



APYSL Coaching Guidelines

APYSL Coaching Guidelines



Welcome to the first APYSL Coaching Guidelines!

For years APYSL has been providing a valuable service to our community. This commitment has received an incredible response echoed each year with an increased number of players who have decided to join our club for the Rec and Competitive programs.

As a result of the club's growth, APYSL has decided to develop its first Coaching Guidelines.

APYSL Coaching Guidelines



The objective is to help our coaching staff to identify the ideal developmental targets for each group level as well as standardize the APYSL's curriculum by aligning the club with the U.S. Soccer guidelines for the Grassroots level.

With these guidelines, APYSL is hoping to assist our coaches in reaching the club's ultimate goal: to provide each of our players with an enjoyable experience through their journey with us and give them the chance of playing soccer at the High school/College level.

APYSL Coaching Guidelines



Grassroots Level (US Soccer Guidelines) - Skill Sets

This document outlines the necessary sets of skills that each player should ideally achieve within each group level: U8, U10, U12, U13+.

Coaches should focus on preparing the players for the range of skills described for their level.

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Grassroots Level (US Soccer Guidelines) - Skill Sets

To accomplish this objective, coaches should reinforce the different soccer concepts by consistently using the same **Key Words** through the practice exercises (these are the U.S. Soccer's Key Words).

This allows APYSL to standardize its message through all the coaches and group levels. It also lets the players get familiar with the same concepts/practice instructions through the different group levels in a consistent way, independently of the coach or the player's age group.

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Play – Practice - Play (US Soccer Guidelines)

This document also introduces coaches to the “Play – Practice - Play” methodology which was researched, developed, and implemented by the U.S. Soccer (see Appendix A at the end of this document). The “Play – Practice – Play” is a player-centered approach that allows coaches of all levels to create training environments fulfilling the two basic needs of players of all ages: to have fun and to develop!

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Play – Practice - Play (US Soccer Guidelines) (Cont'd)

These training exercises are all divided into three areas of the field (own half, opponent's half and scoring area) for both defense and offense (see Appendix B).

Each training focuses on a particular set of concepts and contains instructions, key words, questions and answers that help players with their development of those concepts.

Note: an example of a “Play – Practice – Play” training can be found at the end of this document.

If interested in more trainings, please reach out to APYSL (bericalsoccer@gmail.com).

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Play – Practice - Play (US Soccer Guidelines) (Cont'd)

This methodology is optional and completely up to the coach. Still APYSL believes that giving it as an option would be beneficial for our club.

APYSL is extremely thankful for the time, effort, and dedication that each coach exhibits during the season (all of YOU!, 98% volunteers!, Thank You!!) and has confidence that this methodology will help each of you in designing your team's practices while reducing the time and effort required to do so.

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Grassroots Level
(US Soccer Guidelines)

Skill Sets

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U8 (4v4) - (US Soccer Guidelines)

At this level, coaches should focus their training on introducing the players to the actions/concepts described on the next two pages through practice exercises and one on one interactions with the players.

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U8 - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Shoot	"Shoot"
Introduce players to the proper shooting posture ("non-shooting foot" right next to the ball, good contact with the ball, leaning slightly forward).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Pass	"Pass, Look Up, Hard Touches"
Introduce players to the proper passing position (body facing the other player, "non-passing foot" right next to the ball, good contact with interior/middle part of the cleat, etc.).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Dribble Forward	"Go Forward, Move Forward, Dribble, Soft Touches"
Encourage players to dribble forward with the ball under their control, as much as possible.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Spread Out	"Opening, Use Space, Be Open"
Initiate players on the concept of "spreading out through the field" to avoid "bunching". Consistent messaging during playing time should give players their first view of this concept.	

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U8 - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Protect the Goal	"Protect the Goal, Defend the Goal"
Initiate players on the concept of getting the player's position between their own goal and the ball, in a defending position.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Steal the Ball	"Steal the Ball, Step In, Pressure the Ball"
Introduce and encourage players through practice to get the ball back and put pressure on the other team.	

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U10 (7v7) - (US Soccer Guidelines)

At U10, coaches should focus on reinforcing and improving the concepts introduced through the U8 level as well as presenting the additional concepts appropriate for this age group.

It's essential that the players develop these concepts through practice exercises and casual one on one interactions between the player and the coach.

This set of concepts will build the fundamental set of skills needed by the player to succeed in the next group levels.

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U10 - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (1 of 2)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Shoot	"Shoot"
Reinforce the proper shooting posture (“non-shooting foot” right next to the ball, good contact with the ball, etc.)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Pass	"Pass, Look Up, Head Up"
Reinforce the proper passing position (body facing the other player, “non-passing foot” right next to the ball, good contact with interior/middle part of the cleat, etc.).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Dribble Forward	"Go Forward, Take Opponents On, Dribble"
Encourage players to dribble forward with the ball under their control, as much as possible, to create situations of 1v1 or 2v1.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Spread Out	"Opening, Use Space, Be Open"
Reinforce the concept of “spreading out through the field” to avoid “bunching”.	

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U10 - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (2 of 2)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Create Passing Options	"Get Open, Hips Open, Call for the Ball"
Introduce players to the concept of getting open and giving their teammates an opportunity for a pass. Also advise the players to receive the ball sideways (hips open), controlling with the correct foot (on the right, right foot, on the left, left foot).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Support the Attack	"Go, Call for the Ball"
Encourage players to support their own team's play by moving up with the player who has the ball to support the attack and create passing options.	

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U10 - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (1 of 2)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Protect the Goal	“Protect the Goal, Defend the Goal”
Reinforce players on the concept of getting the player’s position between their own goal and the ball, in a defending position.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Steal the Ball	“Steal the Ball, Step In, Step to the Ball, Pressure the Ball”
Encourage players through practice to get the ball back and put pressure on the other team.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Get Compact	“Get Together”
Encourage players to get together as a unit as they are defending.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Stay Compact	“Stay Together, Move with the Ball, Move Together”
Encourage players to stay together, without openings as they are defending.	

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U10 - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (2 of 2)

CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Pressure, Cover, Balance	"Pressure and Cover, Pressure, Cover"
Initiate players on this defensive concept. Help the players understand the difference between "Pressure" (commit to the ball, trying to steal it) and "Cover" (stand in front of the opponent patiently, one arm length distance, waiting for the opponent to make a move).	

