

NLSC SOCCER CLUB

Summer Camp Coaches Manual

Northern Lights S.C.

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Introduction

This manual is designed to guide you through this summer's soccer camp so that you may become a more efficient and proficient coach. The information in this manual has been developed using information from the American Youth Soccer Association (AYSO), United States Youth Soccer, and Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA). Moreover, some ideas have also been borrowed from coaching clinics, videos, and talented youth soccer coaches. This manual will help you structure and introduce age/ability appropriate activities, plan and evaluate your coaching skills, and gives you the tools to be successful.

The methodology of coaching youth soccer is something you will not find in this manual. As adults we hope that you will be able to introduce the game of soccer in a safe, fun, and educational environment. Every soccer coach has his or her own coaching style. It is up to you to find a style that you are comfortable with.

A coach's influence on a young child is extremely important. The effect that a coach has could last for an extended period of time beyond the season. Therefore, your personality, action and words could have a dramatic effect positive or negative on each and every child. The value of understanding children, being fair and enthusiastic, as well as being a positive role model, cannot be underestimated.

This booklet is coded to ensure it is user friendly and easy to find relevant information. Please feel free to add any notes to the booklet, such as, diagrams, coaching points, tips or coaching styles. This booklet is for your reference, it is yours to personalize.

If you are in need of any further information or guidance, please contact your Camp Director, Michael O'Reilly.

Northern Lights S.C. hopes that you have a fantastic soccer experience and we thank you in advance for all your efforts.

Northern Lights S.C.

Hints and Tips

Here are some basic hints and tips that have been passed on by youth soccer coaches across the globe.

The most important tip that any good soccer coach will give you is to stick to the "three L" rule.

1. NO **L**APS
2. NO **L**INES
3. NO **L**ECTURES

Running laps, especially without a ball is a waste of time. All practice activities should take place on the soccer field, preferably with a ball.

Having players stand in lines waiting for their turn generally indicates an inappropriate activity. If players are standing and not moving, the activity will not keep their interest.

Lectures should be left for the classroom. Children come to practice to be active and participate, not to be talked to for extended periods of time.

- Plan you session in advance. Failure to plan is planning to fail.
- Be the first person at the field and the last to leave. Every parent will appreciate having you there the entire time.
- Check field for hazards, trash, dog mess etc.
- Learn every child's name as soon as possible. By knowing their names will give you more control of the group.
- Use your voice; there is no need for a whistle.
- Sunglasses and hats create a visual barrier between you and your players, when possible refrain from wearing them. You will find it a lot easier to communicate with your players.
- Communicate with your players at their eye level. As an adult you will intimidate a small child if you stand over them. Imagine an 11ft person talking down to you...
- When talking to your players have your face pointing in the direction of the sun. If the player has their face in the sun they will be distracted, they should be concentrating on what you have to say.

U5 Soccer

Without a doubt coaching U5 is the most challenging, but at the same time, the most rewarding.

The main goal is for this age group is to have fun in a safe environment. Remember 5/6 year olds are highly distractible and have short attention spans. However, because they are so young your main goal is to provide a fun and educational environment.

U6 Soccer

Coaching U6 soccer is slightly different from U5 soccer. At U6 the player is socially more advanced and physically more capable to playing the game. With this in mind the coach may be able to add a few coaching points into his coaching sessions. These points will be very discrete with the player not realizing that they are performing a task that will improve their skills.

The important thing is not to force the issue, if a player is unable to do a task it is OK, as long as they are trying, remember they are only 5/6 years old. The main focus is to have fun.

U7 Soccer

Being a U7 soccer coach you are able to identify the better athletes in your group. At this age the more athletic players seem to take more control of a group.

As the coach you have to try and identify this and act accordingly. You may need to set different challenges to different players. Try to acknowledge achievements that have been completed by the player, this standard may vary from player to player.

Remember they are only 6/7 years old. The main focus is to have fun.

U8 Soccer

Being a U8 soccer coach you are able to identify the better athletes in your group. At this age the more athletic players seem to take more control of a group.

As the coach you have to try and identify this and act accordingly. You may need to set different challenges to different players. Try to acknowledge achievements that have been completed by the player, this standard may vary from player to player.

Remember they are only 7/8 years old. The main focus is to have fun.

***Water breaks** are issued at the coach's discretion (hotter days = more frequent breaks).

Here is a break down of what equipment you will need to bring to every practice. The club will supply you with everything you need. It is up to you to maintain it.

Equipment

- Cones
- Pinnies
- First Aid Kit
- Session Plan
- Soccer Balls – Size 3 (each player should have one)
- **Players** MUST wear shin guards
- **Players** should wear appropriate footwear (soccer cleats/tennis shoes)

The games that we you use are all geared towards maximum touches and maximum time with the ball. You will be developing their basic motor skills and familiarizing the player with the soccer ball.

Warm-up activities

The 15-minute warm-up gives you the perfect opportunity to interact with your players. It also gives you the chance to gain control of the group. During this time you will give out instructions for the players to follow. This will allow the players the chance to get used to your voice and demonstrate who's in charge. Here are some examples,

- **Go** – the players start moving around the area (whole or half field).
- **Freeze/stop** – the players stop their ball and themselves where they are.
- **Cheetah/corvette/rocket speed** – players dribble the ball really fast.
- **Elephant/snail speed** – players dribble the ball really slow.
- **Rewind** – the players go backwards
- **Toe-taps** – right foot then left foot tap the top of the ball repeatedly.
- **Ticktacks** – pass the ball between the inside of the right and left foot repeatedly.
- **Seagulls** – the player smoothers the soccer ball on the ground to protect it.

Please feel free to invent your own. Try and relate to the children. Ask them questions like, "what animal moves really fast?" and let them move at that speed.

Be prepared to demonstrate what you are trying to teach. Your players will understand a lot easier by you showing them what you mean.

Try and adapt the theme to something that they can familiarize themselves with, whether it is Barney or Sponge Bob Square Pants.

Tip of the day – The first time you do this will be hard, be strong and stick with it. Start by using GO and FREEZE until they get used to your voice and to you being in charge. It is new for them as it is for you.

Fun Games

Here are some games that will help players get maximum touches of the ball. They are also fun! We will try and describe each activity the best we can. If you have any questions please consult the Camp Director, Michael O'Reilly.

These games are geared towards maximum participation. During these activities there is no player sitting out. This is what is so great about these games.

The more you do these games the better you will become at facilitating them. You will learn different ways to get the message across.

Stuck in the Mud

The mud monster (coach) appears and tries to tag all the soccer players. If the mud monster tags the player you are frozen in the swamp. To be released you have to call for help from one of your teammates who must pass their soccer ball through the legs of the stuck player.

Then select 1 or 2 new mud monsters to take the coaches place.

The aim of the game is for the mud monster(s) to have every player "stuck in the mud"

Tip of the day – If the mud monster(s) are catching people too quickly the coach should join in and release some players.

Knock-out

The players dribble around in the area (whole or half field) and a designated player (wearing a pinnie) will come into the area and attempt to kick the player's soccer balls out of the area. If a player's soccer ball is kicked out, they must go and get it and find coach. Coach will set them a challenge if they manage to complete the challenge they are allowed back into the game.

The aim of the game is to be the last left in.

Tip of the day – Set an easy challenge. Let them bounce the ball off their knee and catch it three times without the ball hitting the ground.

Hospital Tag

Each player has a soccer ball and dribbles around the area. When the coach shouts "hospital", the players try to tag each other with their hands while still dribbling their soccer ball. When they have been tagged they hold that part of the body and continue dribbling. When they have been tagged twice and both hands have been used, the next tag means they have to go to the hospital and perform a set task before they can play again.

Tip of the day – Set an easy challenge. Let them bounce the ball off their knee and catch it three times without the ball hitting the ground.

Soccer Alley

Soccer players start at one side of the alley and they have to try and dribble their soccer balls to the other side of the alley without their soccer balls being hit by the soccer shooters (coach) at the sides of the alley. As the players dribble their ball through the alley the coach will try and pass his or her soccer ball and hit the player's soccer ball.

If the players' ball is hit they join coach on the sides. The winner is the last player standing.

Tip of the day – When passing the soccer balls be sure that you and the players are using the inside of their foot so the ball will stay on the ground.

