

Boyne Area 4H  
Youth Soccer

Grades 3 & 4

Practice Lesson Plan Manual

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## Under 10 Lesson Plans

Welcome coaches to Boyne Area 4H Soccer. If you are new to soccer, you are probably asking yourself..."What did I get myself into now?" Well, you can relax. Within the context of this manual are daily lesson plans that you can use to develop your players in key areas of soccer.

These plans are by no means finite. As you become comfortable with coaching your team, feel free to be creative. At the end of this manual are suggested websites where you can enhance your creative juices. You should be able to create your own sessions once you understand the essential ingredients.

### Each practice session has four main areas:

1. **Warm-up:** Emphasis on preparing the player both physically and mentally for the training session. General motor ability (i.e.) balance, coordination and flexibility) should also be enhanced. All of the above should be followed by stretching of the various parts of the body. Young players don't need stretching, but it's a good habit for them to begin early.
2. **Individual Activities:** This portion will cover fun-filled methods that can improve a young player's technique in a playing non-drill manner.
3. **Small Group Activities:** These games will challenge the player (without the pressure of high numbers) to improve a variety of the needed skills. It also gives the players the opportunity to touch the ball more often.
4. **Large Group Activities:** This time will be used to familiarize the player with the different aspects of playing in a match situation. Each section should last between 10 to 15 minutes (take rests when needed). All activities should start with a brief demonstration, followed by the players moving quickly into activities.

The successful coach is one who can imagine these activities through a player's eyes. By creating a fun-filled environment, the players will be excited to return.

Have a great coaching season,

Boyne Area 4H Soccer Association.

## Under 10 --- Session One: Dribbling & Possession

**OBJECTIVE:** To improve dribbling and shielding technique and inspire the confidence in our players to keep the ball (possess the ball) under pressure with the intention to delay play until help arrives, beat an opponent or simply keep possession for your team.

- 1) **Free-Dribble (10 minutes):** Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session; kids dribble the ball towards someone and try a move. Version 2: As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. Version 3: Make the game a knockout game in which players try to knock each other's soccer balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own. Note: You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 sole of the foot touches or juggling 5 times. You do not want players sitting out.

### Coaching Points:

- Bend your knees and get down low
- Use your arms to keep balance
- Keep the ball close using the inside, outside and sole of the foot
- Keep your head up

- 2) **Shield-Steal (10 minutes):** use entire space, half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If the ball goes out of bounds, the person who touched it last LOSES possession. When the coach yells freeze, those who have possession of a ball receive a point. Play multiple games. Go over technical points as a group and at the start of the activity, show the shielding technique. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. Version 2: make the activity competitive by creating two teams; the team who has possession of the most soccer balls at the end of time is the winner.

### Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points from the Free dribble activity
- Survey the area
- Recognize when and where to change direction
- Body sideways between defender and the ball when shielding
- Arm providing protection when shielding
- Ball on outside foot when shielding
- Spin/turn as defender attacks when shielding
- Hands become your eyes; use them to feel for defender

- 3) **5 Goal Game (15 minutes):** 4v4+2 or 5v5+2 in 35x40 yard grid. Five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The 2 neutral players are always on the attacking team. Each team can score by dribbling through any of the 5 goals. The first team to 10 points wins. Players need to be able to see where the open goals are, and receive the ball with a “picture” of what is around them.

**Coaching Points:**

- Dribbling to keep the ball “Shielding”
  - Dribbling to beat an opponent “Inviting a tackle, change of speed, change of direction, feints”
  - When to dribble to break pressure: This is used most commonly by midfielders and by forwards. It involves simply getting beside the pressuring defender for a split second. Once beside a defender, sudden, explosive changes in pace or direction and feints are the most common means of breaking pressure.
  - Where to dribble to gain space “With any sort of space ahead of him, an attacker will run with the ball forward to gain territory”
  - Recognizing what goal is open
- 4) **4v4 or 5v5 to Four Goals (15 minutes):** Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three. You must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 25yds X 25yds. Have one team of 4 or 5 on deck. They come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately. Look for open space and attack it with speed.

**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce coaching points covered in previous activities.

- 5) **6vs. 6 (includes GK’s) Game (25 minutes)**

**Coaching Points:**

- Stress dribbling & shielding technique

- 6) **Cool Down (10 minutes):** Controlled juggling (thigh-thigh-foot-foot). Statically stretch the large muscle groups.

## Under 10 --- Session 2: Receiving Lofted Balls

**Objectives:** To improve the technique of receiving soccer balls played in the air. To help players practice using different surfaces when receiving lofted balls (feet, thighs, chest).

### 1) Dutch Circle (Warm-up – 15 minutes):

Half of the players (servers) create a 25-35 yd outer circle and have soccer balls in their hands. These players must always be alert and on their toes. The other half of the players (receivers) are in the middle of this circle and do not have soccer balls. The receivers check to the servers to receive a ball out of the air from them. They receive the ball with feet, thighs or chest and then play the ball to any server on the outer circle who does not have a ball (except the player who tossed it to them). They then check to another server on the outside that has a ball and repeat the process for about 2-3 minutes until coach switches players on outside and inside. Focus on both feet, receiving with the top of foot and then turning with it; the thigh, taking it in the direction they want to go; the chest.

#### Coaching Points:

- on toes and get body behind ball
- Move to the ball, do not wait for it
- Try to drop the ball a bit in front of your body using one touch so the ball is in your control but not under you

#### Thigh:

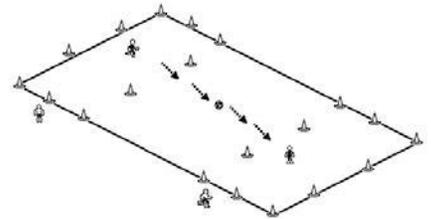
- Lift thigh up to meet ball and once ball touches thigh drop your leg down to cushion the ball
- Torso should be leaning forward
- Make sure you push ball slightly in front of you so you can handle it easily
- Ball should not pop up as you cushion it
- Point of contact on leg is the bottom of the quadriceps muscle

#### Chest:

- Bend knees with feet staggered
- Slightly arch back while using arms for balance
- Cushion ball (collapse chest) as it hits your chest and guide it just in front of your feet
- Do not push out chest to pop the ball out too far in front of you
- Ball should droop down, not pop up
- Once contact is made move forward to stay over the ball and protect it

## 2) Box to Box (15-20 minutes):

Two players per team. Two boxes are made approximately 20-30 yards apart. There is a player from each team in one box. One team starts the game. When the ball is lofted to the other box, the attacking team gets the opportunity to get the first touch. Then they have to dribble outside of the box (square) to receive a point. The defending player is outside the box and has to wait until the attacking player gets the first touch. The defending player tries to win the ball after the first touch has been made. If the attacking player is successful in bringing the ball down and dribbling outside of the square then they keep it. If the defending player wins the ball after the first touch, then they become the attacking team. Coach may allow the serving players to toss the ball in the air or punt it in the air to the opposite box.



### Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points listed in activity #1
- First touch and importance of cushioning ball
- Get in line with the ball
- Select controlling surface early
- Relax body part at impact
- Take first touch away from where pressure is coming from

## 3) Arsenal Drill (15-20 minutes):

Split grid into three even zones (zone 1, 2 and 3). Split team into three even teams (can have 3 to 6 players in each zone). If have three teams of 4, then Team in Zone 1 is trying to possess the ball (can ask them to have 2 to 4 passes before they can play the ball down) and then play it in the air to team in Zone 3. Meanwhile, team in Zone 2 sends two defenders into Zone 1 to try and win the ball. If they win the ball, they turn, play it down to Zone 3 and then switch zones with team in Zone 1 (team in Zone 1 then has to then send two defenders into Zone 3 and try to win the ball back). If team in Zone 1 is able to play it down to team in Zone 3, they get a point. That means the other two players waiting in Zone 2 are entering into Zone 3 to win the ball back. Team that gets to 5 points first, wins. Variation: Make a restriction that the ball played into other zone has to be in the air.

### Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- First touch and importance of cushioning ball

- Get in line with the ball
- Select controlling surface early
- Relax body part at impact
- Take first touch away from where pressure is coming from

4) **6 v 6 Scrimmage\_(25-30 minutes):**  
Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- Highlight the technique of receiving the ball in the air
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (what surface they use to receive it, where their first touch goes, body positioning, etc.)

5) **Cool-down\_(10 minutes):** Groups of 3. One player is the server and has the ball in their hands and the other two are ready to juggle. Server says 2 and 2 which means the server tosses the ball to the first player who has to juggle the ball two times before getting it to the next player who has to juggle the ball twice and get it back to the server (ball should not touch the ground). Server can change numbers of juggles to 1 and 1, 1 and 5, 3 and 4, 4 and 2, etc.

## Under 10 --- Session 3: Receiving – Low Balls

**Objectives:** To improve the technique of receiving soccer balls played on the ground. To help players see different methods of receiving ground balls (inside of foot, outside of foot, across body, through legs, etc.).

- 1) **Dutch Circle (Warm-up – 15 minutes):** Half of the players create a 25-35 yd outer circle and have soccer balls at their feet. These players must always be alert and on their toes. The other half of the players are in the middle of this circle and do not have soccer balls. The inner players check to players on the outside to receive a pass from them. They receive the pass and then play to any player on the outer circle who does not have a ball (except player who passed to them). They then check to another person on the outside that has a ball and repeat this process for about 2-3 minutes until coach switches players on outside and inside. Focus on both front foot and back foot receptions and add in feints (i.e. ball runs through legs, ball runs across body, or take ball early). Work on receiving with both feet and receiving sideways-on.

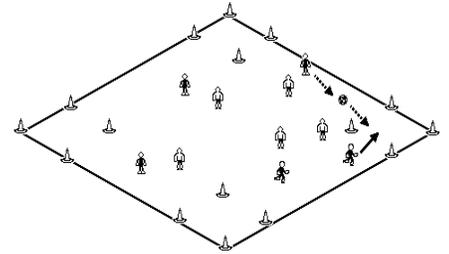
### Coaching Points:

- Get body behind the ball and be on toes
  - Go to the ball, do not wait for it
  - Keep ankle of receiving foot locked
  - Cushion ball as it arrives (as you would catching an egg)
  - Point of contact is the middle of the ball
  - Keep feet moving before ball arrives
  - Make your first touch active by pushing the ball in the direction in which you want to go (typically away from pressure)
  - Get head up before and after receiving
  - Always try to receive the ball facing the way you want to play
- 2) **Numbers Passing (15 minutes):** Split the team into groups of 4-5 players. Give every player a number. Have them spread out and pass the ball from number 1 to 2, from 2 to 3, etc. through the whole group. The highest numbered player simply passes back to number 1 and the activity continues. Tell all the players that the ball cannot stop moving, and they cannot stop moving. As they become proficient at the activity, introduce another ball to the group; they now have to pay attention to where they are receiving the ball from as well as where they need to play the ball next. Version 2: Have the whole team as one group and follow the same information above (but can add more than one soccer ball to group).

### Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Player receiving must have head up to know what they are going to do with the ball before they get it

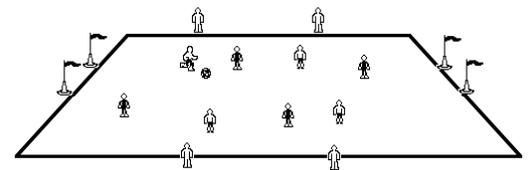
- 3) **Four Square Passing (15 minutes):** Form a grid 35yds x 35yds with squares roughly 4 yds across in each corner. Two teams of 4 to 6 players try to score by passing the ball to a teammate who makes a run into one of the four squares. Only players from the attacking team can enter a corner square. Once a player in the square receives a ball, they can pass to a teammate or dribble the ball out for a point. Balls out of play can be passed or dribbled back into play.



**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2

- 4) **Bread and Butter (15 minutes):** Typical 4 vs. 4 but with an additional 4 players who stand on outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets (can limit the touches of these players if they have the ability (ie: two touches)). If a team gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yd area. May restrict the players to 2 or 3 touches to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive.



**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- When receiving balls with back to goal or in midfield, try to receive sideways on (with body sideways to the length of the field) and look over shoulder before receiving the ball

- 5) **6v6 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes):**  
Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- Highlight the technique of receiving
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (how they receive the ball in relation to where they are on the field and the options they have)

- 6) **Cool-down (10 minutes):** Top cross bar chip. All players, each with a soccer

ball on the penalty mark try to chip the ball to hit the crossbar. Can have them then try from the edge of the penalty area (and farther if they need to be challenged more). Coach can make a competition out of it – when team hits top crossbar certain number of times, they can go home, etc.

## Under 10 --- Session 4: Passing (Short)

**OBJECTIVE:** Improve passing technique with the inside and outside of their feet. Recognize the correct timing and opportunity to pass.

- 1) **Gates Passing (10 Minutes):** Randomly place many pairs of cones making small goals (1 yard wide) in a large space (30 x 20 yards). Players are paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Have them pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot.

### Coaching Points:

#### Kicker

- Stress passing techniques
- Point your toe side-ways and with up locked ankle
- Strike the middle of the ball
- Follow thru to partner
- Knees bent
- Head down...eyes on ball at moment of contact
- Placement foot pointed to target and parallel to ball; pay attention to proper weight and angle

#### Receiver

- Support – get to an angle at which passing lane is clear and have your hips open to the playing Field
- Communicate...call for the ball
- Head up
- Move toward pass (check to ball)

- 2) **3 vs. 1 keep away (10 Minutes):** In a grid 10x15 yards, play 3 vs. 1 continuous keep away. Three attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attackers he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in. Version 2: Add another defender and play 3v2 keep away.