Note: The Pressure, Cover and Balance concept refers to the different player roles when out of possession. One or more players will take up each of the roles and the position of the ball will dictate who does what. The closest player to the ball will apply pressure. The pressing player may not attempt to win the ball, but just close the distance between themselves and the ball. Because the pressing player has approached the ball, the distance between players within the same defensive unit now becomes too big. For this reason, the 2nd closest defender must shorten this distance and provide cover. If the 1st player is beaten in the 1v1, the "cover" player is now in a suitable position to attempt to win the ball if this happens. Because of these positional movements, the other defensive players in the unit (3rd, 4th defender) will have to balance their position towards these two players to provide extra protection against any potential areas that the ball may be played into.

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U12 (9v9) - (US Soccer Guidelines)

At U12, coaches should focus on reinforcing and improving the concepts introduced through the U10 level as well as presenting the appropriate additional concepts for this age group.

It's essential that the players develop these concepts through practice exercises and regular one on one interactions with the coach.

These concepts will introduce the players to a more advanced set of skills needed to succeed in the next group levels.

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U12- ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (1 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Shoot	"Shoot"
At this age group, players should start perfecting their technique in their shooting posture (good balance, good synchronization with the ball, "non-shooting foot" right next to the ball, good contact with the ball, "blocking" the foot and straight leg at the time of the impact, etc.).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Pass	"Pass, Look Up, Head Up"
Players should start perfecting their technique in the proper passing position (body facing the player who will receive the ball, "non-passing foot" right next to the ball, good contact with interior/middle part of the foot, etc.), pass accuracy.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Dribble Forward	"Go Forward, Take Opponents On, Dribble"
Reinforce and encourage players to dribble forward with the ball under their control, recognizing the best opportunities to use this skill within the game.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Spread Out	"Opening, Use Space, Be Open"
Players should completely understand and apply the concept of "spreading out through the field" as this action relates directly to the next concept of creating passing options.	

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U12 - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (2 of 3)

CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Create Passing Options	"Get Open, Hips Open, Call for the Ball"
Reinforce players on the concept of getting open and giving their teammates an opportunity for a pass. Advise the players to receive the ball sideways (hips open), controlling with the correct foot (on the right side of the field, right foot, on the left side, left foot).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Support the Attack	"Call for the Ball, Communicate, Talk, Support"
Reinforce players on supporting their own team's play by moving up with the player who has the ball, supporting the attack and creating passing options.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Create a 2v1 or 1v1	"Take Opponents on, Take Defender on"
Encourage players to create 2v1 and 1v1 situations as they take on defenders.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Change the Point of Attack	"Switch the Field, Keep the Ball Moving"
Initiate players on the concept of switching the point of attack and finding space. By passing quickly from right to left, defenders are constantly moving across. Eventually, this will create space out wide or a chance to dribble and pass forward in central areas.	

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U12 - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (3 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Change the Pace/Rhythm	"Switch Pace"
Initiate players on the concept of change of pace or rhythm. The change of pace involves varying the rate speed with which the player advances the ball. As soon as the defender matches the player's speed, he slows down quickly. As soon as the defender slows down, the player speeds up quickly and so on.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Switch Positions	"Shift"
Initiate players on the concept of switching positions with other players to create gaps on the other team's defense	

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U12 - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (1 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Protect the Goal	“Protect the Goal, Defend the Goal”
Reinforce players on the concept of getting the player’s position between their own goal and the ball, in a defending position.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Steal the Ball	“Steal the Ball, Step In, Step to the Ball, Pressure the Ball, Block the Pass”
Encourage players through practice to get the ball back and put pressure on the other team.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Get Compact	“Get Together, Work Together, Defend Together, Get Tight”
Reinforce players to get together as a unit as they are defending.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Stay Compact	“Stay Together, Move with the Ball, Move Together, Stay Close to Each Other”
Reinforce players to stay together, without openings as they are defending.	

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U12 - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (2 of 3)

CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Pressure, Cover, Balance	"Pressure and Cover, Pressure, Cover"
Reinforce players on this defensive concept. Help the players understand the difference between "Pressure" (commit to the ball, trying to steal it) and "Cover" (stand in front of the opponent patiently, one arm length distance, waiting for the opponent to make a move).	

Note: The Pressure, Cover and Balance concept refers to the different player roles when out of possession. One or more players will take up each of the roles and the position of the ball will dictate who does what. The closest player to the ball will apply pressure. The pressing player may not attempt to win the ball, but just close the distance between themselves and the ball. Because the pressing player has approached the ball, the distance between players within the same defensive unit now becomes too big. For this reason, the 2nd closest defender must shorten this distance and provide cover. If the 1st player is beaten in the 1v1, the "cover" player is now in a suitable position to attempt to win the ball if this happens. Because of these positional movements, the other defensive players in the unit (3rd, 4th defender) will have to balance their position towards these two players to provide extra protection against any potential areas that the ball may be played into.

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U12 - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (3 of 3)

CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Outnumber the Opponent	"Outnumber the Opponent"
Initiate the players on this concept where they try to get more attackers than defenders around the ball.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Stay Involved	"Stay Involved"
Encourage players to stay involved and proactive in each of the plays the team designs, either in offense or in defense	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Mark the Player/Mark the Area	"Defend the Player, Defend the Area"
Initiate the players on the following concepts: <u>Man Marking</u> - Each defender is assigned a player to mark. The objective is to stay close to your player and stop him from scoring or making an impact upon the game. <u>Zone Marking</u> - Rather than stick to a player, each defender guards a certain zone.	

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U13+ (11v11) - (US Soccer Guidelines)

At U13+, coaches should focus on reinforcing and improving the concepts introduced through the previous levels. At this time all the players should be aware and proficient on all the basic soccer concepts, and they should start “understanding how the game is played” as they put all these concepts in practice.

It’s essential that the players develop these concepts through practices. The coach should be most focus on communicating the game strategy and the positioning of each independent unit (defense, mid, etc.).

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U13+ - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (1 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Shoot	"Shoot"
Players should work on perfecting their technique in their shooting posture (good balance, good synchronization with the ball, "non-shooting foot" right next to the ball, good contact with the ball, "blocking" the foot and straight leg at the time of the impact, etc.).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Pass	"Pass, Look Forward, Head Up, Scan the Pass"
Players should work on perfecting their technique in the proper passing position (body facing the player who will receive the ball, "non passing foot" right next to the ball, good contact with interior/middle part of the foot, etc.), pass accuracy.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Dribble Forward	"Go Forward, Take Opponents On, Dribble, Think Forward"
Encourage players to dribble forward with the ball, recognizing the best opportunities to use this skill within the game.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Spread Out	"Opening, Use Space, Be Open"
Players should apply the concept of "spreading out through the field" as this action relates directly to the next concept of creating passing options.	