King of the Ring

All players have a soccer ball and dribble around the soccer area. On the coach's command the players will try and kick each other's soccer balls out of the area. If their ball is kicked out, they come and find coach. He or she will set a challenge. Once completed, the player will be allowed back into the ring.

Tip of the day – Once their ball is kicked out, encourage them to come and see you quickly so that they can get back into the game.

Golden Egg

Divide your group in to two equal teams. Set up two squares with your cones (5 steps by 5 steps). Each team has their square (home). All the soccer balls are spread out around the whole area of your soccer field. On the coaches command all the players run and dribble a soccer ball back to their base. Once all the soccer balls are gone from the middle they can then go a steal a soccer ball from the other teams base.

The winner team is the team with the most soccer balls in their square.

Coaching point – *When you get close to a ball call out your name (the players own name) as loud as they can, so to identify that this is MY ball.*

Tip of the day – They aren't allowed to tackle each other, no puppy guarding and they are only allowed to dribble one soccer ball at a time.

Scooby and Scrappy Doo

Divide the group into two equal teams. One team is called Scooby and the other is called Scrappy. One team starts out without balls. This team will move around the area trying to avoid the other team who will try to hit them with their soccer balls, below the knee. Everybody will be moving around the area either trying to get hit or avoiding to get hit. If you get hit you go down on one knee and your teammate will give you a high five and you are good to go.

The aim of the game is to get the other team down on one knee as quickly as possible.

Coaching point – *When dribbling around the area, try and keep the ball nice and close so that you can get a quick shot off.*

Tip of the day – When the players are passing the ball to hit the other team, the player must not use their toe to kick the ball. Try using the inside, outside or the instep of the foot.

Soccer Tag

Every player has a partner. They number themselves 1 and 2. Number 1 has three soccer seconds to get away before number 2 comes chasing after them. Every player has a soccer ball. Number 2 has to try and tag number one on the body whilst having the soccer ball under control. Once tagged the roles are reversed. Every time they manage to tag their partner they receive a point. The player with the most points is the winner.

Coaching point – *Try not to let the players run on straight lines or circles.*

Tip of the day – If there is an odd number of players set one group up as a threesome. No player sits out.

The next pages of the manual you will find an example of a session plan and a plain sheet for you to photocopy and use for future use.

NLSC – Example practice planner

Date	N/A	Age Group	U5
Location	Rec. Center	Topic	Dribbling

Warm-up	Coaching points
<p>Players dribble around area whilst coach is giving out simple commands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple commands, such as go, freeze, cheetah speed etc. • Use a theme, soccer island, space ship, etc. • Award points for top performers • Use as much space as possible
Activity 1	Coaching points
<p>Gates Dribbling</p> <p>How gates change the players dribble through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinkie toe Dribbling • Players must keep the ball close to their feet
Activity 2	Coaching points
<p>Stuck in the mud</p> <p>Use all your allocated space and cone around the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach is mud monster first • Make sure every child gets the chance to be the mud monster • Make sure players scream for "help" when they are stuck in the mud • Use lots of space
Activity 3	Coaching points
<p>What's the time Mr. Wolf</p> <p>Use all your allocated space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach is the Wolf first • Keep the ball close to their feet when dribbling
Scrimmage	Coaching points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4v4 max • Have FUN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep supply of balls to play • Emphasize boundaries

NLSC

Date		Age Group	
Location		Topic	

Warm-up	Coaching points
Activity 1	Coaching points
Activity 2	Coaching points
Activity 3	Coaching points
Scrimmage	Coaching points

U9+

The motivation to learn basic skills is very high at this age level. Children gradually begin to change from being self-centered to being self-critical and develop the need for group and/or team games. The "six principals" of U9+ player development should be,

1. Are activities developmentally appropriate?
2. Provide clear, concise and correct information.
3. Organize activities simple to complex.
4. Provide safe and appropriate training area.
5. Include decision making by the players within activities.
6. Ensure activities have implications for the game.

At this age the coach has to understand and demonstrate the basic techniques of soccer and deliver to the player in a sensitive, patient, enthusiastic and imaginative manner.

Technique is understood as the mechanics of the following basic soccer skills,

1. **Dribbling:** Moving the ball at your feet. Player may move the ball to beat an opponent, accelerate away from an opponent or turn away from an opponent.
2. **Receiving:** Receiving a ball that has been passed along the ground or in the air using any part of the body except the arms or hands.
3. **Shooting:** Striking the ball with feet towards the opponent's goal.
4. **Passing:** Playing the ball with the feet to a teammate.
5. **Heading:** Intentionally contacting the ball with the forehead.

When you are working on technique key factors include the position of the player's head, eyes and non-kicking foot. Of equal importance is which surface of the ball is contacted and by what surface of the foot or body.

When your are conducting your sessions please consider the following,

- Are the activities FUN?
- Are the activities organized?
- Are the players involved in the activities?
- Is creativity and decision making being used?
- Are the spaces used appropriate?
- Is your feedback appropriate?
- Are there implications for the game?

In soccer there are individual, small group and team tactics. At U9+ the key development of tactics occurs in 1v1 and 2v2 situations. Play a variety of positions in order to develop into a complete player.

Attacking examples could be a player dribbling to beat an opponent, when and where to shoot at goal, when and where to pass and move and the choice of controlling surface.

Defending examples could be the positioning of the player between opponent and goal, when to challenge for a ball and supporting a teammate challenging for a ball.

Demonstrate increased self-responsibility for preparation and discipline. Let them initiate play and learn through self-discovery/self expression. All activities should have objectives/method of scoring. Let them enjoy competition. Most importantly keep it **FUN** and **ENJOYABLE** to foster a desire to play.

Foot skills library

At this age group it is important that we make ours players familiar with the ball. The foot skill activities enable us to help the player become comfortable and confident with the ball at their feet. The activities are geared towards using different surfaces of the feet, increasing foot speed, coordination and balance. They also require minimal space, which makes them perfect for the player to practice at home.

Coaching Points,

- Insist on correct technique before speed.
- Once mastered, can they perform task with out looking at the ball (head up).

Toe-taps

- The player stands behind a stationary ball.
- The player "taps" his/her "toes" on top of the ball. Right/left foot first and then switches to the other foot and repeats.

Tick-tacks

- The player uses the inside of his/her feet and passes the ball between his/her right and left foot.

Tick-tack - slide

- The player tick-tacks the ball once and then slides the ball using the sole of his/her foot, rolling the ball across his/her body to the other foot and repeats.

Tick-tack – slide – turn

- The player tick-tacks the ball once and then slides the ball using the bottom of his/her foot, rolling the ball.
- Once the ball is rolling to the "other foot" the player steps over the ball with the "other foot" and spins on the "other foot" counter clockwise.
- The ball will arrive on the inside of the foot that originally rolled the ball.

The triangle

- The player starts with the right or left foot on top of the ball in front of them.
- Using the sole of the foot they role the ball towards them.
- The player then uses the inside of the same foot and passes it to the inside of the other foot.
- The other foot then passes the ball back to its original position. The ball should have traveled to make a triangle.

The box

- The player “tick-tacks” the ball once.
- The player will then drag the ball back using the sole of his/her foot and he/she will be facing 90 degrees to the right/left to where they started.
- The player then repeats and finds himself/herself 180 degrees from where they started.
- The player then repeats and finds himself/herself 270 degrees from where they started.
- The player then repeats and finds himself/herself back to where they started.
- The player then goes in the opposite direction.

Outside-inside

- The player kicks the ball with the outside of the right foot, then the inside of the right foot.
- The ball then travels across the body to the left foot where the player kicks the ball with the outside of the left foot and then the inside of the left foot.

The “V”

- The ball starts with the right or left foot on top of the ball.
- The player drags the ball back towards their body using the sole of the foot.
- The player then uses the same foot and kicks the ball using the instep (laces) towards the outside of the no-kicking foot.
- The player then places the no-kicking foot on the ball and repeats.

The “Henry”

- The player roles the ball using the sole of his/her foot across the body.
- The player then places the big toe of the no-kicking foot on top of the ball to stop it.
- The player then places that foot on the ground and places his/her weight on it.
- The other foot then swings around the top of the ball and is placed next to the ball.
- You then repeat.

The “squeeze”

- The player starts with either right or left foot on the ball.
- He/she then roles the ball using the inside of his/her foot out to the side of his/her body.
- The player then uses the inside of the same foot and kicks it to the left foot.
- The player then repeats using the opposite foot.