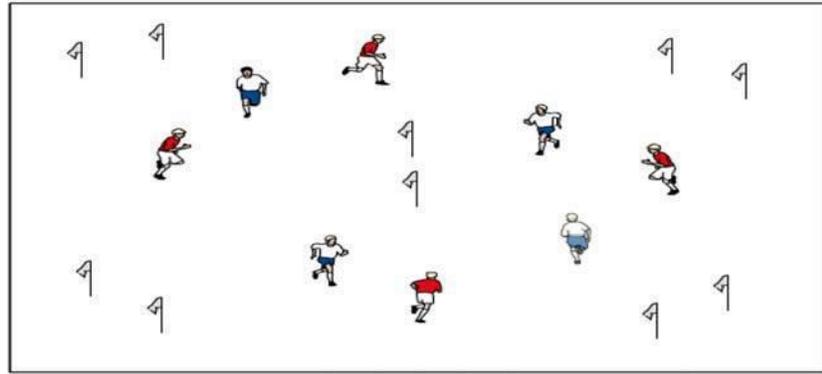
### Coaching Points:

- Stress coaching points from above
- Read the situation

#### Receiver

- Support – position yourself at an appropriate angle and distance so that you are a good option for the passer

**3) 5 Goal Game (10 Minutes):** 4v4 in 25x30 grid. Five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The teams score by passing through any of the goals to a teammate. First team to 10 points wins.



**Coaching Points:**

Kicker

- Players need to be able to see where the open goals are

Receiver

- Receive with a “picture” of what is around them.

**4) 4 vs 4 To Four Small Goals (10 Minutes):** In a 35 X 30 yard grid with a small goal in each corner team attacks the two opposite goals and defend their two goals. The coach will set up as many grids as needed to accommodate the players. When the ball goes out of bounds it can be passed or dribbled in to play. The teams should be rotated every three minutes until all groups have played against each other.

**Coaching Points:**

- Stress recognizing opportunities
- Timing of passes
- Playing away from pressure by changing the point of attack
- Efficiency of touches

**5) 5 vs. 5 + GK’s Game (30 Minutes):**

**Coaching Points:**

- Stress passing technique
- Stress recognizing opportunities
- Timing of passes
- Playing away from pressure by changing the point of attack
- Efficiency of touches

- Movement of the ball

**6) Cool Down (10 minutes)– Juggling:** ” in the next two minutes, let’s see who can juggle the most touches without letting your ball hit the ground. If hits the ground, start a new count.” . Statically stretch the large muscle groups.

## Under 10 --- Session 5: Passing (long)

**OBJECTIVE:** Improve long passing technique (using different techniques). Recognize the correct timing and opportunity to pass long versus short.

### Low drive

- Approach the ball from a slight angle.
- Place the non-kicking foot alongside the ball, pointing in the direction of the target.
- Drive diagonally through the ball, kicking the ball with the inside of instep (laces).
- The knee and body are over the ball at the time of contact.
- Follow through low with the kicking foot.

### Lofted pass

- Approach the ball from a slight angle.
- Place the non-kicking foot alongside but towards the back of the ball, pointing in the direction of the target.
- Drive diagonally through underside of the ball using the upper instep above big toe.
- Lean back slightly at the moment of contact to impart loft on the ball.
- Follow through towards target.

### 1) **Inter-passing in 2's (10 minutes):**

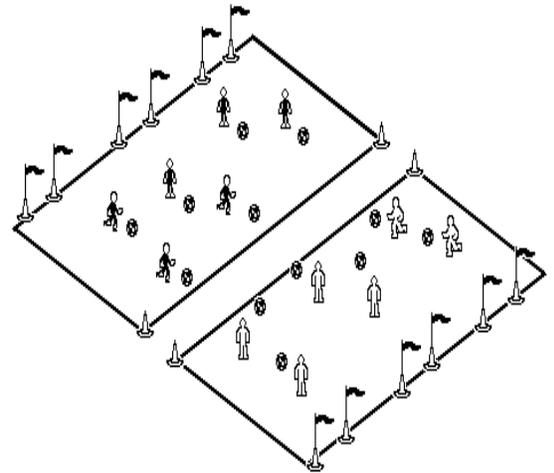
Short Passing & moving in 2's (10-15 yards)...insides, outsides and laces/instep  
Gradually increase the distance between the 2 players (20-30 yards)...focus on laces/instep. The purpose of this warm-up activity is to clean up the mechanics of passing & receiving, allow lots of repetition and increase the players' technical speed.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Stress passing techniques
- Survey the playing area at all times so that you can anticipate what to do next with and without the ball.
- Keep body open to as much of the field as possible based on where you are on the field.
- Take first touch toward the target.
- Strike ball with proper weight and proper surface.

## 2) Clean Your Backyard (10 minutes):

Break the group into two teams and have each team stay only on their own half of the field. Place a 15 yard buffer zone between halves so that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3-5yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at the other team's goals in an attempt to score through any one of the small goals (below knee height). Players cannot cross the buffer zone or go into the other half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense but no use of hands. Only shots (or passes) with laces count as goals.



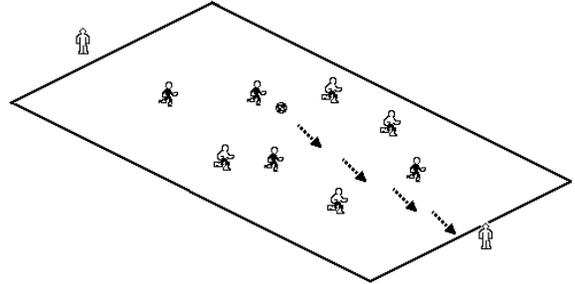
### Coaching Points:

- Stress long passing technique
- Point your toes down and lock ankle
- Placement foot pointed to target and behind the ball, pay attention to proper weight and angle (for air ball pass)
- Placement foot pointed to target and parallel to ball, pay attention to proper weight and angle (for low ball pass)
- Strike the middle of the ball
- Follow thru and land on your kicking (passing) foot

## 3) Three Zone Game (15 minutes):

- Split grid into three even zones (zone 1, 2 and 3). Split team into three even teams (3 to 6 players in each zone).
- Each team occupies a Zone. The Team in Zone 1 starts with the ball. The team in Zone 2 sends two of their players
- into Zone 1 to defend. The team in Zone 1 tries to possess the ball a minimum of 3-4 passes before attempting to
- play the ball to the team in Zone 3. If the two defenders win the ball in Zone 1, they turn and attempt to play it down
- to Zone 3 and then switch zones with the team in Zone 1 (the team in Zone 1 then has to then send two defenders
- into Zone 3 and try to win the ball back). If the team in Zone 1 is able to play it down to team in Zone 3, they get a

- point. That means the other two players waiting in Zone 2 are entering into Zone 3 trying to win the ball back. The team that gets to 5 points first, wins. Variation: Make a restriction in which the ball played into the other zone has to be in the air.

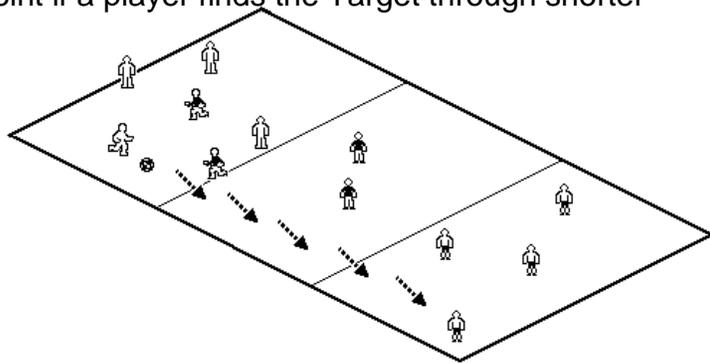


### Coaching Points:

- Stress the proper technical points as well as the proper timing of the passes
- Read the situation. Read the game
- Supporting players must get to an angle that provides a good passing option
- Proper communication by supporting players

#### 4) **4v4 + 2 Targets (15-20 minutes):**

In a 50x40 yard grid, 4 red versus 4 yellow with targets on opposite end lines. In order to get a point, team must find the Target. Version 2: Team must look to find a Target, get the ball back and attack the opposite end and try to get the ball to the other target. Three points if a player finds the Target in one long penetrating pass from their own half and one point if a player finds the Target through shorter combinations.



