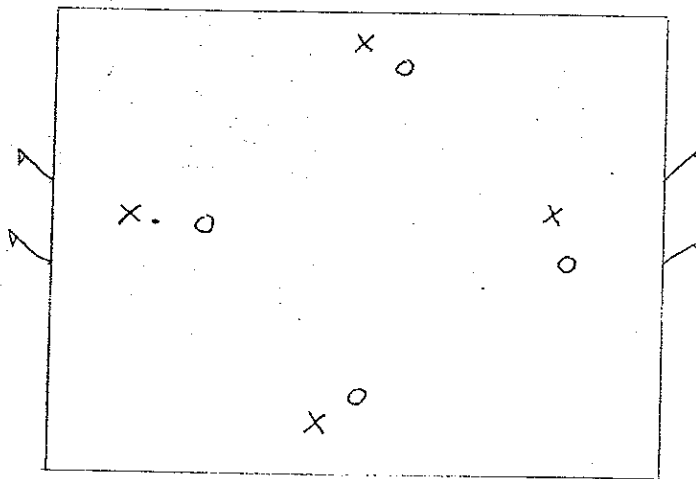
Key Points

- Dribbling, short passing, receiving
- Quickness, sprinting, anaerobic endurance
- Working in pairs, two player combinations
- Concentration, team work



Small Sided 4v4, No Goalkeepers

The final activity of every practice session should be a small-sided match randomly selected by the coach (do not pick captains to choose teams). The coach should simply divide by shirt colors, count off, or just split the group in two. This small-sided match should ideally be a four vs four scrimmage without goalkeepers. The feedback from the coach should continue to be positive, but reduced to let children play. This is their time and their game. The coach should concentrate on observing player behavior and to make sure that the players are safe. The area should be adjusted to meet the needs of the players, but generally an area 25-30 yards wide and 35-40 yards in length should work.



HAVE MORE FUN at practice

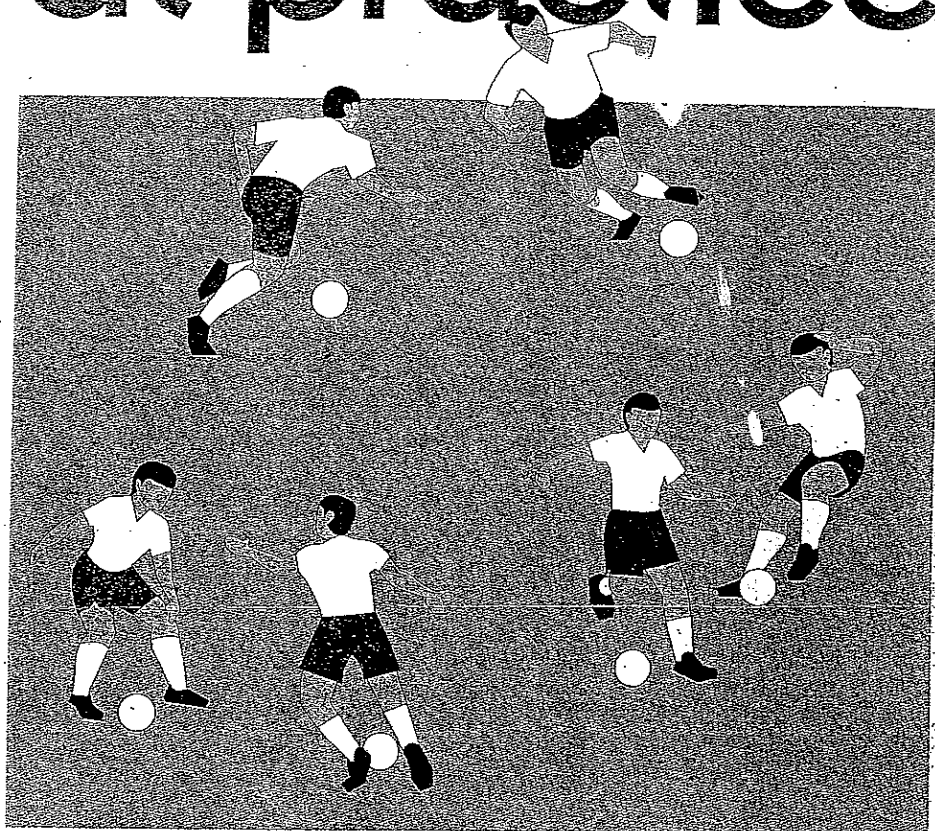
Some coaches get stuck in the rut of drills, drills, drills. Their players quickly get bored and lose interest. Other coaches skip the drills and just have the kids go out and scrimmage. Not a bad approach, but continual scrimmaging often slows the development of weaker players. It doesn't allow coaches to focus on improving individual and team weaknesses.

Dr. Ron Quinn, a U.S. Soccer staff coach and the women's head soccer coach at Xavier University, believes in spending most of a team's practice time playing small-sided games. His book "Peak Performance" explains dozens of such games — eight of which are described here. While the games may not replace drills or scrimmages, they give coaches fun ways to develop skills and tactical understanding.

The key behind the games is opportunity. The small sides give each player lots of chances to touch the ball. The more ball contact a player gets, the faster he or she develops skills. Similarly, the more times a player has to decide what to do with the ball, the faster he or she develops tactical understanding.

Small-sided games can be used with any age group. If a game is too easy for your players — or too difficult — it can be easily modified. You can increase or decrease the playing area, the length of the game and the number of balls, players or goals. You can also specify particular types of passes. These changes allow all players to participate at their own ability levels.

The games and exercises shown here will increase player motivation, allow for growth and individual differences and, most importantly, they'll develop excited, enthusiastic players.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GUANNE HINZE

HOSPITAL TAG (u8)

Setup: Each player has a ball. The number of players and size of the playing area for all the games should be determined by the skill level of the players. For this game, try starting with five players within a boxed area 10-15 yards on each side.

Rules: Each player dribbles and attempts to tag any player while maintaining control of the ball. Each time a player is tagged somewhere, that spot becomes injured. The player must hold that spot and continue dribbling. After he's been touched three times, the player must go to a designated place off the field (the hospital) and do an activity chosen by the coach to get healed (5-10 alternating ball touches with the feet, for example) before rejoining the game.

eight great games that teach kids skills and tactics

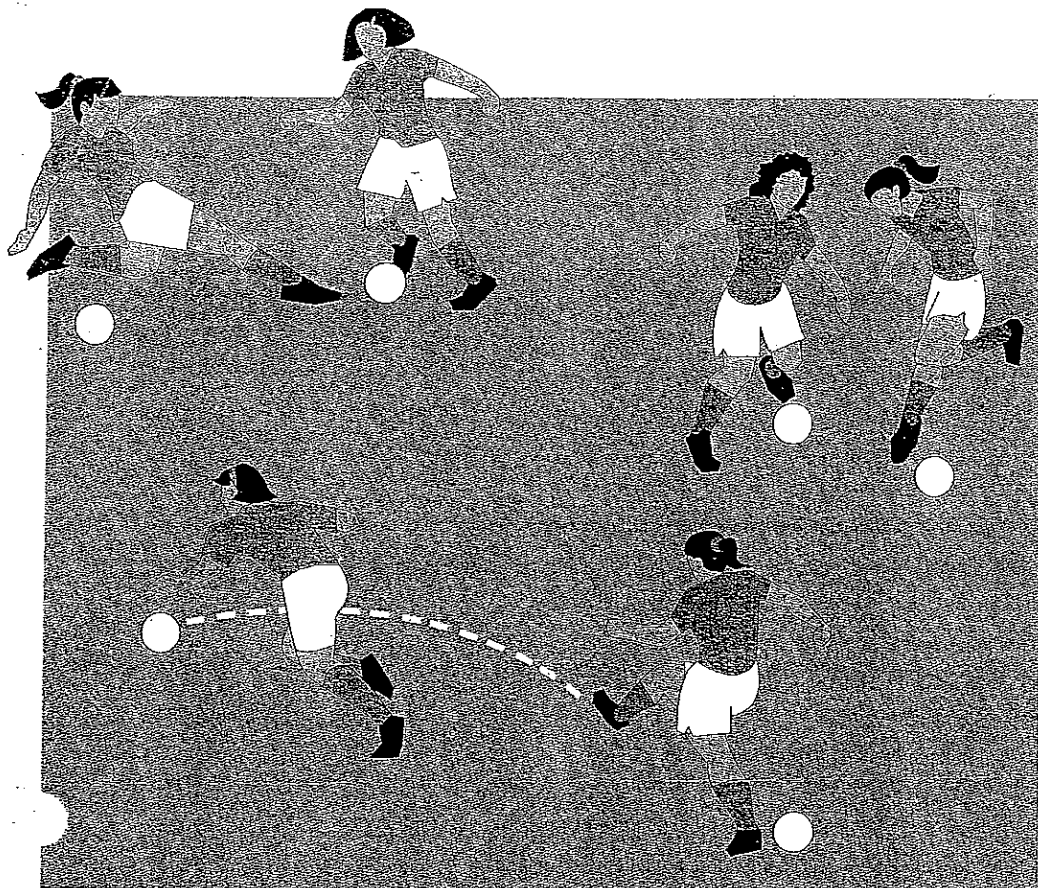
KNOCKOUT

(46/8)

Setup: A confined area about 20 yards by 20 yards. Each player has a ball.