Super skills library

“A great soccer player is a player that does the simple things first, but is able to do that little bit extra when required...”

The “little extra” is what this section is referring to. At this age we need to educate our players to express themselves so that they have the ability to change a game or get out of trouble.

For the skills to be effective one or more of the following factors must be stressed,

- Fast/quick feet.
- Close ball control.
- Deception: disguise or fake within a move which wrong foots the opponent.
- Change of speed (rapid acceleration/deceleration).
- Quality execution of move.

When coaching these skills please consider the use of both feet, changes of pace and changes of direction.

The skills are broken down into two groups,

1. Moves to turn away from an opponent.
2. Moves to beat an opponent.

Moves to turn away from an opponent

Outside Hook

- Place the non-kicking foot at a comfortable distance away from the ball.
- The player should pivot the kicking foot and using the outside of the foot flicks the ball back in the opposite direction.
- The player should then turn in the opposite direction. The turn takes player through 180 degrees.

Inside Hook

- Place the non-kicking foot directly at the side of the ball.
- The player should pivot on the non-kicking foot and make contact with the inside of the kicking foot.
- The player should then turn in the opposite direction. The turn takes the player through 180 degrees.

Drag back

- Place the non-kicking foot at the side of the ball.
- Place the kicking foot on top of the ball.
- The player drags the ball back using the sole of the foot in the opposite direction.
- The player turns in the opposite direction. The turn takes the player through 180 degrees.

The "Cruyff" turn (Johan Cruyff)

- Place the non-kicking foot at the side of the ball.
- Bring the kicking foot around the front of the ball thus creating an angle of 90 degrees with the non-kicking foot.
- Using the inside of the kicking foot push the ball back in the opposite direction.
- The player should then turn and pivot around on the non-kicking foot. The turn takes the player through 180 degrees.

The reverse Cruyff

- The player starts the move from directly behind the ball. The player takes the non-kicking foot across his body and places it slightly in front of the ball.
- The ball is going to be played with the laces of the kicking foot, on the side of the ball furthest away from the player's original position.
- The ball is then flicked away in the opposite direction. The player has turned 180 degrees.

Step over

- Place left foot next to the ball.
- The right foot swings around the ball and the player should be standing with his/her legs crossed.
- The player then puts his/her weight on the right foot and unhooks the left foot which swings round and strikes the ball with the inside of the foot. At the same time the player is pivoting on his/her right foot. The player has turned 180 degrees.

Step 'n' go

- Place the non-kicking foot at a comfortable distance away from the ball.
- Bring the kicking foot around the ball and with the outside of the foot flick the ball away.
- The turn takes the player through 180 degrees.

Moves to beat an opponent

The Funky little move (Scissors)

- Place the left foot at a comfortable distance away from the ball.
- Bring the right foot through the space between the left foot and the ball and place the right foot at a comfortable distance away from the ball on the other side.
- Slide the left foot under the ball and with the outside of the left foot flick the ball away (towards 10 o'clock).
- Be sure to practice going in both directions.

The stomp (Lean and Push)

- Stomp the non-kicking foot at comfortable distance away from ball.
- Bring the kicking foot between the non-kicking foot and the ball and flick the ball away (10 o'clock if you are flicking with the left foot and 2 o'clock if you are flicking with your right foot) using the out side of the foot.

The slide 'n' fly (Zidane)

- Place the non-kicking foot slightly behind the ball.
- Role the ball with the bottom of the kicking foot across the body.
- The non-kicking foot, steps over the rolling ball.
- Using the outside of the non-kicking flick the ball away (10 o'clock/2 o'clock).

The Beardsley (Peter Beardsley)

- Place the non-kicking foot next to the ball
- The player goes to strike the ball, but at the last minute stops and flicks the ball away (10 o'clock/2 o'clock).

Gazza (Paul Gascoigne)

- The player plays the ball with the inside of the strongest foot inwards.
- The player quickly shifts body weight and plays the ball past the defender with the inside of the opposite foot in a forward direction accelerating past the opponent.

Stop 'n' go (Romario)

- The player dribbles the ball forward. The player stops the ball using the sole of the foot.
- As the player's foot moves off the ball the player uses the same foot to move the ball forward again with the instep of the foot.

The Terry Henry (Thierry Henry)

- The player roles the ball with the sole of the foot across the body.
- The player transfers his/her weight onto the kicking foot and stops the ball with the big toe of the non-kicking foot.
- In one movement the player flicks the ball with the outside of the kicking foot.

Dauids (Edgar Davids)

- The player steps over the ball, taking the opponent in one direction. Then with the back foot, flick the ball in the opposite direction.
- The player moves around the opponent on the side he/she originally stepped and collects the ball on the other side.

Lineker (Gary Lineker)

- Place the non-kicking foot at the side of the ball with the kicking foot placed lightly on top of the ball.
- Rotate hips sideways and drag the back away from pressure.
- As the player drags the ball back he uses his body to shield the ball from the opponent.

Maradona (Diego Maradona)

- The player places the non-kicking foot next to the ball.
- The player places the kicking foot onto the ball and in one motion the player switches feet on the ball whilst rotating 360 degrees. Moreover, when the player switches feet the player drags the ball with the sole of the foot into the direction where the player wishes to go.

Denilson (Denilson)

- The player starts with the ball to his right, placing the inside part of his sole on top of the ball. He/she rolls the ball from the inside to the outside of the sole, hopping to the left as the ball is in motion.
- The player now has the ball on the outside of his/her foot on the inside of the ball, with his/her weight to the left.
- The player pushes the ball flicking the ball with the outside of the right foot.

The Dessie (Des Bulpin)

- The player starts with the ball outside the left foot and slightly in front of the body.
- The player places the right foot on top of the ball, drags the ball towards the body using the sole of the foot.
- He/she then plays the ball out to the right using the inside or outside of the foot.

Squeezy Push (Andrew Tunnicliffe)

- The player starts with the ball next to the instep of the right foot.
- The player rolls his/her foot over the ball, moving it across the body towards the left foot, then squeezes with the outside of the right foot moving the ball away towards the right side of the body.

The Welsh squeezy push (Jon Lewis)

- The player starts with the ball outside the right foot.
- Move the ball away from the body by rolling the foot over the ball and then squeeze the ball back across the body using the instep.

1v1 activities

The competitive cauldron of the 1v1 format gives the players the perfect opportunity to develop their super skills and a number of other game related skills and techniques. These activities create a realistic, game like environment in which young players are allowed to develop.

Below you will find an extensive list of the 1v1 activities that can utilize throughout your season. Where appropriate you will find coaching points to aid you.

1v1 Duel

Two players in a defined area (depends on age and ability of players) compete against each other for one ball. Points are scored by having possession of the ball when the coach calls "freeze". Bonus points can be given to players who beat the defender with a set move (this will avoid players simply shielding the ball).

1v1 Tag

Two players with a ball each play in a defined area. Player 1 has one minute to tag (10points a tag) player 2 as many times on the shoulder. During the game both players must retain possession of their soccer balls at all times and if the player being chased is tagged he/she has three seconds head start before play continues.

1v1 Quick fire

Players stand facing their partner one step back from the ball with happy feet. On the coaches command of "quick fire" the players must perform a drag back/Cruyff turn and take the ball past the cone behind. If the player passes the cone before being tackled they win 10 points.

1v1 Doorbell

Both players face each other on either side of a line approx 6-10 steps apart. The players use one ball and must stay on their side of the imaginary line. Player 1 starts with the ball and to score 10 points they must stop the ball against one of the cones. If the ball crosses the line, goes past either cone or if player 2 gets a foot in front of the cone to block, then possession changes.

1v1 Double doorbell

The game is played within the same format as above using the same rules, but this time both players have soccer balls. Player 2 can only block if his/her soccer ball is at the cone before player 1.

1v1 Mega double doorbell

The game is slightly different. The only way player 2 can get the ball is by winning possession from player 1. The player with the ball can score on either cone and can move anywhere in the designated area.

1v1 Ski challenge

Player 1 and 2 have a juggle off, to decide who starts with the soccer ball. If player 1 wins they start with the ball and player 2 starts with a disadvantage (on one knee).

Player 1 must dribble through as many gates as possible, while player 2 must try and win possession and do the same. Each gate is worth 10 points.