### Coaching Points:

- Stress on the quality of the pass (which surface of which foot, which direction and why)
- Stress communication and organization.

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2 and #3
- Encourage finding the end line/target as quickly as possible.

5) **8v8 regular game(30-40 Minutes):**

On a 70x50 yard field with goalies and large goals, play a regular match. This is the US Youth Soccer recommend field size and numbers.

6) **Cool Down\_(6 minutes):**

Controlled juggling (thigh-thigh-foot-foot) or any combination of 4-6 juggles that will challenge the players. Statically stretch the large muscle groups.

## Under 10 --- Session 6: Defending (Pressure)

**OBJECTIVE:** This session is designed to teach players the technical points of pressuring the ball. The 1st<sup>t</sup> defender's speed of approach, body shape and tackling technique.

1) **Defensive Stance Warm-up (5-7 minutes):** In pairs passing about 10-15 yds away. When coach signals one player stops ball with the sole of their foot, the other player approaches to defend. Then players back up and passing resumes. Variation 2: After a few passes, one of the players lets the ball go through their legs, the other player approaches to defend and „force“ the player in the direction they are facing

### Coaching Points:

- Angle of approach – We want to direct the player one way on the field
- Speed of approach – Approach fast arrive slow
- Body Shape- knees bent, on the balls of their feet
- Mobility – able to make a quick change or adjustment

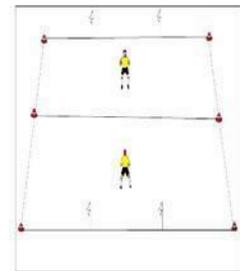
**Mistakes to watch for:** (these are common mistakes that we want to watch for and correct.)

- Planting their feet once they get to defender
- Sprinting straight at the attacker (diving in)
- Standing straight up

2) **1v1 to two small goals: (15 minutes):** Set up a multiple 15yd x 10yd grids with small goals at each end. Play multiple 1v1 games for 45-60 seconds per game. Rotate players from field to field.

### Coaching Points:

- Same as above
- Reading the attackers body language- try to anticipate their next move
- Deciding how to win possession of the ball...block tackle or toe poke (see coaching points below)



### **Coaching Points: (Block Tackle)**

- Attack the player fast, closing the distance between yourself and the ball as fast as possible
- Position your feet in a staggered stance, one foot slightly further than the other.
- Your knees should be slightly bent, allowing you to quickly extend your feet either way, in case the attacker tries to dribble past you.
- Extend your arms sideways, to gain some balance and always stay on the balls of your feet, so you can block the ball with either foot

When you decide it's time to move in for the block, keep your body low and drag the inside of your tackling foot through the ball. It's important that the ankle of your tackling foot is locked and your non-kicking foot is planted firmly near the ball. Other wise you risk injuring yourself.

### **Coaching Points: (Poke Tackle)**

- Attack the player fast, closing the distance between yourself and the ball as fast as possible
- Position your feet in a staggered stance, one foot slightly further than the other.
- Your knees should be slightly bent
- If you get close to the attacker and there is an opening to poke the ball away with your toe, do so quickly!

**Visual Cues to Tackle:** opponent has their head down; just as the ball leaves the foot on the dribble; the ball gets stuck under the opponent; the opponent touches the ball too hard and loses control.

### **3) 2v2 to lines (20 minutes):**

Create multiple fields that are 20yds x 15yds with 4 cones outlining the field (enough so all players are playing), break all of the players into teams of 2. Each team will defend the end line behind them. Players have to dribble across the end line to score. Play a tournament format where teams will play 2 minute games and then rotate to another field. Scoring goes as follows: 3 pts for the win, 1 pt for the tie, 0 for a loss and, if they have a shut-out, they get 2 bonus pts.

### Coaching Points:

- Same as above
- Reading the game – Do the players recognize when they become the first defender and if, when and how to tackle

### Mistakes to watch for:

Players hanging back and not pressuring the ball when they become the 1<sup>st</sup> defender

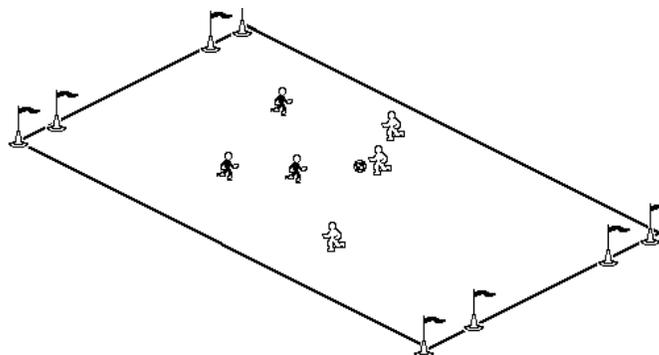
4) **3v3 to 4 goals (15 minutes):** Create a few fields that are 30yds x 20yds with two goals at each end. Split all of the players in to teams of 3. Two teams will play on each field with each team defending a goal. Scoring will be normal: 1 point for a goal. Have the players call out when they are the first defender as they close down the ball.

### Coaching Points:

- Same as above

6) **6v6 Game (15minutes):** Break the group in to 2 teams and play an unrestricted game. You will receive 1pt for a goal scored normally. While the game is going on, praise successful defending by the pressuring defender.

**COOL- DOWN\_(10 minutes):** Juggling in 2"s and 3"s only using their feet or head. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.



## **Under 10 --- Session 7: Defending – Pressure/Cover**

**OBJECTIVE:** This session is designed to teach the defenders closest to the ball when, where and how to win the ball back for their team. In particular, we will discuss the roles and responsibilities of the pressuring defender (1<sup>st</sup> defender) and the covering defender (2<sup>nd</sup> defender).

1) **Pressure-Cover Warm-up (5-7 minutes):** 3 Players per ball in open space. Player A and Player B, about 8-10 yards apart, pass the ball back and forth. Player C is located about 10-15 yards away from Players A & B. After 3-4 passes between Players A & B, Player A passes the ball to Player C. While the ball is traveling, Player B approaches Player C to apply pressure to the ball; at the same time, Player A provides appropriate cover to Player B (positions herself behind and at an angle to Player B. Player C attempts to split Players A & B with a 1 touch pass. Repeat many times, changing the roles of the 3 players.

### **Coaching Points (1<sup>st</sup> Defender):**

- First Angle of approach – We want to direct the player one way on the field, take away option of advancing forward.
- Speed of approach – Approach fast...arrive slow
- Body Shape- knees bent, on the balls of their feet, one foot slightly angled in front of the other foot
- Decision to delay opponent or to tackle the opponent to win possession of the ball; if 1 defender does not have good cover, delaying the opponent is a good decision; if the 1 defender has good cover, then the 1st decision to tackle with the toe-poke or block tackle is appropriate just as the ball comes off the foot of the dribbler

### **Coaching Points (2<sup>nd</sup> Defender):**

- Angle and distance of cover; speed to cover – Stay connected to first defender
- Cover dangerous space between 1 defender and you; cannot allow a penetrating pass to split you and the first defender!
- Be positioned so that, if the 1 defender gets beat with the dribble, you can become the 1st defender immediately.