Rules: Each player dribbles her ball and tries to kick the other players' balls away. When

player's ball gets kicked, that player must immediately chase it. If she can get to it before it stops rolling, she stays in the game. If the ball stops rolling, she must do a drill of the coach's choosing before reentering. After a few minutes, the coach may want to say that there are only 30 seconds left in the game. If a player's ball gets kicked out after this point, that player must stay out. This way, the most anyone stays out of the game is 30 seconds. The key is to keep everyone involved.



(08)

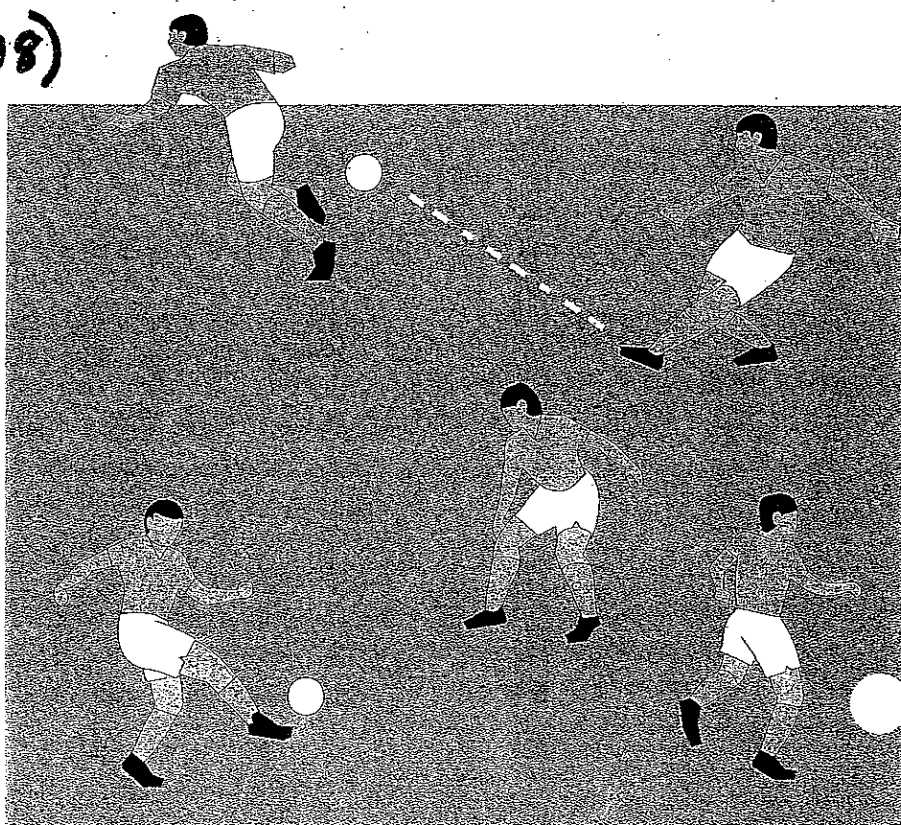
PAC MAN

Setup: A confined area about 20 yards by 20 yards. Each player has a ball.

Rules: Pac Man controls his ball while the other players run freely without controlling their balls. Pac Man dribbles and attempts to hit the other players below the waist.

When a player is hit, he gets his ball and becomes the second Pac Man. The game continues until all players have become a Pac Man.

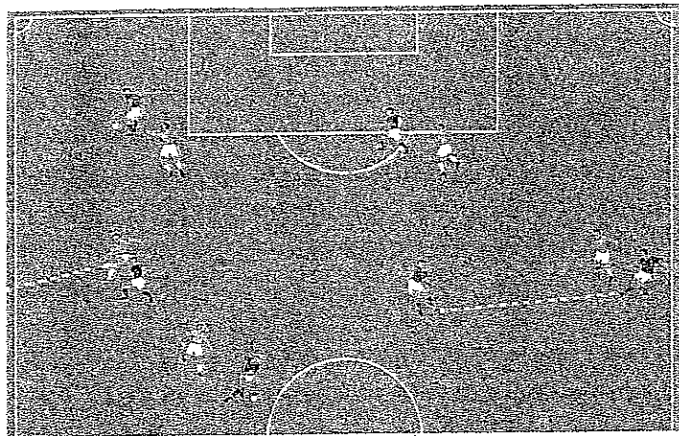
When playing this game with girls, call it Pac Woman or Pac Girl!!



TEAM KNOCKOUT (U8)

Setup: One ball for every two people; two teams on half a field.

Rules: Team A is on the field. Each player on Team A has a ball. On the signal, Team B



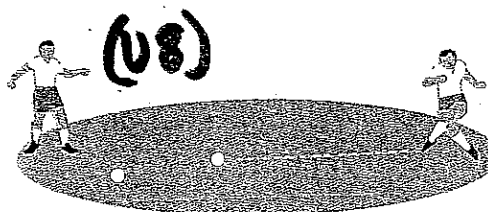
runs onto the field and attempts to kick all the balls off the field. The coach starts the clock on the signal and stops it when the last ball is kicked off the field. Team A players whose balls are kicked off the field help other teammates by getting into position to receive passes. Time stops when Team B kicks all the balls off the field.

Vary the game by having Team B players gain possession of the balls and kick them into the goal. Shots on goal should be taken outside the penalty box. The clock stops when all the balls have been kicked into the goal. Team A players who have lost possession attempt to regain control of the ball or help teammates by receiving passes.

MARBLES

Setup: One ball per person; players are set up in pairs. Play in a large, open space.

Rules: This is a passing game where players take turns trying to hit each other's balls. It starts with one player playing his ball away 5-10 yards while the second player attempts to pass his ball and hit his partner's ball. On a hit, score a point. On a miss, the



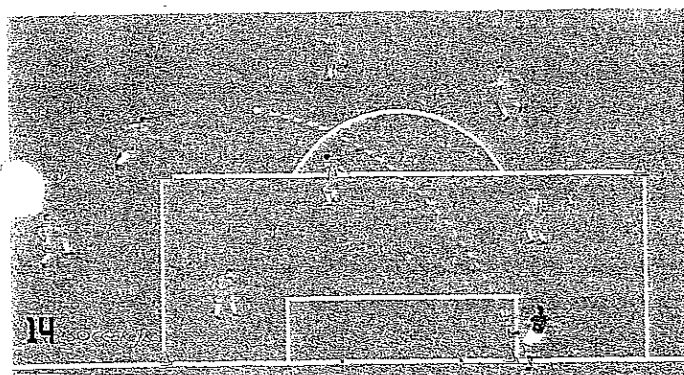
moment the passed ball moves completely past the other ball, the next player's turn

begins and he now tries to hit his partner's ball. Players immediately chase their balls after passing so that if their partners miss, they are ready to strike their balls. After a hit, restart the game with a new pass.

BASEBALL (U8)

Setup: Two teams on a baseball diamond with bases and an outfield, or use the penalty box with the 6-yard-line mark on the right side of the goal as home plate. The corners of the box are first, second and third bases.