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U13+ - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (2 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Create Passing Options	"Get Open, Hips Open, Call for the Ball"
Players should work on finding the open spots on the field to always be available for their teammates' pass.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Support the Attack	"Call for the Ball, Communicate, Talk, Support"
Players should consistently support their own team's attack and create passing options.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Create a 2v1 or 1v1	"Take Opponents on, Take Defender on"
Encourage players to create 2v1 and 1v1 situations as they take on defenders.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Change the Point of Attack	"Switch the Field, Keep the Ball Moving"
Players should get comfortable with the concept of switching the point of attack and finding space. By passing quickly from right to left, defenders are constantly moving across. Eventually, this will create space out wide or a chance to dribble and pass forward in central areas.	

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U13+ - ATTACKING - Concepts and Key Words (3 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Change the Pace/Rhythm	"Switch Pace"
Players should regularly apply the concept of change of pace or rhythm to their game. The change of pace involves varying the rate speed with which the player advances the ball. As soon as the defender matches the player's speed, he slows down quickly. As soon as the defender slows down, the player speeds up quickly and so on.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Switch Positions	"Shift"
Players should regularly apply the concept of switching positions with other players to create gaps in the other team's defense.	

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U13+ - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (1 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Protect the Goal	"Protect the Goal, Defend the Goal"
Players should understand at this point their defending position in each of the different situations within a game (corner kicks, indirect kicks, etc.). Always positioned between their own goal and the ball.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Steal the Ball	"Steal the Ball, Step In, Step to the Ball, Pressure the Ball, Block the Pass"
Encourage players through practice to get the ball back and put pressure on the other team.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Get Compact	"Get Together, Work Together, Defend Together, Get Tight"
Players should perfect this concept on the field as they are defending.	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Stay Compact	"Stay Together, Move with the Ball, Move Together, Stay Close to Each Other"
Players should perfect this concept on the field as they are defending, without openings.	

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U13+ - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (2 of 3)

CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Pressure, Cover, Balance	“Pressure and Cover, Pressure, Cover”
Players should be familiar with this defensive concept. They should understand at this point, the difference between “Pressure” (commit to the ball, trying to steal it) and “Cover” (stand in front of the opponent patiently, one arm length distance, waiting for the opponent to make a move).	

Note: The Pressure, Cover and Balance concept refers to the different player roles when out of possession. One or more players will take up each of the roles and the position of the ball will dictate who does what. The closest player to the ball will apply pressure. The pressing player may not attempt to win the ball, but just close the distance between themselves and the ball. Because the pressing player has approached the ball, the distance between players within the same defensive unit now becomes too big. For this reason, the 2nd closest defender must shorten this distance and provide cover. If the 1st player is beaten in the 1v1, the “cover” player is now in a suitable position to attempt to win the ball if this happens. Because of these positional movements, the other defensive players in the unit (3rd, 4th defender) will have to balance their position towards these two players to provide extra protection against any potential areas that the ball may be played into.

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U13+ - DEFENDING - Concepts and Key Words (3 of 3)	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Outnumber the Opponent	"Outnumber the Opponent"
Encourage players to work on this concept (to get more attackers than defenders around the ball).	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Stay Involved	"Stay Involved"
Encourage players to stay involved and proactive in each of the plays the team designs, either in offense or in defense	
CONCEPT/SKILL	KEY WORDS
Mark the Player/Mark the Area	"Defend the Player, Defend the Area"
Make players work on the following concepts: <u>Man Marking</u> - Each defender is assigned a player to mark. The objective is to stay close to your player and stop him from scoring or making an impact upon the game. <u>Zone Marking</u> - Rather than stick to a player, each defender guards a certain zone.	

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Appendix A

Play – Practice – Play Methodology



U.S. SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION

PLAY-PRACTICE-PLAY OVERVIEW



U.S. Soccer developed and implemented the Play-Practice-Play methodology at the Grassroots level. Researched and developed by technical leaders, this player-centered approach allows coaches of all levels to help create training environments to fulfill the two basic needs of players of all ages: to have fun and to develop!

The game of soccer is very unpredictable and free-flowing. It's constantly changing between the moments of attacking, defending, and both transitional moments in between. Each of the three phases of Play-Practice-Play replicates those moments and are easy for the coach to implement. The environment provides players with what they like and with what they need to analyze the game, make decisions, be creative with their own solutions, and to ultimately become independent, critical thinkers.

U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

At the grassroots level, children learn and develop to their full potential through game-like experiences in an enjoyable environment which supports individual growth



THE 1ST PLAY PHASE



As children arrive at practice, they immediately start playing small games (2v2, 3v3, or 4v4, or a game with unequal numbers based on the available number of players). The coach's priorities during the first play phase are to welcome the players, ensure safety, and observe/monitor their behaviors while PLAYING.

There is an intention within this first phase based on the training session goal that the coach has selected prior to the session; the coach has an influence by using teaching actions, such as positive specific praise, key words, and asking guided questions.

These teaching actions help plant seeds for players to think about the goal while experiencing the fun of a small-sided game and to learn by making decisions, creating their own solutions, and solving the problems that the game presents. Empirical data has shown that children learn best when they experience periods of play in a safe environment where they can experiment and make decisions. The goal of this phase is to get players excited about training and primed to learn about today's training-session goal based on a real context that they have just experienced.

ATTACKING TRAINING SESSION GOALS	DEFENDING TRAINING SESSION GOALS
• Building up from own half to move the ball to the opponent's half • Building up in opponent's half to create chances • Score goals	• Prevent the opponent from building up in their own half • Prevent the opponent from building up and creating chances in our half • Prevent the opponent from scoring

FAQ- When do the players warm up and stretch?

It's important to prepare their bodies for the motor skills and movements that they will use while playing. Improving flexibility is important to prepare them for practice or the game and also to help prevent injury. We see a decrease in flexibility as growth accelerates. Specific flexibility training through tag games or moving games are appropriate from the age of 11-12 (prior to puberty). It is also best carried out when players are warm after some movement. Coaches should consider the first break in play 1 as a potential time for stretching.



THE PRACTICE PHASE



The Practice Phase is where the players will actively learn through continued guidance from the coach. This phase uses game-like activities – directional, located in the corresponding area of the field for the training objective, and free-flowing with attacking, defending, and both transition moments. The activities set up meaningful repetitions of today's goal.