- Be ready...see the ball, keep feet moving

**Mistakes to watch for (1 defender):**\_(these are common mistakes that we want to watch for and correct.)

- Planting their feet once they get to the defender
- Sprinting straight at the attacker (diving in)
- Standing straight up

**Mistakes to watch for (2<sup>nd</sup> defender):**

- Running right behind the 1 defender
- Running next to the 1 defender and creating a flat shape

## 2) 2v2 to lines (20 minutes):

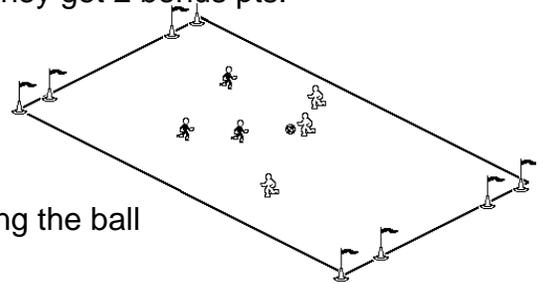
Create multiple fields that are 20yds x 15yds with 4 cones outlining the field (enough so all players are playing); organize all of the players into teams of 2. Each team will attack the end line opposite them and defend the end line behind them. Players must dribble over the opposite end line to score. Play a tournament format where teams play 2 minute games and then rotate to another field. Scoring goes as follows: 3 pts for the win, 1 pt for the tie, 0 for a loss and, if they have a shut-out, they get 2 bonus pts.

**Coaching Points:**

- Same as above

**Mistakes to watch for:**

- Players hanging back and not pressuring the ball as a team when they become defenders



## 3) 3v3 Four Goal game (20 minutes):

In a grid 20x30 yards with four goals measuring 3 feet across in each corner, play 3v3. Each team attacks the 2 goals opposite them and defends the 2 goals behind them. Some questions to ask the players: “can you channel the ball into certain areas of the field to gain possession?” “Can you apply enough pressure on the ball to limit the first attacker's options and make the play predictable?” Version 2: If the players are scoring very quickly, change the game so that the attacking team has to score by dribbling through one of the goals; this will allow the defending team more time to get organized.

**Coaching Points:**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> defender must recognize their responsibility to cover the 1st defender as the ball is traveling to the opponent (1st attacker).

**4) 6v6 Game (15 minutes):**

Unrestricted play. While the game is going on, praise successful defending and connection by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> defenders.

**COOL- DOWN\_(10 minutes):** Juggling in 2"s and 3"s only using their feet or head. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.

## Under 10 --- Session 8: Dribbling - Penetration

**Objectives:** To improve the technique of dribbling, help with confidence to take players on and allowing players to recognize when to take players on versus using other options (passing, shooting, shielding).

### 1) Technical Box (Warm-up - 15-20 minutes including dynamic stretching):

Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session; players carry the ball towards someone and try a move. Version 2: As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. Version 3: Make the game a knockout game in which players try to knock each other's balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own. Note: You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times. You do not want players sitting out.

#### Coaching Points:

- Keep ball within 1 giant step and maintain balance at all times, use arms to help maintain balance
- Try to keep your head up (once comfortable with ball at feet)
- Keep both knees bent and lean over the ball, do not stand upright with ball
- Slow down to change direction
- After making a move, dribbling into an open space or changing direction, you need a
- burst of speed
- Stress movement of body and burst of speed when doing moves
- Use outside of foot or laces when dribbling for speed
- Use all parts of your feet
- Try new things and be creative

### 2) 1v1 to lines (15 minutes):

In a 15x10 yard grid, two players play 1v1 and try to score by beating the defender and dribbling over the line opposite them. They play toward the ten-yard lines and use their favorite feints. When the ball goes out of bounds it is dribbled in. Switch partners between grids every 2-3 minutes. Keep score.

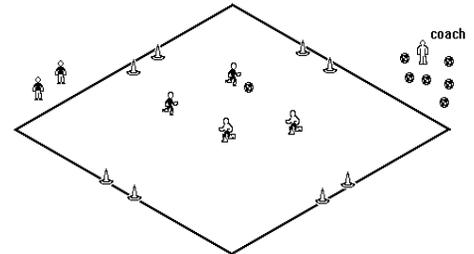
#### Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- When taking on the defender the attacker will have bent knees, the ball close to his or her dribbling foot and be balanced

- He or she will execute a feint or combination of feints to unbalance the defender and dribble behind him or her
- Players should look to attack the defenders front foot to off balance the defender
- Players who are dribbling past an opponent should dribble past them with the foot furthest from the defender

### 3) 2v2 to Four Cross Goals (15-20 minutes):

Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three goals; you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yd X 10yd. Have one team of 2 on deck; they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately.

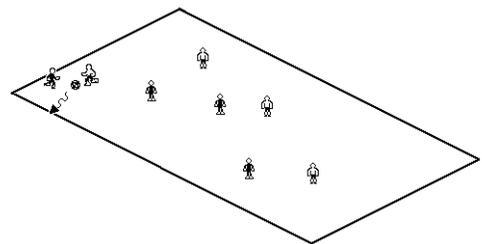


#### Coaching Points:

- Help players to recognize where the open space is and when to attack it on the dribble
- Assist players in recognizing when to dribble at speed (there is open space ahead), and when to slow down (they need to make decisions, combine with 2<sup>nd</sup> attacker, or are getting closer to opponents)
- The first attacker (player with the ball) needs to make a decision on whether to combine with the second attacker or attack the space themselves
- This decision is based on where the first defender is in relation to the field, the goal, the first attacker, and the second attacker

### 4) 4v4 to lines (15-20 minutes):

In a 25x30 yard grid, two teams play to the opposite 30 yard lines. They score by dribbling the ball over end-line in control. When the ball goes out of bounds it can be passed or dribbled in to play.



#### Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in #1, #2 and #3
- Stress attacking the open space on the dribble and recognition of one versus one opportunity.

**5) 6v6 scrimmage (25-30 minutes):**

Depending upon numbers, space will change and numbers will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in #3
- Highlight the technique of dribbling
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing opportunities to take players on, how they attack –get in and behind for a shot / attack endline and get cross off, etc.).

**6) Cool-down (5-10 minutes):**

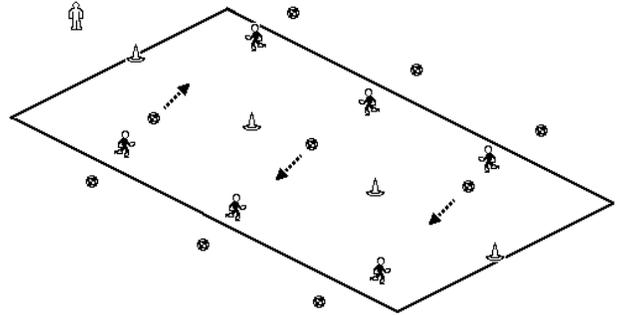
Groups of 5 heading challenge. One player in the middle, four players circle around them. Player in the middle tosses ball to player on the outside who heads in back to player in the middle. Player in the middle then heads to next player on the outside, who then heads it back to player in the middle and so on. Give player in the middle multiple chances to get the ball all the way around the circle, and then switch up players to ensure everyone gets a chance to be the middle player.