1v1 to a ball

The players play with one target ball and one game ball anywhere in a defined area. Player 1 and player 2 have their right foot on top of the ball and count to three and then they are in play. Both players then compete for the ball and 10 points are awarded when the player hits the target ball with competition ball. There are no outs and the game begins with a count to three.

1v1 to a line

Both players play in a coned area approx 15x10 steps and the game starts with a pass from player 1 to player 2. Player 2 attempts to score by dribbling past player 1 and controlling the ball on the line player 1 started on. If player 1 wins the ball they try and control the ball on the line player 2 started on. Bonus points can be awarded if a player performs a specific super skill.

1v1 ladder

The players are set up in the above format, but instead of a line they have a goal (4 steps apart). They play 1v1 for a designated time and at the end of each round the winner's move up the ladder and the loser's move down. In the event of a tie, both players have a juggle off.

1v1 to target players

Target player feeds the ball into the player who is facing him. This player must then try and turn and get the ball to the target player at the other end, scoring a point. If the other player wins the ball he/she can play to any target player, but only scores a point when he/she receives the ball from one target player a transfers the ball to the other target player at the other end. You will always receive a pass from the target player if you played the ball to that player. Play to 5 points and then switch.

1v1 to a goal

Organize the players into groups of three, one goalkeeper and two out field players. Have the two out field player's face away from the goal and the game begins with the goalkeeper throwing the ball out. Both players compete for the ball and attempt to score. Score one point for performing a move; three if you score a goal and five if you scored resulted from a move.

Two player combinations

Two player combinations are very effective in helping your team advance up the field, create scoring opportunities, keeping possession of the ball, making your team more dynamic and working your way out of defensive situations.

The coaching points,

- Communication (verbal/visual)
- Quality execution of combination pass
- Change of pace/direction
- Disguise

Start with a grid (20 x 30 paces), player A starts inside the grid with a ball and player B on the outside. Player A starts dribbling around inside the grid and makes visual or verbal contact with player B on the outside and then they combine to do one of the following combinations,

Wall Pass

Player A (A) attacks the ball towards player B (B), A then passes the ball to B, A explodes into space (90 degrees from B) to receive a first time pass from B.

Take over

A, dribbles the ball towards B, keeping the ball on the outside of the foot. B motions towards the ball and takes the ball over from A, using the outside of the foot nearest the ball. The two players then explode away.

Fake over

Same as above, but the player A dribbles the ball towards B, but switches the ball to the other foot and explodes away with the ball and player B explodes away without the ball confusing the defender.

Spin "n" go

A approaches B in a straight line and passes to B. B passes (lofted or on the ground) the ball first time into the space behind A who has spun away to receive the ball.

Reverse heel pass

A dribbles in front of and past B who comes into the grid behind A and calls for the ball. A heels the ball back into his path and moves to the outside.

Overlap

A dribbles at an angle towards the outside of the grid and past B who comes into the grid overlapping A. A passes the ball forward into B's overlapping run.

Dribbling

The ability to dribble the soccer ball comfortably is the first step in a player's soccer education. The activities below are geared towards the following coaching points,

- The player should keep the ball at a comfortable distance away from them.
- The player should dribble with their head up.
- The player should use both feet and all parts of the feet.
- When performing a move on the dribble the player should use acceleration and movement.
- Super skills should be performed at game speed, ensuring changes of both direction and movement.
- Player's should be encouraged to beat an opponent rather than shield the ball.

Body Breaks

All players have a soccer ball in a coned area (25x20 steps).

The player's dribble around in the area, when the coach calls out a part of the body the player stops the ball with his/her foot and places that part of the body on the ball. The first player to put that part of the body on the ball wins 10 points.

In addition, the coach can call out two parts of the body. The player then has to find a teammate and put one part of the body on one ball and the other part of the body on the other ball.

Nine Lives

All players have a soccer ball in a coned area (25x20 steps).

The player dribbles around the coned area with nine lives. The player can gain extra lives by working hard, being the first to freeze, looking for space and performing set tasks/move at the quickest speed. The player can lose lives if their ball leaves the area, collides with another player or moving slowly. This game has many additions, the coach calls out "switch" and the player plays on with a different ball, coach calls out a part of the body, coach calls out a number and the player's get into groups of that number, toe taps and tick tacks.

"Lives" are used as a motivational tool.

Hunters Ridge

All players have a soccer ball in a coned area (25x20 steps).

The player's dribble their soccer ball inside the coned area practicing their moves. The coach has named each side of the area, deer, duck, pheasant and bear. When the coach calls out one of these, every player dribble's their soccer ball to the correct side and performs a task (a foot skill, juggles or a trick) that the coach set.

The coach should demonstrate the isolated skill that he/she want s the players to perform.

Number Up

All players have a soccer ball in a coned area (25x20 steps).

The players are dribbling their soccer ball inside the coned area. The coach calls out a number and the players get into groups of that number (if it's an odd number, those player(s) come and find coach, nobody is excluded). The group that's the quickest earn 10 points each.

A progression for the activity would be for the coach to hold up his/her fingers. The player's get into groups depending on how many fingers the coach is holding up. This helps the player's look up when they are dribbling the ball.

This is an organized way of setting up your groups for the next activity. For example, if your next activity is 1v1 the coach would call out "two".

The coach should let the player's work out the numbers for themselves. This is part of the learning process and the first time it may take a couple of minutes, this is OK, they will improve the more they do it.

1st Touch

To become a master of the soccer ball the player has to spend a lot of individual time juggling the soccer ball. Juggling the soccer ball is seen as the foundation of 1st touch and ball control. Realistically, most youth soccer player's, take two to three touches to control the ball. With using the terminology "1st touch" instead of "controlling the ball" you are starting to paint a picture in the player's mind that you should have the soccer ball under your control immediately with the first touch.

1st touch is a very important area for youth coaches to work on through out the soccer season. The key coaching points with regards to 1st touch are as follows,

- The player's should always be on their toes.
- The player's should move in order to get their body part in line with the ball whilst selecting the appropriate body part to receive and re-direct the ball.
- The player's should be encouraged to take the 1st touch into the best penetrating space.

Types of 1st touch

Foot

Get in line with the ball. As the ball drops get your body over the ball. At the moment of impact with the ground use the inside or outside of the foot to angle into the top side of the ball and guide the ball away to the side.

Thigh

Get in line with the ball and draw the thigh to meet the ball. At the moment of impact pull the thigh away with the ball touching to cushion the 1st touch.

Chest

Get in line with the ball, as the ball arrives, give at the knees and sink back with the chest to cushion the 1st touch.

Head

Get in line with the ball, as the ball arrives, give at the knees and use your forehead (hair line) to cushion the 1st touch.

Juggling Games

Player's should have a soccer ball in an open space.

Juggling is the foundation of 1st touch and there are a number of challenges that can be used throughout the season.

The player juggles a soccer ball with their feet, legs or head. The player counts how many times they can keep the ball in the air without the ball touching the ground. Every player is encouraged to increase their top juggling score or to get to a specific target. You can motivate your player's using lives, points or dairy queen...!

To challenge the player you can use,

- Sequence juggling, using the foot, thigh then head etc (around the world).
- Moving the ball around without it touching the ground.
- Work in pairs or small groups within a challenge format.

Bouncing Bomb

The player's start dribbling in a coned area (25x20 paces).

On the coaches command the player pick up the soccer ball and bring it up to waist height. The player drops the ball and attempt to control the ball with the inside or outside of the foot and re-directs the ball into the best attacking space (in a non-pressure environment it is to the side or in front). The player has two or three touches to try and stop the ball from bouncing (ideally the ball shouldn't bounce).

The coach should encourage the player to use both feet and "explode" into the best attacking space.

Once the player has mastered this encourage the player to serve the ball slightly higher.

Partner serves

The player's are in groups of two and stand facing each other approx. 5 to 8 steps apart.

One of the player's has a soccer ball and will serve the ball in the air (two handed, under arm throw) for his/her partner. The player receiving the ball has to re-direct the ball into the best attacking space (forward of to the side, in this non-pressured environment).

A progression to this would be to have the player's moving across the field. The server is moving backwards and the receiver is moving forwards or vice versa.

Sequence Passing

The player's stand approx. 5 to 8 paces from each other, depending on age and ability.