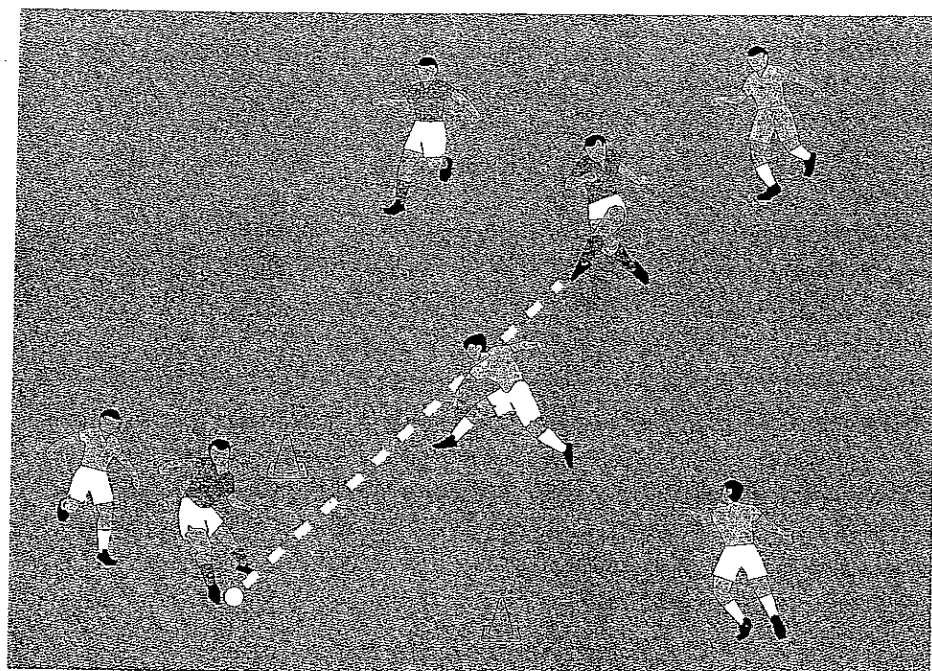
Rules: Play the game like regular baseball



except for two rule changes: 1. Play with no outs so everyone gets a turn at bat. The inning is over when everyone has kicked. 2. The fielding team tries to place the ball in the goal before the kicker completes his run to home plate. One variation may be that all shots must come from outside the penalty box. Players on the fielding team can dribble or pass to each other to get the ball into shooting position. The kicker is out if the ball goes into the net before he crosses home plate. If he crosses home plate before a goal is scored, a run is scored. Depending on the skill level of your players, you may have them play three-, two- or one-touch or state that the shot must cross the goal line in the air.

MANY GOALS

Setup: Two teams of ^{3/4} ~~3~~ players each. Play on half a field with three or four goals set up throughout the field, with more goals if you play



(U8) (A FORWARD'S DREAM)

on a full field. For goals, use cones set about six feet apart. You may use large goals, too.

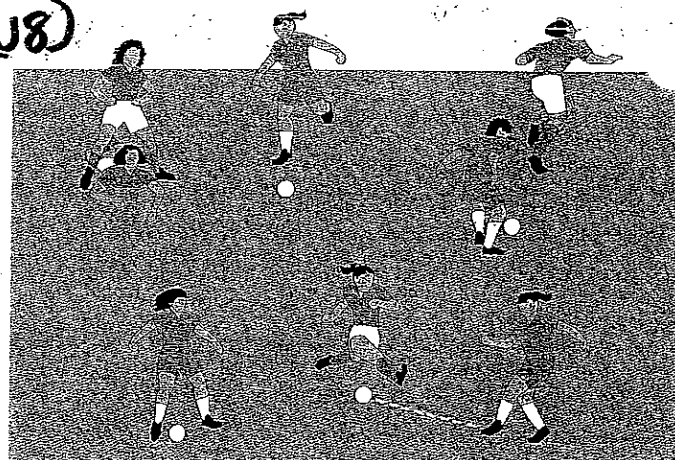
Rules: The coach tosses a ball in the air to start the game. The team that gains possession tries to score goals in the cone goals or in the large goal. A goal in the cones counts only if a teammate is on the other side of the goal and cleanly receives the ball without an opponent intercepting it or knocking it away. Score one point for every goal put in the cone goals and two points for those that go in the large goal. Vary the game by playing with or without goalkeepers and by playing with more than one ball.

DEFROST TAG

Setup: Two equal teams with one ball for every two players. Play in a confined area about 20-30 yards on each side. One team starts without balls in the area, and the other team starts with balls outside the area.

Rules: On the coach's signal, the team with the balls dribbles into the area and tries to hit the other players below the waist. The players without the balls do all they can to avoid getting hit by a ball. Once a player is hit (below the waist) with a ball, she becomes frozen and stands with her legs apart. The objective is to freeze the entire team. A frozen player can only get defrosted and rejoin

(U8)



the game when a teammate crawls through her legs. When a teammate is crawling through another player's legs, she and her teammate are safe from getting hit until she has finished the crawl. This game can be played with a time limit or until all players are frozen.

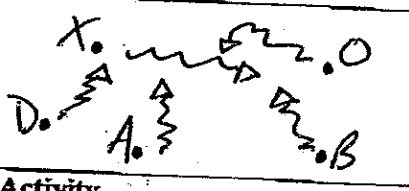
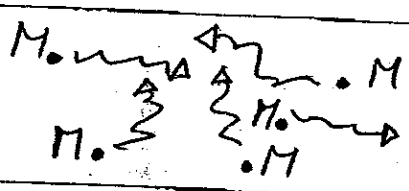
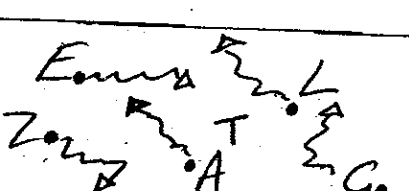
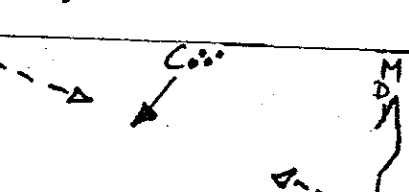
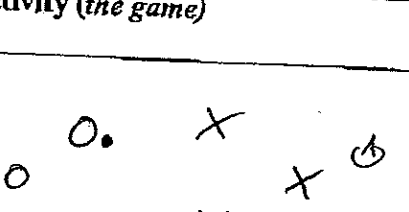
31 MORE GAMES

To get a copy of Ron Quinn's book "Peak Performance," which includes 53 more fun games, coaching concepts and sample practice lessons, send a check for \$23.50 to: QSM Consultants, P.O. Box 15176, Cincinnati, OH 45215, or call (513) 745-1084 (days) or (513) 761-6240 (evenings).



U.S. Soccer Youth Certificate Course Lesson Plan

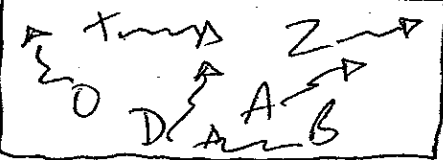
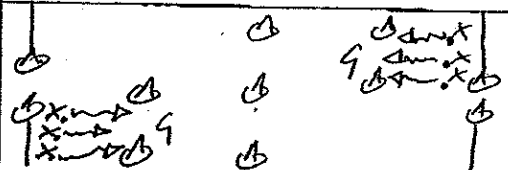
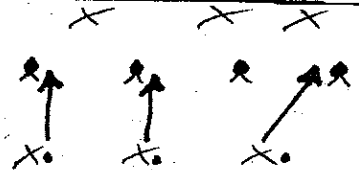
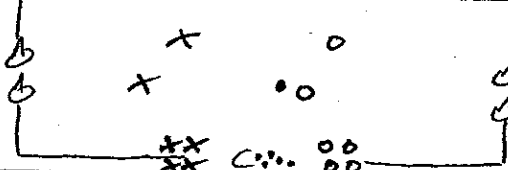
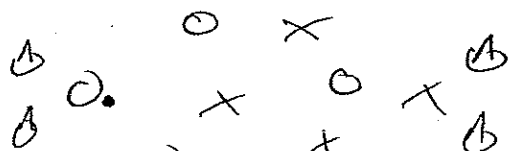
Name: WISCONSIN YOUTH SOCCER ASSOC. Date: _____
 Age Group: U6 Site Location (i.e. school or field location, state): _____
 Theme: NO THEME NECESSARY WITH U6'S