## Under 10 --- Session 10: Shooting

**Objectives:** To improve the technique of shooting with the insides and instep of both feet. To foster the confidence to shoot!

### 1) Shooting Through the Cones (Warm-up - 15-20 minutes):

Set up a line of cones about 6 yards apart, representing goals for the players to shoot through. Position two players about 10-15 yards away from and on opposite sides of the line of cones. Players opposite each other proceed to kick (shoot) the ball through their cone goal, back and forth, working on correct shooting technique. It is important that the players work to perfect their preparation touch and that they strike a moving ball. The players should be using both feet to shoot. Scatter extra soccer balls around the playing area.



### Coaching Points:

- Keep ankle of shooting foot locked with toe down
- Non-kicking foot is placed parallel to ball (not behind it or ahead of it) and far enough away that it is comfortable to hit ball and that both ball and non-kicking foot are underneath your hips
- Non-kicking foot should be pointing towards your target
- Your weight should be on the ball of your non-kicking foot
- Both knees bent
- Strike through the middle of the ball...if you made a cross in the back of the ball, hit where the two lines intersect
- Follow through to your target
- Land on your kicking foot
- Keep head down to see what you are kicking
- Lean over ball as you kick, do not stand upright
- Strike ball with laces so that ball strikes hard bone on top of foot
- Encourage players to strike through the ball
- Players may need to make a slightly angled approach towards ball in order to prevent them from kicking ground...this will result in hip of the same leg as the kicking foot being higher than non-kicking foot

### 2) Popcorn (15-20 minutes):

Set up a grid about 30 yds. X 20yds. With a goal on each end. Coach plays balls into 4-5 players who are all competing against each other to get the ball and score in either

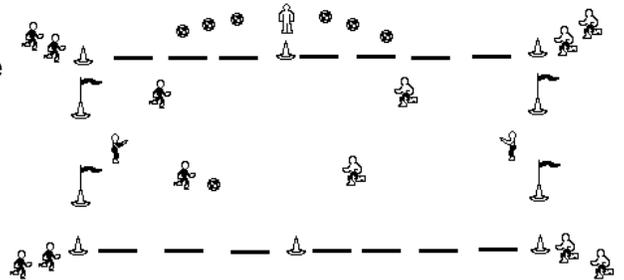
goal. First to five goals wins. Coach should manipulate service in order that all players are able to have shots and feel some success.

**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Gives players more opportunities for scoring chances
- Encourage a risky mentality to shoot

**3) Four (4) Corner Shooting (20 minutes):**

On a field 20 yards wide x 25 yards long, position two goals at each end. Split group into two teams (red and blue). Position half of the red team in a line behind one corner of the field and the other half of the red team in a line behind the other corner of the field, at the same end. Organize the blue team in the same manner at the other end of the field. Select a goalkeeper for each goal and rotate that player every 5 minutes. The coach is positioned at the midfield line, outside the field, with all the soccer balls. When the coach kicks a ball into the field, the first person in each of the four (4) corner lines enters the field to play. The game becomes a 2v2 + keepers activity. Play continues until the ball goes out of play or a goal is scored. When this happens, the players on the field quickly get back into their original lines, keepers stay on, and the assistant coach kicks the next ball in for the next 4 players. The coach should play the ball toward one of the corner lines (risk/safety management).

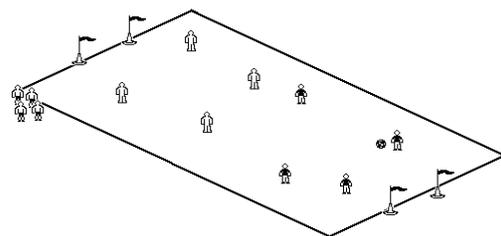


**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce coaching points listed in activity #1
- Players looking to go to goal quickly

**4) 4vs 4 + 4 on deck (15-20 minutes):**

Two teams playing to one goal each. First team to two goals stays or if two minutes pass by, the longest team on gets off and new team comes on. Captains on each team keep score.



**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Help players to recognize when to use the inside of foot vs. the

instep (laces)

**5) 6v6 scrimmage (25-30 minutes):**

Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

**Coaching Points:**

- Highlight the technique of shooting
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (when, how and where to shoot the ball, etc.).

**6) Cool-down (10 minutes):**

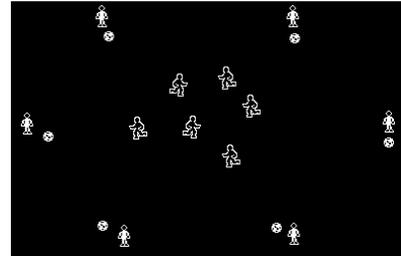
Individual juggling. Have players compete to see who gets the most in a 2 minute period.

## Under 10 ---Session 11: Heading/Volleying - To clear

**OBJECTIVE:** This session is designed to teach players the technical points of heading and volleying a ball.

### 1) Warm-up: Dutch Circle (15 minutes):

Half of the players (outsiders) create a circle with a diameter of about 25 yards. The outsiders are equipped with soccer balls in their hands. The other half of the players (insiders) are in the circle and do not have soccer balls. The outsiders must always be alert and on their toes ready to serve a lofted ball, at various heights, to an insider. The insiders move around to different outsiders and:



- Head the ball to the hands of the outsider that served the ball to them
- Head the ball to the feet of the outsider that served the ball to them
- Head the ball over the head of the outsider that served the ball to them
- Volley the ball with the inside of the foot to the hands of the outsider
- Volley the ball with the laces of the foot to the hands of the outsider

Change insiders and outsiders every 2-3 minutes.

### Coaching Points: (Heading)

- Keep eyes open and focused on the ball
- Mouth closed
- Surface of contact should be upper half of forehead
- Strike the ball, do not let the ball strike you
- Strike the ball on the upper half of the ball to drive it down; the middle of the ball to drive it level; the lower half of the ball to drive it up
- Players should tighten neck and torso, arch back and drive the head through the ball for maximum power
- Use arms for balance, protection and to create space

Mistakes to watch for: (these are common mistakes that we want to watch for and correct.)

- Heading the ball with the top of head
- Closing eyes before they head the ball
- Not driving towards the ball (resulting in the ball hitting them)

### Coaching Points: (Volleying)

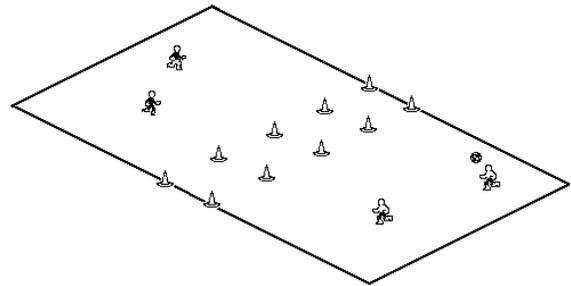
- Keep eyes open and focused on the ball

- Strike the ball, do not let the ball strike you
- Strike the ball on the upper half of the ball to drive it down; the middle of the ball to drive it level; the lower half of the ball to drive it up
- Surface of contact should be in the middle to upper half of the ball
- Players should lock ankle and turn toe up for inside of the foot volley; players should lock ankle and point toe down for instep (laces) volley
- Use arms for balance

## 2) Tennis (20 minutes):

Organize teams of 2, 3 or 4. Set up multiple tennis courts (size depends on the numbers playing). For a doubles game (2v2), set up a grid 30-35 yards long x 15 yards wide. Include a central 3 yard alleyway across the width of the court, made from cones, to represent the net.