There are three options (or challenge levels) in the Practice Phase: Core, Less Challenging, and More Challenging. Coaches start with the core activity and then decide to move to the less or more challenging activity to find the appropriate level of challenge for the players. Players build on their previous experiences from the 1st Play Phase and apply their own solutions with the coach's guidance.

Along the way, players will make mistakes and the coach continues to help by not only using positive reinforcement, guided questions, and key words, but also other teaching actions such as demonstrations, feedback, or directions. The coach also interacts with the players about the “why” of the desired behaviors. The goal of the practice phase is to help players further develop their solutions to the challenges presented in the 1st Play Phase.

5 ELEMENTS OF A TRAINING ACTIVITY

- 1. Organized:** is the activity organized in the right way? (is it safe and the ball stays in play?)
- 2. Game-like:** is the activity game-like? (attacking, defending, & transition)
- 3. Repetition:** is there repetition when looking at the overall goal of the session?
- 4. Challenging:** are the players being challenged? (is there the right balance between being successful and unsuccessful?)
- 5. Coaching:** is there effective coaching, based on the age and level of the players?

	4 v 4	7 v 7	9 v 9	11 v 11
	U-6, U-7, U-8	U-9, U-10	U-11, U-12	U-13+
ATTACKING	U-6 • Shoot • Pass or dribble forward U-7/U-8 • Spread out • Create passing options • Support the attack	• Shoot • Pass or dribble forward • Spread out • Create passing options • Support the attack • Create a 2v1 or 1v1 • Change the point of attack	• Shoot • Pass or dribble forward • Spread out • Create passing options • Support the attack • Create a 2v1 or 1v1 • Change the point of attack • Change the pace/rhythm • Switch positions	• Shoot • Pass or dribble forward • Spread out • Create passing options • Support the attack • Create a 2v1 or 1v1 • Change the point of attack • Change the pace/rhythm • Switch positions
A>D	DEFEND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE			
DEFENDING	U-6 • Protect the goal • Steal the ball U-7/U-8 • Make it compact • Keep it compact	• Protect the goal • Steal the ball • Make it compact • Keep it compact • Pressure, cover, balance • Outnumber the opponent	• Protect the goal • Steal the ball • Make it compact • Keep it compact • Pressure, cover, balance • Outnumber the opponent • Stay involved • Mark the player/mark the area	• Protect the goal • Steal the ball • Make it compact • Keep it compact • Pressure, cover, balance • Outnumber the opponent • Stay involved • Mark the player/mark the area
D>A	ATTACK AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE			

FAQ- What about technique?

Technique is the isolated execution of a soccer action, whereas skill is the execution of the technique in a context with decision-making. Within a game-like context, players learn fundamental skills (techniques performed in the context of the game) through playing. U.S. Soccer has developed a list of developmentally appropriate Player Actions (see figure 3) which coaches select as part of the training session goal. They are integrated with the Key Qualities which are also needed for the player to perform the action.

THE 2ND PLAY PHASE



The final phase offers players the opportunity to scrimmage now with larger numbers involved and with minimal interruptions; this is why the players came to training. The coach still has an influence through specific teaching actions such as key words and checking for understanding through guided questions.

It is also an opportunity to learn the Laws of the Game/Rules, as it mimics a game with using the max roster size for the age group. For instance, 7v7 has a max roster size of 12, so the final game is 6v6 and all players are encouraged to play and apply what they have learned in the previous two phases. In this final phase, the main priority for the coach is to check the effectiveness of his/her teaching actions from the 1st Play and Practice Phases. A half-time is built in to this phase, so that the coach can help players reflect on their first-half performance and look for solutions to challenges in the game related to today's training session goal. The coach now can use all previously used key words and guided questions, and help the player get organized for the second half of play.

Following the conclusion of the session, coaches should take a moment to check on the players' well-being, review the objectives of the training session, check for players' understanding of today's training session goal, and inform or remind them about the next training or game.

FAQ- When do they learn the rules (throw-ins, corner kicks, etc.)?

Within the holistic approach, players learn the rules of the game through playing and experiencing the moments when/where the rule occurs. The 2nd Play Phase provides many of these moments within a context that most closely resembles the game.

Conclusion

The Play-Practice-Play methodology helps coaches create enjoyable environments, with the ultimate goal of developing players to their full potential. The methodology has three main objectives:

1. Play-Practice-Play helps coaches create a player-centered environment. This means having a holistic approach to coaching that places the needs and motivations of all players at the forefront.
2. In order to help players transfer what they have learned in practice to games, this methodology provides players with multiple opportunities to experience realistic game moments and make decisions.
3. When using this methodology, coaching becomes much easier and training is more enjoyable for both the players and coaches.

All of these factors have been proven to increase motivation to make playing soccer a lifetime activity. Play-Practice-Play promotes fun, inclusion, and development. All the best on your soccer journey!