Activity	Coaching Points
1 st Activity (warm-up)	IDENTIFIERS
	PLAYERS RUN AROUND PLAYING AREA AT RANDOM. COACH CALLS OUT IDENTIFIER OF A GROUP OF PLAYERS OR PLAYER, WHO THEN BECOME HUNTERS. WHO CAN TAG THE MOST PLAYERS IN A MINUTE? IDENTIFIERS CAN BE: HAIR COLOR, T-SHIRT COLOR, SOCK COLORS, LETTER OF NAME, etc. PROGRESSIONS: EVERYBODY HAS A BALL; PLAYERS DRIBBLE AND "HUNT" WHILE KEEPING THEIR BALL CLOSE
2 nd Activity	DOG AND MASTER
	EACH PLAYER (MASTER) DRIBBLES THEIR BALL (DOG). THE COACH CALLS OUT VARIOUS COMMANDS: KEEP HIM ON A SHORT LEASH, DOG RUNS AWAY THEN CATCH IT, MASTER STROKES DOG, MASTER JOSS WITH DOG, MASTERS SLAP DOGS, etc. INTRODUCTION: TALL CONES AS TREES (STAY AWAY FROM TREES), INTRODUCE AN EVIL DOG CATCHER WHO KICKS BALL OUT OF PARK (PLAYERS HAVE TO SEE PARK RANGER (COACH) TO GET BACK INTO PARK)
3 rd Activity	TIGERS IN THE JUNGLE
	EACH CHILD CHOOSES TO BE A TYPE OF ANIMAL THAT LIVES IN THE JUNGLE & MAKES THE SOUND OF THAT ANIMAL. ONLY TIGERS ARE NOT ALLOWED. THE TIGER IS MOST FEARED & KICKS BALLS OUT OF THE JUNGLE INTO THE SWAMP. IF A BALL IS KICKED IN THE SWAMP, THE ANIMALS CAN BRING IT BACK, BUT MUST STAND WITH LEGS APART & BALL IN AIR. WHEN ANOTHER ANIMAL DRIBBLES THRU THEIR LEGS, THEY'RE FREE TO PLAY AGAIN. PROGRESSIONS: ANIMALS DRIBBLE ONLY USING LEFT FOOT, OUTSIDE OF FEET, etc.
4 th Activity	DISNEY GAME
	2 TEAMS OF EQUAL NUMBER STAND AT EACH END OF A 25x18Y AREA. GIVE EACH PLAYER A DISNEY CHARACTER NAME (MAKE SURE THERE'S A MATCHING CHARACTER AT EACH END). COACH SENDS IN A BALL & CALLS OUT A CHARACTER NAME. THESE 2 PLAYERS COME IN & PLAY 1V1. AFTER A GOAL IS SCORED OR THE BALL GOES OUT, THE PLAYERS GO BACK TO THEIR STARTING SPOT. PROGRESSIONS: 2 NAMES FOR 2V2, WITH OLDER PLAYERS TRY CALLING OUT 2 DIFFERENT NAMES (1ST NAME FROM ONE END, 2ND NAME FROM OTHER). COMMENTS: Don't be afraid to play more than 1V1 at a time
5 th Activity (the game)	2V2 OR 3V3
	



U.S. Soccer Youth Certificate Course Lesson Plan

Name: WISCONSIN YOUTH SOCCER ASSOC. Date: _____
 Age Group: U8's Site Location (i.e. school or field location, state): _____
 Theme: THEME NOT NECESSARY FOR A U8 PRACTICE

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) 	TAIL TAG (IN A DEFINED AREA) <p>EACH PLAYER HAS A VEST/BIB TUCKED INTO THE BACK OF THEIR SHORTS. UNTIL GAME IS STARTED BY COACH. WHEN GAME STARTS, GOAL IS TO AS MANY TAGS AS POSSIBLE (KEEP PLAYING IF YOURS GETS STOLEN). WHO TAGS THE MOST? THEN PLAY AGAIN AND SEE WHO TAGS THE MOST & WHO KNEW THE GATONE TO LOSE A TAIL!</p> <p>PROGRESSIONS: EACH PLAYER DRIBBLES A BALL TOO PLAYED DRIBBLE BALL IN A SPECIFIC METHOD</p>
2nd Activity 	ENTRANCES AND EXITS <p>DIVIDE PLAYERS INTO 2 GROUPS, ONE ON EACH END LINE OF A FIELD OF AN APPROPRIATE SIZE. THE 2 TEAMS FACE EACH OTHER AND EACH PLAYER HAS A BALL. MAINTAIN CENTRAL LINE WITH A FLAG OR TAIL COME ON EACH SIDE LINE, CALL THE LINE BETWEEN THE TEAMS THE 'BRIDGE'. PLACE ONE DEFENDER ON EACH BRIDGE. THE 'X'S' HAVE TO DRIBBLE PAST THE GUARD(S) TO GET TO OTHER SIDE TO SHOOT, THEN GET 4 ROOM INSIDE THE 2 BRIDGES. PROGRESSIONS: AT START ADD 1 PLAYER TO GO THROUGH AS A GROUP, THEN HAVE THEM TRY TO GET THROUGH INDIVIDUALLY</p>
3rd Activity 	BALL HUNTING <p>ON THE BASELINE OF A RECTANGULAR AREA ARE 6-8 PLAYERS. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PLAYING AREA ARE 3 CONES, EACH WITH A BALL ON TOP OF IT. THE PLAYERS SHOOT FROM SIMULTANEOUSLY TRYING TO KNOCK BALLS OFF THE CONES. BALLS THAT ARE KNOCKED OFF ARE IMMEDIATELY PUT BACK ON THE CONES. WHO HITS THE MOST BALLS IN 2 MINUTES? PROGRESSIONS: SHOOT USING ANY SURFACE, SHOOT USING LACES, SHOOT USING INSIDE OF FOOT, ETC.</p>
4th Activity 	"OUT OF THERE" <p>O's attack the left goal & X's the right goal. If a ball goes over a side-line or end-line everyone is outta there! If a team scores they stay on & the other team swaps 2 players in asap. The coach turns balls in quickly as possible as demanded by the game. The coach doesn't say anything when turning balls in, they control who's out!! PROGRESSIONS: PLAY 1V1 THEN 2V2</p>
5th Activity (the game) 	3v3 or 4v4

Skills to be Taught:

1. **Baggio Turn** (Roll ball with the sole of the right foot under right hip. After rolling the ball, clear out right hip by stepping inside the line of the ball and take away with the inside of the left foot)
2. **Outside Hook** (Some distance from the ball, reach out with a relatively straight leg and chop down on the ball with the outside of the foot so the ball changes its direction of movement 180 degrees. Take ball away with the outside of the same foot)

Warm-Up (10 Minutes)

"Body-part Dribble." Each player dribbles a ball. Tell the players to stop the ball with a body part... be creative. Also, you can have the players dribble the ball with different surfaces. Progression:

1. Stop the ball with knee, chest, elbow, head, etc.
2. Dribble the ball using left foot, bottoms of feet, knees, shoulders, head, etc.
3. Dribble the ball but after 5/6 touch, change direction by rolling ball with sole of foot, using the heel of foot, by stopping the ball, etc.

Skill Teaching (10 minutes)

Teach the Baggio and Outside Hook Turns. This can be done as a large group with a ball each or in a "drill-type" activity. If you use a "drill-type" activity, it should be completed quickly.

Skill Repetition Game (5 - 10 minutes)

"Monster Turns." Let the players dribble around in a defined area. 2-4 players do not have a ball and are "taggers." The other players have their ball and dribble around from "tagger to tagger." They must approach a "tagger" and execute a turn without their ball being touched. Play for a minute and see who gets the most turns without having their ball touched. Switch "taggers" and play again. Add extra points for the featured turns (both left and right).

1 v 1 Games (10 minutes)

"Multiple Goals Game." Set-up 9 goals throughout your playing area. Players play 1 v 1 and can score in any goal. A player scores by dribbling through a goal and stopping the ball within 2 yards. He then leaves the ball for his partner, who can score in any goal... except the one just scored upon. Show the kids after a couple of games that you can lead your defender to one and then turn to attack another. Add points for executing a Baggio or Outside Hook Turn before scoring.

3 v 3 or 4 v 4 Street Soccer Games (20+ minutes)

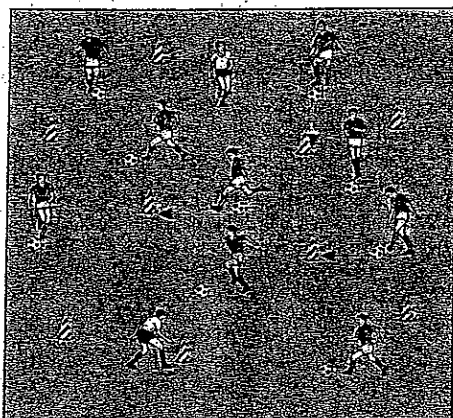
4 v 4 games (or 3 v 3 with smaller groups) to be played for at least 5 minutes per game (2 games are played at same time). Before first game and at the end of each other game, get the children on a line and mix them into different teams (1, 2, 3, 4; 1, 2, 3, 4; etc). All teams to play a diamond formation (1 defender, 2 midfielders and 1 forward). You can play the 2 games simultaneously on the same field by having one game played N-S and the other E-W. Keep coaching to a minimum. Keep interruptions to a minimum, but remind the kids to try and maintain the diamond as they play.

ers: Start 'em early

Bingo (U6)

1 GAME SETUP

A number of cones are distributed throughout the field. Two players are the "replacers;" each of the others has a ball.



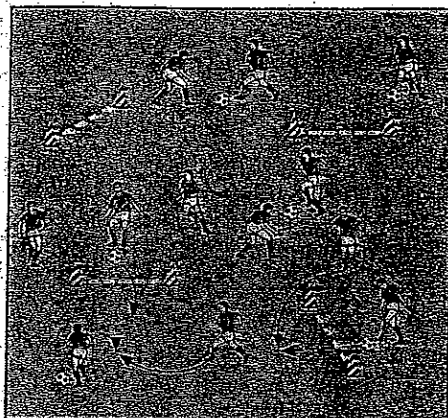
CONCEPT

The players with balls try to knock down as many cones as possible with their balls. The "replacers" (all players take turns in this role) set up the cones as fast as they're knocked down. When a player knocks down a cone, he yells "Bingo!" (the sound adds to the excitement). Who can score the most "Bingos?"

Every man for himself (U8)

2 GAME SETUP

Four mini-goals are set up in a field. There are about half as many balls as players.



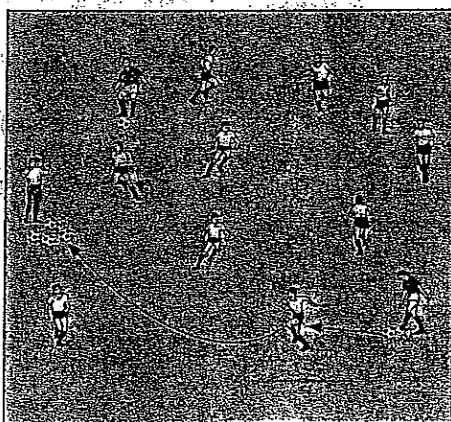
CONCEPT

Each player tries to win a ball and then score a goal by shooting between the cones. Each goal counts one point. After scoring, a player must move to a different goal. Which player can score the most goals in 8 minutes?

Hunters and rabbits (U8)

3 GAME SETUP

Two players (hunters) have one ball each. The other players (rabbits) spread out over the field. The coach stands off to the side with more balls.



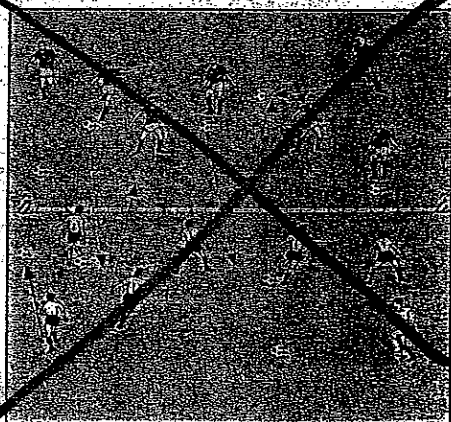
CONCEPT

The hunters try to "shoot" the rabbits with their balls. When a rabbit is hit, he gets a ball from the coach and becomes a hunter too. The round ends when only two rabbits are left; they become the first hunters for the next round.

4 GAME SETUP

A centerline divides the field in half. Players are divided into two teams, one in each half. There are about half as many balls as players.

Clean up your field (U8)



CONCEPT

Each team tries to keep its own half "clean" by shooting all the balls into the other half as fast as possible. Players may not cross the centerline (shooting line). From time to time the coach whistles; all players freeze and the balls are counted. The team with fewer balls in its half scores one point (up to five points).

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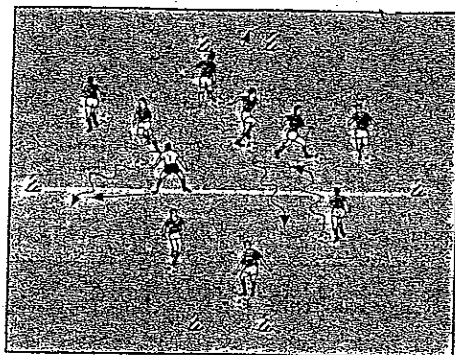
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Great wall of china (U6)

5 GAME SETUP

Each player has a ball. The "Great Wall" is the coach, who moves back and forth along the centerline. A goal is marked on each endline.



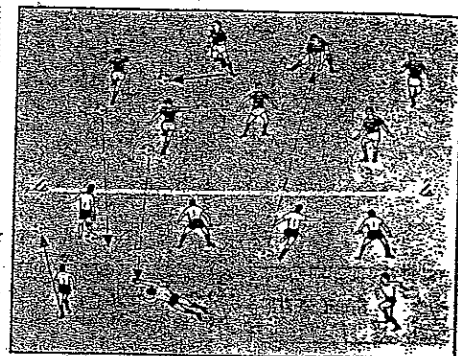
CONCEPT

Each player tries to dribble from one goal to the other, while the coach moves back and forth, trying to keep everyone from crossing. Players must wait for a hole and "scoot" through. Each goal scores one point, but if the coach touches a player's ball, that player loses a point. Who can score the most points in 8 minutes?

(U8) Shooting at the wall (Indoors)

6 GAME SETUP

Two teams face each other, one in each half. The centerline is clearly marked. There are about half as many balls as players.



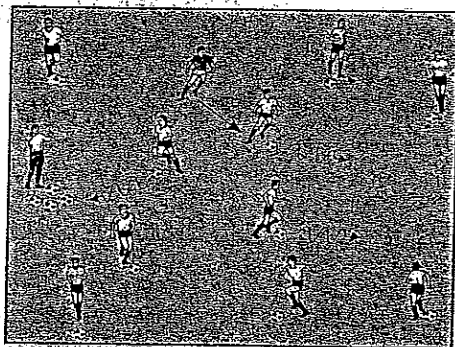
CONCEPT

Each player tries to hit the opposite wall with a ball, without crossing the centerline. At the same time, each player is goalkeeper and may stop incoming shots with his hands. Players may only shoot balls that are at rest (lay down the ball, look, run, shoot). Which team can score the most hits in 10 minutes?

Tigerball (U6/8)

7 GAME SETUP

Each player has a ball, except for the "tiger."



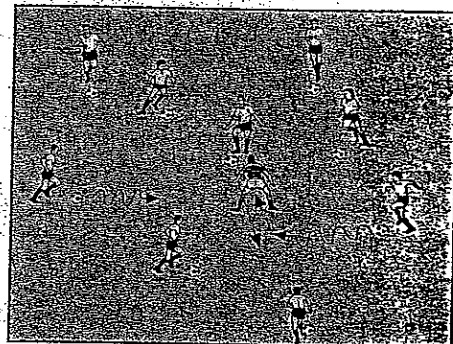
CONCEPT

At the coach's signal, the tiger tries to steal a ball from one of the other players. To win it, he must hold it in his hands and take it to the coach. The player who lost his ball becomes a tiger too. The last player with a ball is the winner, and becomes the first tiger in the next round.

Tunnel soccer (U6)

8 GAME SETUP

Each player has a ball. The coach has no ball, but moves about the field with the players.



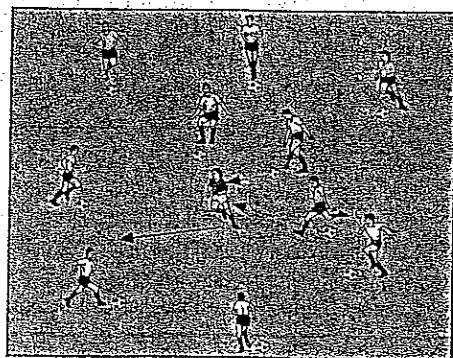
CONCEPT

While moving around the field, from time to time the coach stops and spreads his legs to form a "tunnel." The players dribble after him and try to shoot through the tunnel whenever he stops. After three shots, the coach moves on again. Who can score the most points in 5 minutes?