The player's are organized in to two's by using the number's game with one ball. The player's pass the ball back and forth only using two touches. The coach introduces different sequences,

1. Control the ball with the inside of the right foot and pass it with the inside of the right foot (*no toes and no stomping on the ball to control it*).
2. Control the ball with the inside of the left foot and pass it with the inside of the left foot (*no toes and no stomping on the ball to control it*).
3. Control the ball with the inside of the right foot and pass it with the inside of the left foot (*no toes and no stomping on the ball to control it*).
4. Control the ball with the inside of the left foot and pass it with the inside of the right foot (*no toes and no stomping on the ball to control it*).
5. Control the ball with the outside of the right foot and pass it with the inside of the right foot (*no toes and no stomping on the ball to control it*).

6. Control the ball with the outside of the left foot and pass it with the inside of the left foot (*no toes and no stomping on the ball to control it*).

To help the players move the ball the coach can place a cone in the middle of the two players, so if the ball arrives down one side of the cone the player moves the ball and passes the ball down the other side.

Challenge races (first pair to 20 passes) can be used as a motivational tool.

Pass and move

The players pass and move in groups of two in an area up to half a field. The coach can make it competitive, for example, first team to twenty passes wins. The coach can reset a teams score if they, stop the ball (poor 1st touch), play a bad pass or if the ball leaves the area.

Encourage the player to re-direct the 1st touch into the best attacking space.

Passing

Passing is one of the most often used skills in soccer. A soccer player is able to pass the soccer ball in a variety of ways. It is important that the coach works on the various and correct techniques. Technical work is important, but it can also become boring for the player. With this in mind the coach has to make his/her activities interesting and game realistic.

Here are the techniques of passing,

Inside of foot

- Place non-kicking foot at a comfortable distance level with the ball, with the toe pointing in the direction in which you wish to pass.
- Lock the ankle and strike the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Strike through the center of the ball and follow through in the direction of the pass.

Outside of the foot or flick pass

- Place the non-kicking foot slightly behind and to the side of the ball.
- The kicking foot is positioned to the inside of the ball and the ball is flicked by an outward rotation of the foot.
- The ball is struck in the middle to keep it on the ground.

Driven pass with laces

- Toe points down towards the ground
- Instep (laces) strikes through the middle of the ball.
- Approach the ball at a slight angle (approx. 30 degrees).
- Kicking foot strikes the ball at an angle.
- Non-kicking foot level with the ball to the side.

Lofted pass with laces

- Strike the bottom half of the ball with the laces.
- Non-kicking foot slightly behind the ball and to the side.
- Approach the ball at an angle.
- Follow through the soccer ball.
- Lean the body slightly back.

Inside of foot swerved pass

- Kicking foot comes across the ball from inside to outside.
- There is an outward rotation of the kicking leg.
- The ball is struck with the forward part of the inside of the foot.
- Contact with the ball is made just right of center.
- Non-kicking foot is slightly to the side and behind the ball to allow the kicking foot more freedom to swing.

Here are some passing activities,

Mine sweep

The coach places random cones on the ground in an area (30x25 steps). The soccer player's dribble a soccer ball and they try and pass the soccer ball so it hits one of the cones, using one of the passing techniques. Challenge the player's by encouraging them to hit a cone the furthest away.

Points can be used as a motivational tool.

Pass and move

The players pass and move in groups of two in an area up to half a field. The players are only allowed two touches and must be an appropriate distance apart, depending on the type of pass, age and ability of the player's. The coach can make it competitive, for example, first team to twenty passes wins. The coach can reset a teams score if they, stop the ball (poor 1st touch), play a bad pass or if the ball leaves the area.

Encourage the player to re-direct the 1st touch into the best attacking space.

A progression is to have the player's pass and move whilst doing two player combinations.

Serve "n" go

Start with a grid (20 x 30 paces), player A starts inside the grid without a ball and player B on the outside with a ball. Player A starts moving around the inside the grid and makes visual or verbal contact with player B on the outside and then player B passes the ball and player A has two touches to play the ball back. He/she plays the ball back in a way in which the coach has directed.

A progression to this is when player A receives the ball he/she re-directs the ball and plays a pass to somebody else on the outside that isn't in possession of a ball.

Possession

The one key to building a great team is being able to keep possession of the soccer ball. If your team has the soccer ball you are able to score and the other team cannot possibly score. As your team develops, possessing the soccer becomes a much more tactical topic, for example, possessing the soccer ball in middle third of the soccer and drawing the other team in, switching the play, patience in the final 3rd or making the field big to keep the ball in an attempt to tire the other team out.

When you are working on possession it is important to try and keep the activities exciting, making up names for the games or making it competitive by using a point system.

Possession work follows a logical progression, 4v1, 3v1, 4v2, 5v2 and 7v4. Once you feel your team is competent, move on to the next progression. For all possession sessions please consider the size of your area, touch restrictions, and the amount of initial pressure, this will all depend on the age and ability of your players.

4V1

Play within an area 15x10 paces, approx.

4v1 should be your starting point for any form of possession work. The defender starts with the ball and plays it to any other player. The receiving player has one touch and the defender can apply the pressure. 10 consecutive passes equals a point and switch the defender at regular intervals.

Coaching points,

- *Quality and timing of the pass.*
- *Commit the defender before passing.*
- *Quality 1st touch.*
- *Quality decision making.*
- *Player movement both on and off the ball.*
- *Communication (visual and verbal).*

3V1

Play within an area 15x10 paces, approx.

The defender starts with the ball and plays it to any other player. The receiving player has one touch and the defender can apply the pressure. 10 consecutive passes equals a point and switch the defender at regular intervals.

Coaching points,

- *Reiterate the points from 4v1.*
- *Movement off the ball (help the player in possession).*
- *Body position as the ball is received (open or closed?).*
- *Range of passes used.*
- *Disguising the pass and playing into space.*

4v2

Play in an area approx. 20x15 paces.

The defender starts with the ball and plays it to any other player. The receiving player has one touch and the defender can apply the pressure. 10 consecutive passes equals a point and switch the defender at regular intervals. To progress, the player who makes the mistake becomes a defender.

Coaching points,

- *All the points from 4v1 and 3v1.*
- *When split the defenders with a pass.*

5v2

Play in an area approx. 25x20 paces.

The defender starts with the ball and plays it to any other player. The receiving player has one touch and the defender can apply the pressure. 10 consecutive passes equals a point and switch the defender at regular intervals. To progress, the player who makes the mistake becomes a defender.

Coaching points,

- *All the points from 5v2, 4v1 and 3v1.*
- *Constant movement to keep the shape.*
- *Support and receiving positions be come vital.*
- *Points to succeed, 2 short options, 1 long split pass and 1 pass to link the play.*

7v4

Play in and area approx. 60x40 paces.

Present a blueprint of success. Give them the idea of keeping possession of the soccer ball and sucking the defenders in before making the long pass. You then add an incentive to the defenders so they pressure the ball.

Coaching points,

- *Timing of the pass.*
- *Quickness of support.*
- *Supporting in realistic positions.*

2v2 to target players

Play in an area approx. 20x15 paces.

Have a target player on each end of the grid. The two players that have possession of the ball have to try and transfer the ball to one of the target players to the other at the opposite end. The two other players have to try and win possession of the soccer ball. Every time a pair of players completes a cycle they get a goal, first to 10 goals wins.

Who can do a two player combination...?

2v2 with outside support

Play in and area approx. 25x20 paces.

Four players are playing 2v2 inside the area and the other four are spread out around the area taking one side of the rectangle. The player's in the middle must do three passes and pass the ball to one of the outside player's. The outside player has to pass the ball back to the team that passed it to him/her. Every time they complete a cycle they get a goal, first to ten wins.

Shooting/Finishing

Having the correct technique and instilling the right attitude in front of goal can be the difference between winning and losing a game, there is nothing worse as a coach to see your player in front of goal and he/she toe blows the ball high and wide of the goal. The fact that you may have lost a game, is immaterial, there will be another game. As a youth soccer coach it is our responsibility to educate our player's on the correct technique, especially at a young age.

When striking the ball the player should understand the following principles,

Coaching points,

- *Body position and direction of the non-kicking foot.*
- *Striking the ball with the laces.*
- *Striking the ball through the middle.*
- *Approach from the side of the ball.*
- *Follow through in the direction of the target.*

When shooting at goal the player must also consider,

- Accuracy before power (the shot has to be on target).
- Shoot low and hard in to the far corner (very hard for the goalkeeper to save).
- Responsibility (if you don't shoot you don't score, any body on the soccer field can score a goal).
- Awareness (the position of the goalkeeper and defenders).