Team A serves the ball from behind their end line with a volley or half-volley kick to Team B. The ball must land in Team B's half court to be GOOD. However, Team B can choose to play the ball before the bounce or after the bounce. Depending on age and ability of the players, the rules can allow 1-2 bounces on a side, with a 3-4 touch limit between teammates (this allows for juggling). Balls can be headed or volleyed to the other Team's side. Points can only be scored by the team that served the ball. If a ball lands in the central alleyway, it is NO GOOD (like a tennis ball going into the net). Follow regular tennis rules or adjust accordingly.



## 3) Team Handball (20 minutes):

Organize players into 2 teams of 4, 5 or 6. Set up a 35 yard x 50 yard rectangular field with goals centrally located at each end. The 2 teams play this game by tossing the ball (with their hands) to their teammates (similar to basketball). Players can only take a maximum of 3 steps with the ball; then they must pass the ball to a teammate. Goals can only be scored by heading or volleying the ball after it has been thrown by a teammate. If the ball drops on the ground, possession goes to the other team.

**4) 6v6 Game (20minutes):**

2 Teams play a regular soccer game. Award 1pt for a goal scored normally; 3points for a goal that is scored as a result of a volley; and 5pts if a goal is scored from a header.

**5) COOL-DOWN (10 minutes):**

Juggling in 2"s and 3"s only using feet and head. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.

## Under 10 --- Session 12: Goalkeeping – Body Position, Footwork, Catching

Objectives: To help goalkeepers work on and improve the technical aspects of proper footwork, body position and handling the ball, through team training.

### 1) Dribbling / Hands Warm-Up (15 to 20 minutes):

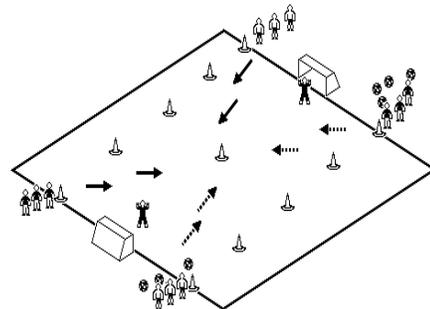
One ball per player. All players, including goalkeepers, freely dribble with inside and outside of their feet. Change speed & direction, and perform moves. Version 2: The GK's in the group get rid of their soccer balls. The field players call out their names and pass the ball towards them so that the goalkeepers can begin to field the soccer balls with their hands (on the ground first, then change to service in air).

#### Coaching Points:

- Make sure when catching ball, the hands always lead, not the knees.
- Prior to catching the ball, get into a "Gorilla" shape...shoulders rounded, knees bent, feet square to body, arms out to sides and slightly forward with elbows slightly bent, palms facing forward.
- Always be on balls of the feet, moving while ball is moving, ready to come out to meet the ball or cut down the angle.
- Getting set when shooter plants non-kicking foot to shoot.
- "W" hand position for chest high and overhead balls. The "W" is formed by the thumbs and index fingers.
- Both palms of the hands must always be turned outwards to the ball. This means the body position will have to be adjusted to ensure that both palms get behind the ball. The object is to present the maximum amount of palm and fingers to the ball.
- Hands leading (bent elbows, giving a strong, shock-absorbing effect), shoulders square to the ball.
- Hands together, fingers pointed towards ground for low balls...shovel ball into body (scooping low and into body)

### 2) Shooting Warm – Up (15 to 20 minutes):

Set up two goals about 40 yards apart and the width of the penalty area, with GK's in each and have players partner up with a ball. Partners dribble and pass together around the area, call out the GK's name and then shoot on net (to warm them up). Version 2: Player with ball can play ball outside the area (into the flanks) to their partner to get a cross off. If GK makes save, can quickly



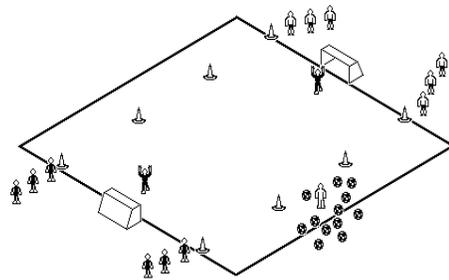
throw ball out to player who crossed it. Version 3:  
Partners now try and dribble at GK with partner and try to score.

#### **Coaching Points:**

- Coach should be behind goalkeeper (if there is an assistant coach, he can coach another goalkeeper in the other goal) reinforcing coaching points listed in Activity #1

### **3) Shooting Stars (15-20 minutes):**

Two goals set about 2 penalty boxes apart with cones separating field into two. Split team into two teams, yellow and blue. Blue has half of their team, with soccer balls, at one side of one goal, and the other half of their team at the other goal (on the opposite side), without soccer balls. Yellow will set up the same way. A blue player in the group with the soccer balls passes across to a blue player opposite them. The blue player receiving the pass tries to run onto it, receive it before the half way mark, and then has 1-2 touches to get a shot off by the halfway mark. Yellow is doing the same task at the same time. Have them switch sides; choose which foot they pass it to and which foot shooter shoots with. Version 2: Make it competitive and first team to 10 goals win.



#### **Coaching Points:**

- Coach should be behind goalkeeper (if there is an assistant coach to help, he can work with the goalkeeper in the other goal) reinforcing coaching points listed in Activity #1.

### **4) GK / Team Challenge (15 to 20 minutes):**

Split teams into two (blue and yellow). Blue group is at one goal (on both sides of goal) and yellow is at the opposite goal (on both sides of goal). Have a server on the side with all of the soccer balls. Server calls out number of players they want from each team and plays ball into area (number can vary-2/3/4). Players try to score and must keep track of their goals. First team to 10 goals wins. Server can take a shot on a goalkeeper as well to keep them on their toes.

#### **Coaching Points:**

- Coach should again position themselves behind goalkeeper and reinforce coaching points listed in Activity #1

**5) 6v6 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes):**

Depending upon numbers, space will change and numbers may change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce positive technical goalkeeping points (on balls of their feet, hands out in front, attack the ball, “W” hand position, etc.).

**6) Cool-down (10 minutes):**

Individual juggling; have them compete to see who gets the most in a 2 minute period.

## Under 10 --- Session 13: Combination Play – 2 Players Combining

### Objectives:

To help players to recognize when to combine with teammates and what combination is appropriate (wall-pass, overlap and take-over) considering the changing conditions of the game.