Ouch! (U6)

9 GAME SETUP

Each player has a ball. The coach has no ball, but moves about the field with the players.



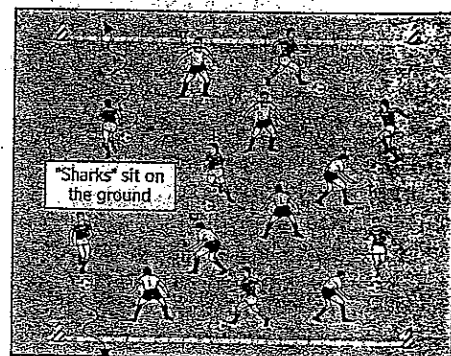
CONCEPT

Each player tries to hit the coach with his ball as often as possible, while the coach tries to dodge all the shots. Whenever the coach gets hit, he yells "ouch!" which makes it more exciting for the children. Each hit scores one point. Who can score the most points in 5 minutes?

Shark pool (U6)

10 GAME SETUP

Half of the players (sharks) sit on the ground without balls. Each of the other players has a ball.



CONCEPT

Keeping their balls close to their bodies, the players with balls try to dribble from one endline to the other as often as possible. Each crossing scores one point. If a player loses his ball to a shark, the two players immediately switch roles. Who can score the most points in 10 minutes?



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"Y1" COACHING RESOURCES

Recommendations

"The Baffled Parents Guide to Great Soccer Drills" by Quinn and Fleck.

Can Coach CD Rom's: U6/U8 and U10/U12.

The Weekend Warrior by David Griffiths (800-331-5191. Recommended for U9/10 coaches).

US Youth Soccer Official Coaching Manual by US Youth Soccer.

Other Reading

Assistant Coach Series: U6/U8, U10 and U12 Activity Aids, US Youth Soccer.

Coaching Kids for Dummies by Rick Wolff.

The Baffled Parent's Guide to Coaching Youth Soccer by Bobby Clark (800-7224726).

24 Easy to Follow Practices for 5 to 8 Year Olds by Schreiner and Twissen.

Soccer Coaching for 5 - 8 Year Olds published by WCC (888-3426224).

Out Of Control by Nack and Munson, Sports Illustrated, July 24, 2000.

Coaching 6, 7 and 8 Year Olds by Waiters and Howe (800-3315191).

Coaching U8's by Tino Stoop (800-331-5191).

Coaching U10's by Tino Stoop (800-331-5191).

10 and Under Practice Games by Quick-Flip Coaching Guides (800-297-6386).

Games Approach to Coaching Soccer by ASEP (800-297-6386).

Success in Soccer Magazine - January 2004 onwards (888-828-4263).

Developing Youth Soccer Players by Wein (800-762-2376).

Videos

Coaching Under 9's by Johan Neeskens (800-331-5191).

The Dutch 4x4 Training Method by the KNVB (800-331-5191)

Club Coach by the Football Association (800-762-2376).





United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age Group: _____ Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

1st Activity (warm-up) *Hunters and Hares*

Players are in a marked playing area. One to three hunters have a ball and are hunters. The other players are hares. The hunters throw the ball at the hares (must hit hares below the waist). When a hare is hit by a ball, he picks it up and becomes a hunter.

Progressions: The hares each have a ball and the hunters have to throw their ball and hit the hare's ball. Or, make it so the hunters have to kick the hare's ball.

- The hares must constantly be looking all around for hunters who may try to throw a ball at them
- By making the hunters throw their ball at the hares ball the technique of shielding is introduced for the hares

2nd Activity *Foxes and Hunters*

Players on the inside of a marked area are foxes. Players on the outside are hunters (have one to three). Hunters dribble into the grid and try to dribble their ball into the foxes so that it hits them below the knees. If a fox is hit, the fox drops down to one knee and tries to kick the ball away from the other hunters that are dribbling by. Once all of the foxes are down the teams switch roles. Time each team, the team that stays alive longest wins.

Progressions: Specify how hunters must dribble. Give foxes a ball too.

- Can hunters use disguise in their dribbling to catch a fox off guard?
- Once again, great vision is required by the foxes to look for hunters dribbling the ball at them
- Hunters could be required to kick their ball off of the fox's ball.

3rd Activity *Tigerball*

Each player has a ball except for the "Tigers." At the coach's signal, the tigers (2) tries to steal a ball from one of the other players. To win it, he must steal the ball with his feet and then hold it above his head in his hands. The tiger should then take the ball to the coach. Now, both players are tigers. Plan until only two people are left and then those players are the next tigers.

Progressions: Use only left foot, outsides of feet, soles of feet.

- When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender?

4th Activity *Tunnel Passing*

Two players face each other at a distance of one yard. Player one has 30 seconds to pass the ball as many times as possible through the tunnel formed by the separated legs of player two. While the first player is kicking the ball back and forth through the second player's legs; the second player should be counting how many times the first player kicks the ball through his or her legs.

Progressions: Use left foot only, use only soles of both feet, etc.

- A fun little game to play that gets the children moving

5th Activity (the game) *German Game*

Set up several 20 x 10 yard playing areas. Have the players play 2v2 inside the areas. Instead of scoring by kicking the ball through goals, players must score by dribbling the ball over his opponent's endline. Play for two minutes and then the teams rest for one minute. Switch who plays who as well.

Comments: The pair that wins the most games could be the tournament winner.

- By changing how goals are scored different demands are placed on the players
- By taking away the goals, players must take on defenders and beat them to get to the line behind them, they can't just fire shots off and hope one gets through into the net



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age Group: _____ Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Pair Tag</i></p> <p>Set up a fairly large area and have everyone get a partner. Everyone jogs around in the area and on the coaches signal one pre-designated person tries to tag the other as many times as they can in 10 seconds. Players get a point for each tag. Who can score the most points in five rounds?</p> <p>Progressions: Might be possible to add a ball, may be too difficult though.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't let games like this go on for too long, young kids will go all out for about 20-30 seconds and then they will be exhausted Player several short rounds rather than one or two very long rounds
<p>2nd Activity <i>Shadow Running</i></p> <p>Everyone has a pair again. This time, one person moves around in an area while the other tries to shadow them, doing everything they do. The person can stop to stretch, change direction, pretty much whatever they want. Play for 20 seconds at a time.</p> <p>Progressions: Add a ball for each player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretching can be added to this game
<p>3rd Activity <i>Coconut Shy Game</i></p> <p>Everyone pairs up and stands 10 yards apart; one of the players needs a ball. In between the players is a ball on top of a disc cone. The players pass the ball back and forth trying to knock the ball (coconut) off of the cone. The person who knocks the ball off the cone puts in back on while the other person retrieves the game ball. Which pair can score the most points in a minute?</p> <p>Progression: Specify what surface they must use to strike the ball.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the players lock their ankles (toes should be pointed up) and follow through in the direction of the target?
<p>4th Activity <i>Pairs Game</i></p> <p>Set up several small gates inside an area (one more gate than the number of pairs). The players are divided into pairs who play 1v1 to the small gates. Each pair has a ball; whoever has the ball tries to dribble through as many gates as they can. When they lose the ball the other person tries to score as many points as they can as well.</p> <p>Progressions: Score by dribbling through a goal. Score by dribbling through the goal and stopping the ball within two yards for your opponent to take.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to make sure everyone is with a partner of relatively the same ability The progression is good because if one player is dominating the other player will get plenty of opportunities
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>2v2 to multiple goals</i></p> <p>Use the same set-up as in activity four but now each pair becomes a team. Play 2v2 into the multiple goals.</p> <p>Progressions: A team can score by dribbling through a goal. A team can score by passing through a goal. A team can score by passing the ball through a gate to their teammate on the other side.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have three or four small goals so their isn't a lot of congestion Can we try to score on a goal where there is not a defender (very simple language for advanced tactical concept of playing the ball away from pressure)