Pin-ball

Players get in to groups of three, with one being the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper sets up his/her goal with two cones, 8 paces apart. The other two players (A and B) go either side of the goal. A shoots the ball at the goal, if the goalkeeper saves it he/she rolls the ball to the other side to B. B then shoots at the same goal, if he/she scores A goes and retrieves the ball. Here are the progressions,

1. Strike a stationary ball.
2. Strike a moving ball.
3. Strike a bouncing ball.

You can then add pressure to the player shooting by adding a player at each end. Player A1 passes the ball through A2's legs and applies pressure. You can also vary the feed, over the left shoulder, right shoulder or over the head. As a coach you can apply different levels of pressure by allowing the defender to move on the player's first touch or his own pass.

Coaching points,

- *1st touch takes the attacker away from the defender.*
- *Shoot low and hard across the goal.*

1v1 to full goal (age appropriate)

Place two goals 30 paces apart and add two goalkeepers and partners on opposite sides of the field. A passes to B, who attempts to score. Once the play is over, from

a missed shot, save or goal, B then goes back to his starting position and feeds A. Here are the progressions,

1. A passes to B and then defends passively.
2. A passes to B and then defends fully. B then has to consider the position of the goalkeeper and defender.

2v1 to central goal

This game is set up in the same way as "Pin-ball". The difference being, there is a 2v1 situation on each side of the goal. When two A's combine to score a goal, the goalkeeper turns and joins in on the other side becomes the defender and the player that scored becomes the goalkeeper. During this time the player's should consider,

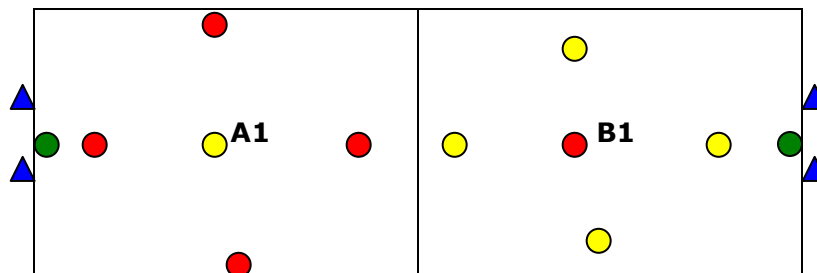
1. Can I dribble past the defender and shoot?
2. Can I do a two player combination (take over, wall pass etc.)?
3. Can I do a through pass to my teammate?

3v2 to a goal

The goalkeeper plays the ball out wide to B. Once the ball has been played, the two A's enter the field from behind the goal and become defenders. The 3 B's play against the 2 A's until a goal is scored or shot missed. Then one of the B's goes in goal and the other two B's start behind the goal to become defenders (roles reversed).

Ricochet

You play in an area 60x40 paces, with a line of cones going down the center of the field. You have 4v1 in each of the halves of the field, with goalkeepers.



At this point you are only allowed to shoot from your own half (B1 or A1 cannot score; if he/she wins possession he/she must lay the ball back so that his/her teammate can shoot).

To progress your session you can,

- Have more than one ball.
- B1/A1 can shoot, but only on a rebound.
- B1/A1 can shoot.
- The ball must be played to either B1 or A1 before you can shoot.

Attacking

The ability to create space as an individual and as a part of a team, so a player can take a shot at goal in the final third of the soccer field is the most difficult aspect of the game for a youth soccer player to understand.

As a coach you cannot manufacture "plays" (unless it is dead ball situation), but you can give the soccer player the tools to be creative (super skills, two or three player combinations etc.). The soccer player has to evaluate each scenario; through quality practice sessions we can help the player identify and execute an appropriate action.

Whopping 1V1 to a goal

A goalkeeper in a full size goal. The rest are partnered 1v1. There are gates (4 paces) in an arc around the penalty box.

One of the players starts with the ball on the outside of the arc facing the goal and opponent. The opponent stands between the gates with his/her back to goal. On the coaches command the player will try and dribble the ball through the gate, past the defender (no puppy guarding) and shoot at goal.

Coaching points,

- *Attacker must make the ball change direction.*
- *Attacker must change speed.*
- *Player's should use the super skills library to create the space for a shot.*
- *The attacker must be positive and aggressive when trying to beat an opponent.*

Three and In

One of the classics...One of the player's is a goalkeeper and the other two play 1v1. The first player to score three goals switches with the goalkeeper.

Coaching points,

- *Attacker must make the ball change direction.*
- *Attacker must change speed.*
- *Player's should use the super skills library to create the space for a shot.*
- *The attacker must be positive and aggressive when trying to beat an opponent.*

The progression from attacking as an individual is adding a teammate. Attacking space can be created through the movement of the ball and a teammate. Two player combinations (page 16) are a great starting point for any youth soccer player.

2v1 to a goal

Player's get into groups of four and team up to create a 2v2 situation. The two goals (4 paces) are 30 paces apart from each other. A's start with the ball and attack the B's. One of the B's drops back and becomes the goalkeeper while the other becomes the defender. Therefore you have created a 2v1 situation. If the A's lose possession, one of the A's drops back into the goal and the other becomes the defender whist the B's attempt to score.

Coaching points,

- *If the first attacker can shoot, they should.*
- *Movement and communication of the second attacker.*
- *Can the first attacker beat the defender 1v1 or does he/she need to do a two player combination to create space for the shot?*

2v2 to a line

Player's play in an area 20x20 paces. A's pass the ball to B's to start, and the B's have to try and stop the ball on A's goal line to score. A's attempt to win possession and counter attack and stop the ball on B's line.

Coaching points,

- *Awareness – positioning of the defenders in relation to the play.*
- *Encourage the first attacker to beat the defender aggressively in 1v1 situation.*
- *Does the player need to combine to create space (wall pass, over lap, take over etc.)?*
- *Communication.*

2v2 to target players

Play in an area approx. 20x15 paces.

Have a target player on each end of the grid. The two players that have possession of the ball have to try and transfer the ball to one of the target players to the other at the opposite end. The two other players have to try and win possession of the soccer ball. Every time a pair of players completes a cycle they get a goal, first to 10 goals wins.

To progress the session, the player's MUST do a two player combination.

Defending

Defending is not an easy topic to teach, it is not as glamorous as attacking, but it is just as important. Defending is often seen as hard work, with little or no reward. It is the role of the coach to make the practices interesting and stressing the point of regaining possession as one of the most important aspects of the game. It is the aim of the coach to make the player's understand that defending as a team starts with the forwards. When your team doesn't have the ball, the team must concentrate on their defensive duties in an attempt to win the soccer ball.

There are two main systems of defense,

1. Man-to-man marking.
2. Zonal defending.

Depending on the ability of your player's and the tactics you wish to use, many teams use a combination of the two, for example, forwards are marked man-to-man and the team plays a zonal defense every where else.

You can play these systems in two ways,

1. High pressure defense.
2. Low pressure defense.

A high pressure defense will allow little or no time on the ball for the opponent. All over the soccer field the defense will be closing down the attacker as quickly as possible. This is high energy and can take a lot out of your players.

A low pressure defense will let the other team have time on the ball in certain situations and be patient before committing to the ball.

Basic defending techniques,

- Stand on the balls of your feet.
- Knees bent giving a low center of gravity.
- Body weight distributed evenly between both legs.
- Body sideways on to the attacker.
- Maintain stance whilst shuffling backwards, keeping goal side all the time.
- Attempt to steal the ball or knock it away.

Defending principles on an individual basis,

- Always stay goal side.
- Quickly close down the space between you and the attacker.
- Make the attacker play predictably (do a curved run towards the attacker).
- Always be patient. If you dive in to a tackle you are making it easier for the attacker to beat you.
- Eyes on the ball (not at hips, head or feet).

There are three basic defending roles, the first (pressure), second (cover) and third (balance).

The first defender (pressure)

The first defender's role is to apply pressure to the ball carrier, quickly. Their role is to make the attack predictable by giving the attacker one passing option. Applying high pressure can do this.

The second defender (cover)

The second defender will sit behind (distance will depend on whether the first defender has applied high or low pressure) the first defender. The second defender will have the following functions,

- Covering and giving support.
- Marking.
- Tracking the runner.
- Reading the pressure, can he/she double team?

The third defender (balance)

The third defender takes up a position so he/she is able to see all the attacking options. He/she will sit deep enough so that he/she can read the game effectively and come into the space when required. The third defender has the following functions,

- Balance.
- Compactness.

1v1 to a ball

The players play with one target ball and one game ball anywhere in a defined area. Player 1 and player 2 have their right foot on top of the ball and count to three and then they are in play. Both players then compete for the ball and 10 points are awarded when the player hits the target ball with competition ball. There are no outs and the game begins with a count to three.

There is no puppy guarding and you are looking for the coach the defender on how to pressure the ball.

1v1 to a line

Both players play in a coned area approx 15x10 steps and the game starts with a pass from player 1 to player 2. Player 2 attempts to score by dribbling past player 1 and controlling the ball on the line player 1 started on. If player 1 wins the ball they try and control the ball on the line player 2 started on. Bonus points can be awarded if a player performs a specific super skill.

There is no puppy guarding and you are looking for the coach the defender on how to pressure the ball.

2v1 to a goal

Player's get into groups of four and team up to create a 2v2 situation. The two goals (4 paces) are 30 paces apart from each other. A's start with the ball and attack the B's. One of the B's drops back and becomes the goalkeeper while the other becomes the defender. Therefore you have created a 2v1 situation. If the A's lose possession, one of the A's drops back into the goal and the other becomes the defender whilst the B's attempt to score.

Coaching points,

- *If the first defender closes down quickly.*
- *Makes the play predictable by make a curved run.*

2v2 to a line

Player's play in an area 20x20 paces. A's pass the ball to B's to start, and the B's have to try and stop the ball on A's goal line to score. A's attempt to win possession and counter attack and stop the ball on B's line.

Coaching points,

- *1st defender closes down quickly.*
- *1st defender makes the play predictable.*
- *2nd defender reads the pressure of the 1st defender.*
- *2nd defender communicates.*
- *2nd defender covers if there is a lack of pressure.*
- *2nd defender tracks the runner (ball) or 2nd attacker.*
- *2nd defender looks for the double team.*

3v3 to an end zone

Player's play in an area 30x20 paces, with end zones (like in football). A's pass the ball to B's to start, and the B's have to try and stop the ball in A's end zone to score. A's attempt to win possession and counter attack and stop the ball in B's end zone.

Understanding the role of the third defender when the first defender is applying low pressure, he/she should be creating "balance" and if the first defender is applying high pressure he/she should be squeezing the play (compacting).

Coaching points,

- *How the defenders swap roles throughout the game as the ball is moved around the field by the attackers.*

Heading

Heading is a unique skill in soccer. If the ball comes near your head in any other sport you would attempt to catch it or avoid it. Heading the soccer ball has received some bad press in the United States over the last few years. There is no evidence to show that the amount of heading that a child will do in their soccer career will have any adverse effect on a child. Soccer, despite being the world's most popular game has no recorded incident of brain damage.

As a coach it is up to you to give the player the tools to feel comfortable heading the ball. If the player is frightened of heading the ball and the ball in general, 9 times out of 10 the player will get hurt.

When coaching heading it should be part of, but not the main body of your practice

Coaching points,

- *Get body in line with the ball.*
- *Eye on the ball at all times.*
- *Head the ball with the forehead (hair line).*
- *When heading the ball down, the player connects with the middle to top half of the ball (attacking).*
- *When heading the ball up, the player connects with the middle to bottom half of the ball (defensive).*

Uffdah...

Player A faces player B (8-10 paces) with the ball in his/her hands. A serves a two handed underarm throw to B. B will then attempt to head the ball back to the feet of A (attacking header, very difficult for the goalkeeper to save). The players do ten headers each. The person heading the ball gets a point if the ball lands right at the player's feet.

The next progression is to work on the defensive header. Player A faces player B (8-10 paces) with the ball in his/her hands. A serves a two handed underarm throw to B. B then heads the ball over A's head and as far as possible. A then has to chase the ball and gather it before it bounces a second time. If it bounces twice player B gets a point and if player A gets it before the second bounce, he/she gets a point. The players do ten headers each.

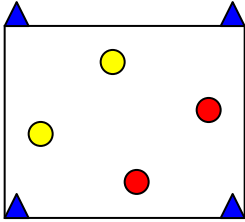
Two Vs Two combat

In groups of two, the players set up square using four cones approx. 7 paces apart. A1 will serve a two handed underarm throw to A2. A2 will head the ball in an attempt to score a goal past B1 or B2. The B's will act like goalkeepers and try and save the ball. They will serve the ball to each other and try and score.

Coaching points,

- *Get body in line with the ball.*
- *Eye on the ball at all times.*
- *Head the ball with the forehead (hair line).*

- *When heading the ball down, the player connects with the middle to top half of the ball (attacking).*



Can any of the player's attempt a diving header?

Head-catch

Divide the group into two even groups. Play on a field approx. 30x20 paces. The two teams have a target player each, situated at the end of the grid (goal). The team has to throw the ball to a teammate so that he/she can head the ball to a teammate. You score by a player heading the ball to a target player.

Head to gates...

Divide the group into two even groups. Play on a field approx. 30x20 paces. Also, set up some small gates (4 paces) around the field. The player's play in the same format as "Head-catch", but to score a goal the player must head the ball down through one of the gates.

Goalkeeping

The goalkeeper is a very important part of the team. The keeper is able to see the whole field and has the unique ability to use their hands (in the correct area). A successful keeper learns the basic techniques, so that they can make great saves whilst keeping themselves safe.

In soccer there are three different ways to catch a ball,

1. Down on one knee – rolling ball. The keeper faces the ball but turns their lower body to the side. Then the keeper puts down the knee closest to the ball. The keeper has the two pinkies touching each other and scoops the ball up into the basket.
2. Basket catch – waist height. The keeper leans forward and grabs the ball into the basket. If it is a slow shot the keeper comes to the ball. If it is a hard shot the keeper may hop back to absorb the shot.
3. The “W” catch – for a ball above shoulder height. The keeper holds their hands out in front, in the shape of a “W” (thumbs together, pinkies pointing outwards) with their arms slightly bent.

Pass and move, keeper style...

The player's pair up, with one ball between two. They are in a grid (25x20 paces).

Player A has the ball in the basket, whilst B runs around a cone (one of the cones used for the grid) and receives a rolling, waist or high throw from A. B then has to decide which one of the three ways to catch a ball to use.

Coaching points,

- *Encourage the player to bring the ball into the basket at all times (safe).*
- *Ensure proper technique.*

To progress the session, a keeper must find a different player each time, to help improve awareness and communication.

Keep away

Divide the keeper's into two groups. In an area approx. 25x20 paces the two teams play keep away. To start the keeper's are only allowed to serve rolling balls. You can then progress to basket and “W” passes. See how many consecutive passes the team can do. The ball can be turned over if it is intercepted or if an incorrect technique is used.

All great goalkeepers make fewer diving saves because they have great footwork. By having good footwork helps make difficult saves look easy. Keepers will move around the area by shuffling, making sure their feet don't cross or touch.

A keeper will only dive if he/she is unable to get to the ball by any other method. The keeper will do a collapse dive, meaning the legs fall out, so they land first, then the hip and then the shoulder. We use the “three hand” technique, which is one hand on top of the ball, one behind and the ground acts as the third. Their body should be behind the ball, between the ball and goal, with their head low.

Here is an idea to get the keeper used to diving,

1. The keeper is on his/her knees and has a stationary ball to one side. The keeper collapses on the ball to make a diving save. Move the ball so the keeper has the chance to dive to both sides.
2. In partner's same as 1, but with a rolling ball.
3. Same as 1, but from a crouched position.
4. Same as 2, but from a crouched position.
5. Same as 1, but from a standing position.
6. Same as 2, but from a standing position.

1v1 to goals

Keepers play facing each in a goal approx. 15 paces from each other. They are allowed one touch to set up a shot. They play against each other and the first to ten goals is the winner.

Coaching points,

- *Encourage the player to bring the ball into the basket at all times (safe).*
- *Ensure proper technique.*

The keeper has six ways to distribute the soccer ball.

1. The roll – the keeper holds the ball in the palm of his/her hand with the fingers spread and brings the ball back. The keeper then steps forward with the furthest foot and brings the ball through, to bowl the ball along the ground.
2. Baseball throw - the keeper holds the ball in the palm of his/her hand with the fingers spread. The ball is brought to the side of the body level with the shoulder. The keeper takes a step forward with the opposite foot and brings the ball forward quickly releasing the ball in front of the body. The hand should go under the ball, giving it some backspin.
3. Over arm throw – the ball is held with the fingers, palm and wrist wrapped around the ball. The body should be turned sideways and the throwing arm should be brought back. Step with the opposite foot and have the opposite arm pointing in the direction of the target. Bring the throwing arm forward; keeping the arm straight and have the throwing arm pass right by the ear. The hand should go under the ball giving it backspin.
4. Punt – the keeper holds the ball at waist height and brings the kicking foot through. The keeper drops the ball the kicks the ball with the laces and follows through.
5. Drop kick (don't work on this with the kids)
6. Kick from the ground (don't work on this with the kids)

All distribution should be thrown or kicked to your teammate's feet or into the space that your teammate is moving into. When possible the goalkeeper's distribution should be along the ground, it is easier for the player to control.

1v1 to goals

Keepers play facing each in a goal approx. 20 paces from each other. The keepers try and score a goal by using one of the four distribution techniques. They play against each other and the first to ten goals is the winner.

Small-sided games

Small-sided games allow the player more touches on the ball in the competitive cauldron. You should have a maximum of 4x4 with one or more games playing at the same time (depending on numbers). Small-sided games allows' the player's to put what they have learnt into practice. As a coach you can adapt your small-sided game to make it relevant to the theme of your practice.

Game 1

Play 3v3 on a field approx 30x20 paces.

Restriction: You must beat a player before you score. Progress to; you can only pass backwards.

Coaching points,

- *Can the player's recognize the 1v1 situation?*
- *Confidence to go and try a move (aggressive and change of pace/direction).*
- *When, where and why to penetrate with the dribble.*

Game 2

Play 3v3 on a field approx 30x20 paces.

Restriction: Restrict touches on the ball to encourage good 1st touch, passing awareness and movement of the ball.

Coaching points,

- *Open body position to receive the pass.*
- *Play with head up and look for the next pass.*
- *Communication (verbal/visual).*
- *Movement off the ball, support the player with the ball.*

Game 3

Play 3v3 on a field approx 30x20 paces.

Restriction: Every player on the team must touch the ball.

Coaching points,

- *Open body position to receive the pass.*
- *Play with head up and look for the next pass.*
- *Positive 1st touch away from pressure.*
- *Communication (verbal/visual).*
- *Movement off the ball, support the player with the ball.*

Game 4

Play 3v3+1 on a field approx 30x20 paces.

Restriction: The floating player always plays for the team that has possession of the soccer ball.

Coaching points,

- *Open body position to receive the pass.*
- *Play with head up and look for the next pass.*
- *Positive 1st touch away from pressure.*
- *Communication (verbal/visual).*
- *Movement off the ball, support the player with the ball.*

Game 5

Play 3v3+1 on a field approx 30x20 paces.

Restriction: The floating player always plays for the team that has possession of the soccer ball and they must do a two player combination before they can score a goal.

Coaching points,

- *When, where and how to combine.*
- *Play with head up and look for the next pass.*
- *Communication (verbal/visual).*
- *Movement off the ball, support the player with the ball.*

Game 5

Play 3v3 on a field approx 30x20 paces.

Restriction: Coach the roles of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd defender.

Coaching points,

- *Awareness of defensive roles and responsibility.*
- *Communication (verbal/visual).*
- *Movement off the ball to pressure the attacking team.*

Game 6

Play 3v3 on a field approx **20x30** paces.

Restriction: Play "four goal" soccer to encourage the player's to switch the point of attack. Each team must defend two goals and attack two goals. The field needs to be wide enough to make the game successful.

Coaching points,

- *Awareness of when to switch play.*
- *When to play the long pass to penetrate the defense.*
- *Patience in possession.*
- *Play with head up and look for the next pass.*
- *Communication (verbal/visual).*
- *Movement off the ball to pressure the attacking team.*

Game 7

Play 3v3 to an end zone, on a field approx 30x20 paces.

Restriction: Play to an end zone where the player's have to dribble the soccer ball, play the soccer ball to a teammate already in the end zone or play the ball so a teammate can run onto the ball and meet it in the end zone.

Coaching points,

- *When to play the long pass to penetrate the defense.*
- *Patience in possession.*
- *Play with head up and look for the next pass.*
- *Communication (verbal/visual).*
- *Movement off the ball to pressure the attacking team.*


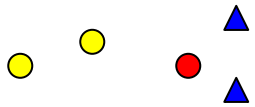
Adapting a practice

You will be able to make subtle changes to your practice to make it successful. As a coach you have many tools available.

- **Field size** – A smaller field will encourage more 1v1 situations (defending and attacking). A larger field will help you team keep possession because they have more space to move into and to correct a bad 1st touch. A wide field will help you work on switching the play, crossing and finishing.
- **Different types of goals** – If you are working on finishing you may want to make larger goals to see more success. To score a goal the player has to stop the ball on the line, find a target player, double sided goals, counter goals, perform a super skill, play into an end zone, play to multiple goals, do a two player combination or score past a goalkeeper.
- **Restrictions on certain players** - If a player is playing above the ability of the age group, you may have the player take a maximum of three touches or they must perform a super skill every time they get the soccer ball.
- **Numbers on a team** - If your theme is, offensive play in the final 3rd, you may want the attacking team to have an extra player.
- **Channels and zones** – You can set up certain zones where certain player's are allowed in. For example, if you are working on crossing, you have zones on the side of the field. The only player allowed in the zone is the player crossing the ball.
- **Time** – The player's have X amount of time to complete a task. If you are doing a finishing session, the player has 3 seconds to get a shot off at goal.
- **Progressions** – Your session should flow in a logical manner. Keep to one theme throughout and stick to it. Make your progression age, ability and game appropriate.

NLSC – Example practice planner

Date	N/A	Age Group	U9 Boys
Location	Central Park	Topic	Dribbling

Warm-up	Coaching points
<p><u>10 mins</u></p> <p>Players dribble around area (20x15 paces) whilst coach is giving out commands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a super skill • Use both feet and all parts of the foot • Keep the head up • Keep the ball close • Award points for top performers • <i>Use numbers game to progress</i>
Activity 1	Coaching points
<p><u>10 mins</u></p> <p>1v1 to a line</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Fast/quick feet • Deception (fake/disguise) • Change of pace • Quality execution of the move
Activity 2	Coaching points
<p><u>10 mins</u></p> <p>2v1 to a goal</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Identify when, where and how to complete a super skill (move)
Scrimmage/small-sided	Coaching points
<p><u>30 mins</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4v4 max • Player must beat a defender before shooting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Coach stops play where appropriate
Cool down	N/A

NLSC

Date		Age Group	
Location		Topic	

Warm-up	Coaching points
Activity 1	Coaching points
Activity 2	Coaching points
Scrimmage/small-sided	Coaching points
Cool down	

A guide to your camp week

The following topics are to be covered on each day. Please do your best to adjust your activities accordingly.

Monday – Dribbling

Tuesday – Turns and Moves

Wednesday – Shooting

Thursday – Agility and Tricks

Friday – Recap of the week

Daily session plan (U5-U8)	Daily session plan (U9+)
9:00-9:15am	9:00-9:15am
Introduction	Introduction
9:15-9:30am	9:15-9:30am
Warm up (Dribbling activity)	Warm up – Super skills and foot skills
9:30-9:50am	9:30-9:50am
Fun game	1v1
9:50-10:00am	9:50-10:00am
Water Break	Water Break
10:00-10:30am	10:00-10:45am
Fun game(s)	Activity focusing on topic of the day
10:30-10:50am	10:45-11:00am
Light snack with entertainment from the coaches,	Light snack with entertainment from the coaches,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joke time • Story time • <i>Be creative with this time...</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joke time • Story time • <i>Be creative with this time...</i>
10:50-11:05am	11:00-11:20am
Fun game	Activity focusing on topic of the day
11:05-11:40am	11:20-11:40am
Scrimmage	Scrimmage
11:40-12:00	11:40-12:00
Coaches Challenge and close	Coaches Challenge and close