### Coaching Points:

#### Wall pass:

- First attacker runs right at the defender with the ball
- The second attacker sets up level with or slightly ahead of the defender, turned sideways, shoulders pointed to the goals
- When the first attacker is close to-but still out of tackling range of-the defender, he/she must read cues from the defender
- If the defender is jockeying between the two attackers and obviously playing the pass, the first attacker must simply dribble past the defender with speed
- If the defender is attending more to the first attacker, then the first attacker should pass the ball to the wall player"s (2<sup>nd</sup> attacker) front foot
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> attacker plays the ball with one touch into the space behind the defender and into the running path of the first attacker
- The 1<sup>st</sup> attacker sprints to receive the ball preferably in the natural flow of her run

#### Overlap:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> attacker runs right at the defender (option 1) or the first attacker plays the ball to the second attacker who dribbles in a direction away from the overlapping space (option 2)
- If the defender shifts over to pick up the 2<sup>nd</sup> attacker in option 1, the 1<sup>st</sup> attacker can dribble by the defender. If not, the second attacker"s run must be around either shoulder of the first attacker at full speed. After drawing the defender toward the ball (and away from the space intended for the overlapping run), the first attacker may play the ball into the running path of the second attacker
- In option 2, the second attacker dribbles to create overlapping space and the first attacker then becomes the

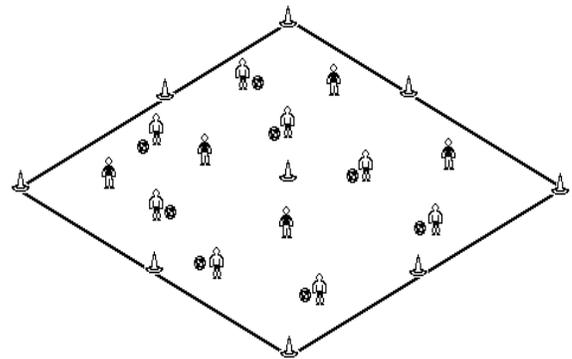
player who overlaps. The ball is played into the running path of the first attacker

### Takeover:

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> attacker runs directly at the 1<sup>st</sup> attacker from the opposite direction
- The 1<sup>st</sup> attacker protects the ball from the defender by keeping it on the foot furthest from the defender so that his body is in between the defender and the ball
- If the takeover is on (if the defender does not step into path of second attacker), the first attacker leaves the ball for the second attacker and the second attacker takes the ball using the same foot as the first attacker (right foot to right foot, left to left!)
- Depending on your preference as a coach you may have the first or the second attacker dictate this exchange with simple communication
- If the defender slows down to “pick-up” the 2<sup>nd</sup> attacker, 1<sup>st</sup> attacker can call his or her name and continue to dribble.

### **1) Combination Square (15 to 20 minutes):**

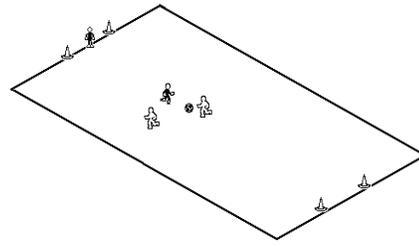
Make a grid about 30yds x 30yds and break it into quarters. Place 4 or 5 players in vests and have them roam around the entire grid in order to give support to the other players. Players in vests do not have soccer balls, while all other players do. Players with soccer balls look to dribble around the grid and try to connect with the vested players to perform wall-passes. However, in order for this to happen the player on the ball must pass to a vested player in a different quarter than him and the pass back from the vested player must go into a quarter that neither he nor the player who passed the ball is in. The player initiating the wall pass needs to play a firm pass, sprint to an open space in a different quarter, receive the return pass, and look for another player to combine with. The vested player must show themselves to others constantly in order to give support and look to play balls to the front foot of the runner.



### **2) 2v1+1 to goal (15-20 minutes):**

In a 12x17 yard grid add two 3 yard goals on

each 12-yard side. If the attacking team combines before they score, they are awarded 2 points. If they don't combine and score, it is worth 1 point. The defending team must have one player in the goal and one on the field. The goalkeeper must stay in the goal until the attacking team loses the ball.

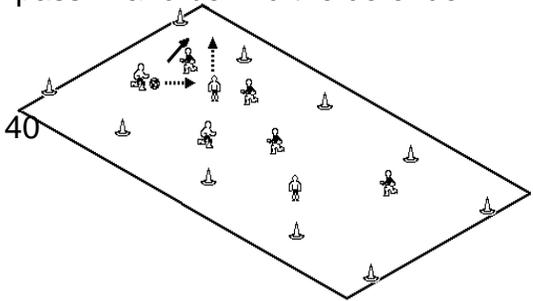


**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Help players recognize when to combine and when to fake the combination to beat the defender
- Assist players in seeing that, when they combine, their ultimate goal is to get their pass in and behind the defender (vs. in front of them).

**3) 4v4 to end zones (15 minutes to 20 minutes):**

In a field space approximately 30 to 35 yards long by 40 to 50 yards wide, teams comprised of 4 players depending on numbers and space (can increase or decrease from 3v3 to 6v6). Teams receive 5 points if they combine with a teammate before successfully entering the opponent's end zone; they receive only one point if they get in without a combination. Add a "plus" player who always plays for the attacking team, **IF** they can't keep possession long enough to create a combination or opportunity to score.

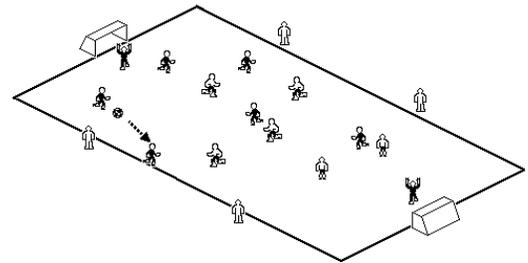


**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2

**4) 6v6 plus 4 to Goals (15-20 minutes):**

In a field approximately 55 yards long by 40 yards wide, play 6v6 to goals, with goalkeepers, and position 2 neutral players on each sideline (neutral players can move up and down the sidelines). Play a regular game...the 4 neutral players always play with the attacking team (team in possession of the ball). This activity will stimulate combination play.



**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2

**5) 8v8 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes):**

In a field approximately 75 yards long by 50 yards wide, play a regular game with goalkeepers. Depending upon number of players that you have at training, field size may change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games.

**Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (decision to combine or not, what type of combination, how effective at the time and place on the field, etc.).

**6) Cool-down (5-10 minutes):**

Individual juggling; challenge the players to see who can juggle the most in a 2 minute period.

## **Further Information**

The practice plans provided in this manual are just intended for suggestions. There is a myriad of information available to you on the internet for you to incorporate into your lesson plans. There's always more than one way to skin the cat (apologies to you cat lovers). In fact, the sky's the limit in terms of your creativity with the kids. Here are some suggestions:

### **Free online videos demonstrating soccer skills:**

<http://bigfootsoccer.com/>

[http://www.soccertricks.org/soccer\\_skills.html](http://www.soccertricks.org/soccer_skills.html)

<http://www.joesoccer.com>

<http://www.soccerpracticevideoclips.blogspot.com/>

### **Great websites for lesson plans and skill development:**

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/> (our favorite)

[http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/pages/6\\_practice\\_plans.cfm](http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/pages/6_practice_plans.cfm)

<http://usyouthsoccer.org>

[http://www.ussoccer.com/articles/viewArticle.jsp\\_280734.html](http://www.ussoccer.com/articles/viewArticle.jsp_280734.html)

**If you have any questions, please feel to contact Jeff Burke at [jrburke9631@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jrburke9631@sbcglobal.net) or call him at 582-3259**