APYSL Coaching Guidelines



Appendix B

Training Sessions Roadmap



GRASSROOTS ROADMAPS

U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS ROADMAP

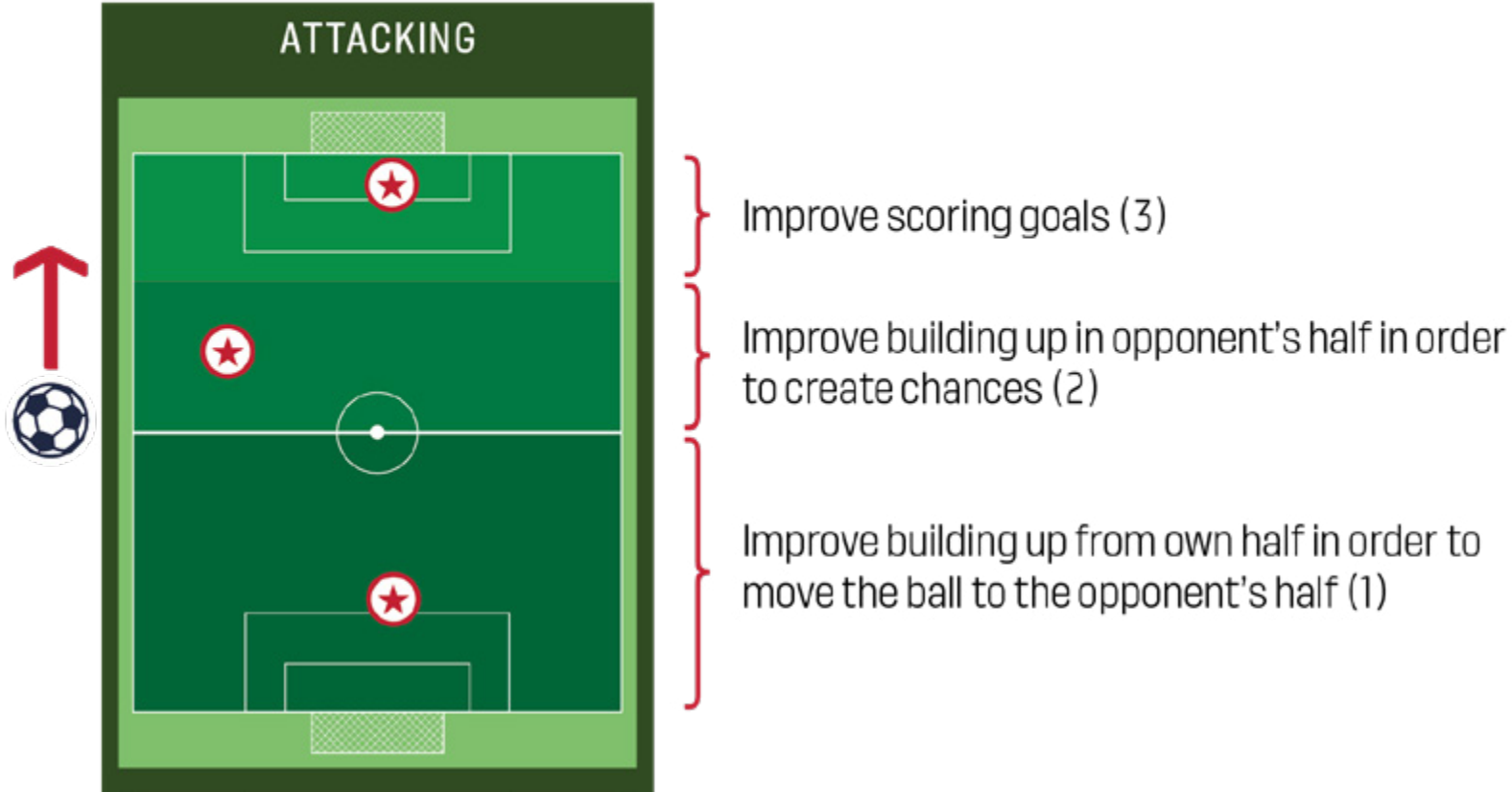


ATTACKING GRASSROOTS ROADMAP



ATTACKING				
WHERE Where is it happening on the field?	WHY/GOAL Why do players attack? What are the goals?	HOW How are players going to accomplish the goals?	WHAT/PLAYER ACTIONS What can players do to achieve the How and the Why?	WHO/QUALITIES Who are these players? What qualities do they need to execute the actions?
Own half Build up	• Move the ball forward	• Find openings • Create openings	• Shoot • Pass or dribble forward • Spread out • Create passing options • Support the attack • Create a 2v1 or 1v1 • Change the point of attack • Change the pace/rhythm • Switch positions	1. Read and understand the game and make decisions 2. Take initiative, be pro-active 3. Demonstrate focus 4. Execute with optimal technical abilities 5. Execute with optimal physical abilities 6. Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance
Opponent's half Build up	• Create Chances			
Close to the goal Scoring	• Score goals			

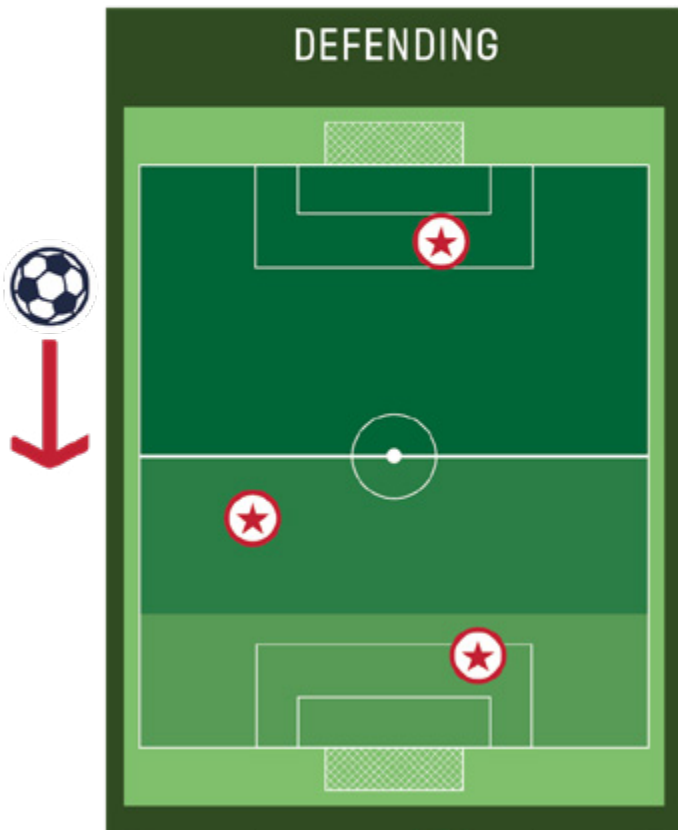
TRAINING SESSION GOALS - ATTACKING





DEFENDING				
WHERE Where is it happening on the field?	WHY/GOAL Why do players defend? What are the goals?	HOW How are players going to accomplish the goals?	WHAT/PLAYER ACTIONS What can players do to achieve the How and the Why?	WHO/QUALITIES Who are these players? What qualities do they need to execute the actions?
Opponent's half Prevent the build up	- Prevent the opponent from moving the ball forward - Regain the ball	- Close the openings (to the goal) - Keep the openings (to the goal) closed	- Protect the goal - Steal the ball - Make it compact - Keep it compact - Pressure, cover, balance - Outnumber the opponent - Stay involved - Mark the player/mark the area	- Read and understand the game and make decisions - Take initiative, be pro-active - Demonstrate focus - Execute with optimal technical abilities - Execute with optimal physical abilities - Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance
Own half Prevent the build up	- Prevent the opponent from moving the ball forward - Regain the ball			
Close to the goal	- Prevent scoring goals - Deny chances			

TRAINING SESSION GOALS - DEFENDING



Improve preventing the opponent from building up in their own half (1)