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age Group: _____	Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Ball Retrieval</i> <p>The coach tosses the ball for each player to bring back with his or her hands, elbow, forehead, etc. Have all the players gather closely around you, but not in a line. Each one hands you their ball, which you toss randomly into an open area where they have to go retrieve it and bring it back to you in the manner that you specify as quickly as possible. Progressions: Bring the ball back with two hands, one hand and one forehead, right foot only, etc. The coach should move around the area. Play in pairs now that the children are older.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After a few commands the coach should move to force the players to look up before heading back ▪ This game is great for teaching body awareness, it's fun for the kids too! ▪ Start off by just asking the players to bring the ball back, see if anyone thinks to just pick it up and run it to you?
2nd Activity <i>Hospital Tag</i> <p>All players have a ball and are dribbling in an area. The coach is the doctor and stands outside the area. Players dribble in the area and try to tag each other. When tagged, the person has to hold that body part. Once a player is tagged for the third time they go to the doctor and do a task before coming back in. Play to see who can visit the doctor the least. Progressions: Can only dribble with one foot, outsides of feet, soles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically, this game is an elimination game. The players that get their balls kicked out first have to sit. The players that are eliminated first though are the players that need the most help with their shielding technique. The hospital gives them a chance to get back into the game and continue to practice.
3rd Activity <i>Crew vs. Riverhounds (from U6)</i> <p>Split the team into two groups and have them spread out and face each other. Between the two groups set up several large cones. One of the groups needs balls. On the coaches command one of the groups (make up names for them) strikes the ball and tries to topple as many cones as they can. The other team collects the balls and after the coach sets the cones back up they do the same activity. Progressions: Must strike ball with laces or inside of foot only.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the teams are having trouble hitting cones put more down ▪ Can the players lock their ankles (toes should be pointed up) and follow through in the direction of the target?
4th Activity <i>Soccer Marbles</i> <p>Everyone needs to be in pairs with a ball for everyone. One player plays their ball and the other person tries to play their ball and hit the first ball while it is still moving. If the person misses the first person quickly goes to their ball and tries to play it to hit the second players ball. Players get a point each time they hit the ball. Progressions: Must strike ball with laces, inside of foot, left foot only, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can the players lock their ankles (toes should be pointed up) and follow through in the direction of the target?
5th Activity (the game) <i>GK Game</i> <p>Set up several small 10 x 20 yard fields and have the team play 2v2 in them. When a team is on defense they have to have one person drop back and be a goalie. When the defender steals the ball he passes the ball back to the goalie and they then start to attack. While this is happening the other team is having someone drop back into their goal. Comments: Have several games going at once and rotate the teams so everyone two person teams gets to play all the other teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physically demanding game ▪ The nature of the game demands instant transition from attack to defense



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age Group: _____	Theme: _____

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Island Game</i> Use disc cones to set up small islands (small squares) in a large playing area. Have everyone dribble around in the area. On the coaches signal everyone must dribble with speed to an island; however, only two people are allowed per island. The player (or two) who does not get to an island scores one minus point. Play to see who has the least minus points. Progressions: Start game without balls and then add them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When dribbling for speed the players do not have to dribble the ball as close Their should be about five or six steps in between each touch of the ball
2nd Activity <i>Ball Stealing</i> Split the team into two groups and give one group red vests and one group blue vests. Give one of the teams balls to dribble. Those players try to dribble inside the area without losing possession of their ball to the other team. The objective is to see which team, red or blue, has the most balls at the end. Players from the same team can work together to steal balls or to keep possession (passing???). Progressions: Rotate who starts with the balls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender? If you are going to lose your ball can you find a teammate to give your ball to?
3rd Activity <i>Everyone vs. Everyone</i> Set up several small gates in the playing area. Give half to three-quarters of the team a ball. Players with a ball try to dribble/shoot through as many of the small gates as they can. Players without a ball try to steal a ball from someone who has one and then they try to score. Play multiple games and allow everyone to have a chance to beat their own score. Progressions: Define how goals are scored - by dribbling or shooting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't tell the players that they can't dribble through the same gate twice, see if anyone is creative and dribbles through the same gate back and forth As soon as players go through a gate they should look up to find an open gate and then go for it!
4th Activity <i>Edge of the World</i> Each player gets a ball and stands on one sideline of an area. The objective is for everyone to pass their ball so that it stops as close to the other sideline as possible. If the ball goes past the sideline it falls off the edge of the world. Players get points for getting their ball within one yard (distance depends upon ability) of the line without going over. Progressions: Players play ball with laces, inside of foot, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of having a line you could also have an end zone that the players try to get their ball to stop in
5th Activity (the game) <i>Outta There</i> In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a small line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are "outta there." This should be a very fast paced game. Progressions: Start with 1v1 and progress to 2v2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This game should be very fast paced As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren't having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

1st Activity (warm-up) *Nutmeg Competition*

Mark off a rectangular area and have the team find a buddy. One buddy from each pairs stands with the legs about two feet apart spread out in the area. The other partner needs to have a ball. The players should start to dribble around and on the coaches signal they have to dribble/pass through as many "gates" as possible. Play for 30 seconds and then switch roles.

Progressions: Specify how the players must dribble.

- Can the players keep their head up to see an open gate?

2nd Activity *Dribble to Safety*

Set up an area with two end zones at each end. The players must try to get from one end zone to the other. Between the two end zones should be two or three players with balls. As the players are going from end zone to end zone the players in the middle try to pass their ball into one of the players running to the other end zone.

Progressions: Give the people going from zone to zone a ball.

- Players going from zone to zone should change their direction/speed to deceive the players trying to hit them

3rd Activity *Sequence Passing*

Mark off an area and give everyone a number. The players must pass the ball sequentially from player to player (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, etc.). Progressions: Have the players pass from the highest number to the lowest number. Specify with what surface the players must use to pass the ball.

- When a person is about to be passed to they should try to get in the field of vision of the person with the ball so that person doesn't have to turn
- Can players call for the ball as it is halfway to the person that is going to pass it to them (the person receiving the ball will then know where to play their first touch)

4th Activity *Wolves and Sheep*

Set up a large rectangular area with four zones in each of the corners. Split the players into two teams and give each team a name. Have the players dribble around randomly in the area. When the coach calls out one of the team names that team leaves their balls and tries to tag members of the other team. The other team tries to dribble to a safety zone without being tagged and earn a point for doing so. Play multiple rounds and see which team can score more points.

Progressions: Specify how players must dribble. When a team name is called those players have to continue to dribble their ball.

- The players should keep the ball close so when they have to dribble to a safety zone they can take off right away
- The first touch when they head to a safety zone should be larger than a normal dribble

5th Activity (the game) *Get Outta Here*

In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a small line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are "outta there." This should be a very fast paced game.

Progressions: Start with 2v2 and progress to 3v3.

- This game should be very fast paced
- As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately
- The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren't having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them
- Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area

Scrimmage 2v2 or 3v3



United States Youth Soccer Association

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Activity

Coaching Points

<p>1st Activity (warm-up) Math Dribble</p> <p>Each player needs to have a ball. Have them dribble in a confined, the coach calls out a math problem and the players immediately solve the problem by forming the appropriately sized group. After everyone is in a group the players should start dribbling again until the next problem is called. This is a great activity to get groups formed quickly for the next activity.</p> <p>Progressions: Mix between addition and subtraction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a math problem where the solution is one more person than the number of players at practice; see how long it takes them to come and stand by you Can the players keep the ball close so when the problem is called they can quickly get in a group Players should keep their heads up so they don't try to join a group that does not need them
<p>2nd Activity Knee Tag</p> <p>Everyone should be without a ball moving around in a marked area. On the coaches signal everyone tries to tag as many people as they can. In order to score a point they must tag someone else on the knee. Play several rounds of 30 seconds each.</p> <p>Progressions: Add a ball after a few rounds. Play to see who can tag the most people. Play to see who can be tagged the least.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the players are tagging each other, instead of standing upright and trying to tag someone's knee can they bend their knee's and get down low (just like a defensive stance, hmmm...)
<p>3rd Activity Draw</p> <p>Everyone needs to pair up and each pair needs a ball. The partners should face each other with the ball equidistant between. Both players need to have both feet on the ground. When the coach says "Draw" the players try to be the first to step on the ball and pull it backwards for a point. Play to 5 points and then switch partners.</p> <p>Progressions: Add a line behind each player, after they get the ball they have to dribble past the line to get a point.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an alternative way to start a scrimmage or a dead ball situation Throw in a few words like "Straw" to make sure they really have to listen
<p>4th Activity Junkyard Soccer</p> <p>Not a game to be played for teams where boot ball is a problem. Have two teams with at least one ball for every two players, more can be used. Have the two teams face each other with a 10-15 yard zone in between them. On the coach's signal the teams try to kick the balls quickly enough so that all the balls are on one side. Teams earn one point for doing so.</p> <p>Progressions: Specify how balls must be played (on the ground, in the air, one touch, with the left foot, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This game could be modified to work on several different skills
<p>5th Activity (the game) Get Outta-Here2v2</p> <p>In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a small line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are "outta there." This should be a very fast paced game.</p> <p>Progressions: Start with 2v2 and progress to 3v3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This game should be very fast paced As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren't having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area



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Activity

Coaching Points

<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Ball Retrieval-Groups of 4</i></p> <p>Players are in groups of three or four with one ball in a large unmarked space. The coach tosses the ball away and the players must return it to the coach with each player touching the ball at least once. The final pass should be played to a player standing next to the coach.</p> <p>Progressions: The coach can move within the area to make the players look up. Specify how many passes or what type of passes must be used to bring the ball back.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be creative and make the players hand the ball to you in different ways (give me the ball using your back) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See how the players solve the problem, do they just pick it up and put in one someone's back or do they try to do something more complicated By this age players can receive more instruction on how to pass the ball technically correct
<p>2nd Activity <i>Elbow Tag</i></p> <p>Players are in pairs with their elbows hooked and standing in a random formation. The other hand is on their hip with their elbow bent. The coach breaks one pair apart and designates one person as "it". That person tries to run down their partner and tag them. Their partner can become safe if they link elbows with one of the other pairs. When a person links with a pair, the person who is not linked to the new person must then unlink and is fair game to be tagged.</p> <p>Progressions: Break apart more pairs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When changing direction to shake off a tagger can they stay low to the ground Can players use changes of speed and direction to shake off taggers Can players use feints to deceive potential taggers
<p>3rd Activity <i>Hurricanes and Ladders</i></p> <p>Play consists of two teams of 5 to 7 players with one ball using half a field. The coach tosses the ball and the ladder group runs to the ball as quickly as possible and forms a line. Then, they have to hand the ball to the end of the line in an over the head/between the legs fashion. Meanwhile, the other team forms a tight circle or huddle. One person from that group runs around the circle as many times as they can until the other team yells stop. Switch. Play to 10 points.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great activity that encourages teamwork and problem solving Be vague in your instructions, don't tell them to get in a tight circle
<p>4th Activity <i>Defrost Tag</i></p> <p>Start with two equal teams in a larger area. One team is on the inside of the area without balls and the other is outside the area with balls. On the coach's signal the players on the outside dribble into the area and try to freeze the inside players by passing their ball off of them below the knees. Inside players can be unfrozen by other inside players by crawling through each other's knees.</p> <p>Progressions: Give both teams balls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAFETY NOTE - As long as any part of a person's body is still underneath a frozen player, a ball cannot be played at them
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>Get Outta-Here2v2</i></p> <p>In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a small line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are "outta there." This should be a very fast paced game.</p> <p>Progressions: Start with 2v2 and progress to 3v3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This game should be very fast paced As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren't having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area



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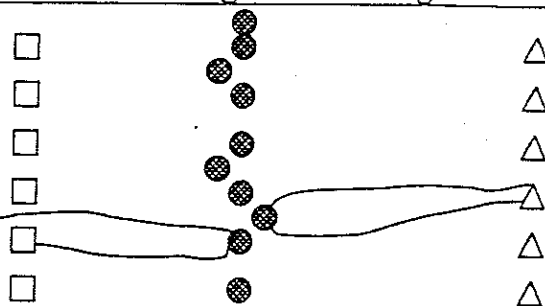
Activity

Coaching Points/Diagram

1st Activity (warm-up) *Too Many Players*

Split the players into two teams and have each team stand on a line of cones that faces each other. In between the teams there should be a line of balls, but there should be two balls less than the number of players. On the coaches command the players try to sprint to the middle, collect a ball, and then return it past the line they started on. Teams get a point for each ball returned to their line. Players that don't get a ball try to steal one from the other team.

Progressions: Change the number of balls or how players must dribble. Specify how players must turn with the ball.



2nd Activity *Shooting Fish in a Barrel*

Split the players into two teams. The teams play around the center circle (or any large circle). Several cones should be placed in the circle. Teams play soccer and score points for passing the ball into the circle and knocking over a cone. Players can't enter the circle. Play until all the cones are knocked down.

Progressions: Specify how the players must shoot. Change the number of cones in the middle. Have different cones (colors or sizes) and assign different point values for the different cones.

- The team that has possession of the ball should spread out to make the defense spread out (this will create lanes or gaps that the attacking team can pass through)
- Don't foolishly strike the ball towards the cones; if the ball is intercepted the opposing team will have a very short shot – when a good opportunity arises attack with speed – but otherwise possess the ball until a good opportunity presents itself

3rd Activity *Shooting Cones in the Safety Zones*

Play small-sided games with the team. Instead of scoring on goals there should be a group of cones placed in an end zone at each end of the area. Teams score points by passing the ball so that it knocks over cones in the opponent's end zone. Play to a set number of points, a time limit, or until one team's cones are knocked down.

Progressions: Specify how players must strike the ball. Have the cones spread out or place them close to each other. Put some cones close together and others far apart, assigning different point values to the cones.

- Does the team make good decisions on which cones to try to attack, can they head in one direction and then switch the point of attack, heading to another cone to try to knock it over before the opponents can get there

4th Activity *Game with a Central Goal*

Play a regular small-sided soccer game, but instead of each team having a goal set up one goal in the middle of the playing area. Teams can score by shooting the ball through the goal from either direction.

Progressions: Have no GK or have a neutral GK. Specify how players must shoot.

- Players should stay spread out
- A team should have players on both sides of the goal

5th Activity (the game) *Numbers Game*

Split the players into two teams and have them stand on opposite endlines. The game is played on a small soccer field. Assign each player a number on each end (1-5 on one side and 1-5 on the other side). Play a ball into the area and call out a number; those players must then sprint onto the field and play 1v1. Play until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds.

Progressions: Have more than one 1v1 game going on at the same time. Call out two and then three numbers. Mix up the numbers.

- Don't be afraid to have more than one 1v1 or 2v2 game going on at the same time
- Encourage players to shoot whenever they have a clear line of sight to the goal



86 Ways to Say "Very Good!"

1. Good for you!
2. Superb
3. You did that very well
4. You've got it made
5. Terrific
6. That's not bad!
7. Couldn't have done it better myself
8. Marvelous
9. You're doing fine
10. You're really improving
11. You're on the right track now!
12. Now you've got it figured out
13. Outstanding!
14. That's coming along nicely
15. I know you can do it
16. Good work
17. You figured that out fast
18. I think you've got it now
19. I'm proud of the way you worked today
20. Tremendous!
21. You certainly did well today
22. Perfect!
23. Nice going
24. You've got your brain in gear today
25. Now you've got the hang of it
26. WOW!
27. Wonderful!
28. You're getting better every day
29. You're learning fast
30. You make it look easy
31. That's a good boy/girl
32. That's very much better
33. Super!
34. You did a lot of work today
35. Keep it up!
36. You've got that down pat
37. Congratulations
38. Exactly right!
39. Nice going
40. Excellent!
41. Sensational!
42. You're doing beautifully
43. You've just mastered that!
44. That's really nice
45. That's the best ever
46. That's great!
47. Way to go!
48. That's the way to do it!
49. That's quite an improvement
50. Good thinking
51. You really are going to town
52. Keep up the good work
53. That's it!
54. That's better
55. You haven't missed a thing
56. Fantastic!
57. You outdid yourself today
58. You're doing a good job
59. That's the right way to do it
60. That's better
61. Right on!
62. Well, look at you go!
63. That's the best you've ever done!
64. That's RIGHT!
65. You must have been practicing!
66. Great!
67. Keep working on it... You're getting better
68. You remembered!
69. That kind of work makes me very happy.
70. You're really working hard today
71. That's what I call a fine job!
72. I knew you could do it!
73. I'm very proud of you
74. One more time and you'll have it
75. Fine!
76. That's good
77. Good job
78. You really make this fun
79. Good remembering
80. Nothing can stop you now
81. You are doing much better today
82. Keep on trying
83. You are really learning a lot
84. You've just about got it!
85. I've never seen anyone do it better
86. You are very good at that.