Improve preventing the opponent from building up and creating chances in our half (2)

Improve preventing the opponent from scoring (3)

KEY QUALITIES OF A GRASSROOTS PLAYER



1. READ AND UNDERSTAND THE GAME AND MAKE DECISIONS

- applies knowledge of the cues
- reads and analyzes situations regarding attacking/defending/transition
- understands where and when to move themselves and the ball
- aligns own actions with other players and positions

2. TAKE INITIATIVE, BE PROACTIVE

- creates opportunities instead of reacting
- confronts situations
- challenges opponents

3. DEMONSTRATE FOCUS

- plays to win
- demonstrates bravery
- deals with adversity
- remains calm and composed

4. EXECUTE WITH OPTIMAL TECHNICAL ABILITIES

- shows comfort with the ball
- is technically proficient to be effective
- is proficient in 1v1 situations to create or to regain the ball

5. EXECUTE WITH OPTIMAL PHYSICAL ABILITIES

- demonstrates physical awareness (what their bodies can do)
- is coordinated in their movement

6. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OWN DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE

- is involved and engaged throughout every game/training session
- delivers on agreements and promises
- is adaptable and flexible in dealing with (unexpected) challenges and problems
- articulates own learning needs
- evaluates and reflects on own performance

APYSL Coaching Guidelines



Training Session Example

9v9 Improve Building Up in Own Half- (B)

AGE: U11-U12 / 9v9 / 16 players

MOMENT:



GOAL: Improve building-up from own half in order to move the ball to the opponent's half

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus

16

90 min

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

PRACTICE (Core Activity): From 4 v 3 to 5 v 4

PRACTICE (Less Challenging): From 4 v 3 to 5 v 4

PRACTICE (More Challenging): From 4 v 3 to 5 v 4

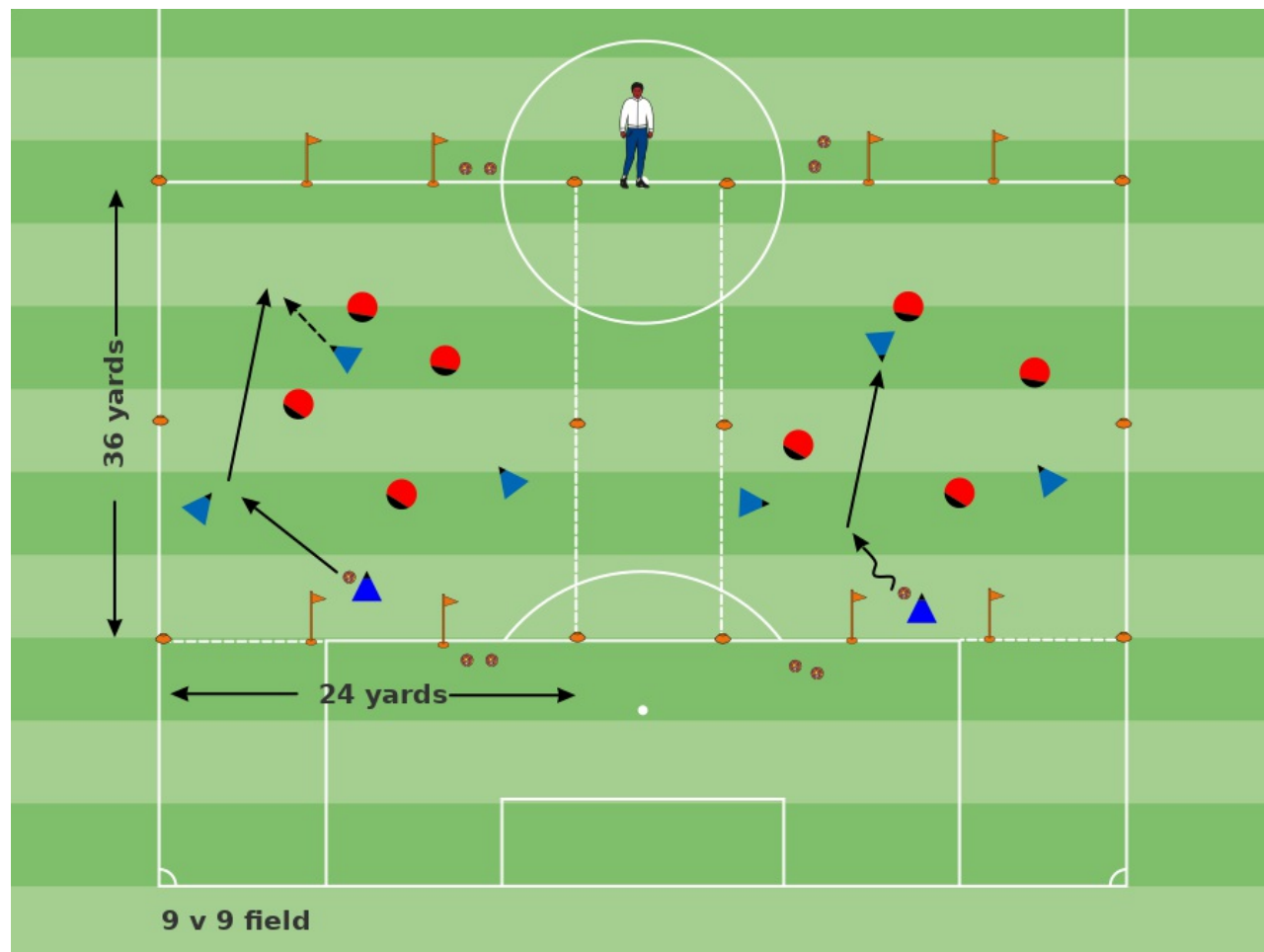
2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To build a solid attack, move the ball forward and score

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out two 36 x 24-yard fields. Divide players into four teams of four. Free play: Teams play 4 v 4 on 8-yard goal lines without goalkeepers (pass on the ground to score). Play for 30 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) What do you do when opponents immediately start trying to disrupt your attack? 2) How do you create the space you need to build a solid attack?

ANSWERS:

1) Stay calm, build the attack in a controlled way and play safe combinations to move the ball forward into the opponent's half. 2) Make the field as big as possible; push forward (no offside rule) and try to engage individual opponents; use the full width of the field.

NOTES:

First break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. Second break: Players share answers with coach and each other.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:
4 vs 4

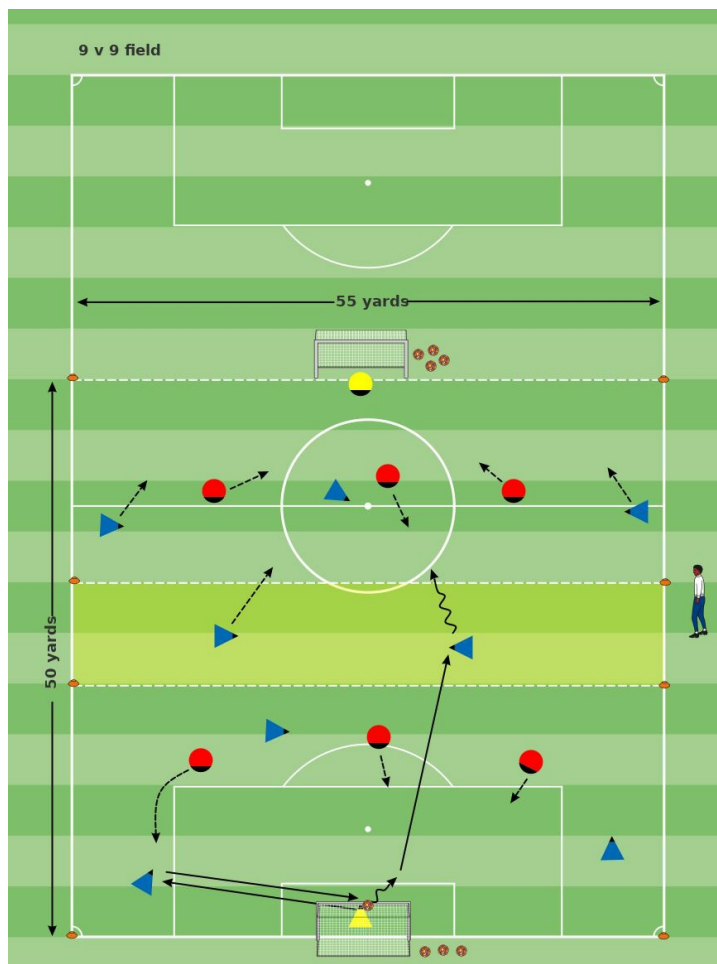
DURATION:
30:0 min

PRACTICE (Core Activity): From 4 v 3 to 5 v 4

OBJECTIVE: To build a solid attack, move the ball forward and score.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Divide a 55x 50-yard field into three zones. Divide players into teams of 9 and 7 (Blue and Red) and assign them to zones as shown (1-3-2-3). Blue starts out attacking 4 v 3. If they can successfully pass into the center zone, they then attack 5 v 4 on Red's goal. Red tries to win the ball and score on Blue's goal. Play is restarted by Blue's keeper after interruptions. Play for 30 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) On distributions, where should the outside defenders show for the ball? 2) Why? 3) How should they position their bodies? 4) After they receive the ball, how should they build the attack? 5) What if they can't do that?

ANSWERS:

1) Just outside the penalty box sidelines, close to the endline. 2) To make the field as big as possible. 3) Open up hips to face up the field. 4) Take the ball forward and look for potential receivers. 5) Stay calm, "peel" away or pass to the keeper to switch the point of attack.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:
4 vs 3

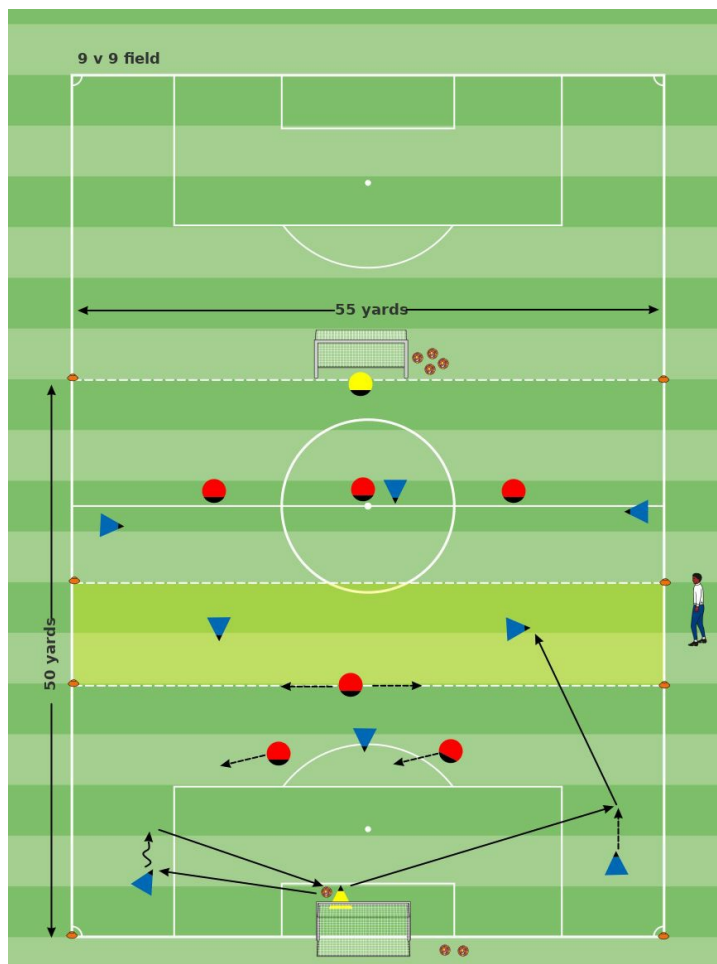
DURATION:
30:0 min

PRACTICE (Less Challenging): From 4 v 3 to 5 v 4

OBJECTIVE: To build a solid attack, move the ball forward and score

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Same as Core Activity, except Blue starts out attacking 4 v 2. The third defender stays on the center zone boundary and tries to intercept passes.

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) On distributions, where should the outside defenders show for the ball? 2) Why? 3) How should they position their bodies? 4) After they receive the ball, how should they build the attack? 5) What if they can't do that?

ANSWERS:

1) Just outside the penalty box sidelines, close to the endline. 2) To make the field as big as possible. 3) Open up hips to face up the field. 4) Take the ball forward and look for potential receivers. 5) Stay calm, "peel" away or pass to the keeper to switch the point of attack. NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this Less Challenging activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:
4 vs 3

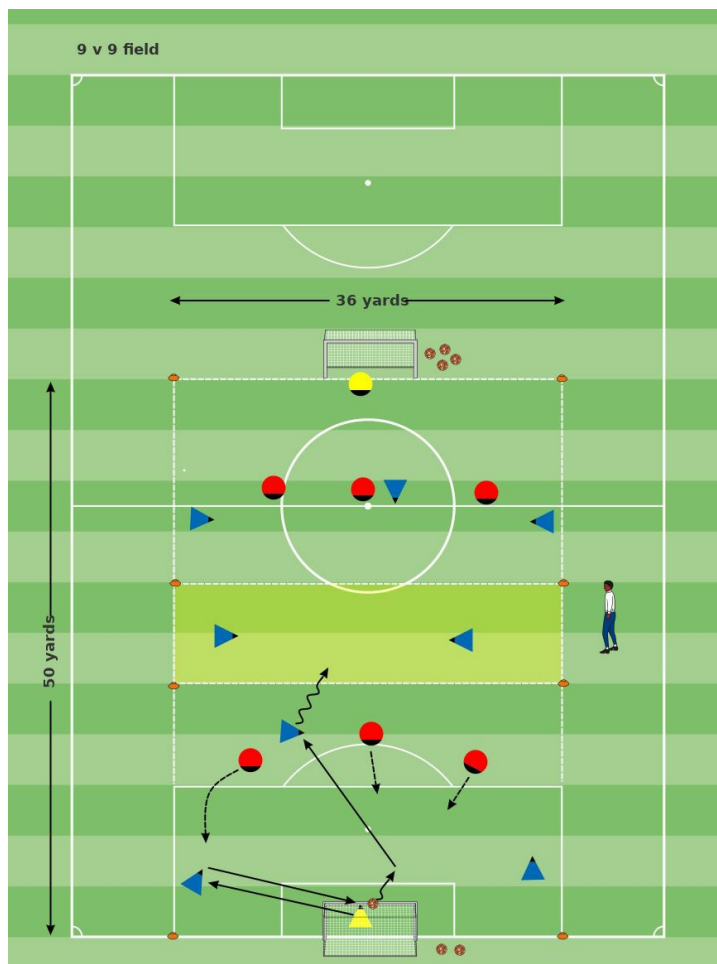
DURATION:
30:0 min

PRACTICE (More Challenging): From 4 v 3 to 5 v 4

OBJECTIVE: To build a solid attack, move the ball forward and score

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Same as Core Activity, except the field is only 36 yards wide.

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) On distributions, where should the outside defenders show for the ball? 2) Why? 3) How should they position their bodies? 4) After they receive the ball, how should they build the attack? 5) What if they can't do that?

ANSWERS:

1) Just outside the penalty box sidelines, close to the endline. 2) To make the field as big as possible. 3) Open up hips to face up the field. 4) Take the ball forward and look for potential receivers. 5) Stay calm, "peel" away or pass to the keeper to switch the point of attack.

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:
4 vs 3

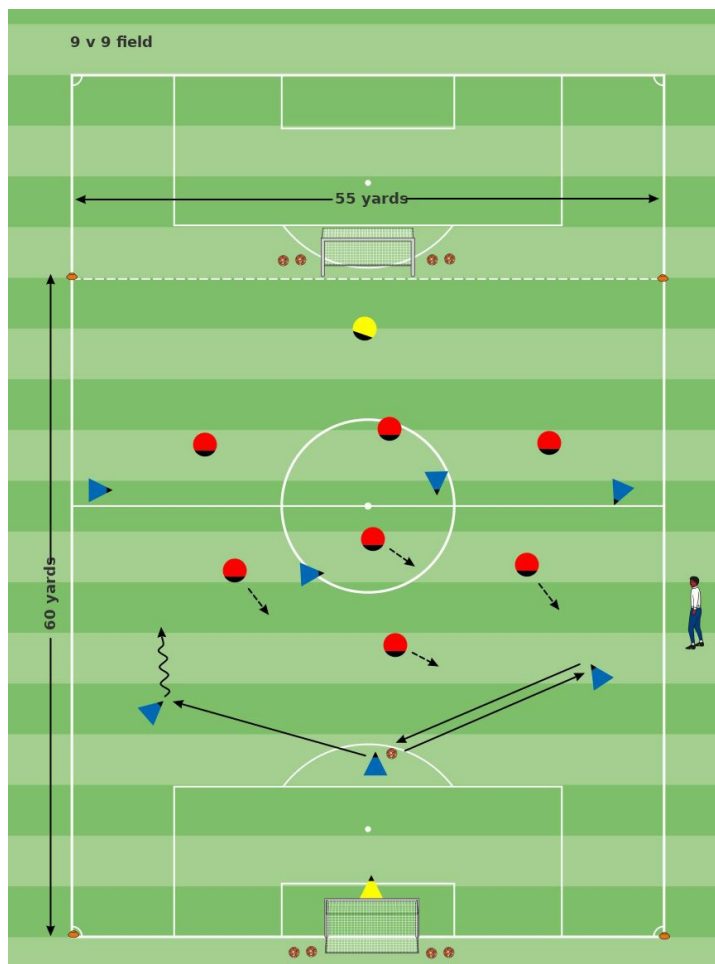
DURATION:
30:0 min

2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To build a solid attack, move the ball forward and score

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out a 60 x 55-yard field. Teams play 8 v 8 in a 1-3-3-1. Play according to the Laws of the Game and the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives. Play for 30 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) What do you do when opponents immediately start trying to disrupt your attack? 2) How do you create the space you need to build a solid attack? 3) On distributions, where should the outside defenders show for the ball?

ANSWERS:

1) Stay calm, build the attack in a controlled way and play safe combinations to move the ball forward. 2) Make the field as big as possible; push forward and try to engage individual opponents; use the full width of the field. 3) Just outside the penalty box sidelines, close to the endline.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:
8 vs 8

DURATION:
30:0 min

9v9 Improve Building Up in Own Half- (B)

GOAL: Improve building-up from own half in order to move the ball to the opponent's half

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus

AGE: U11-U12 / 9v9 / 16 players

Attacking

DURATION: 90 min



Five Elements of a Training Exercise

1. Organized: Is the exercise organized in the right way?
2. Game-like: Is the exercise game-like?
3. Repetition: Is there repetition, when looking at the overall goal of the session?
4. Challenging: Are the players being challenged?(Is there the right balance between being successful and unsuccessful?
5. Coaching: Is there proper coaching, based on the age and level of the player?

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

Do-focus on the situation

1. Did you achieve your goals? Yes/No
2. What went well?
3. What could you do better?

NOTES: