

12U COACH



Complete “How-To” for Coaching Pre-Teen Soccer Players
Includes a Complete Season of Training Plans



AMERICAN YOUTH
SOCCER ORGANIZATION

COACHING SERIES

12WACH



Accredited By:

AYSO National Office
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www.AYSO.org



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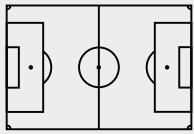
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WELCOME TO THE FIRST TEAM!

FROM THE FIELD



"Our National Coaching Program is expertly designed, tested and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education. We have a proven method for player development and I am proud of our contribution to the game in the USA."

John Ouellette, AYSO Hall of Fame and Former National Coach

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!

The American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) welcomes you to the colorful world of youth soccer coaching.

AYSO is a place where **every child plays** in an atmosphere of **good sportsmanship** and **positive coaching**. In addition to the game's technical, tactical and physical components, we fully recognize and prioritize the psychosocial needs of our children and work toward the fulfillment of those needs in all our programs. Staying **truly** child-centered makes AYSO a model for other youth sports groups and is a key to our position as a **player development** leader.

The content of this manual is drawn from the knowledge and experience of AYSO's Player Development Team and our National Coaching Advisory Commission—people with vast soccer knowledge, yet volunteers of AYSO—just like you. The coaching methodology and soccer skills included in this manual have been carefully researched and have **natural** alignment with U.S. Soccer's Zone One (6-12 years) objectives for player development: Development over Winning, Age Appropriate, Quality Training, and Having Fun/Inspiring Players.

We encourage you to attend your local Region's Annual Coach Orientation, as well as other AYSO coaching courses available in your area or online. Your Regional Commissioner or Coach Administrator can provide you with information about what's required for your specific age group.

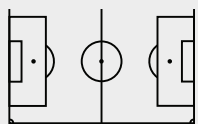
On behalf of the entire organization, thank you for joining the team!

NATIONAL COACHING ADVISORY COMMISSION

AYSO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT TEAM

AYSO

FROM THE FIELD



"We strive to galvanize the player development pathways of our youth soccer organizations. The common objective is to develop the next wave of youth players. In this collective effort, it is critical to promote a single message and common coaching methodology with respect to player development. AYSO's National Coaching Program is in line and coherent with these efforts."

*Dave Chesler, Former U.S. Soccer Director of Coach Education
Current WNT Performance Analysis Coach*

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SOCCER CLUB

Founded in Torrance, CA in 1964, AYSO is a distinguished cornerstone of US Soccer and with approximately 60,000 teams across *all* age groups; AYSO is the world's biggest soccer club!

Success can be measured in many ways, from the careers of professional players who got their start playing AYSO to the thousands of coaches (youth, high school, collegiate and professional) who developed their passion and understanding of the game in AYSO. Regardless of perspective, our contribution to the US game's success is founded upon our unique **Vision**, **Mission** and **Philosophies**.

KEEP IN MIND



Any player development or instruction should always include a comprehensive understanding and practical application of our core values.

AYSO VISION

To provide world-class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

AYSO MISSION

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs in a fun, family environment based on the AYSO philosophies:

AYSO SIX PHILOSOPHIES

EVERYONE PLAYS®

Our goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.

BALANCED TEAMS

Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible—because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.

OPEN REGISTRATION

Our program is open to all children who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.

POSITIVE COACHING

Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

We strive to create a safe, fair, fun and positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

We believe that all players should be able to develop their soccer skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities, both individually and as members of a team, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game.

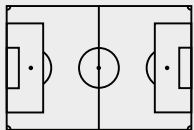
KEEP IN
MIND



AYSO Six Philosophies:

Everyone Plays®
Balanced Teams
Open Registration
Positive Coaching
Good Sportsmanship
Player Development

FROM THE FIELD



“It is better to win ten times 1-0 than to win once 10-0.”

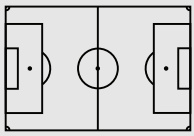
Vahid Halilhodžić, Bosnian Coach and Former Professional Player

DIVERSITY. EQUITY. INCLUSION.

AYSO commits fully to its founders’ legacy of diversity, equity and inclusion. Providing fun and enriching soccer programs is what we do. We welcome everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, social-economic position, ability or disability. Differences are respected and embraced. AYSO is proud to be at the heart of communities where all feel that they belong.

STEWARDS OF THE GAME

FROM THE **FIELD**



"We must all work together; coaches, officials and parents to create the optimal performance environments for our players' development."

Players need to play with freedom, confidence and enjoyment in a developmentally rich environment to truly reach their potential."

Scott Snyder
AYSO Player Development Specialist

Stewardship: "The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care" (2017 Merriam-Webster).

APPLICATION ON THE FIELD

Referees and coaches are to be Stewards of the Game and work together to ensure that player safety, at the physical and emotional level, is the number one priority on the field. All 7 members of the team (3 referees and 4 coaches) are equal participants and are there for the sole purpose of discussing how to ensure a safe and protective environment for the players to play. The Center Referee shall initiate a brief meeting between referees and coaches before the AYSO match to collectively:

- Identify any potential issues that may impact the ability of players to safely have fun; such as the field, sideline areas, field equipment, players' equipment, the physical and emotional states of participants, and other game related concerns.
- Review and follow a simple process that encourages communication and collaboration when there is a concern or issue with players/participants.

REFEREES

Referees, as Stewards of the Game, are responsible for keeping the game safe, fair, and fun. Referees should support and work with coaches to manage the behavior of players and spectators.

COACHES

Coaches must keep their sideline participation to being: Positive, Instructive and Encouraging at all times. Coaches must ensure respect and support for referees by players, parents, and all other spectators.

PARENTS

Parents are expected to respect coaches and referees, and model positive sporting behavior; and at the same time, maintain realistic expectations.

KIDS ZONE®

KEEP IT FRIENDLY

KEEP IN MIND



Sideline critics who scream instructions at players or criticize referees or coaches slow down the learning process and make it less fun for everyone. Consider every time you prepare to kick the ball you receive numerous screams of direction? Scary, confusing and annoying!

In AYSO, fans (yes, including parents) are asked to be cheerleaders, **not critics or sideline coaches**! Kids Zone® is a unique program that includes a Parent Pledge that moms and dads sign to commit to *positive, encouraging* behavior when they're watching the matches. It also includes signs, buttons and other match-day reminders.

Soccer is a *player's* game! Players learn the game by trying new things, making mistakes and trying again.

Negative, even violent, behavior of players, coaches and parents involved in youth sports has become almost epidemic in this country. Kids Zone® is a proactive effort to counteract this trend and involves the following elements:

To help execute this program, four basic elements are involved (and available from the AYSO Store):

1. **Kids Zone® Button.** Worn by program supporters at matches and serves as a reminder of the importance of positive sideline behavior.
2. **The Sign.** A large sideline poster lists positive behavior standards and can be posted at the entrance of participating fields. Parents and spectators who will abide by these standards are welcome.
3. **The Pledge.** AYSO requests all parents to sign a pledge that holds them to the Kids Zone® standards.
4. **The Video.** A 12 minute documentary introduces AYSO's principles and its Kids Zone® action plan to new participants. Viewers will also watch a parent intervene to change another parent's negative behavior. In order to make this program work, everyone must help!

KEEP IN MIND



Help create a safe and encouraging environment for you and your team by implementing Kids Zone®.

To learn more or visit
ayso.org/kidszone

ALERT!

You are entering an



By entering this kids zone, you agree to the following:

- Kids are #1
- Fun – not winning – is everything
- Fans only cheer, and only coaches coach
- No yelling in anger
- Respect the volunteer referees
- No swearing
- No smoking
- Leave no trash behind
- Set a proper example for our children

If you can agree to the above, we welcome you.
AYSO – it's for the kids!

12U COACHING

GAME ON!

12U is the time to polish our players' technical skills to accommodate the tactical demands presented to this ambitious age group.

Ultimately, 12U should confirm the foundational skills and tactical understanding to advance our players into the intermediate and advanced stages of the game.

However, this is also the time where players consider leaving the sport for one reason or another. They have played (and been coached) for seven years? They are bored? They are not having fun? They are ready for a new challenge? A new sport?

Therefore, it is our job (as coaches) to address all of these possible dilemmas and not only engage our players with innovative learning and age-appropriate challenges, but **inspire** them to push beyond their current comfort levels, technically, tactically and physically...and **become** soccer players!

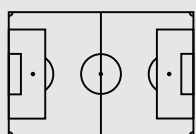
And as one might expect, as our players' needs change, our own knowledge and application should advance and align accordingly.

Welcome to 12U coaching!



COACHING METHODOLOGY

FROM THE FIELD



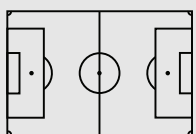
“One of my biggest pet peeves is youth team coaches who take winning too seriously. This has always bothered me, and I always tell coaches to forget about winning with young players. They need to create an environment where the kids enjoy playing and are developing their soccer skills. Winning should never be a priority.”

Landon Donovan, AYSO Alumni and Professional Player

The AYSO Player Development Team and NCAC have researched current coaching methodologies and approaches to quality training from all across the soccer globe and are proud to present our findings for your consideration and implementation.

DEVELOPMENT OVER WINNING

FROM THE FIELD



“Development over winning. Being faithful to it, being really faithful to it every single day. Are the players, are the kids the most important thing? That’s what I worry about. That’s what I talk about. That’s my only goal: making the players and of course, the coaches who teach them, all of us, better!”

Claudio Reyna, Former U.S. Soccer Youth Technical Director

Prioritizing **Development Over Winning** does **NOT** reduce competition, which is instrumental to a player’s development. However, a competitive environment does not necessarily need to be all about wins, draws and losses.

Consider the emotional roller coaster of equating success *only* when you win the game or score a goal (aspects that are *not* 100% within your control)? How would we like to be judged as adults in that type of scenario?

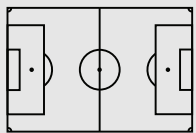
As coaches, it is our responsibility to determine if the competitive environment is healthy or not. Please consider this on your coaching journey.

KEEP IN MIND



Children should be competitive, not the adults! And a competitive environment for our youth players should focus on **performance** rather than **outcome** (favoring ball skills, effort, creativity, etc., as means to find success, not the score).

FROM THE FIELD

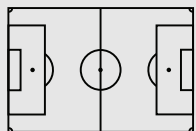


"In matches the coaches should keep out of the way. He/she is an important figure, of course, but is more likely to lose a match than win it. Matches are won by players."

Romario, Brazilian Legend

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCCER (VS. OTHER U.S. SPORTS)

FROM THE FIELD



"AYSO emphasizes all the positives of soccer: the enjoyment that kids get from the sport, understanding how to play on a team and be a good teammate, and developing skills in a fun environment."

Julie Foudy, AYSO Hall of Fame, 1991 & 1999 World Cup Champion, 1996 & 2004 Olympic Gold Medalist

It is important to recognize some key differences between soccer and other American sports, as this impacts how the game should be played, viewed and coached. In comparison, soccer is:

- Free-flowing (fewer stoppages).
- Low-scoring (more often).
- Requires eye-foot coordination (versus eye-hand in baseball, basketball, football).
- Has no physical size requirement.
- Equal opportunity sport (girls are equally as talented and have comparable opportunities to boys).
- **PLAYER-based** (as game flows, *players* make the decisions and **PLAY** the game, less coach involvement).

STYLE AND ATTITUDE

Mourinho, Ferguson, Klinsmann, Guardiola? Coaching styles differ based on personality and beliefs on how the game should be played. Effective coaches; however, *all* possess similar qualities:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| • Leader | • Knowledgeable | • Observant |
| • Teacher & Motivator | • Quality Demonstrator | • Humorous |
| • Conscientiousness | • Enthusiastic & Energetic | • Personable |
| • Fair & Honest | • Patient & Understanding | • Confident |
| • Smart Appearance | • Communicator | |

The general qualities of any coach combine into four fundamental attributes all successful coaches share:

1. Soccer knowledge.
2. Prioritize athlete's well being.
3. Ability to communicate knowledge to the player.
4. Ability to observe and evaluate (coaching eye) to correct any apparent faults (in a positive manner).

KEEP IN MIND



Whatever coaching persona you may adopt, **avoid** being the center of attention! Create an environment where the players are the focus and priority, and they can gain success on their own.

PREPARATION AND ORGANIZATION

PREPARATION

Always prepare a written Training Plan! Consider what you wish to work on and what activities you can use to achieve your goal. A written plan ensures smooth transitions, less down time and a more economical use of precious time.

Take a few minutes just before your training session to review your plan and the coaching points you want to make. (Consider saving your plans as a coaching library for future seasons/sessions or to share with other coaches in your Region.)

APPEARANCE

Appropriate attire is expected when conducting your coaching session. Wearing soccer apparel and footwear go a long way to comforting your players that you know what you are doing related to your role as their "soccer coach."

Sunglasses are discouraged (unless you require a medical prescription), as the players cannot see your eyes. Even with a prescription, remove your sunglasses when in direct communication with your players.

ORGANIZATION

Ideally, set up your area in advance of players and parents arriving. **Upon their arrival, they should see a planned and organized environment, which will immediately set the tone for the session as well as provide confidence for the parents.** In organizing your coaching area:

- Make sure the area is safe (playing surface, physical considerations, sprinklers, etc.).
- Plan for a smooth transition from one exercise to another.
- Minimize the number of cones that you have to pick up or reset.
- Have a place for equipment and breaks.



EQUIPMENT

Below is a basic list of the minimum equipment you should have as part of your coaching kit:

- AYSO Player Registration Forms – which include the Emergency Authorization.
- Basic first-aid kit*.
- **(Players should bring water to every activity).**
- 12 cones (preferably multi-colored).
- **12** scrimmage vests (preferably 2 sets of different colors).
- Extra soccer balls (players should bring a ball to *every* activity).
- Pump.
- Extra pair of shin guards (players must wear shin guards at *every* activity).
- Pop-up goals (preferred).
- Whistle.
- Charged cell phone (in case of emergency).
- Training plan.

*Be familiar with your first aid kit contents so that you know what you have **and where it is** if needed.

AGE APPROPRIATE UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

The following chart generalizes age characteristics of children ages 9 through 12 years of age. (Note: *All* children are unique and often chronological age can conflict with developmental age; therefore, individual application should always be considered.)

KEEP IN
MIND

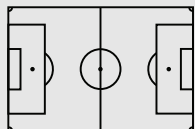


Our players are *not* mini-adults; therefore, our training sessions must be adapted to life through *their* eyes, *their* interests and most important, *their* capabilities.

AGE APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISTICS	
10U	9-12 years is the golden age for learning and the perfect age to increase focus on specific techniques and skills. It is the time for ADVENTURE! Physically, ages 9-10 are still in the early stages of development. Pre-pubescent players (9-12) are responsive to role models, friendships and peer approval. Players enjoy the team concept but will participate enthusiastically in competitive arenas, so 1v1 and 2v1 situations are perfect to develop individual skills. Passing technique/activities will help develop their team concept.
12U	Players have increased understanding of strategy and tactics so small-sided matches can help develop basic attacking and defensive principles. Players should still rotate positions to avoid early specialization (as well as participate in other activities/sports). Physical literacy (balance, agility, speed, coordination, etc.) improves. 12U is the time for “polishing” the player’s technical skills.

COACHING MOMENTS

FROM THE FIELD



“Football is simple; trainers (coaches) shouldn’t make it so complicated.”

Johan Cruyff, Dutch Soccer Legend

At the end of the day, it is the coach’s job to coach! Having the content is one thing (and we are providing this for you), but knowing **how** to effectively communicate, motivate and develop your individual players is another talent.

KEEP IN MIND



Positive Coaching! Regardless of your personal approach or delivery, **Positive Instruction and Encouragement (P.I.E.)** should *always* be used to instruct and motivate your players. They will respond better to you and it will help keep AYSO a developmentally rich and positive environment.

MANAGING THE COACHING MOMENT...LESS IS MORE

Occupy a central but sideline position during training to allow a clear, panoramic view of the activity.

The coaching environment you create must be safe and conducive to learning. Players must be stimulated to learn and educational opportunities must be well thought out if you want to maximize player development. Players must be given freedom to be creative, find solutions **without** constant coaching, and ultimately learn from their mistakes. Remember, mistakes are guidelines for improvement!

It is a fine line, managing the flow of your session and finding the appropriate time to step in. Methods:

- Forced Stoppage (**freeze, get in, make your point, get out**).
- Natural Stoppage (be careful the coaching opportunity hasn’t passed and the situation forgotten).
- Flow (talking as the game is playing...but **avoid** constant commentary).
- Individual Reference (pulling a player aside to make an observation).

PRESENTING YOUR COACHING POINTS

Avoid lengthy speeches! Keep instructions for activities as simple and quick as possible and limited to one point at a time. Where possible, explain in images and provide visual analogies (much easier for kids to grasp). Coaching points or instructions should be:

- Concise (broken down, simple, small pieces of information).
- Accurate.
- Relevant (to a coaching principle or objective).
- **Demonstrated** (whenever possible)!

LET THEM PLAY AND THE GAME TEACH!

When addressing your players, make sure **they** are not directly facing the sun or have the wind in their face. Also, consider a semi-circle to see each player.

KEEP IN MIND



Avoid lengthy speeches! Keep instructions for activities as simple and quick as possible.

I HEAR...

I SEE...

I DO...



I FORGET



I REMEMBER



I UNDERSTAND

VOICE

- Do consider the volume and tone of your voice.
- Avoid being monotone.
- Modulating the intensity of your voice can help emphasize your coaching points and gain the required attention.
- Always maintain control and *never* raise your voice in anger or frustration.

INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS OF DELIVERY

Questions

Children respond enthusiastically to questions and are stimulated to find the answer. Questions can be:

- Factual Definitive, simple answers (*what*).
- Conceptual Requires a higher level of processing and thought (*how*).
- Stimulating Requires complex reasoning (*why*).

Commanding

Definitive, controlled, lecture (less player-centered).

Guided Discovery

Guides the player through process by posing a *series* of questions whose responses lead to the understanding of a concept (like detectives).

Experimentation

Cause and effect comparison (try it and see, compare).

COMPLETE SYSTEM OF DELIVERY

Say, Show, Do and Review

An effective complete teaching method for any age group:

1. **SAY:** Explain skill or technique (keep it brief especially with younger players).
2. **SHOW:** Effectively demonstrate skill or technique.
3. **DO:** Have players perform skill or technique.
4. **REVIEW:** *Observe, Correct* and *Confirm* proper technique.

Observe (silently). Instead of trying to correct immediately, let the player play uninterrupted for a time (they will learn from mistakes) and take notes (preferably written), focusing on *one* effort they can improve.

Correct what you saw in terms of the player's execution, and then provide them with attainable modifications to correct one or two deficits by once again demonstrating.

Confirm accomplishments once success is achieved! Say it out loud, so everyone can hear.

Post Session

Discussion with the players: Do not underestimate the value and impact of a positive comment or constructive feedback to a player after the training session (but keep it concise).

Review your training plan: Note what worked well and what needs to improve.

Evaluate yourself: Reflect on your session, your coaching and your choices to help maximize your own development. Encourage constructive feedback from others in relation to your coaching and session structure.

COACHING YOUR OWN CHILD

A large percentage of you will be lacing up sneakers to coach your own children and this section outlines some perspective and tips to maximize the opportunity...for you, and more importantly for your child (and the rest of the family).

But I've Never Coached Or Played Soccer Before!

- It's okay if you never played soccer or don't know much about it! However, by reading this manual and progressing through the AYSO National Coaching Program, you **will** gather valuable tools to succeed.
- No pressure! Do not misinterpret the role you're supposed to play. Go out to enjoy!
- Change your adult perspective and **view the game through your child's eyes**.
- If you can create a safe, fun and developmental environment for your child and team, **encourage self-expression and mistakes (learning)**, you are already in the running for Coach of the Year.
- Fun, exercise and the chance to play soccer is what it's all about, particularly at the younger ages.

What's My Role As Coach?

- Maintain realistic expectations! It's a game, a sport, a pastime. As you are likely aware, the odds are against your child making the pros; therefore, make sure your own adult expectations do not stray too far from those of your child.
- Soccer, perhaps more than any other sport, requires little teaching at the early ages. **The game itself is genuinely the best teacher.** In fact, the role of the coach in the first stages is simply to give children the opportunity to discover the game's joys in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Generally speaking, through 10U let them play. At 12U we can expand their technical development and reading of the game.
- What you're really doing is very similar to taking your child and his or her friends to the playground. You're supervising soccer playtime while allowing the children to explore the fun on their own terms.
- Once you comprehend the expectations, you'll find all aspects of the role less daunting, including the dynamics of coaching your own child.

KEEP IN MIND



In the blink of an eye, they are grown up and beyond our daily reach. Therefore, what an incredible opportunity to spend time in "their" world as "their" coach!



Coach or Parent?

- When you first start coaching you may be introducing your child to a new experience other than the game: sharing the attention of mom or dad with a larger number of **other** children (while at the same time, you are trying not to show favoritism).
- The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) recommends you explain to your child, “I always love you and you are special to me. But when I’m coaching you, I need to be fair and treat you like all the other players. And you need to respond to me as your coach, not your dad. Do you think you can do that?”

Am I Doing Okay?

- Avoid being harder on your own child than the other players because you’re worried about perceptions of favoritism. No matter what you say or how you say it, your comments can often register as a personal attack because they come from dad or mom.
- Don’t be afraid to praise your child and acknowledge her strengths and accomplishments at every opportunity. As well as your child they are also a player on the team!
- A good test on how to treat your child on the soccer team is to constantly ask yourself if your reactions to his play or behavior are the same as they are to his teammates.
- Another peril of coaching your own children is to leave your coaching hat on when the session/match is over. Limit your post-session soccer discussions once the whistle blows.
- Once the topic of food is raised, it’s probably time to return to your full-time role!

KEEP IN
MIND



SAVOR EVERY MOMENT!

It will pass all too quickly!

The (Long) Car Ride Home

Please be very mindful of the car ride home, where we often feel compelled to discuss performance, results, and other parental observations made from the comfort of our folding chairs. We suggest you refrain from discussing the practice or game unless the child brings it up. If the topic does arise, be proactive in responding with unconditional support, growth, and positivity. “You looked like you were having fun out there!”

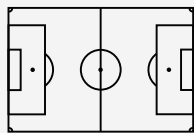
- “I loved how you hustled and supported your teammates.”
- “What was your favorite moment of the game?”
- “That was a tough one, but I’m proud of how you kept going.”
- “I’m proud of you just for being out there.”
- “I love you and I love watching you play, no matter the score.”
- “Win or lose, you’re always my favorite player.”
- “Where shall we eat?”

Trust me, your child knows exactly how they did!



AGE APPROPRIATE (PLAYER) DEVELOPMENT

FROM THE FIELD



“Learning to be a soccer athlete, there are progressive stages and if you don’t get the early stages right, *in sequence*, then you are fighting an uphill battle in developing an athlete.”

*Dave Chesler, Former U.S. Soccer Director of Coach Education
Current WNT Performance Analysis Coach*

THE SCIENCE OF AGE APPROPRIATE TRAINING

“To provide youth soccer programs *that enrich children’s lives.*”

This vision can *only* be achieved if we continually ask ourselves if the activity, method or decision will truly *enrich* the player’s life. To achieve this goal, our training sessions *must* be adapted to the player’s specific age and stage of development.

Technical, tactical, physical and psychosocial training components should be woven throughout each session; however, *at all-times* with deep respect to the player’s specific age *and* stage of development. At AYSO, we prioritize these important aspects as follows:

Psychosocial

Respect, motivation, confidence, cooperation, competitiveness, etc., and how these emotions and feelings impact a player’s development. Also, includes a player’s ability to reason, learn and solve problems. **At AYSO, we develop the *whole* person!**

Physical

A player’s physical attributes: speed, agility, endurance, strength and power, etc. **At AYSO, we promote a healthy lifestyle through soccer!**

Technical

A player’s ability to master ball skills, i.e., ball control, shooting, passing, etc. **At AYSO, we prioritize skill development and ball mastery.**

Tactical

A player’s capacity to use their skill and ability *within* a game environment, i.e., creating space in midfield, possession and transition, creating width, etc. **At AYSO, we educate our players on playing as part of (and within) a team dynamic.**

KEY DEVELOPMENTAL COMPONENTS IN AYSO 12U TRAINING

A TIME FOR ADVENTURE...

PSYCHOSOCIAL

- In between childhood and adolescence, 12U players are ready to learn!
- Can process more abstract thought and handle more complex tasks.
- More analytical which boost their tactical awareness and understanding.
- Early or late puberty can impact self-esteem and relationships.

PHYSICAL

- Strength, stamina and power increase, as well as coordination.
- Your own expectations can increase, from endurance to psychomotor, players should be able to execute with more confidence and capability.
- Observable differences in genders start to develop.

TECHNICAL

- Dribbling
- Throw-in
- Instep kick
- Inside of the foot–push pass
- Inside of the foot–ball control
- Top of the thigh–ball control
- Juggling
- Tackling–front block
- Goalkeeping

TACTICAL

Attacking Objectives

Score
Maintain Possession
Advance Ball

Attacking Principles

Penetration
Support
Mobility
Width
Creativity

Defending Objectives

Prevent Scoring
Regain Possession
Delay Opponents

Defending Principles

Pressure (delay)
Cover
Balance
Compactness
Control/Restraint



ELEMENTS OF SOCCER

OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

ATTACKING OBJECTIVES			DEFENDING OBJECTIVES		
SCORE	Maintain Possession	Advance Ball	Prevent Scoring	Regain Possession	Delay Opponents
BASED ON A PLAYER'S RELATIVE POSITION TO:					
The Ball	Teammates	Opponents	Location on Field	Time in Game	

However, like most aspects of the game, **objectives vary depending on player age and stage of development:**

ATTACKING OBJECTIVES (BY AGE)

	6U	8U	10U	12U
Score	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keep Possession		✓	✓	✓
Advance Ball			✓	✓

DEFENDING OBJECTIVES (BY AGE)

	6U	8U	10U	12U
Prevent Scoring	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regain Possession		✓	✓	✓
Delay Opponents			✓	✓

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

The Principles of Play are used to **achieve** the Objectives of the Game.

There are ten **Principles of Play** utilized in soccer — five **attacking** and five **defending** principles, each introduced at a specific age and stage of development. All ten principles apply to 12U.

For each attacking principle, there is a defending principle to counter it.		
ATTACKING	countered by	DEFENDING
Penetration 12U v Advancing the ball past opposing players by dribbling, passing and shooting.		Pressure (delay) 12U v Pressuring opponents in possession by giving immediate chase, denying their options, i.e., dribbling, passing, shooting, etc., or delaying the opponents in order to regain possession.
Support 12U v Supporting teammates by creating safe options for the player with the ball.		Cover 12U v Supporting the player(s) challenging the ball in case they are beaten. Limits options for 1st attacker.
Mobility 12U v Players interchanging positions (filling in for one another as needed) and moving off the ball. Unbalancing defense, creating numerical advantages and thereby attacking/scoring opportunities.		Balance 12U v Reading the attack and providing equal or greater numbers of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.
Width 12U v Kin of mobility. Attacking on a broad front (players spread out) stretches and isolates the defense and creates space for players to advance.		Compactness 12U v Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area making it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball.
Creativity 12U v Creating opportunities for advancement, possession and scoring by utilizing individual skills such as feints and fakes while dribbling.		Control/Restraint 12U v Staying calm and collected in the face of an attack by maintaining proper defensive techniques and positioning.

Remember, due to the fluid nature of soccer, players’ roles are in constant rotation, and supporting players can be behind, to the side, or in advance of the ball.

The only players with definitive roles are the 1st attacker and 1st defender.

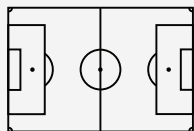


In soccer there are no *absolutely* correct decisions. You cannot always judge how well your team is playing by the results of the game. You need to have a standard method of assessing your team from moment to moment. The **Principles of Play** can be your measuring stick.

Ultimately, you must UNDERSTAND the Objectives and Principles of Play if you want to be successful.

POSITIONS

FROM THE FIELD



“The Dutch change positions quicker than you can make a cup of coffee.”

Paolo Rossi, Italian Soccer Legend

12U is the time to **introduce** position-specific coaching. This does NOT mean you have players rooted to one spot covering their positions, while the game develops...without them! How many times have you seen young defenders being contained in their “own” half because they are not permitted to cross the half-way line? **Frankly, this needs to stop as it is not conducive to player development and impacts the player’s overall experience!**

Regardless of age, *all* outfield players should be encouraged to defend AND attack. Players should be given the freedom to be involved in the flow of the game, but empowered with the responsibility to cover their position (or have someone else cover it) if they choose to explore. Your center-half should be encouraged to score goals, your striker encouraged to chase back and stop goal scoring chances.

Throughout the season, try to let all players experience all field positions (not in same game). Allow players to play one, or at most, two positions in a single game giving them some time to familiarize themselves and get comfortable with the position. This also applies to the goalkeeper position so that ***all*** children get a chance to develop their field skills.

Everyone Plays! Remember, every child in AYSO must play 1/2 of every game; however, we recommend strongly that each player play 3/4 of every game ***before*** any player plays a full game. Children of all abilities improve when they play and the more they play, the better they get.

Soccer has four basic positions: **goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, and strikers**. There are numerous specialized names for each: sweeper, forward, wing, outside back, center back, stopper, etc. We will concentrate only on the four ***basic*** positions whose ***general*** responsibilities are outlined below:

Position	Own Team with Ball	Other Team with Ball
Goalkeepers	Begin the Attack	Stop Scoring Attempt
Defenders	Maintain Possession Advance the Ball	Stop Scoring Attempt Regain Possession
Midfielders	Advance the Ball Maintain Possession	Delay Attack Regain Possession
Strikers	Score Advance the Ball Maintain Possession	Delay Attack

KEEP IN MIND



All players should be encouraged to defend and attack, and given the freedom and responsibility to be involved in the flow of the game.



SYSTEMS OF PLAY (FORMATIONS)

Refers to the formation of positions that a team engages during a game, i.e., 1-3-3-2 = 1 goalkeeper, 3 defenders, 3 midfielders and 2 strikers). **Age and stage of development should influence what and when to introduce shape and organization of play.**

Teaching players about systems of play, along with the principles and objectives of the game will begin to open them up to the concepts of **shape** and **organization** (*again, consider age and stage of development*).

- Systems assume the presence of a goalkeeper, so there is no number for that position.
- Systems are numbered with the first number indicating the number of defenders, then midfielders, then forwards, i.e., 1-3-3-2 means: 1 goalkeeper, 3 defenders, 3 midfielders and 2 strikers.
- Players during a game should not be positioned in straight lines across the field. They fill general areas, **not specific spots**. Emphasize this to your players.

Do not be discouraged if your team plays as a herd at times with little or no organization (especially at the younger ages). Player maturity, skill and an understanding of the objectives, principles and systems will slowly but surely alleviate this problem. Guaranteed!

KEEP IN MIND

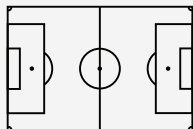


No system of play will overcome a lack of basic technique or skill. Systems of play must be appropriate for the players on your team. Therefore, find a system of play that fits the ability of your players instead of trying to fit **your players** into a particular system.

Soccer is a free-flowing and dynamic game (not static). Players must be encouraged and given the freedom to move relative to the ball, their teammates, their opponents, time in the game and the goal.

STYLE OF PLAY

FROM THE FIELD



"My life and the *beautiful* game."

Pele

Defensive, structured, conservative...attacking, free flowing, creative? How your team play is often a reflection of your own personality and tactical preference. However, in developing your style of play, it is encouraged to consider the perspective of one important group: your players!

Unlike other American sports, which are arguably *play-based* and require a skillful tactician to orchestrate, soccer is a player-based sport where the game's free-flowing rhythm requires players (not coaches) to make decisions (usually over the course of an extended period without stoppages or coach input). And from a player's perspective, a **creative** style of **attacking** play is often favored, one in which they are encouraged to **express themselves freely** within a positive team dynamic.

Look no further than 5-time World Cup winners Brazil or European powerhouse Spain. Both play with crisp, short passing, free roaming and interchanging players, and an explosive and creative offensive style (while hard working and disciplined defensively). And without question, **fun to watch** for *any* soccer fan!

KEEP IN MIND

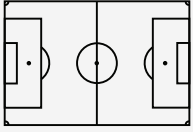


At AYSO, we urge you to consider a style of play that encourages player freedom and expression (remember our quest to *enrich lives*); however, in reality, we simply want for you and your players to have the most enjoyment you possibly can from this wonderful game, *whatever* style you choose to play.



QUALITY TRAINING

FROM THE FIELD



“The coach has to establish a playing environment where everyone is eager to train and perform at their best. Each player should understand what they should bring to each session, i.e., set of standards or expectations. Once everyone on the team understands their role, learning (and fun) develop naturally.”

John Kerr, Head Men's Coach, Duke University

THE COACHING CYCLE

- Coaching involves **OBSERVING** and **EVALUATING** player and team performance to determine what needs to be worked on (**ORGANIZING** and **COACHING**) during training in order to maximize (**player**) **DEVELOPMENT**.
- Training components (psychosocial, physical, technical, tactical) are then incorporated into a training session (plan) to develop and improve the player's competence within a match environment.
- ORGANIZE/COACH**: Training sessions are comprised of: (free play); warm-up; activities I & II; small-sided matches & cool-down.
- Principles of Play** should be considered and applied throughout the session.
- Adjusting **Speed, Space, Opposition** controls the intensity of an activity.
- Coach using sound methodology (P.I.E., Say, Show, Do, Review, etc.) to challenge, increase success and develop players.
- DEVELOPMENT**: Players improved competence within match environment (finishing; short/long play; short combined with long play; ability to keep possession; risk; transition).
- Observe and evaluate** performance and select elements for the next training session.



KEEP IN MIND



Coaching involves **OBSERVING** and **EVALUATING** player and team performance to determine what needs to be worked on (**ORGANIZING** and **COACHING**) during training in order to maximize (**player**) **DEVELOPMENT**.

DURATION AND FREQUENCY OF TRAINING SESSIONS

KEEP IN MIND



It is widely accepted that it takes 10,000 hours of *deep* practice to learn a new skill. However, the real lesson of the 10,000 hours rule is *not* about the quantity; it's about the *quality* of the practice and the environment in which it takes place.

It is important to maximize the learning opportunity without *overdoing* duration or frequency. Exhaustion and fatigue can be detrimental to learning (slows brain, lessens focus, increases errors) so it is wise to consider you training in terms of the number of quality repetitions or touches as opposed to time.

AYSO National Coaching Program Core Program

Age Group	Frequency	Duration
6U	One Activity Session/ Jamboree per Week (<i>includes</i> 25 min. game)	60 Minutes
8U	Once Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	60 Minutes
10U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	60 Minutes*
12U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	60-90 Minutes*
14U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	90 Minutes

EXTRA, Alliance, and United

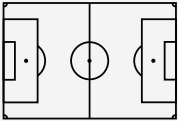
Age Group	Frequency	Duration
10U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	60 Minutes*
12U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	60-90 Minutes*
14U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	90 Minutes

*Specific duration dependent on numerous factors: growth stage, maturity, individual group dynamic, weather, etc.
Other considerations based on US Soccer Player Development best practices:

- The training-to-game ratio should be 2-3 training sessions per game played
- Players should have a minimum of 2 rest days per week during the season, along with planned breaks from organized soccer during the calendar year
- Limit travel to no more than 1 hour
- Tournaments:
 - o Maximize the entire roster to minimize player load
 - o Practice good preparation habits, i.e., nutrition, rest, recovery (plan and maximize)
 - o Limit practice two days prior to and two days post-tournament

SMALL-SIDED MATCHES

FROM THE FIELD



“The need for parents to see their children play in 11-on-11 tournaments from a young age instead of insisting on more small-sided [matches] and practices to develop technical skills produces great athletes but limited soccer players. Parents need to become a little less shortsighted.”

Carli Lloyd, U.S. Women’s National Team referencing the youth soccer culture for her team’s technical shortcomings

Youth players need to practice in a match-like environment, which provides *numerous* opportunities to practice and **repeat a skill**; not one *possible* chance every few minutes (like full-sided play can often present). Therefore, the concentrated ebb and flow of small-sided matches create the optimal learning environment for young players to develop. There are unlimited benefits of small-sided matches:

- Children learn more when the ratio of coach to player is reduced.
- Maximize ball contact, involvement, and mistakes (markers for improvement).
- Increase scoring opportunities.
- Maximize attacking and defending play.
- Maximize transitions and decision-making situations.
- Present more coaching opportunities (observation and analysis).
- Excitement and fun!

To cultivate the numerous benefits of small-sided matches and maximize Player Development, AYSO has carefully balanced the number of players on the field and the number of players on the roster by age group.

AYSO National Coaching Program In-Season Play Recommendations

Age Division	Players per team on field	Suggested Team Size	Maximum no. of team members	Suggested Minimum no. of team members
19U	11-a-side	18	22	12
16U	11-a-side	18	22	12
14U	11-a-side	18	22	12
12U	9-a-side	12	18	10
10U	7-a-side	10	14	8

8U and 6U teams should follow suggested guidelines of 4 players per team on the field (no goalkeepers) during play. However, that number can be adjusted up or down to support the needs of the program.

PROGRESSIVE (BUILD UP) TRAINING

It is essential to technical and tactical development to scaffold player challenges by adding different factors into our training sessions. In general, sessions should progress from:

SIMPLE TO COMPLEX and from **UNOPPOSED TO OPPOSED**

Progression of Technical Build-Up

- Technique demonstrated with *no pressure*.
- Technique demonstrated while *under pressure* (passive to full, integrating decision making).
- Technique demonstrated in match-like situation.

Match Pressure

Training should simulate match conditions as much as possible (most effectively accomplished through small-sided matches). Control methods used to manipulate the playing environment:

- Changing the physical **SPACE** available to players (increasing/decreasing size of playing area).
- Varying the **SPEED** of the play (adding time constraints or number of touches).
- Introducing and varying the amount of **OPPOSITION** (numbers up or down, opposition/defenders are bunnies and can only hop, etc.).

KEEP IN MIND



Players must **FIRST** be successful with a technique to build success and confidence *before* you progress the activity (progression or build up should be paced with your player's success rate). Alternatively, manipulating **SPEED, SPACE** or **OPPOSITION** can help *enable* your players to succeed (i.e., increasing space, touches or numbers).

TOPIC BASED TRAINING

Repetition is a key component to skill development; therefore, just like school, rather than bombard players with multiple topics per lesson, focusing on one topic, i.e., dribbling, provides the maximum opportunity to achieve mastery and success.

Considering most activities are multi-functional, it is feasible to simply view the exercise from the opposite (technical) perspective (i.e., focusing on defensive elements versus offensive in a primarily offensive activity).

UNEVEN TRAINING NUMBERS

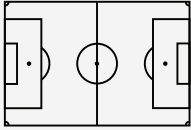
Whether it is due to your age group or attendance at training, a few suggestions on how to accommodate the possible discrepancy, **minimize isolation** and increase functionality:

- Rotate players in and out (players rest, watch, cheer, stretch).
- Pair up (players participate in activity but take turns with a partner).
- Play as a neutral (can play for either team).
- Play as two players (in numbered activities, i.e., Steven is 1 *and* 3).
- Help serve or retrieve balls.
- Have players help you demonstrate or help make small observations, etc. (Children can gain a deeper understanding of the skill if they have to explain it to others.)
- Emphasize number up number down practices (5 v 2, etc.).
- Weigh the challenge (lower number team has different goal, i.e., less touches, etc.).



BUILDING YOUR 12U SESSION

FROM THE FIELD



“We (the U.S.) are producing players who are *over-coached* and *predictable* as opposed to players who can caress the ball and make you sit up and take notice. Coaches need to be secure with themselves and not allow winning games to validate their importance in the lives of their players.”

Sonny Askew, former professional player and current youth coach, Baltimore, MD

FREE PLAY

In our current climate of over-organizing and over-coaching, Free Play is a useful method for players to develop in a natural and safe environment (like playing in the park with your buddies).

Free Play can be used as a pre-warm up upon arrival to prepare players for the technical warm up that will lead to the session’s tactical work. For younger players, Free Play can be used to evaluate their technical level so you have a logical starting point when the actual session begins.

Free Play can also be used in an activity or scrimmage to simply encourage player’s creativity, freedom and expression, not to mention learning through mistakes. In general, Free Play has simple limitations:

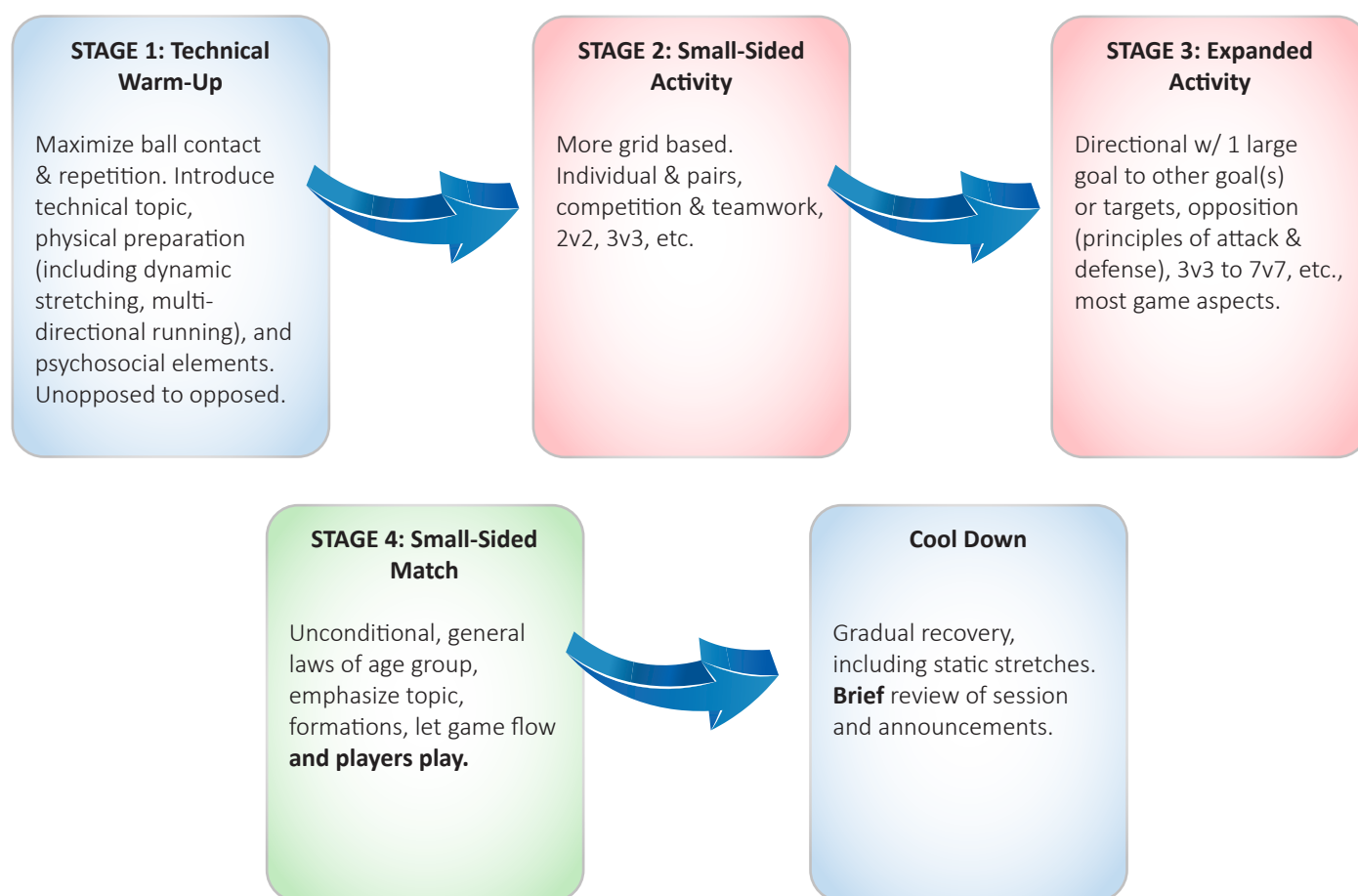
- A situation where individuals play *without* restrictions on time or space, or coaching.
- Players are given *general* directions on what they should attempt to accomplish and then left on their own.
- Free play allows players to *develop natural abilities* in a relaxed, coach-free environment.

KEEP IN MIND



Ultimately the use of Free Play in our sessions will remind the players of the fun and intrinsic benefit of practicing freely on their own (i.e., juggling or passing against a wall) or pick-up games with buddies at the park...simply playing!

Generally speaking, training sessions should progress as follows:



STAGE 1: WARM-UP

Your warm-up should maximize ball contact and repetition and introduce the technical component of your session, i.e., ball control, etc. As well as physical and technical components, the warm-up also provides opportunity to introduce psychosocial elements such as leadership (having a player lead the stretches), focus, communication and teamwork.

Warming up prepares the body for physical activity and should involve jogging as well as short sprints (gradually increase sprint intensity, *not* 100% at start) and multi-directional running (sideways and backwards). It prevents a rapid increase in blood pressure, improves blood flow to the heart, increases muscle temperature and pliability (and ultimately, reduces the risk of injury). Warming up should be done *prior* to any stretching. There are two methods of stretching:

- **Dynamic stretching:** moving limbs through the full range of motion that will be used during the game or training. Dynamic stretching is good for ‘waking muscles up’ and getting them ready to work hard, i.e., during the warm-up. See Appendix D for some recommended dynamic stretches.
- **Static stretching:** placing a muscle in its most lengthened position and holding for approximately 30 seconds. Cooling down is a good time for static stretching (helps the body recover and gradually return to its normal temperature).

During the warm-up, the emphasis should be on dynamic stretching with less focus on static stretching (player can stretch additionally as needed). Static stretching should be the dominant effort after training during the cool down.

At younger ages, players’ muscles are not developed to a point where injuries will occur often, especially due to a lack of warming up and stretching. However, players should be taught proper form (TPF) and *introduced* to the concepts in order to prepare them for the years to come. Priority should increase with age.

STAGE 2: SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

Your **first** ACTIVITY should be more grid-based and integrate:

- Individual and pair work.
- Competition and teamwork.
- 2v2 and 3v3.

STAGE 3: EXPANDED ACTIVITY

- Opposition (principles of attack & defense).
- Directional play (1 large goal to other goals or targets).
- Expanded numbers (3v3 to 6v6).
- Most game aspects (including age group laws).

STAGE 4: SMALL-SIDED MATCH

Conclude your session with a match-like activity/small-sided match, which should emphasize the training topic and other components of the game.

The match should be (for the most part) unconditional, have general rules and some formation guidelines, but **most importantly, it is time to let the game flow...and the players play!**

COOL DOWN AND DEBRIEF

Cooling down (gradually slowing down the level of activity) after training is just as important in reducing the risk of injury as the warming up process before exercise, especially for older players.

The major purpose of cooling down is to assist in recovery and to bring the body back to a pre-training state. Static stretches are more appropriate to the cool down as they help muscles to relax, realign muscle fibers and re-establish their normal range of movement.

During the cool-down process you can review the lessons within your session or discuss announcements but keep it concise and always end on a positive!

~~LAPS, LINES AND LECTURES~~

Communicated often, but still a prominent factor in most training sessions, the 3L's are commonly regarded as detrimental to player development:

Laps: You **don't run laps** of the field during a soccer match and you can easily obtain the same cardiovascular benefit by running **with** the ball in a dynamic activity.

Lines: Do your best to **eliminate activities that involve players standing in long lines waiting** on their turn to play. We need to maximize time players have **with** the ball to avoid boredom and keep them engaged (two or three **active** groups are always better than one long inactive group). Remember circles are also lines.

Lectures: Children come to soccer to participate and be active not to sit and be lectured for long periods of time (either positively or negatively). **Keep your communication positive, brief and to the point.**

Eliminating **Laps, Lines, and Lectures** from your sessions will provide a healthier learning and developmental environment for your players.

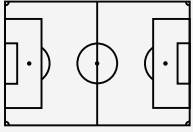
WATER BREAKS

Proper hydration is vital to all children, but especially vital to young athletes; therefore, we need to make sure our training sessions provide adequate opportunity for rehydration. Some general guidelines:

- Players should hydrate themselves **throughout the day** not just prior to or at training (to allow for proper absorption into their system).
- Two to three hours prior to participation, players should drink approx. 16 fl. oz. (2 cups) to 20 fl. oz. (2.5 cups).
- Ten to 20 minutes prior to activity the players should drink approx. 7 fl. oz. (0.875 cups) to 10 fl. oz. (1.25 cups) of fluids.
- Break approximately every 10-15 minutes (**or as often as needed pending weather and age of players**).
- Fluids can be water or sports drinks.
- Rehydration should occur after the activity and ideally be completed within 2 hours.
- Rehydration should contain water to restore hydration status, carbohydrates to replenish glycogen stores and electrolytes to speed hydration.

12U TECHNIQUES

FROM THE **FIELD**



“Teach skill every day! Create training environments where players are challenged and can use those skills in making quick decisions of how, why, and where to use them. Ask players to work on their own self improvement.”

George Kuntz, Head Coach, Men's Soccer, Cal State Fullerton University

DRIBBLING

Dribbling is using the feet to maintain possession of the ball, on the ground, under control, while moving to achieve **Penetration**. The two primary reasons to use dribbling skill are:

- Move the ball into a better position on the field.
- Retain possession of the ball.

The most important element of dribbling is developing a “feel” or “touch” for the ball with the feet...BOTH OF THEM. The key is then to **keep the ball close** by touching it softly.



General Coaching Points:

- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Arms relaxed and used for balance and protection.
- Touch the ball softly using all major surfaces of the foot.
- Keep the ball close and under control.
- Touch the ball every step or so (ball should never be more than one step away).
- Head up as much as possible (to see the field as well as ball by utilizing peripheral vision).

To see this in action or visit [aysou.video/tech1](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech1)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Ball is played too far ahead & player loses control of the ball.	Move slower and touch ball slower.
Player dribbles the ball into trouble or out of play.	Move slower, touch ball softer, look up.
Player re-positions entire body behind ball before touching.	Use motion of foot to direct ball instead of re-positioning.

Fakes and Feints

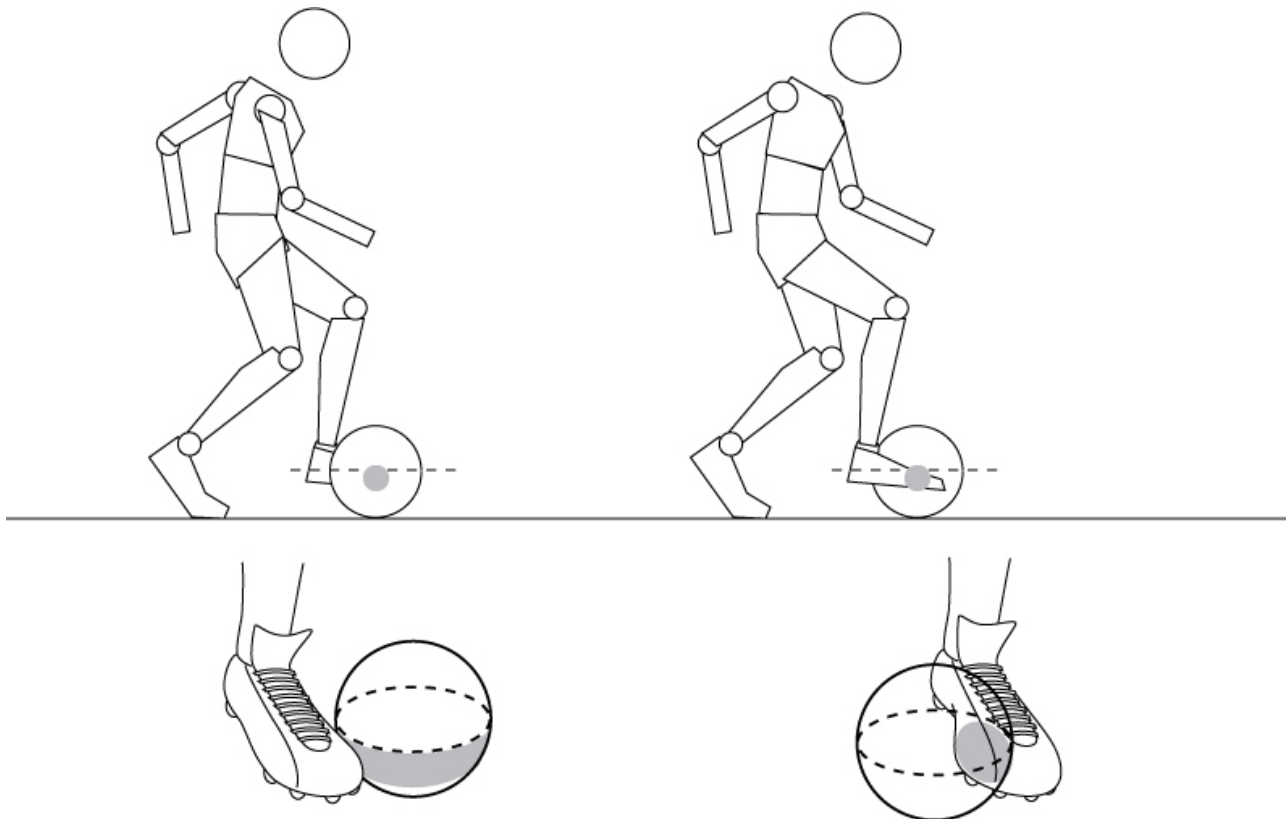
Fakes and feints or “moves” are used by the creative dribbler to unbalance an opponent and create an opportunity to penetrate or maintain possession of the ball.

Players should develop a repertoire of feints. A player often has two or three that are his “favorite moves” along with others to be called upon depending on the situation. Encourage your players to be creative, to try new moves. This expression and freedom is very positive in a player’s development.

One of the most simple and effective feints to get you and your players started is described below:

Fake Left, Go Right (or vice versa) Coaching Points:

- As dribbler approaches opponent:
- Step hard slightly in front of and to the left of the ball with left foot (speed of ball must be accounted for).
 - ☐ Left knee should bend as all weight is placed on left foot.
 - ☐ Upper body should move as well to “sell” the fake.
- Right foot is quickly brought up in between the left foot and the ball.
- Push off with left foot back to the right.
- Outside of the right foot pushes ball forward and to the right at approximately 45 degrees. Accelerate (explode) past the opponent and continue dribbling (the rapid change of pace and direction beats the opponent).



INSTEP KICK (LACES)

The instep kick is used to kick the ball and, as players get older, for long passes and shots on goal (as seen on right).

Instructions:

Prepare Plant Leg (Supporting, Non-Kicking Foot)

- Place support foot next to the ball pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Extend arms out to sides for balance.

Prepare Striking (Kicking) Leg

- Bend knee (cock lower leg).
- Withdraw leg straight back at hip.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.

Striking Movement

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Set plant knee over ball (eye-knee-ball in line).
- Move thigh of striking leg forward (whip action).
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep (“laces” of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target:
- Pull leg straight through while maintaining balance.
- Lower body as leg rises.
- Keep ankle locked, follow through and lift knee.
- Step out of the kick.

General Coaching Points:

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep (“laces” of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

Practice:

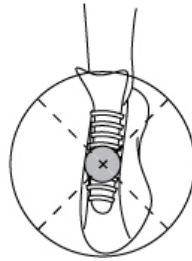
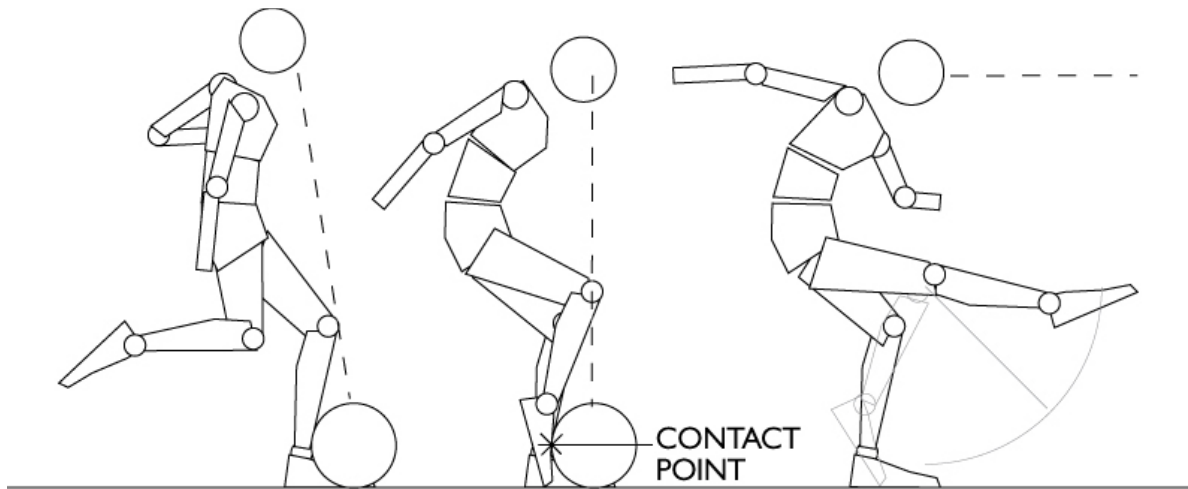
- Planting their foot in the proper place.
- Swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.
- Have each player stand with plant foot in proper position and strike lightly until they begin to hit the ball solidly (properly).



To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech2](https://www.aysou.video/tech2)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Planted foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.	Review proper technique with player(s).
Knee(s) are locked, not bent.	Review proper technique with player(s).
Ankle is not locked and toes are not pointed.	Lock ankle, point toes.
Ball is stabbed or jabbed.	Encourage player to follow through.
Leg is swung across the body instead of toward the target.	Encourage player to withdraw leg straight back and follow through straight toward target.



THROW-IN

Used to restart the game after the *entire* ball has crossed the touchline (whether on the ground or in the air).

General Coaching Points:

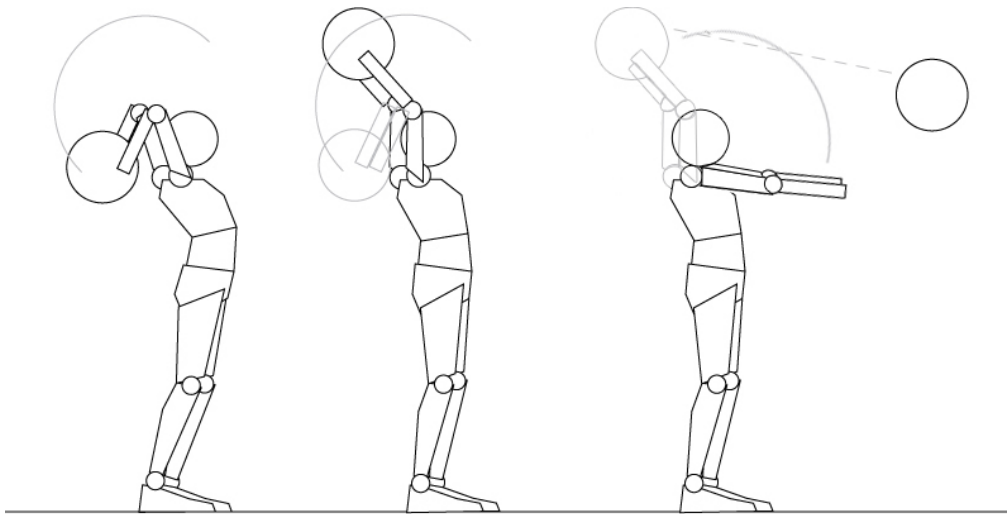
- Face the field of play.
- Have part of each foot on the ground, either on or behind the touchline when the ball is released.
- Use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion.
- Use the “W”/Butterfly method of holding the ball (touch thumbs together and grasp ball in hands).
- Feet must be kept on the ground until ball is released.



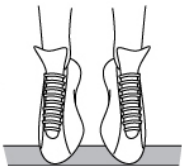
To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech5](https://www.aysou.video/tech5)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Foot/feet come off the ground during throw.	Have players keep their feet <i>together</i> with knees bent and hold their feet down until they develop feeling of throwing without lifting feet.
Ball slips out of grasp.	Reinforce use of “W”/Butterfly method of holding ball. If players’ hands are small, instruct them to spread hand out until they have a solid grasp.



Make sure your feet stay on the ground ON OR BEHIND the touchline.



INSIDE OF THE FOOT - PUSH PASS

Used to advance the ball or to maintain possession by passing to a teammate. A consistent and safe technique once mastered.

Instructions:

Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to the ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms for balance.

Prepare Action Leg

- Draw leg back from hip.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 90 degrees outward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target.

Striking Movement

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Use arms for balance.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Follow through:
 - ❑ Pull leg straight through in general direction of target while maintaining balance.
 - ❑ Lower body as leg rises.
 - ❑ Keep ankle locked and follow through and lift knee.
 - ❑ Step out of the kick.

General Coaching Points:

- Place support foot next to ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Strike through center of ball and follow through in direction of pass.

Practice:

Before having players strike the ball:

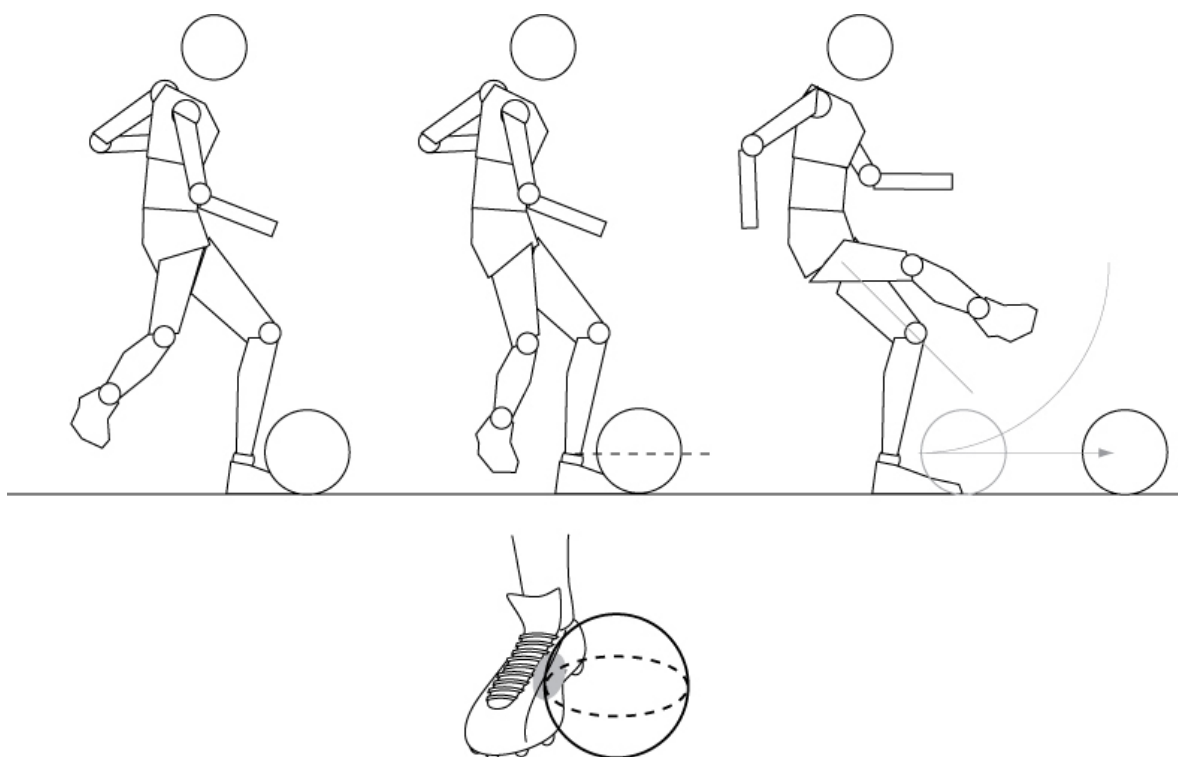
- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.



To see this in action visit aysou.video/tech3

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Planted foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.	Move planted foot closer to the ball and point in direction of target.
Knee(s) are locked, not bent.	Bend knees slightly.
Ankle is not locked and sole of foot is not parallel to ground and/or facing general direction of target.	Lock ankle and square body to the desired target.



INSIDE OF THE FOOT - BALL CONTROL

This technique is used to control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

Instructions:

- Get in line with flight of ball.

Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to path of the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Put weight on plant leg.

Prepare Control Leg

- Move leg toward the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg outward at hip, 90 degrees.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed up to ensure solid contact point.
- Raise foot off the ground and perpendicular to ball (form an “L” with feet).

Controlling Movement

- Keep eyes on the ball.
- Extend the arms to the sides for balance and protection.
- Contact center of the ball with center of inside of the foot (in curve/arch).
- Withdraw action leg straight back as contact is made in order to cushion the ball.
- Prepare ball for your next move—pass, dribble, or shoot.

General Coaching Points:

- On toes (ready to react).
- Get in line with flight of ball.
- Present inside of foot.
- Cushion the ball (by withdrawing the foot).
- Take touch into the best position for next move.

Practice (before having players contact the ball):

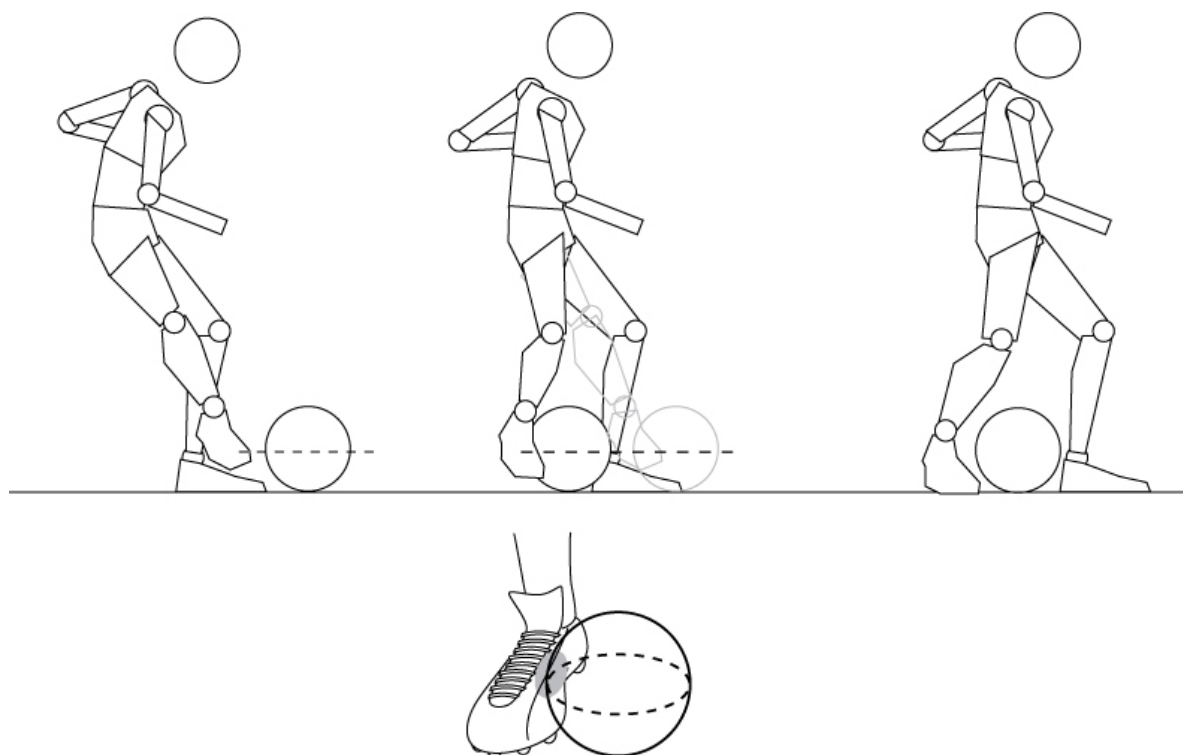
- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice moving their leg and foot straight back and forth in a controlled motion ensuring proper body and leg movement.



To see this in action visit
[aysou.video/tech4](https://www.aysou.video/tech4)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Player misses the ball.	Keep eyes on the ball.
Ball rolls over the controlling foot.	Lock the ankle, point toe slightly up.
Ball bounces off the controlling foot.	Draw the controlling leg back as the ball arrives.



TOP OF THIGH - BALL CONTROL

This technique is used to control the ball in the air using the top of the thigh in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

Instructions:

- Get in line with flight of ball.

Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to path of the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Put weight on plant leg.

Prepare Controlling Leg

- Raise leg from hip with knee bent.
- Raise leg until top of thigh is no higher than parallel to the ground.
- Use arms for balance.
- Target contact of ball with top of thigh between hip and knee.

Controlling Movement

- As the thigh contacts the ball, cushion by withdrawing the controlling leg towards the ground.
- Move leg from hip to drop the ball at feet.
- Prepare ball for your next move — pass, dribble, or shoot.

General Coaching Points:

- Get in line with flight of ball.
- Bring thigh up to meet ball.
- At moment of impact, withdraw surface to cushion first touch.
- Be on toes to react to falling ball.



To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech6](https://www.aysou.video/tech6)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Player falls when controlling.	Have player practice balancing. Bend knees and use arms for balance.
Ball bounces off thigh.	Withdraw (cushion) thigh towards ground when ball hits. Ensure the ball doesn't hit the knee.

JUGGLING

Juggling in soccer refers to keeping the ball in the air without it touching the ground utilizing all parts of the body except, of course, the hands. While juggling in and of itself is not a technique to be used in games, it is a tremendous way to develop your players' "touch" or feel for the ball and improving his or her ability to perform techniques.

How to get your players started juggling:

- Drop ball, bounce kick and catch ball five times for each foot. One bounce – one kick.
- Drop ball, bounce kick twice and catch ball – five times for each foot. One bounce – two kicks, three kicks, etc.

Progress to:

- How long can you keep the ball in the air?
- How many times can you?
- Kick ball without initial bounce.
- Utilize other body parts such as thigh and head.
- Drop/throw ball onto thigh/head first.
- Use of chest to drop ball onto thigh.
- Nomination of foot or surface area to be used.

Coaching Points:

- Breathe and relax!
- Let ball drop to foot – don't touch too early.
- Arms out to balance.
- Present foot towards ball (laces).
- Lift ball upwards using laces (do not kick ball too high).
- Have busy (quick) feet to stay close to ball.
- Make constant minor adjustments.
- Emphasize constant movement and focus.



To see this in action view [aysou.video/tech7](https://www.aysou.video/tech7)

TACKLING - FRONT BLOCK

Tackling is used to take the ball away from an opponent or to maintain possession.

Instructions:

Prepare (front) Plant Leg (supporting, non-tackling foot)

- Place support foot even with and next to the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms for balance.

Prepare Tackling Leg

- Draw leg back from hip.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 45 degrees outward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.

Tackle

- Keep eyes on the ball.
- Move tackling leg straightforward.
- Lower body and lean slightly forward.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Block through the ball with your body weight.

Follow Through

- Keep foot behind the ball with body lowered.
- Keep the ankle locked through the tackle
- Win the ball from opponent.
- Dribble away or pass the ball to a teammate.

General Coaching Points:

- Place support foot even with and next to the ball.
- Draw tackling leg back from hip.
- Lower body and lean slightly forward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Eyes on the ball.
- Strike at center of ball with the inside of the foot. Block through the ball with body weight.
- Keep ankle locked **through** the tackle.



To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech8](https://www.aysou.video/tech8)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Incorrect placement of plant foot puts plant foot too far away causing the tackler to reach for the ball and lose it.	Review technique and encourage player to place plant foot closer to ball.
Ankle is not locked and ball “dribbles” off foot.	Lock toe up on the tackling foot.
Tackling movement and follow through are tentative, causing player to miss and/or lose ball.	Build technique up slowly, beginning with “soft” tackles and progressing to “harder” tackles as player becomes more comfortable.

GOALKEEPING

Goalkeepers are the only players on the field that are allowed to use their hands to play the ball (if within their own penalty area). They are the last line of defense when the other team is attacking and the first line of attack once they possess the ball.

At this age, one player should not be designated as your team's only goalkeeper. Anyone wanting to try the position should be given the chance, but do not force any player to play keeper if they are reluctant to do so.

Basics: Receiving the Ball

Body Position

- Stand on the balls of feet with knees slightly bent. Bending the head forward will help push the body weight to the correct position.
- Move body in line with ball when shot is taken.
- Always receive ball with body behind ball (between ball and goal).

Hand Position

- Hands should be up at the side approximately waist level, facing field of play before the shot is taken.
- When receiving the ball, hands should be close together behind the ball in either:



The High Contour is formed by spreading the hands as wide as possible in a contour to fit around the ball, with the fingers up and the thumbs almost touching. It is utilized for receiving high balls – chest level and above.

To see this in action visit
aysou.video/tech9



The Low Contour is formed like the high contour but with the fingers down and the pinkies almost touching. It is utilized for receiving low balls – waist level and below.

To see this in action visit
aysou.video/tech10



Two Methods of Saving Ground Balls:

1. Feet slightly apart (not too far), bend at the waist
OR
2. Go down on the knee nearest the far post, body square to the ball

THEN

- Scoop up ball with hands in the Low Contour position.
- Let ball run over hands and up arms.
- Gather ball to chest and “hug” it.
- Stand up straight.
- Put the ball away.

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/tech11)



Saving Waist-High Balls:

- Use arms to make a pocket for the ball.
- Bend slightly at waist and catch ball in pocket as it comes into the body.
- Allow body to move backwards slightly to cushion the impact of the shot.
- Put the ball away.



Saving High Balls:

- Form a High Contour with hands slightly in front of the head.
- Extend arms to meet flight of ball.
- As ball arrives, bend elbows and use hands to cushion the impact of the shot.
- Put the ball away.



Putting the Ball Away:

Regardless of the type of shot, keepers should always finish the save by “putting the ball away.” Once the save is made:

- Keep eyes on ball while “hugging” into chest.
- Breathe and look around for teammates.
- Distribute the ball.

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech12](https://www.aysou.video/tech12)

Distributing the Ball

The goalkeeper starts the attack by putting the ball back into play. Once the goalkeeper has possession of the ball, they are allowed 6 seconds to restart play. Maintaining possession is the prime objective when distributing the ball, requiring an accurate delivery to a teammate. Distance is secondary. Encourage your team to play the ball out of the back using your goalkeeper and defenders.

1. Throws

- **Underhand Roll** (similar to bowling) – for quick, short and accurate distribution (the ball shouldn’t bounce)
- **Sidearm Throw** (or sling style throw) – This throw provides both distance and accuracy and is best used for fast, waist level and below distributions. Used to start a counter attack and quickly send the ball up the wing.
- **Overhand** (or arc style throw) – This throw provides the most distance but least accuracy; it can also take too much time in the air to arrive at its destination, increasing chances for interception. Used to target open teammates further up the field.



Underhand Roll (Bowling) Throw

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech13](https://www.aysou.video/tech13)



Overhand (Baseball) Throw

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech13](https://www.aysou.video/tech13)



Overhand (Arc/Sling) Throw

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech13](https://www.aysou.video/tech13)

2. Kicks

- Volley (punt) - greatest distance, but less accurate; can relieve pressure or create a numerical advantage.
- A volley is performed by holding the ball in the hands and kicking it with the instep before it hits the ground.

To see this in action, visit: [aysou.video/tech14](https://www.aysou.video/tech14)



Volley Kick (Step 1)



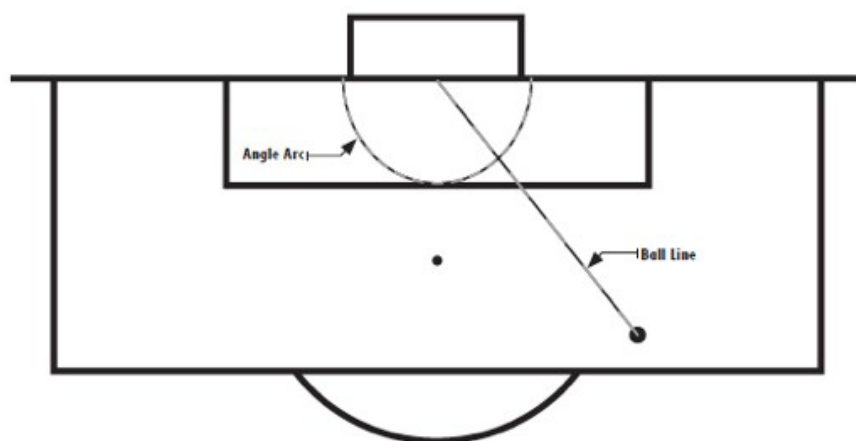
Volley Kick (Step 2)



Volley Kick (Step 3)

TRAINING GOALKEEPERS

- Start by rolling, tossing or throwing the ball gently to your goalkeeper. Make sure you toss the ball so they must work on all different (types) heights of receiving the ball.
- Progress to rolling, tossing or throwing the ball slightly to one side or the other causing them to move to get the body behind the ball in a ball side/goal side position.
- Increase the distance you roll, toss or throw the ball so the keeper has to move and react faster and faster.
- Once they have mastered the correct technique, continue to increase the speed and change directions and heights of the balls.



Positioning

- As your goalkeepers begin to master the fundamental techniques, they must begin to understand fundamental positioning. Teaching basic positional play is essential. Goalkeepers should always position themselves on the “shooting line.” This is an imaginary line from the ball to the center of the goal. The location of the ball in the field dictates how far from the goal line the goalkeeper should be.
- If the ball is in the opposing half, the goalkeeper should be on the shooting line about 12 – 18 yards from the goal line.
- If the ball is just over the half way line, the goalkeeper should be on the shooting line between 6 and 12 yards from the goal line.
- If the ball is close to the defensive 18-yard line, the goalkeeper should be on the shooting line between 2 and 6 yards from the goal line.
- On one-to-one breakaways, the goalkeeper should cautiously advance along the shooting line to cut down on the shooting angle and to put pressure on the shooter. At the time of the shot, the goalkeeper should be stationary and balanced on the balls of the feet, with the body leaning slightly forward.
- As logic dictates, the goalkeeper should move across the goal relative to the position of the ball on the field.
- Goalkeepers should not remain on the goal line, but can come out from the goal in order to “cut off the angle” of a shot, thereby covering more of the goal.
- Once the shot is taken, the goalkeeper should run perpendicular (90 degree angle) to where the ball will be. This is the shortest distance to the ball.
- Demonstrate this by having them stand on the goal line. Roll the ball to the far post and ask them to count the number of steps to touch the ball.
- Have them step out toward the ball two steps. Roll the ball to the far post and ask them again to count the number of steps to touch the ball.
- Repeat one or two more times. It will become clear that it takes fewer steps to reach the ball the more they have come out to “cut off the angle.”

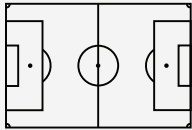
Getting Scored On

No goalkeeper enjoys being scored on and some at this age may take it very personally. Remind them, yourself and the entire team that if a goal is scored it is scored on the *entire* team. The opponents had to get the ball by 10 other players before it got by the goalkeeper.

Never allow anyone to place blame on the goalkeeper for a goal scored! (*Consider* having an outfield player collect the ball out of the net.)

12U TRAINING ACTIVITIES

FROM THE FIELD



“Players should have the freedom to express themselves, be creative, take risks and make mistakes! Learning from trial and error is a key to *all* development and it is crucial that the environment we create (as coaches) promotes this freedom.”

AYSO Player Development Team

KEEP YOUR TEAM ENGAGED

This section will provide you with age appropriate training activities (options) recommended to help your 12U players practice their skills. The activities are grouped according to the skill that they will most effectively help to teach (and generally progress from fundamental to more challenging). Despite all of the coaching techniques that can be utilized, nothing will ever teach 12U players more effectively than just letting them play.

Be creative with the names of the games and modify them to suit *your* players. Use your own creativity and personality; paint in vivid images to effectively communicate with your players in a language *they* can relate to. If an activity is *not* working as intended, modify (increase/decrease) the Speed, Space, and Opposition to maximize success. Let the player’s work through the adaptations to find success. Remember, all players are different (often regardless of age), so **adapt accordingly to the needs of *your* specific group.**

Have fun!

KEEP IN MIND



The game itself is the best teacher!

SAFETY ZONES

TECHNIQUE:

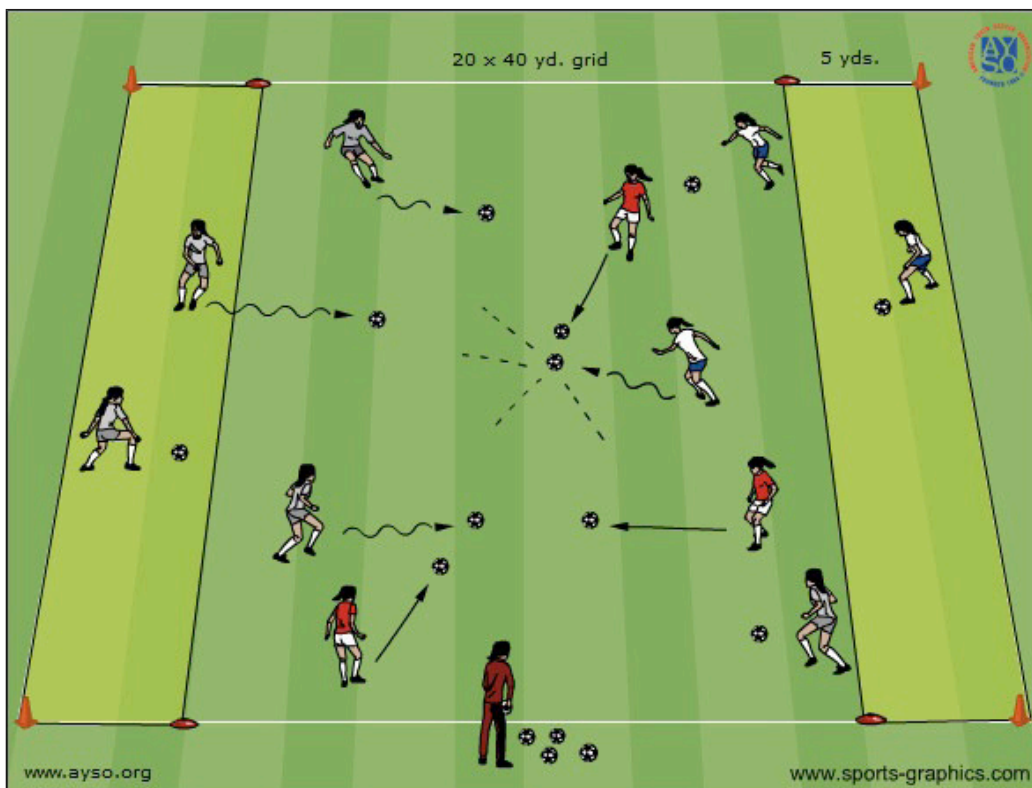
Dribbling (Passing)

Equipment/

Organization:

Mark 20 x 40 grid with a five yard "Safe Zone" at each end of the grid. Place three players in the center of the grid with a ball at their feet. All remaining players, each with a ball, are located in one of the "Safe Zones".

To see this activity in action visit
[ayso.org/video/safety](https://www.ayso.org/video/safety)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players in the Safe Zone try to dribble the length of the grid to the other Safe Zone.
- Players in the center try to prevent dribblers from reaching the other Safe Zone by hitting their ball with a passed ball.
- After a player's ball is hit or knocked out of the grid, they now play in the center as shooters.
- Players dribble between Safe Zones until one player remains. The last player remaining wins.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Players in center use left/right foot to pass.
- Dribbler's have to perform a fake or feint in central area before reaching the Safe Zone.

COACHING POINTS (DRIBBLING)

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches (never more than a step or two away).
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).

COACHING POINTS (INSIDE OF FOOT PUSH PASS)

- Place support foot next to ball (*toe should not be past ball*) pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straight forward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Strike through center of ball and follow through in direction of pass.

BLOCKERS

TECHNIQUE:

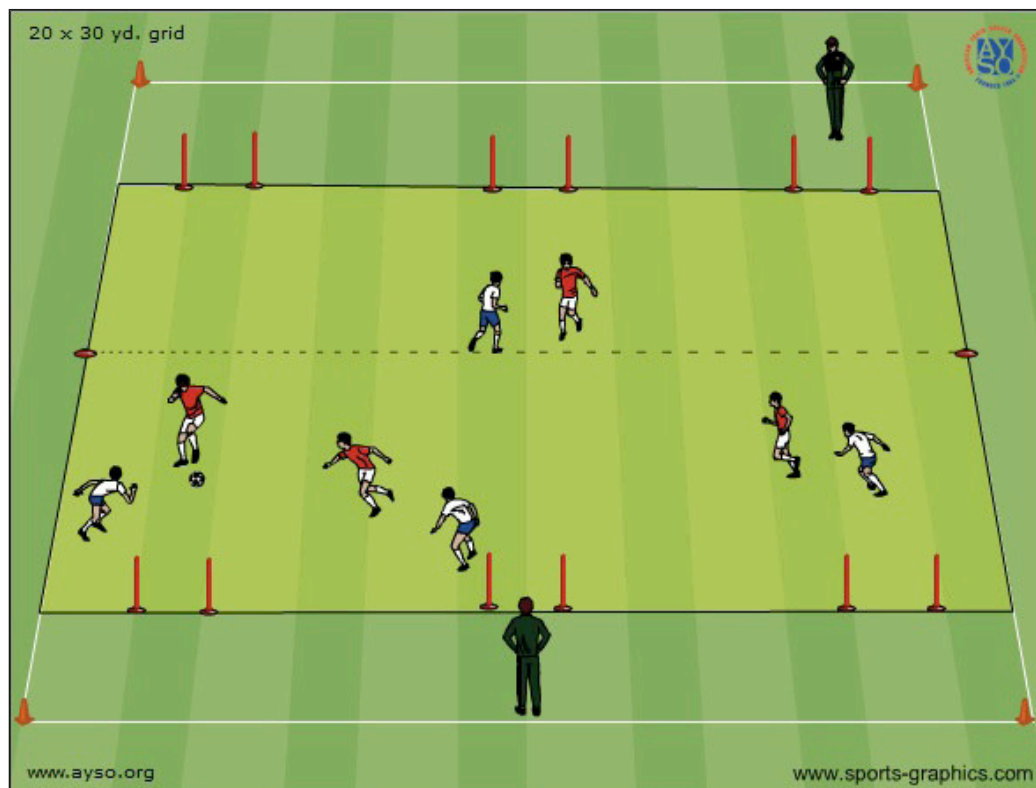
Dribbling (Passing)

Equipment/

Organization:

Mark 20 x 30 grid with 3 small goals at either end of the grid. Two teams of three or four, one ball. Place an assistant or resting player behind each of the goal areas as "blockers."

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/blockers](https://www.ayso.org/video/blockers)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Each team attacks three goals.
- Players can score in any of the goals they are attacking as long as there is not a blocker standing behind it (closing it off).
- Blockers walk up and down the end lines positioning themselves behind the goals they think will get attacked.
- Players must dribble the ball through the goal and stop the ball with their foot to score.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Condition number of passes *before* player can dribble to goal.
- Add halfway line. To score, all the players must be in their opponents half.
- Encourage fakes and feints to beat opponents.
- Rotate players in as needed.

COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches (never more than a step or two away).
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Change of pace and direction to explode past opponent.

IN BEHIND

TECHNIQUE:

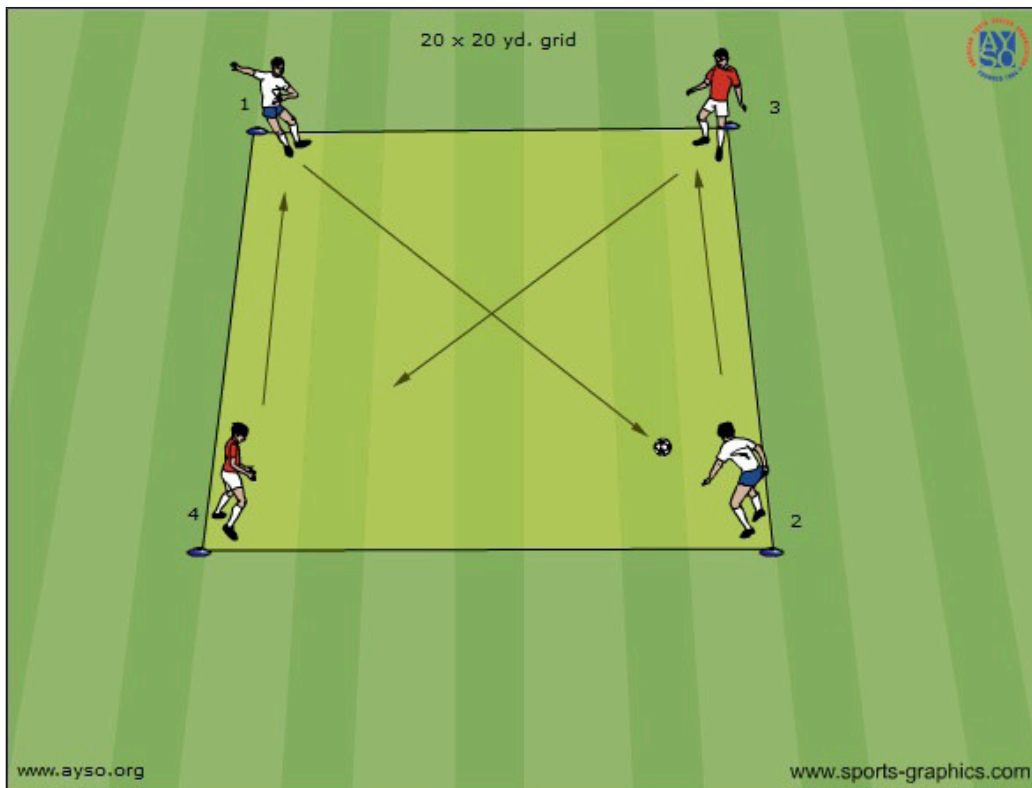
Passing/Control
(Diagonal Balls to the
Back of Defense)

Equipment/

Organization:

12 or more balls, minimum
eight cones. Mark a 20 x 20
yard grid, four players per
group, one per cone, two
balls.

To see this activity in action visit
[ayso.org/video/inbehind](https://www.ayso.org/video/inbehind)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Using a push pass, Player 1 plays the ball to Player 2 who takes one touch to control and one to pass to Player 3, who takes one touch to control and one to pass to Player 4.
- Player 4 takes one touch to control and one to pass to Player 1. Player 1 controls the ball and restarts the activity.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Consider starting with unlimited touches if required for success.
- Players use three or two touches. Progressing to one touch when the activity is somewhat mastered.
- Rotate players after 30 seconds. After three or four rotations, add a defender.
- Last addition should be adding another defender to create a 4 v 2 (use same progression unlimited touch, 2 touch and 1 touch).
- The coach should still be looking for diagonal balls to the back of the defense. When the coach feels that the players understand the concept completely they can have the players rotate to the right or left after they have delivered the pass.
- Whenever activity breaks down, any player can restart but with a diagonal ball.
- Add an additional ball.

COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing technique.
- First touch efficiency *into* direction of next movement.
- Concentration and awareness.

BRAZIL BALL

TECHNIQUE:

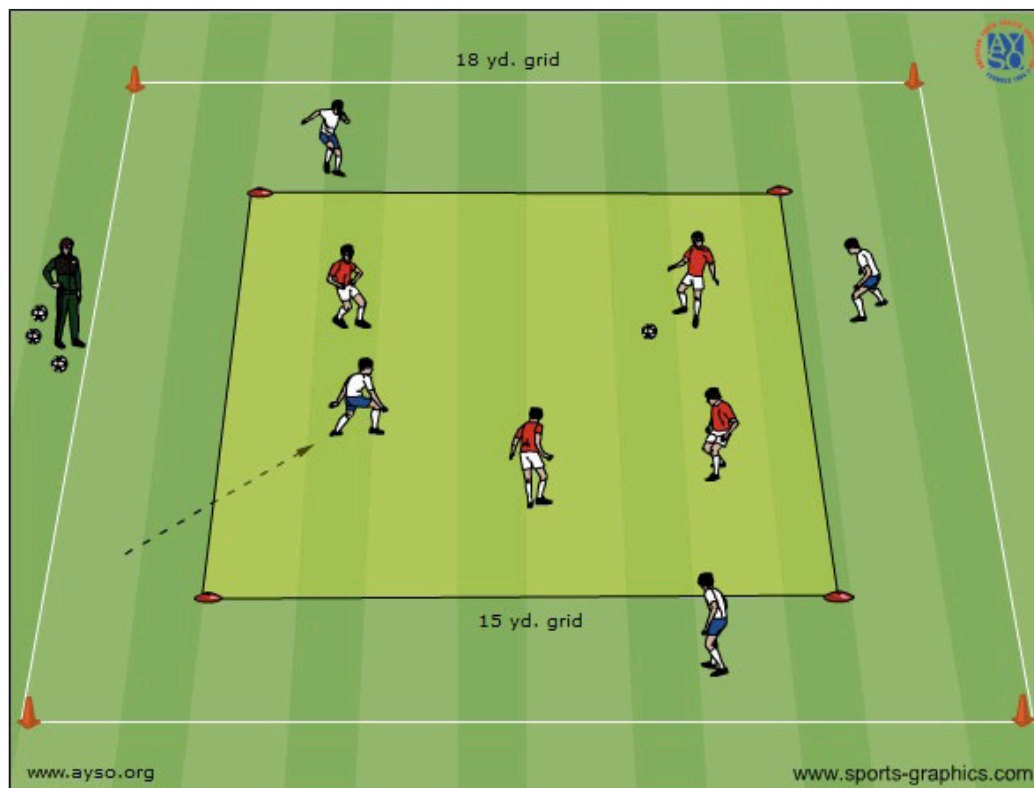
Ball Control, Passing/
Receiving, Support Play
and Possession

Equipment/

Organization:

Mark 15- yard square within
an 18-yard square, two teams
of four (third team can rotate
in), one ball.

To see this activity in action visit
[ayso.video/brazil](https://www.ayso.org/video/brazil)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Brazil A (passing team) plays *inside* the smaller area.
- Brazil B (defenders) wait *outside* the playing area in the larger square.
- The game lasts for two minutes and begins with one defender entering the inner playing area and trying to gain possession of the ball from the passing team.
- After 30 seconds, a second defender is added to make the game 4 v 2. After another 30 seconds a third defender makes it 4 v 3 and finally the last defender enters to make it 4 v 4.
- Serve a new ball every time the ball leaves the playing area.
- Count the number of successful passes the passing team makes in two minutes.
- The passing team and the defending team swap roles and the game is played again.
- The team that makes the most successful passes wins.
- Rotate third team in frequently.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Restrict either team to three, two or one touch of the ball.

COACHING POINTS

- Encourage players to scan the playing area for opponents (and teammates) before receiving a pass.
- Encourage players to take their first touch away from the pressure and into the direction they intend to play their next move.

SOCCER SQUARED

TECHNIQUE:

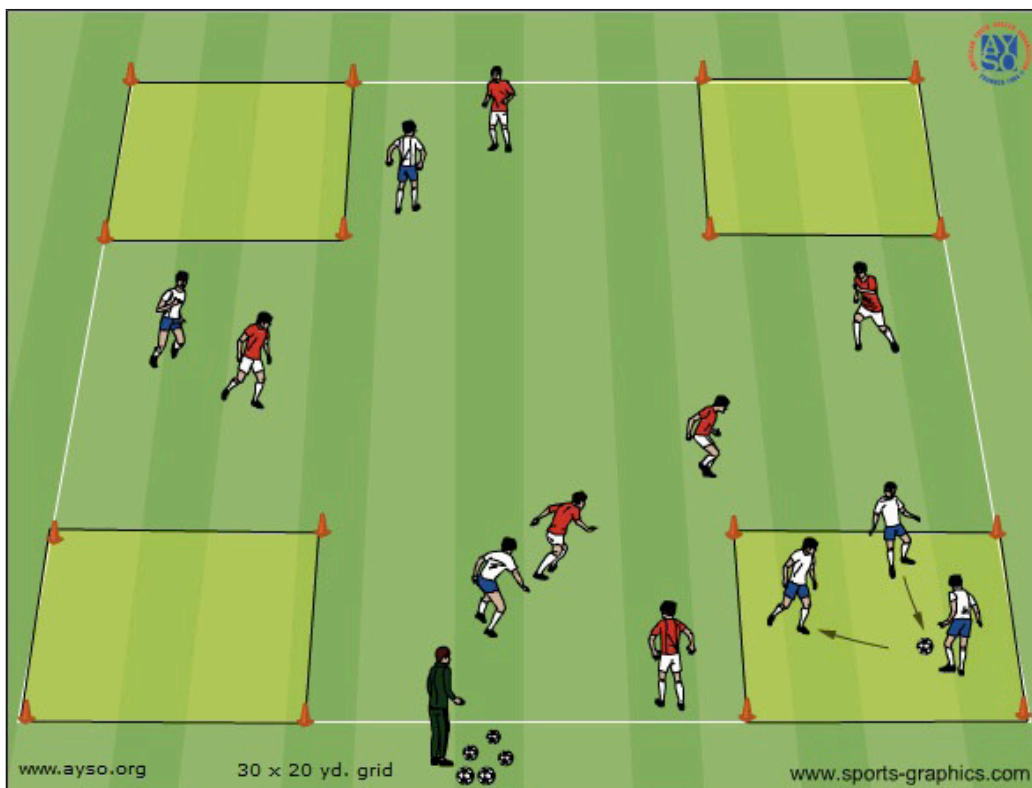
Passing, Receiving,
Possession

Equipment/

Organization:

Mark 30 x 20 grid, with a
target area/square marked
in each corner. Two teams.

To see this activity in action visit
[ayso.org/video/squared](https://www.ayso.org/video/squared)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Team keeps possession of ball and try to enter a target area in either corner.
- Once in the area, the team must attempt to make three consecutive inside of foot passes to score a point and move onto another area.
- Team not in possession can win ball back at any time.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- To score a point teams must go to the *opposite* end.
- Control the number of passes required to score a point.

COACHING POINTS

- Field awareness.
- Check away and back to create space.
- Open body when receiving the pass.
- Take first touch away from the pressure and into direction intended for next move. Quality inside of foot control.
- Make eye contact with receiving player.
- Emphasize inside of foot and instep passing.
- Pass the ball to target player's preferred foot.
- Communication.
- Patience, don't force the play.
- If the pass is not on, go back or switch the play.

LANDON'S LEGWORK

TECHNIQUE:

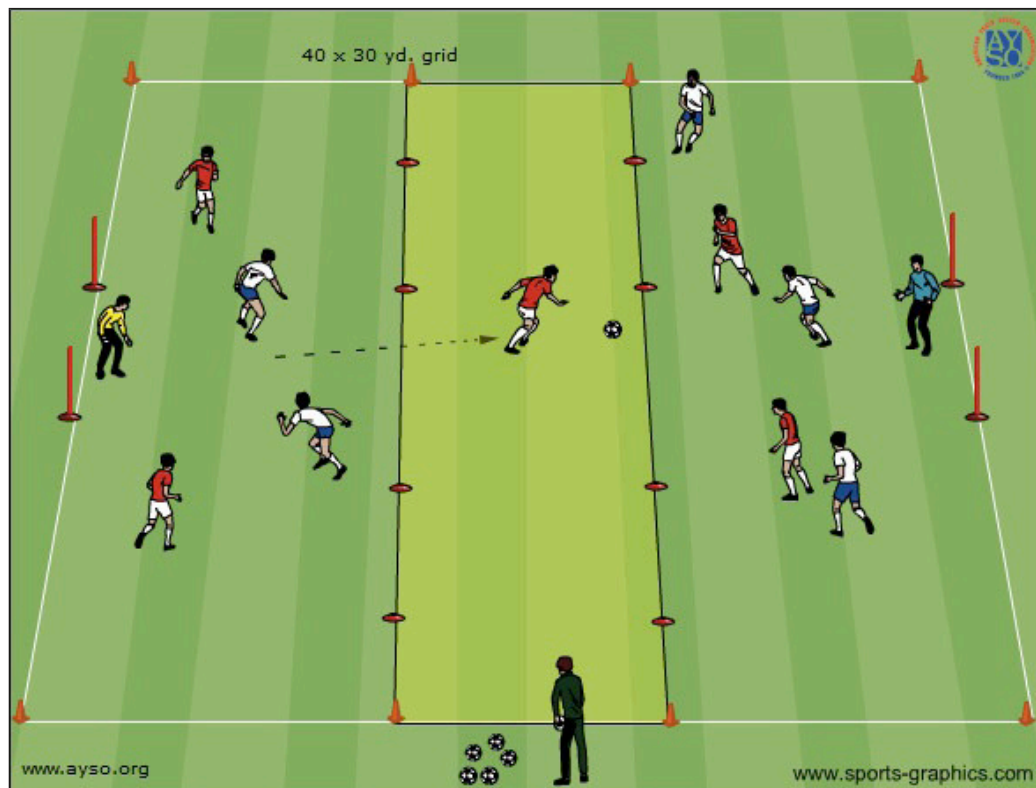
Dribbling and Attacking Play

Equipment/

Organization:

Mark 40 x 30 field with goals and goalkeepers. Mark center channel, splitting area into thirds. Play 3 v 2 in end zones plus goalkeeper (who can also be used as a player to switch the possession in the zone).

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.video/legwork](https://www.ayso.org/video/legwork)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Teams must make three passes in their defensive zone *before* the player with the ball is allowed to enter center channel.
- The player with the ball dribbles across the center channel into the attacking third area to create 3 v 3 (plus goalkeeper).
- Only the ball carrier can enter this area and increase numbers in the final third.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Progress the game so that one defending player and two attacking players can enter the center channel creating 2 v 1. This will affect decision making to either pass (combination play) or run with the ball into the attacking third.

COACHING POINTS

- Dribbling fundamentals: Head-up to see where the defender is, close ball control.
- Take the ball towards one side of the defender, then attack opposite side (diagonal approach).
- Run at the defender to commit them and then change direction with a turn (change pace and direction).
- Positive attitude to beat the defenders with a move (confidence).
- Maximize use of space and teammates.
- Protect the ball from defender either during the move or after you have beaten them (shielding).

CONNECT THE DOTS

TECHNIQUE:

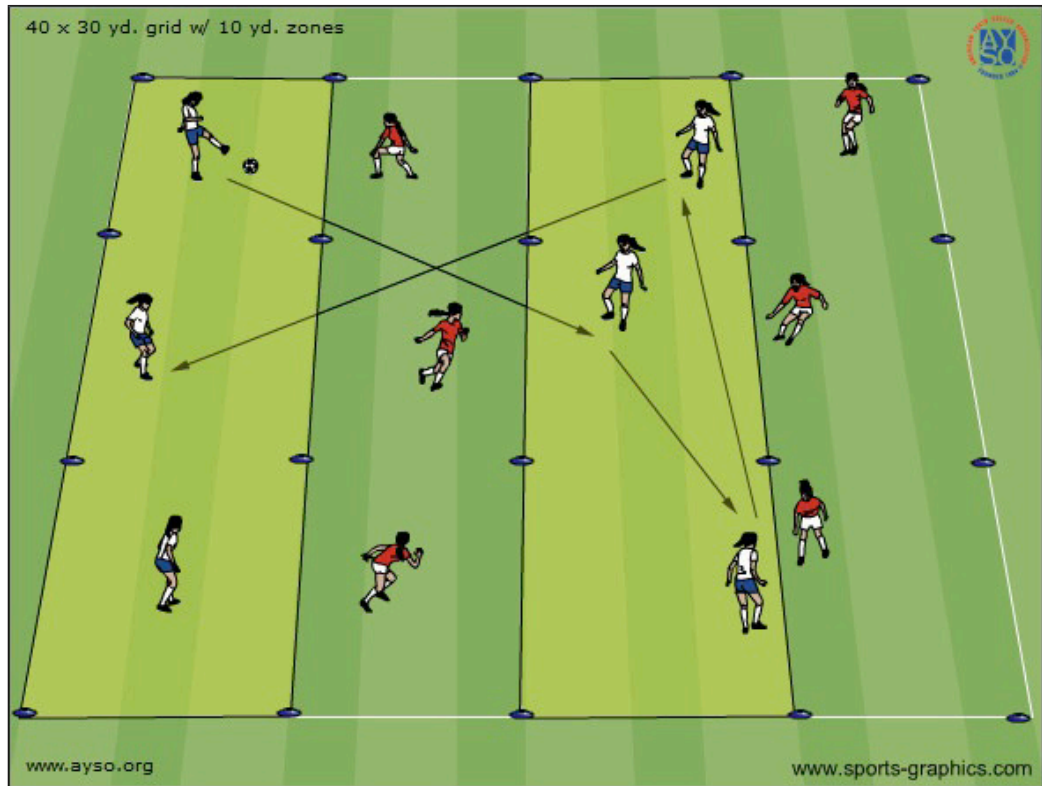
Passing/Control (Zonal Connecting)

Equipment/

Organization:

20 cones, 10 scrimmage vests (two colors), one ball. Six v six in pairs of three. 40 x 30 grid divided by cones (10 yards for each zone).

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/connect](https://www.aysou.org/video/connect)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- One team must play a ball to a teammate in the other grid to get one point (first team with five points wins).
- Teams in the defending zones try to intercept the through balls in their zone. If the ball is intercepted they try to connect balls to their teammates in the other zone.
- Player may dribble and pass in their zone in order to create passing lanes.
- Players in the receiving zones should look to create good passing lanes with off the ball runs so that they can become a target player.
- Balls must be played on the ground.
- Game is started when the coach plays a ball to one of the teams.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Receiving player must one touch back to the original grid.
- Add a defending player in each zone (passive to start).
- Place goals at the end of the zone and when a ball is played to an end line zone, the receiving team can score (first team with five goals wins).

COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing technique.
- First touch efficiency (away from defender to where they want to play their next move).
- Encourage players to scan area before receiving pass.
- Movement, on and off the ball.
- Encourage creativity and expression!
- Disguise passes.

CHANCE OF GLORY

TECHNIQUE:

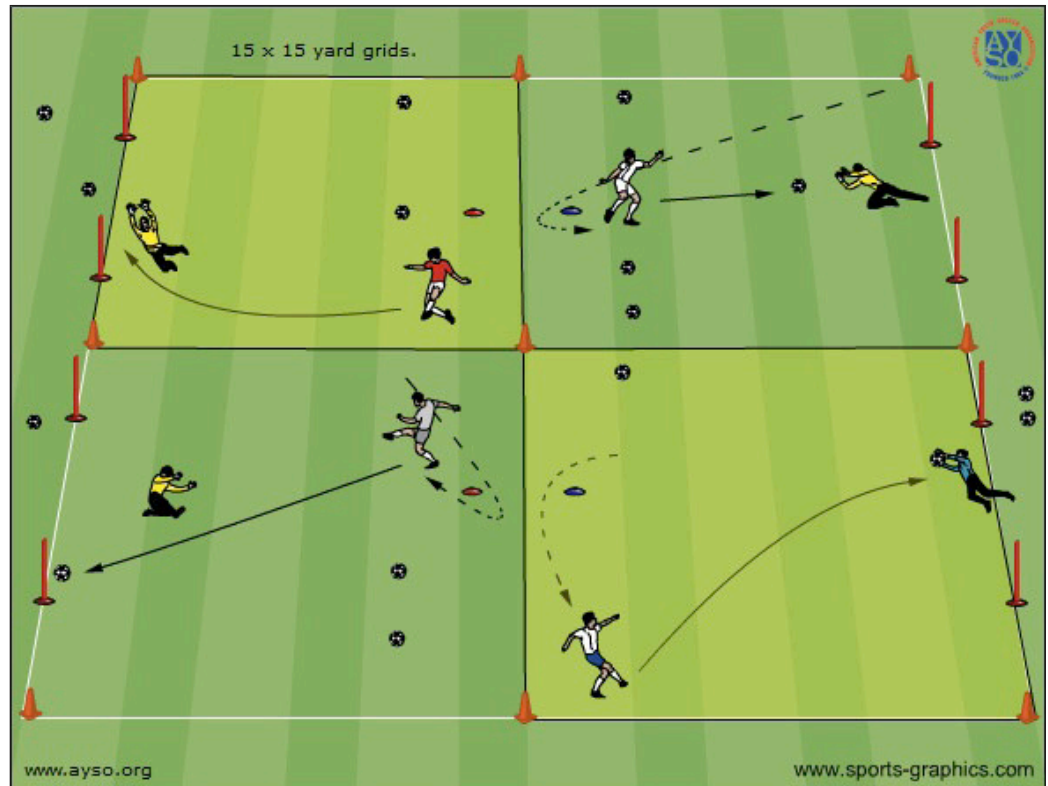
Finishing (Close Range Accuracy)

Equipment/

Organization:

Mark 15 x 15 yard grid (use multiple grids as shown to involve all players) with an eight yard wide goal on one end line. Place 1 disc cone approximately 14 yards from center of goal (set up is to mirror penalty area). Place 4 balls in a line approximately 12 yards from goal (1 wide left, 1 wide right and 1 either side of center). 1 goalkeeper and 1 striker per grid.

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.video/chance](https://www.ayso.org/video/chance)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Striker starts on outer corner cone on goal line.
- On coach's call, striker sprints to the 14 yard marker, cuts around the cone and strikes one of the four balls (any order) first time on goal using either instep drive or inside of foot push pass/strike to "place" the ball passed the goalkeeper into the goal.
- After the shot, the striker cuts sharply and sprints back around the 14 yard cone to approach and strike the next ball. Repeat until all balls have been shot at goal.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot shots. Two touch.
- Goalkeeper and striker switch.
- Strikers progress through each grid to face new goalkeeper.
- Keep scores (goal is to score a hat-trick from four shots).
- Balls can start with goalkeeper (or coach) who serves a *rolling* ball (from front or side) for the striker to run onto and strike.
- Add time challenge. Add more balls.

COACHING POINTS (INSTEP KICK)

- Body should be over the ball (forward). Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back & down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

COACHING POINTS (GENERAL)

- Use peripheral vision to consider goalkeeper position
- #9 Tip: The goal never moves!
- Accuracy over power.
- Composure at point of strike. Focus.
- Maintain striker's intensity and speed.

COACHING POINTS (INSIDE OF FOOT PUSH PASS)

- Place support foot next to ball (*toe should not be past ball*) pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked & toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, & perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" w/ feet).
- Strike through center of ball and follow through in direction of pass.

FINISHING UNDER PRESSURE

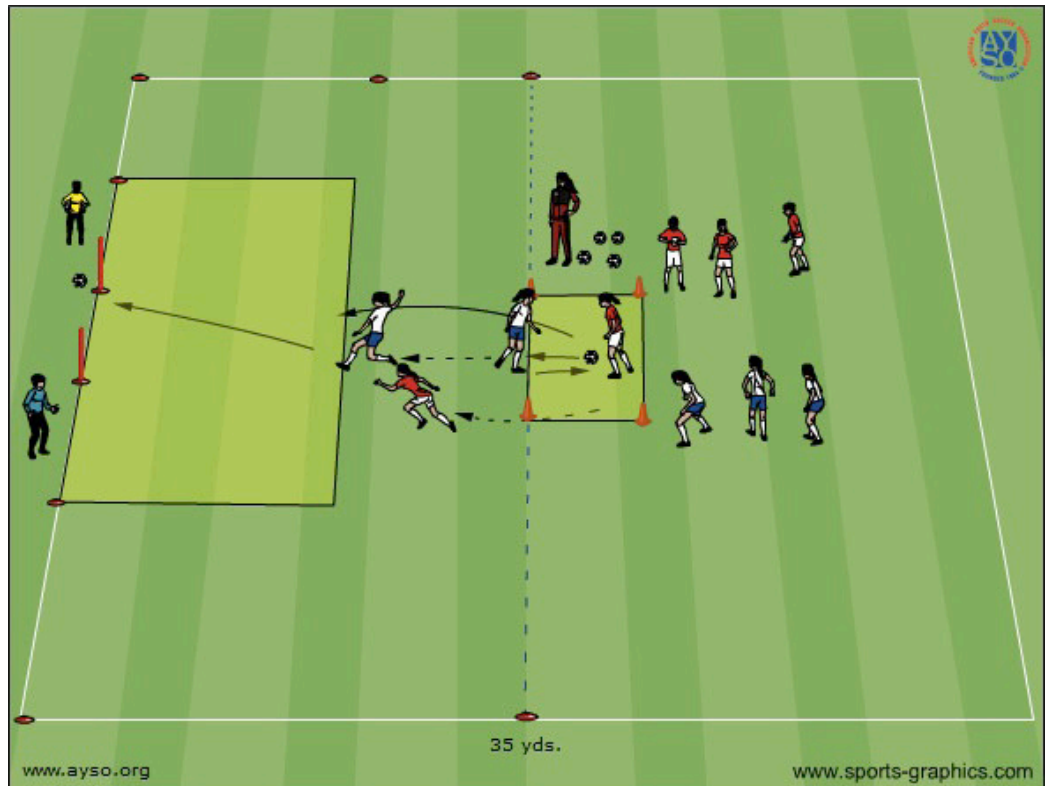
TECHNIQUE:

Finishing with Passive or Full Pressure

Equipment/ Organization:

Mark 5 x 5 square approximately 35 yards from goal. Two lines facing goal behind square. Open goal (to start).

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/finishing](https://www.ayso.org/video/finishing)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Two players enter square. Player one stands with back to goal (attacker); player two stands facing goal on opposite side of the square (defender).
- Players start inside of foot passing (two touch).
- The defender (player two) will then play a pass either side of the attacker into the space behind.
- The attacker (player one) then turns and sprints to the ball and has a strike on goal using instep kick (either one or two touch).
- Player two, once they have passed the ball into space then becomes an active defender, chasing the attacker, putting pressure on their strike on goal.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Vary pressure. Passive to full.
- Condition striker's touch and shooting (one touch, two touch, left foot, right foot).
- Section off goal with cones (two yards from posts for low strikes to corners).
- Add goalkeepers (have assistant work with goalkeepers).
- 1 v 1. Add another opponent (player three). Players line up in triangle. Player two becomes server (does not defend). Ball is served and the two attackers will now battle for the ball to get a strike on goal. The challenge is for the strikers to maintain control, create space and get a strike on goal.
- Vary the starting position of strikers (kneeling, lying down, etc).
- Coach becomes server and varies the serves (volleys, bouncing balls, close to the goalkeeper, etc).
- 2 v 1. The player who is at the top of the triangle becomes an additional attacker for player who has possession. (Player plays ball through for two attackers, then joins the group to create 2 v 1.)

COACHING POINTS

- Concentration, awareness and reaction to win the initial ball.
- Awareness (defender, goalkeeper's position).
- Shooting technique (instep drive, inside of foot kick to place shot).
- Competition, determination, confidence, composure.
- Physical conditioning.

PASS, MOVE, SHOOT, SCORE!

TECHNIQUE:

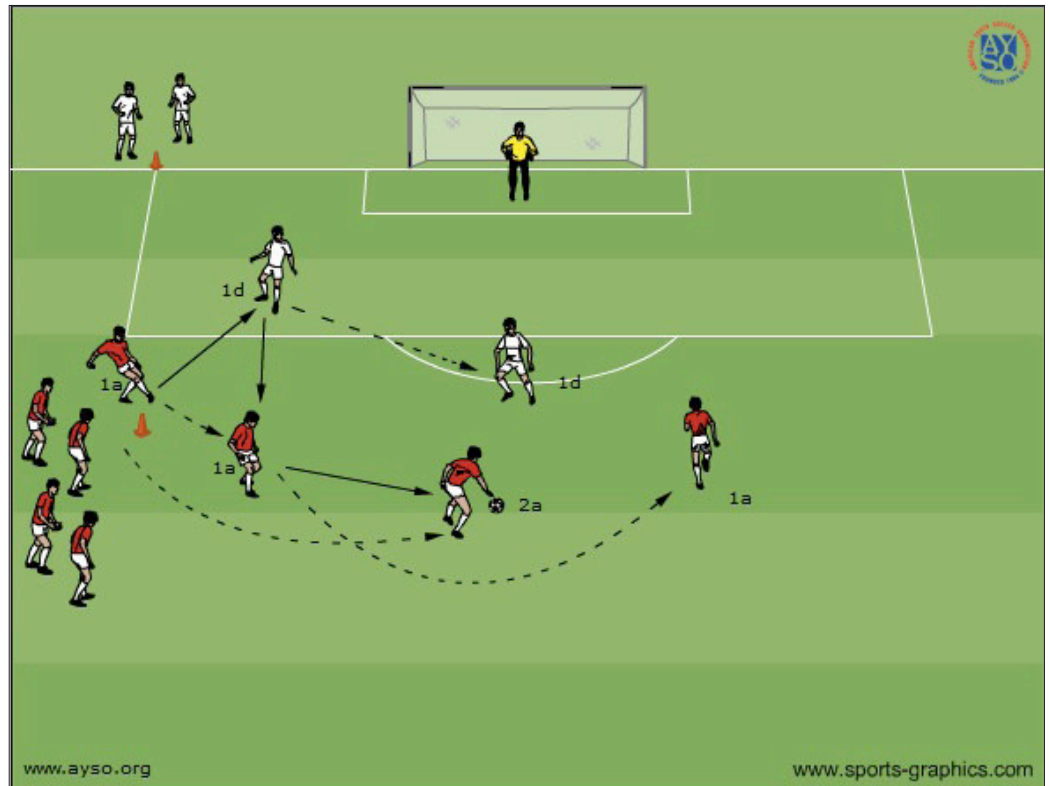
Shooting

Equipment/

Organization:

Set activity around penalty area. Goalkeeper, group of defenders and group of attackers. Position defenders behind goal line at edge of penalty area (mark w/ cone). Position attackers opposite, approx. five yards outside the edge of the penalty area (mark w/ cone).

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/passmove](https://www.ayso.org/video/passmove)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Two attackers start the activity joined by one defender.
- First attacker (1a) passes to first defender (1d) who plays the ball back in a give and go for the attacker to move onto.
- 1a then passes to 2a who has taken a more central position in support.
- 1a then runs around 2a in overlap to a wider position.
- 1d shuffles across to create defensive opposition against 2a and 1a who must create shooting opportunity (shoot, beat defender or combine).
- After play, attackers join defenders line, defender joins attackers line.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot shots.
- Condition finishing: 2a can either shoot directly (using defender as screen); take on defender and shoot; or combine with 1a to create shooting opportunity.

COACHING POINTS (INSTEP KICK)

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target. Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

COACHING POINTS (GENERAL)

- Get ball out of feet.
- Look up to assess space in front, position of defender and goalkeeper.
- Attackers must watch their line to prevent straying offside.

FOUR GOALS

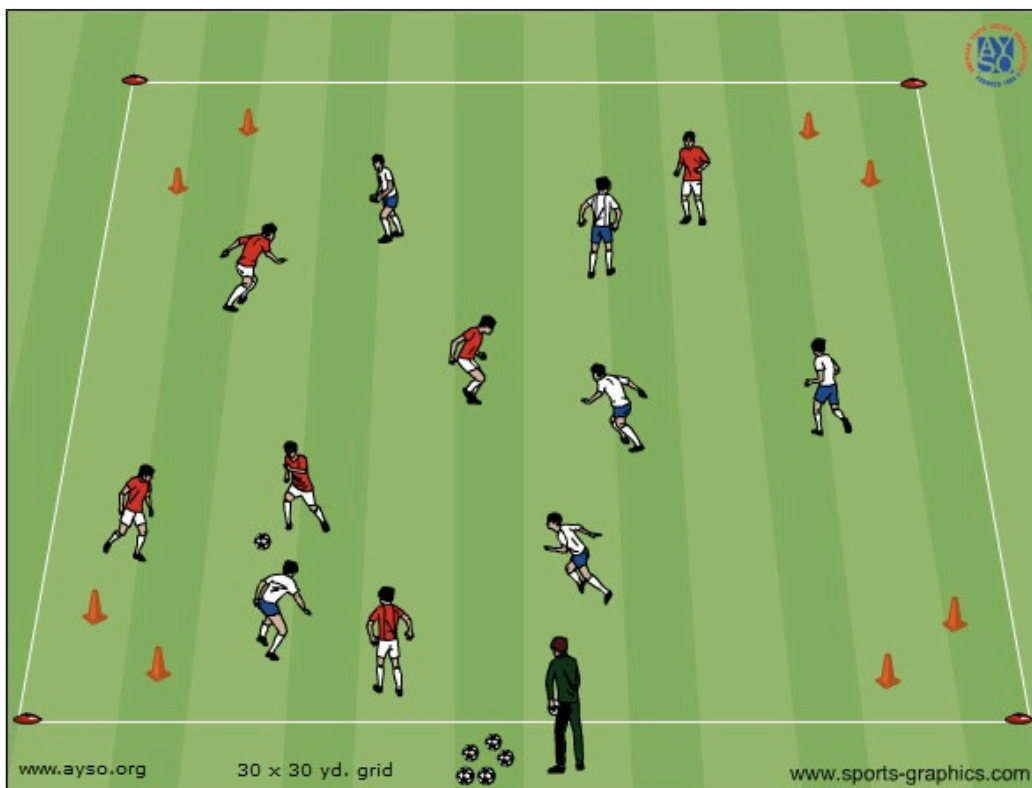
TECHNIQUE:

Offense and Defense, Support, Passing, Ball Control, Possession, Awareness.

Equipment/ Organization:

Scrimmage vests, two goals, spare balls. Mark 30 x 30 playing area. Six vs. six. Use tall cones to mark four small goals (one yard wide), five yards in front of each corner.

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/fourgoals](https://www.ayso.org/video/fourgoals)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Score in any of the four goals (only from the front).
- Score by dribbling through goal or passed through (retaining possession).
- When ball goes out of play, restart with throw-in.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Introduce three (four or five) consecutive passes count as a goal (interceptions or deflections by opposition breaks sequence). Goals through cones can be scored at any time in a passing sequence and multiple goals (passes or cone goals) scored in any possession.
- Create series challenge. First team to score five goals wins. Play a best-of-three series.

COACHING POINTS

Offense:

- Emphasize possession (best chance of success).
- Encourage shielding if passing options are limited.
- Encourage switching play (if one goal becomes blocked/marked).

Defense:

- Emphasize positional play to prevent easy scoring in any of the four goals (coverage).
- Encourage team effort! (Or opponents will easily maintain possession & score passing & cone goals.)
- Player with ball should be pressured (by first defender).

General:

- Mobility, space creation, perception and awareness.
- First touch efficiency (inside of foot plus).
- Quality passing.
- Block tackles.
- Communication and teamwork.

CENTER GOAL

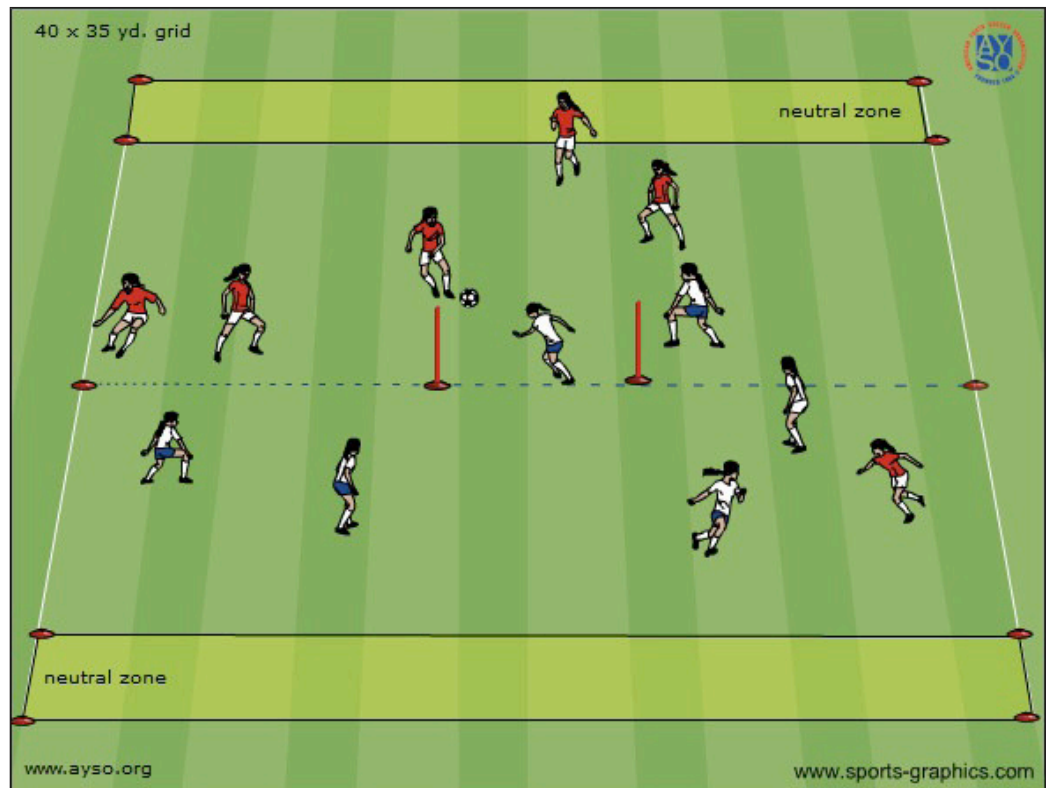
TECHNIQUE:

Offense and Defense,
Support, Passing,
Shooting, Ball Control,
Possession, Awareness

Equipment/ Organization:

Scrimmage vests, spare balls.
Mark 40 x 35 playing area. Six
vs. six. Use tall cones/flags to
mark a center goal (ten yards
wide) on the half way line.
Mark two neutral end zones
on either end-line of area.

To see this activity in action visit
[ayso.org/video/center](https://www.ayso.org/video/center)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- One team attacks with six players against five with the extra defender becoming goalkeeper (can't use hands to start). The attacking team looks to score through the center goal and if successful, play to the opposite neutral zone, reorganize and then turn and attack in the other direction.
- If the defenders win the ball, they play back to their GK who then carries the ball back to the opposite end and joins with the others to attack six vs. five.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Condition scorer's touch and shooting (one touch, two touch, left foot, right foot).
- Permit goalkeeper to use hands.

COACHING POINTS

- Attacking with numbers up, look at team shape, spacing of players, width, movement.
- Defending with numbers down, encourage pressure on the ball (key to other defenders actions).
- Communication on both sides of the ball.
- Transition from attacking to defending and vice-versa.

BUMPERS

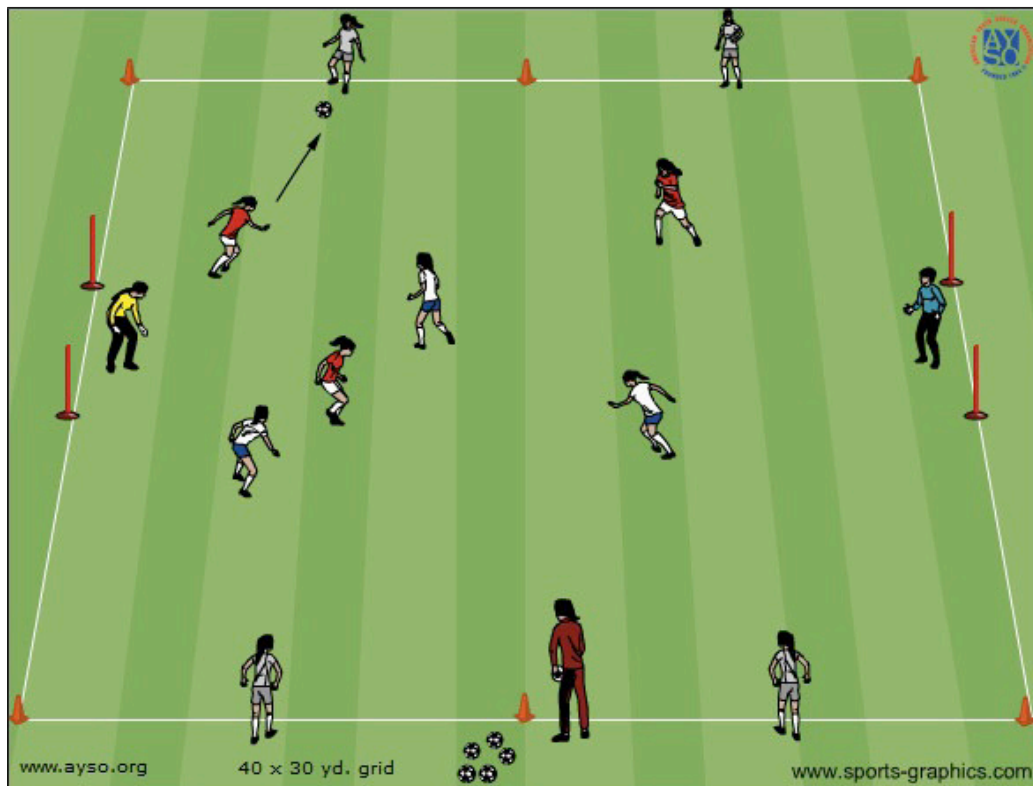
TECHNIQUE:

Create Goalscoring Opportunities and Finishing with Full Pressure

Equipment/ Organization:

Scrimmage vests, two goals, spare balls. Mark 40 x 30 yards playing area. Three vs. three plus goalkeepers. Four bumpers around offensive half.

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/bumpers](https://www.aysou.video/bumpers)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Small-sided match.
- Support players around offensive end (bumpers) cannot score.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Condition bumper's touches (one touch, two touch, left foot, right foot, etc).
- Team *must* play to a bumper before they can score.
- Condition efforts on goal (one touch, two touch, left foot, right foot, etc).
- Rotate bumpers on outside.

COACHING POINTS

- Mobility, space creation, perception and awareness.
- First touch efficiency (inside of foot plus).
- Shooting technique (instep drives and inside of foot placement).
- Quality passing.
- Block tackles.
- Communication and teamwork.

TACKLING ABCS

TECHNIQUE:

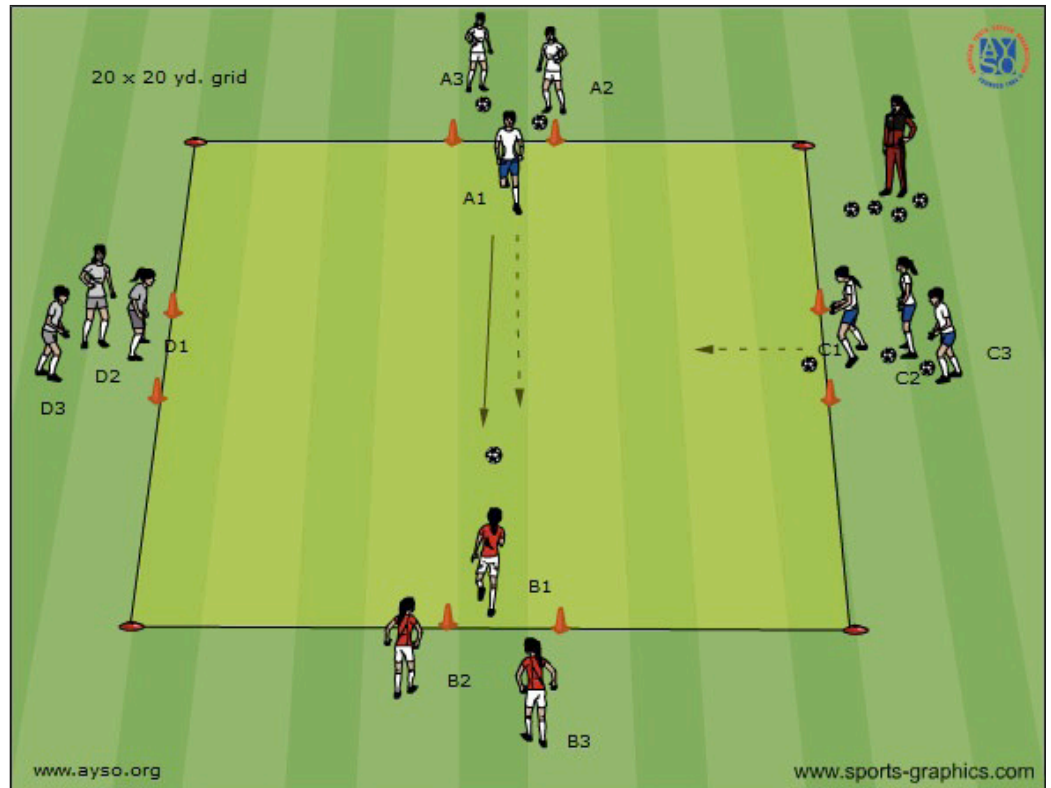
Block Tackle (Dribbling)

Equipment/

Organization:

Mark 20 x 20 grid with four cone goals, one on each side. Players split into groups behind each goal (marked A, B, C, D).

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/tackling](https://www.ayso.org/video/tackling)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Player A1 passes to B1 and closes down from front.
- Player B1 attempts to beat A1 with a fake or turn and dribble. Player A1 tries to regain ball by performing a block tackle.
- When either a tackle is executed or a goal is scored, player C1 plays to D1.
- At the conclusion of the play, players A and B switch places, as do players C and D.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Coach can distribute ball to improve timing of challenge.
- Two players from each line can enter creating 2 v 2.

COACHING POINTS

- Defenders should apply pressure quickly, but slow down in defensive stance when close to opposition preparing to tackle (not overcommitting).
- Block Tackle:
 - ☑ Place support foot even with and next to the ball.
 - ☑ Draw tackling leg back from hip.
 - ☑ Lower body and lean slightly forward.
 - ☑ Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
 - ☑ Eyes on the ball.
 - ☑ Strike at center of ball with the inside of the foot. Block through the ball with body weight.
 - ☑ Keep ankle locked through the tackle.

SPACE FEET

TECHNIQUE:

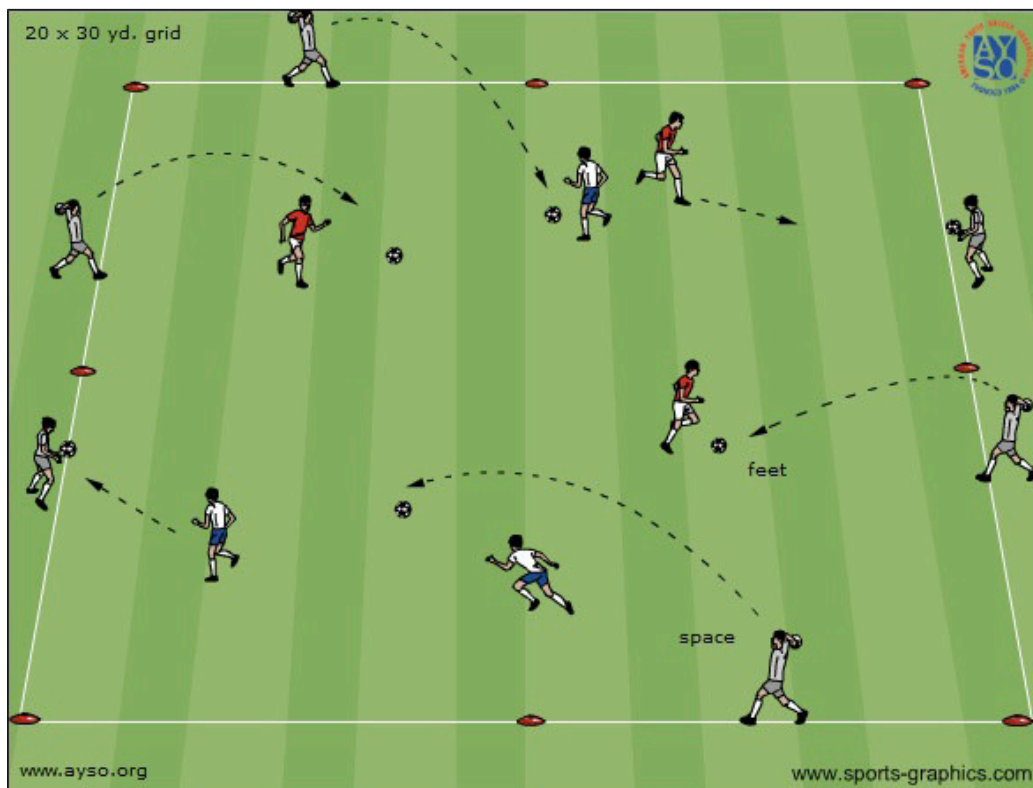
Throw-ins (Inside of Foot Control, Inside of Foot Push Pass)

Equipment/

Organization:

20 x 30 grid, half the group on outside with ball (throwers) and half on inside without ball.

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/spacefeet](https://www.ayso.org/video/spacefeet)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Inside players move towards thrower and call either “feet” or “space.”
- Upon hearing “feet” the thrower will aim and judge the distance of the throw-in to the player’s feet who will then control the ball, dribble and pass using inside foot push pass to a different thrower on the outside.
- Upon hearing “space” the thrower will throw-in to an open space for the player to run onto, who will again control, dribble and pass using inside foot push pass to a different thrower on the outside.
- Rotate inside and outside players often.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Increase/reduce the size of the grid.
- Have throwers respond to the opposite command.

COACHING POINTS

- Face the field of play.
- Use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion. (Use “W”/ Butterfly method of holding the ball (touch thumbs together and grasp ball in hands).
- Release ball as arms extend.
- Feet must be kept on the ground until ball is released (part of each foot must either be on or behind the touchline when the ball is released).
- Proper passing and control technique.
- Encourage quick release throw-ins to keep game flowing.

GOALKEEPER WARS

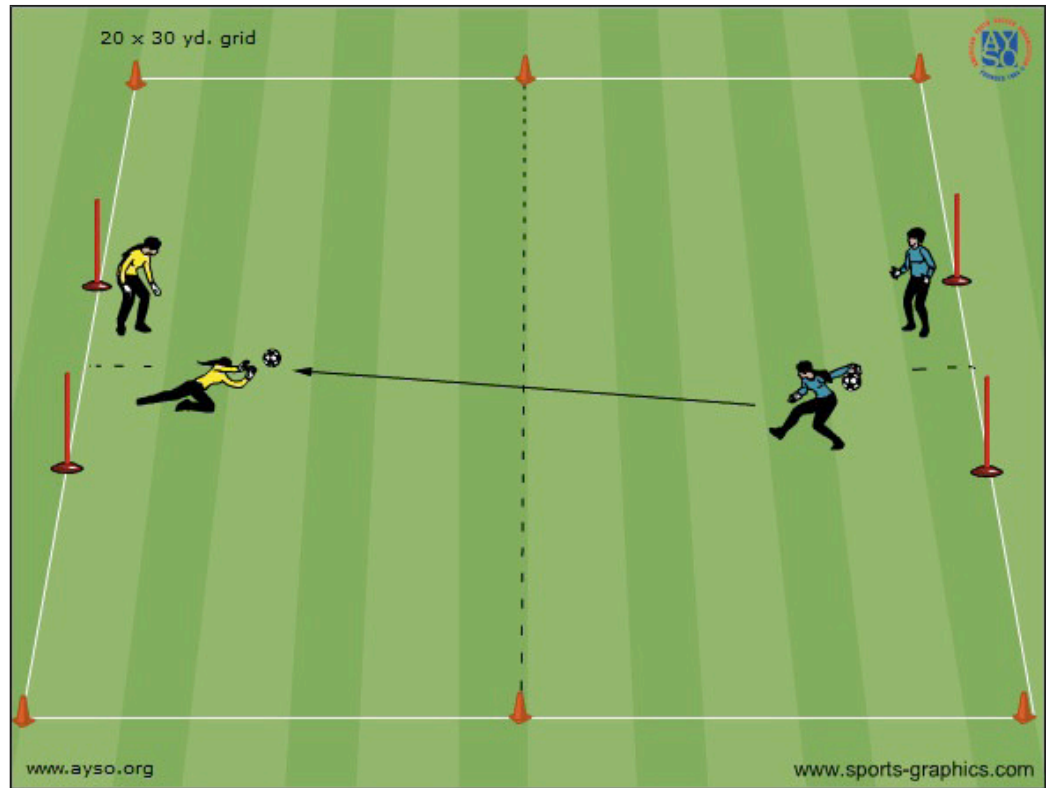
TECHNIQUE:

Goalkeeping Shot
Stopping and
Distribution

Equipment/ Organization:

Mark an area 20 x 30 with
two goals and a half-way
line marked with cones, four
goalkeepers (two per goal).

To see this activity in action visit
[aysou.video/wars2](https://www.ayso.org/video/wars2)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Game is played 2 v 2 with goalkeepers trying to score goals on each other.
- Each goalkeeper covers half the goal (right or left) with one standing at a more advanced position to avoid possible collisions.
- Goalkeepers take turns shooting at their opponents in a quick-fire game.
- Goals can be scored with kicks or throws.
- Quick reactions and responses are encouraged to maximize goal scoring opportunities and test goalkeeper reactions and shot stopping.
- If the ball rebounds off a post or from a save and enters back into the shooters half, a rebound shot can be taken (with one goalkeeper exposed).

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Condition the game, i.e., first to five wins, or time challenge, etc.
- Goals can only be scored with specific throwing technique, i.e., underhand “bowling” throws, overhand “baseball” throws, overhand “arc/sling” throws.
- Goals can only be scored with specific kicks off the ground only, i.e., volley, half-volley, instep-kick.
- Goals can only be scored after lay-off from teammate.
- Adjust game accordingly per age and skill level of players, i.e., distance apart.

COACHING POINTS

- All general goalkeeping techniques apply (see section on Goalkeeping Techniques).
- Because it is a quick-fire game, goalkeepers must stay focused at all times.
- Goalkeepers must recover and react after shot and/or save.
- Face opposition at all time and adjust body position for angled shots adjusting to ball line and arc accordingly.

SAVE, SAVE, SAVE

TECHNIQUE:

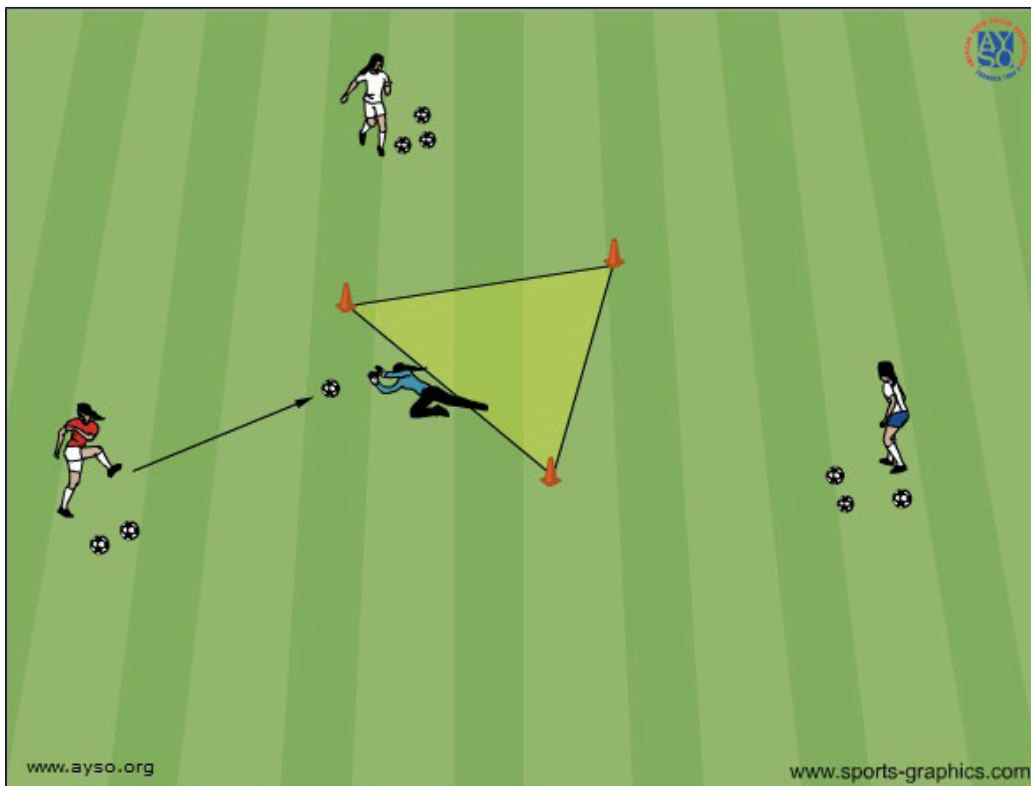
Goalkeeping Reactions and Shot Stopping

Equipment/

Organization:

Place three cones to make a triangular goal in the middle of each playing area. Divide players into groups of four or five. One group per playing area. One player in each group is chosen to be the goalkeeper.

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/save](https://www.aysou.video/save)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Each outfield player has two or three balls. They spread themselves out around a imaginary circle about 10 or 15 yards from the triangular goal.
- On your command, player one shoots. As soon as the goalkeeper makes the save or the ball goes in, the second player in the circle shoots. Then the third, and so on.
- The goalkeeper moves quickly from goal to goal to reposition themselves for each shot.
- If the shooter scores or kicks wide of the goal, he runs to collect his ball.
- If the goalkeeper saves the shot, he quickly returns it to the shooter using an underhand “bowling” throw.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- This game is physically challenging so change the goalkeeper every 60 seconds or so.
- Increase competition by seeing which player lets the fewest goals in during his or her time in goal.
- Condition shots (left, right).

COACHING POINTS

- All general goalkeeping techniques apply (see section on Goalkeeping Techniques).
- Because it is a quick-fire game, goalkeepers must stay focused at all times.
- Goalkeepers must recover and react after shot and/or save.
- Face opposition at all time and adjust body position for angled shots adjusting to ball line and arc accordingly.

12U TRAINING PLANS

RUN YOUR SESSION LIKE A PRO

It is a great pleasure to present a collection of 12U Training Plans from all across the soccer globe, including AYSO, Division 1 Universities, U.S. Soccer, and the NSCAA. This broad perspective from top level youth coaches is representative of today's game and will give you a solid base to use for your in-season training sessions **or a solid framework to help design your own plans.**

Plans are grouped by topic and (and *generally* progress from fundamental to more challenging).

KEEP IN MIND



As with all sessions, you will need to **customize and adapt each session** and activity to your **own** players' stage of development and levels of ability (grid size, numbers, equipment, etc.). Some activities will work more effectively than others, pending numerous variables, so try them out and have fun with it (*they are only suggestions*).



TRAINING PLAN 12U DRIBBLING

CREATED BY
Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

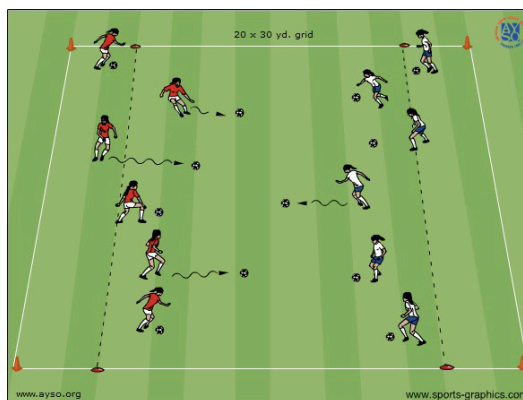
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u1](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u1)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x30 w/ 5 yd. end zone at each end. Ball per player. 1/2 of players in one end, half in other.
- Players dribble end zone to end zone.
- Change speed (slow, half, fast).
- Change direction (go *across* grid).
- Turns, fakes, moves in central zone before reaching other end.
- > Add time challenge.
- > Groups of 4,1 ball per group. Players perform 4 passes in end zone before dribbling to other end (communicating who dribbles).

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique (emphasize looking up).
- Movement, touch on ball.
- Preparation.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

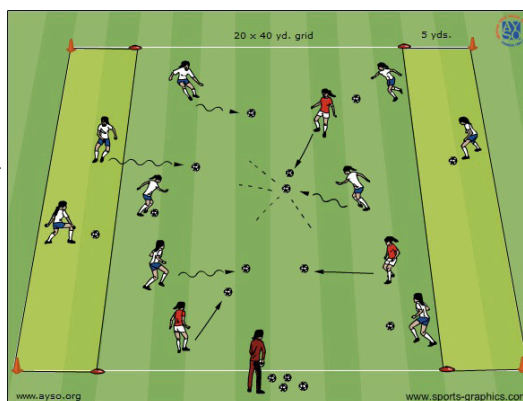
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u2](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u2)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x40 w/ 5 yd. safe zone at each end
- 3 players in center grid with ball each.
- Remaining players w/ ball in 1 of the safe zones.
- Players in safe zone dribble to other safe zone.
- Central players prevent dribblers run by hitting their ball with a pass. If hit, player joins center group.
- Last player wins.
- > Dribblers play in pairs.
- > Central players combine passes & communicate.
- > Players perform fake or feint in central area before reaching safe zone.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Quality passing techniques.
- Spatial awareness.
- Control.
- Creative fakes, feints.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

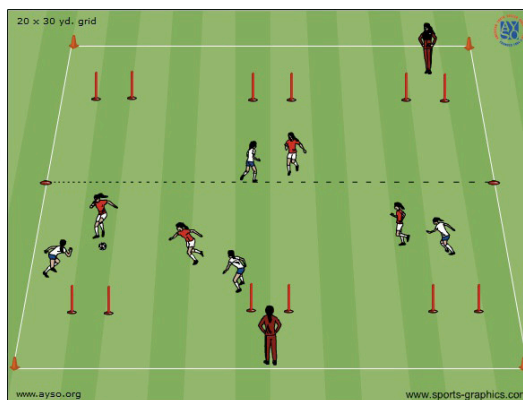
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u3](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u3)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x30 grid w/ 3 small goals either end.
- 2 teams one ball. Place assistant/parent behind each goal area as blocker.
- Each team attacks 3 goals and scores in any goal as long as blocker isn't standing behind it. Blockers block any goal they think will be attacked.
- Players must score by dribbling ball through goal and stopping ball with foot.
- Keep score.
- > Add passes before dribbling to goal.
- > Add halfway line and to score all players must be in opponents half.
- > Players must perform fake or feint before dribbling to goal.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Quality passing technique.
- First touch efficiency.
- Confidence to penetrate.
- Change of pace and direction to explode past opponent.
- Creativity.
- Individual effort and competitiveness.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

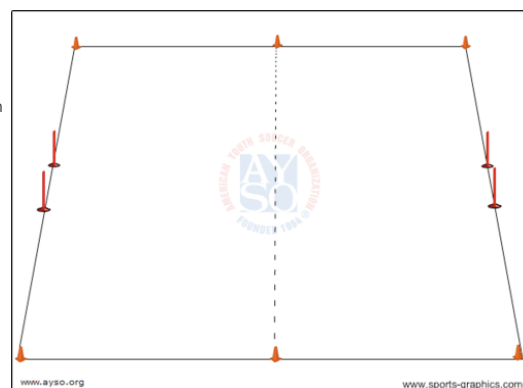
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small sided match with general rules.
- To score, players must dribble the ball through goal and stop ball with foot.

Player leads static stretching, *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality dribbling technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U DRIBBLING

CREATED BY
Chesler
U.S. Soccer

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

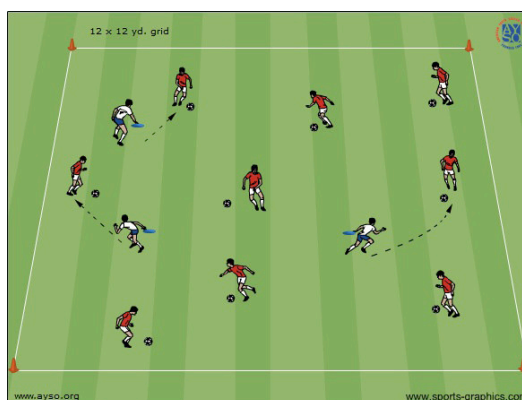
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.video/12u4](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u4)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 12x12 grid. Select 2-3 players as "taggers" who hold a scrimmage vest in their hand.
- All remaining players dribble through the area with a ball at their feet.
- Taggers attempt to strike the ball by throwing the scrimmage vest on top. If they strike the ball, the tagger and the dribbler switch roles and continue playing.

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Head up-head down as players move around with ball.
- Observe positions of teammates and opponents.
- Maintain close contact with the ball in congested areas of the field.
- Utilize all foot surfaces to turn the ball.
- Utilize body to spin away and protect the ball from a pressuring opponent.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 2

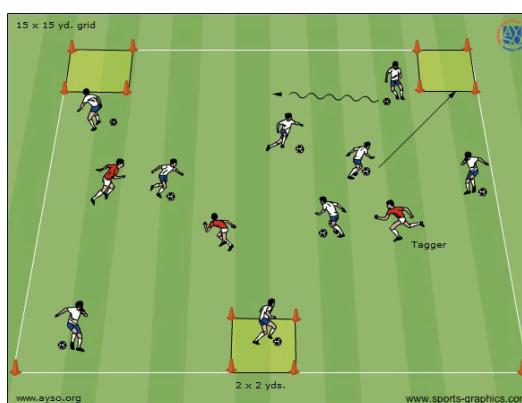
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.video/12u5](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u5)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15x15 grid w/ 3 2x2 safety squares/zone placed in triangular pattern on end lines as shown.
- Select 2-3 players to act as taggers.
- Begin with having all players dribble freely about the grid.
- Only ONE player may occupy the safety zone at a time.
- Any dribbler that is tagged must switch roles with the tagger. (Taggers may or may not have a ball at their feet.)



COACHING POINTS

- 1st touch is long enough to increase stride and speed (accelerate).
- If running with the ball (high speed), utilize the outside of foot to push the ball forward.
- Disguise first touch with a body feint.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 3

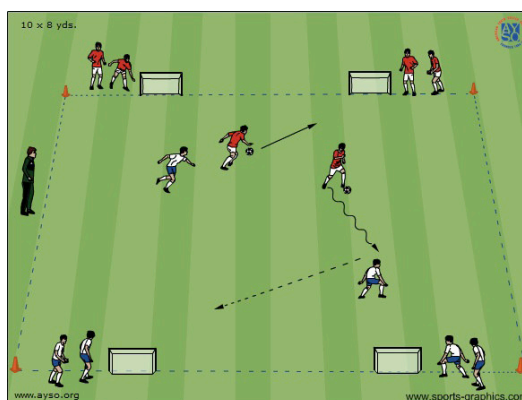
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.video/12u6](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u6)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 10x8 grid with 2 sets of mini goals placed on each end line.
- 2 teams. Each team places half of their team at each of the 2 goals on a common end-line.
- 1st player at each of the 4 goals will compete for 30 seconds to 1 min. intervals.
- Opponents match up w/ player facing them from the opposite goal for each competitive interval.
- Each pair attacks 2 goals and defends 2 goals (independently of other pair).
- Each team should maintain a cumulative total of goals scored for their side.
- Rotate next group in rapidly.
- Resting players provide service of a new ball when the ball is kicked away.



COACHING POINTS

- 1st touch efficiency
- Initial move (deception)
- Positive direction
- Vision
- Acceleration!

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

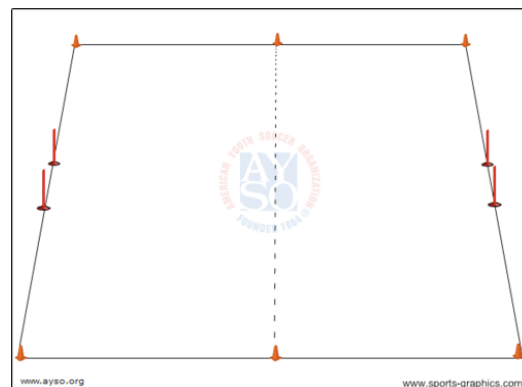
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Divide training group into two teams of 6v6 depending on attendance.
- Mark a field with approximate dimensions 65x50 yards.
- Teams compete while playing under the same rules that apply to their league matches.

Player leads static stretching, *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Place each team in a formation (to create an environment where the principles of play can be reinforced and applied to positional-specific roles for each player).
- Allow players to play, to create, and to explore new ideas through minimal interruption.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U DRIBBLING

CREATED BY
Kuntz
Cal State Fullerton

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

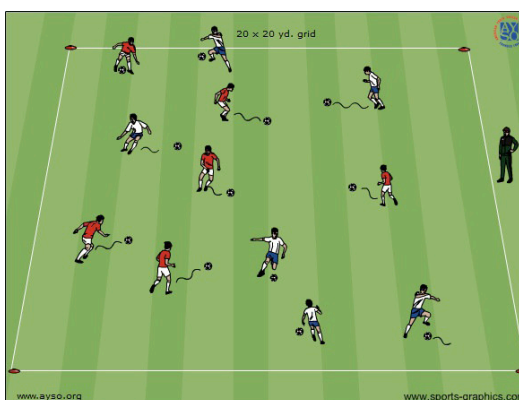
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u7](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u7)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Players dribble through grid performing progression of moves & turns: Attacking moves: body fakes (shoulder-drops) and step over (half-scissors).
- Retreating move: Cruyff turn.

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Movement, touch on ball.
- Controlled approach with speed.
- Execute move/fake.
- Change of pace, change of direction.
- Purposeful movement: to get behind defender.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 2

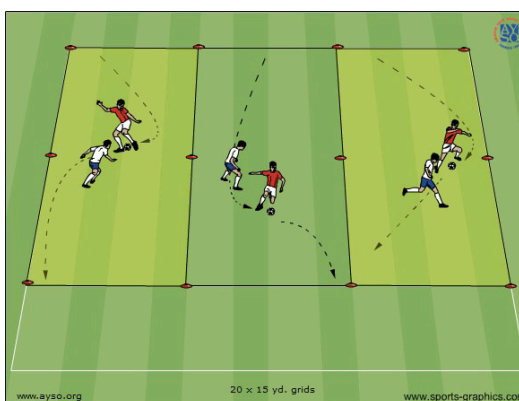
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u8](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u8)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20 x15 grids (numerous to keep all players active).
- 1v1. Players score by dribbling over opponents' end line.
- Defenders start at midfield.
- Each game is 2 minutes then 2 new players play.
- Keep score. Make competition.
- > Add goals.
- > Play 2v2.
- Players should focus on being able to see end line/goal & seek scoring opportunities every time there's a chance to win ball.
- Players should understand **when** to dribble, **when** to pass, **when** to combine, **when** to dribble for possession, **when** to dribble for speed, **when** to shield and, **what** moves/feints work in each situation.



COACHING POINTS

- Players need to be confident and encouraged to take on the opponent and seek first look/first shot (important with all strikers).
- Encourage players to think **ahead** of what they want to do, then use instincts when taking on an opponent.
- Quality dribbling technique and developing instincts in front of goal:
- Attack front foot of defender – run at them.
- Close control.
- Use moves to beat defender using various surfaces of the feet and **selling** the feint.
- Wrong foot defender by constantly changing position of the ball.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 3

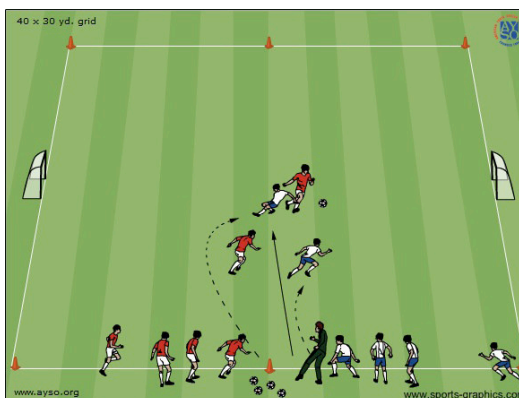
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u9](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u9)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 40x30 field with small goals. Coach on sideline with all balls. 2 teams, 1 on either side of coach.
- When coach serves a ball into play, 1st 2 players on each side enter field and play 2v2 until a goal is scored or ball goes out of play. Once ball is out of play, player exits field around their own goal, along end line, round corner and back to team. Coach serves new ball.
- Game lasts until all balls have gone and all players have played.
- > 3v3, 4v4.
- > Players can only score, once they have tried a fake or feint.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- To beat opponent, emphasize change of pace and direction.
- Encourage creativity and expression with fakes and feints.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 4

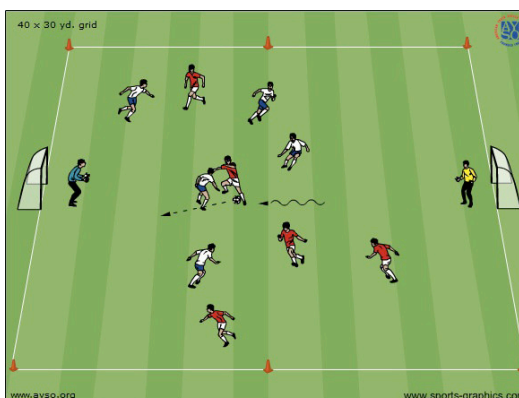
(Small-Sided Match)

- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small sided match with general rules.

Player leads static stretching, **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize appropriate and quality dribbling technique depending on the situation; but let them play.
- Preparation touch (first touch)
- Dribbling with controlled speed vs. dribbling for possession.
- Opportunistic.
- Body position (to shoot).
- Field position – to be able to find the ball to shoot.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U PASSING/RECEIVING

CREATED BY
Kerr
Duke University

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

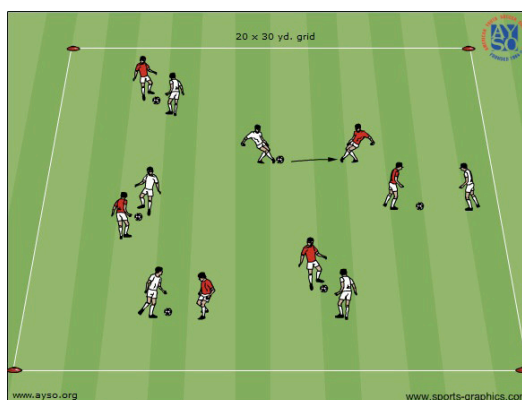
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u10](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u10)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x30 grid, players in pairs w/ 1 ball.
- Players pass back & forth for 60 seconds mandatory 2 touch.
- Ball can't rest. Points scored when partner makes mistake (bad pass or 3 touches).
- >On whistle, change partners (frequently, to get players moving).
- >Use outside of foot for 1st touch.
- > Use 1 touch.
- > Left or right.

Player leads multi-directional jogging and stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing techniques.
- First touch efficiency.
- Preparation.
- Focus.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 2

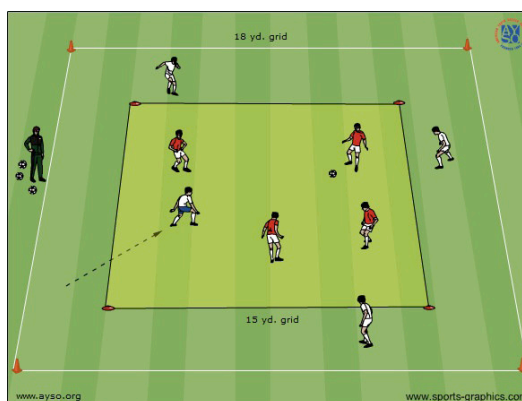
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u11](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u11)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15 yd. square within an 18 yd. square. 2 teams of 4, 1 ball.
- Team A (passing team) play inside smaller square.
- Team B (defenders) wait outside playing area in larger square.
- 2 min. game begins as 1 defender enters inner square to gain possession from passing team.
- After 30 seconds, 2nd defender is added to create 4v2. After another 30 seconds a 3rd defender is added and finally a 4th making it 4v4.
- Coach serves balls (at stoppages).
- Most passes (2 mins.) wins.
- Swap roles & rotate 3rd team.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing technique.
- First touch efficiency (away from defender to where they want to play their next move).
- Encourage players to scan area before receiving pass.
- Movement.
- Encourage creativity and expression!
- Disguise passes.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 3

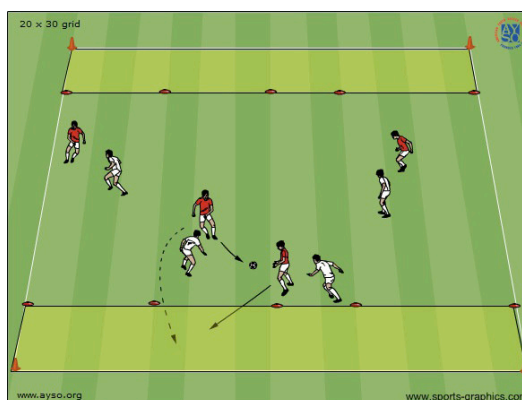
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u12](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u12)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x30 grid w/ 2 end zones 5 yds. deep.
- 2 teams attack either end zone.
- Teams score by passing the ball successfully into opponents end zone to a free teammate (who must control ball).
- Opponents defend their end zone.
- Keep score.
- > Only 1 player can make the run into end zone to receive the scoring pass.
- > Scoring pass must be with L or R foot.
- > Limit scoring player's touch to control (2 or 1).



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing & first touch efficiency.
- Encourage players to scan area before receiving pass & recognize opportunities to explode into space.
- Encourage players to recognize visual cues, i.e., 1 v 1 opportunity, space in front of dribbler, etc.
- Encourage players to recognize verbal cues from teammates, i.e., take him on, time, etc.
- Consider balance and shape.
- Encourage creativity and expression!

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

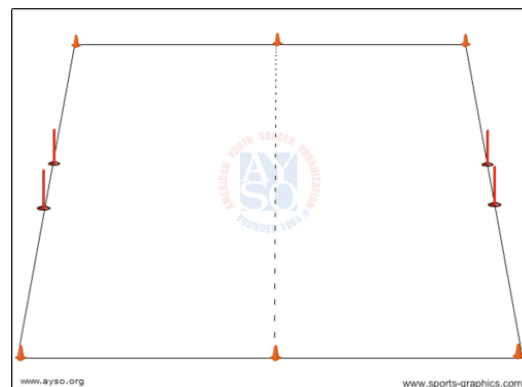
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small sided match with goalkeepers and general rules.
- > 5 consecutive passes = 2 goals.
- >Two touch w/ one touch to score (using instep drive or side foot pass).
- > All attacking team players must be in opponents half to score.

Player leads static stretching, **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality techniques but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U PASSING/RECEIVING

CREATED BY
Ouellette
AYSO

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

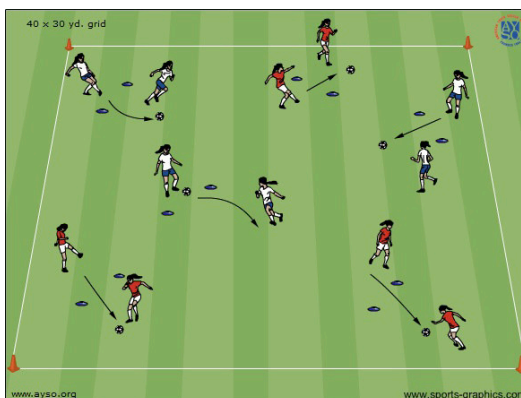
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u13](https://www.aysou.video/12u13)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x40 grid, 12 cones to make 6 gates.
- Players in pairs w/ 1 ball (pair stronger player w/ 1 of lesser skill) pass back & forth through all the gates.
- Do not allow 1 touch back. 2 touches!
- Each player must make 6 passes through the cones.
- Important for receiver not to stand between the cones, they should look to be running onto the end of the pass.
- Use outside of foot for 1st touch.
- Set time challenge and team with best time wins. Repeat twice.

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing techniques.
- First touch efficiency.
- Preparation.
- Focus.
- Competition.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 2

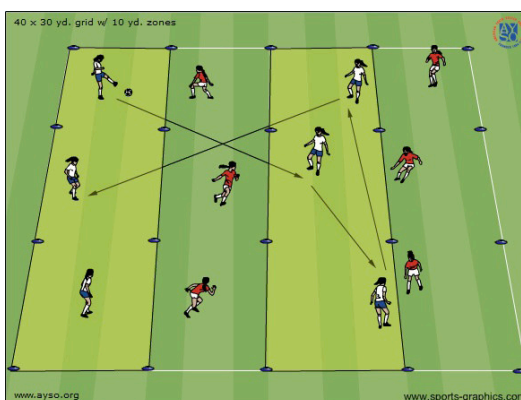
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u14](https://www.aysou.video/12u14)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20 cones, vests (2 colors), 1 ball. 6v6 in pairs of 3.
- 40x30 grid / into 4x10 yd. zones.
- 1 team must pass to teammate in other grid to get 1 point (1st team to 5 wins).
- Teams in defending zones try to intercept through balls in their zone. If ball is intercepted that team try to connect balls to teammates in other zone.
- Player may dribble & pass in their zone to create passing lanes.
- Players in receiving zones try to create good passing lanes w/ off ball runs to become a target player.
- Balls must be played on ground.
- > Receivers 1 touch back to original grid.
- > Defender in each zone.
- > Add goals in each end zone.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing technique.
- First touch efficiency (away from defender to where they want to play their next move).
- Encourage players to scan area before receiving pass.
- Movement, on and off-ball.
- Encourage creativity and expression!
- Disguise passes.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 3

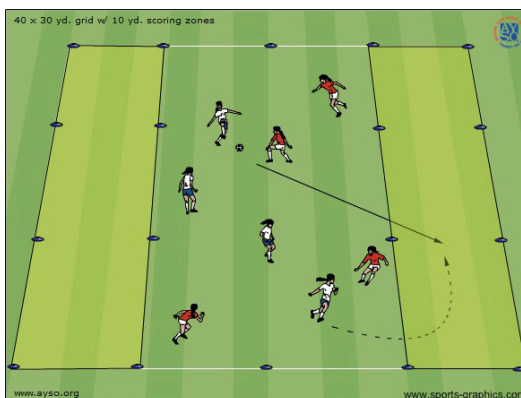
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u15](https://www.aysou.video/12u15)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 40x30 grid w/ 2 end zones 10 yards deep.
- 2 teams attack *either* end zone and score by passing the ball successfully into teammate *running* onto the pass in scoring zone.
- 1 point per successful pass to running teammate. 5 points wins.
- Receiving player must run *onto* pass not be stationary in scoring zone.
- Points are scored in either end zone to start.
- > Go directional.
- > Receiver must one touch pass back to a teammate.
- > Initial pass must be 1 touch into scoring zone.
- > Add defender in each end zone.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing & first touch efficiency.
- Encourage players to scan area before receiving pass & recognize opportunities to explode into space.
- Encourage players to recognize visual and verbal cues from teammates, i.e., take her on, time, etc.
- Consider balance and shape.
- Movement, on and off-ball.
- Disguise passes.
- Encourage creativity and expression!

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

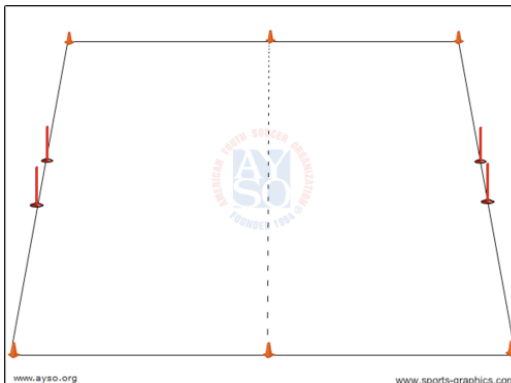
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Balanced 6 v 6. 50x40 grid (or half size of field team plays matches on).
- Match like conditions with general rules.

Player leads static stretching, *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality techniques but let them play.
- Game conditions *should* validate what was covered in training (quality passing/ receiving, movement/vision).

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U FINISHING/SHOOTING

CREATED BY
Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

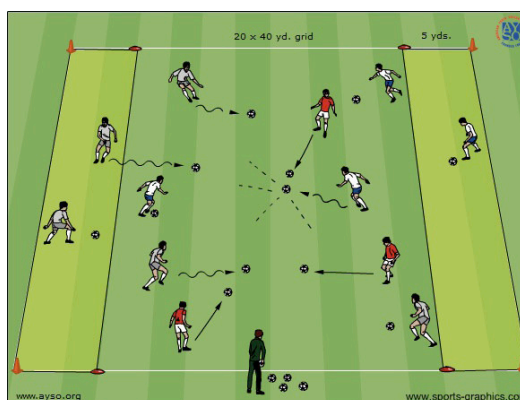
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u16](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u16)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x40 w/ 5 yd. safe zone at each end
- 3 players in center grid with ball each.
- Remaining players w/ ball in 1 of the safe zones. Players in safe zone dribble to other safe zone.
- Central players prevent dribblers run by hitting their ball with a quality pass. If hit, player joins center group as passer.
- Last player wins.
- > Dribblers play in pairs.
- > Central players combine passes & communicate. Use left, right foot passes.
- > Players perform fake or feint in central area before reaching safe zone.

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality striking, passing (and dribbling) technique.
- Communication between central players to combine passing.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 2

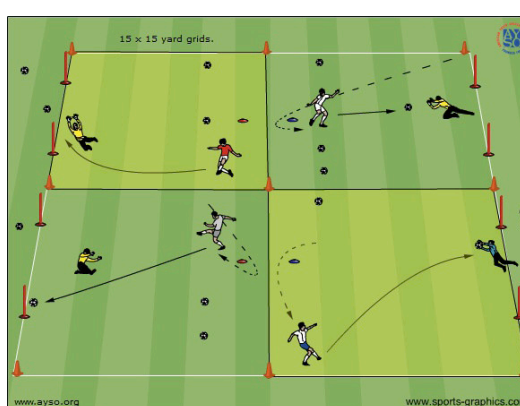
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u17](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u17)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15x15 grid (use multiple grids to involve all players) w/ an 8 yd. goal on 1 end line. Place 1 disc cone approx. 14 yds. from center of goal. Line up 4 balls approx. 12 yds. from goal (1 wide left, 1 wide right & 1 either side of center). 1 GK & 1 striker per grid.
- Striker starts on outer corner cone on goal line.
- On whistle, striker sprints to 14 yd marker, cuts round cone & strikes 1 of the 4 balls (any order) 1st time on goal using instep drive or inside of foot to "place" ball into goal.
- After shot, striker cuts sharply & sprints back round 14 yd mark to approach & strike next ball. Repeat until all balls have been hit.
- > GK & striker switch. > Strikers progress to each grid facing new GK.
- > Balls start w/ GK (or coach) who serves rolling ball (from front or side) for striker to run onto & strike.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality instep shots and inside of foot push pass/strike techniques.
- Use peripheral vision to consider goalkeeper position.
- #9 Tip: The goal never moves!
- Accuracy over power.
- Composure at point of strike. Focus.
- Maintain striker's intensity and speed.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 3

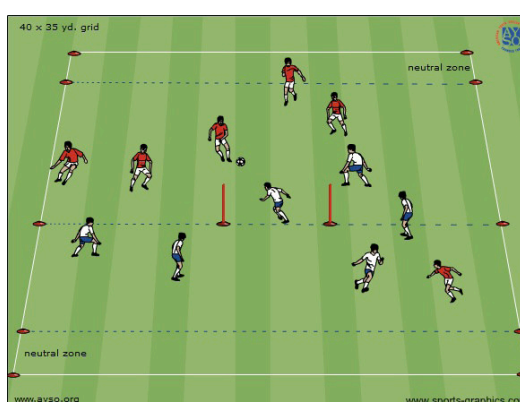
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u18](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u18)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 40x35 playing area. Scrimmage vests, spare balls. 5 v 5. Use tall cones/flags to mark a center goal (10 yds. wide) on half way line. Mark 2 neutral end zones on either end line of area.
- 1 team attacks w/ 5 players v 4 with the extra defender becoming goalkeeper (can't use hands to start).
- Attacking team looks to score through center goal with instep strikes and if successful, play to the opposite neutral zone, reorganize & then turn & attack in other direction.
- If the defenders win the ball, they play back to their GK who then carries the ball back to the opposite end & joins w/ the others to attack 5v4.
- > Condition scorer's touch and shooting (one touch, two touch, left foot, right foot).
- > Permit goalkeeper to use hands.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality instep kicks/strikes.
- Attacking with numbers up, look at team shape, spacing of players, width, movement.
- Defending with numbers down, encourage pressure on the ball (key to other defenders actions).
- Communication on both sides of the ball.
- Transition from attacking to defending and vice-versa.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

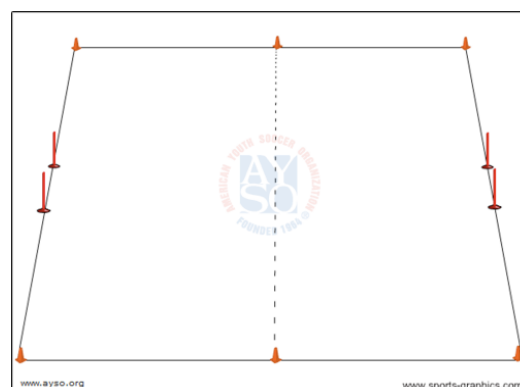
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- Place a goal with goal keepers at each end of the grid.
- > Place additional goals/gates on either sideline.

Player leads static stretching, *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality shooting and finishing technique but let them play.
- Establish a confident and free learning environment; where players are *encouraged* to take the shot without fear of missing.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U DEFENDING

CREATED BY
Barker
United Soccer Coaches

STAGE 1

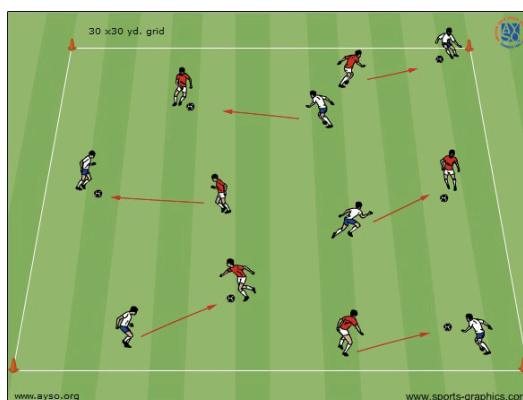
(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/12u19](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u19)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x30 grid w/ players in pairs, 1 ball for each pair.
- Players pass and move in pairs of the same color.
- On coach's command, players without ball must pressure players in opposite colors who have the ball and force them to a particular side.



Player leads stretching.

COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball quickly and get within playing distance.
- Take an angled stance to the ball and the opponent and maintain this for 5-10 seconds to get a "feel" for the defensive posture.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 2

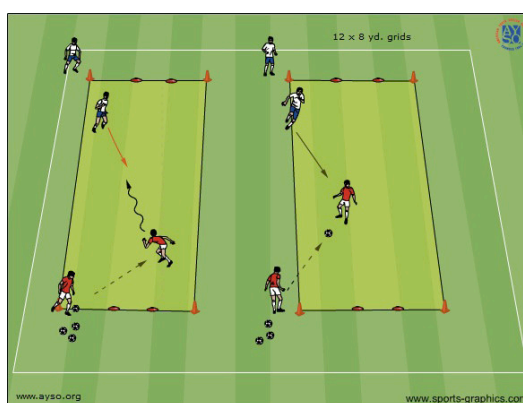
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/12u20](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u20)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 12x8 grid(s). Game is played to end lines or to small goals either end.
- Ball can be played for the player to dribble straight at opponent or ball can be played so the receiver has back to goal.
- Defender must approach quickly and then slow.
- Through body shape force the opponent to a side or back.
- Defender should try to win ball w/ inside of foot to make a block tackle w/ their weight into the challenge.
- Defender should try to stay on their feet and win possession.



COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball quickly and get within playing distance.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Await opportunity to challenge.
- Don't overcommit or dive in.
- Challenge with leading foot to retain balance.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☐
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 3

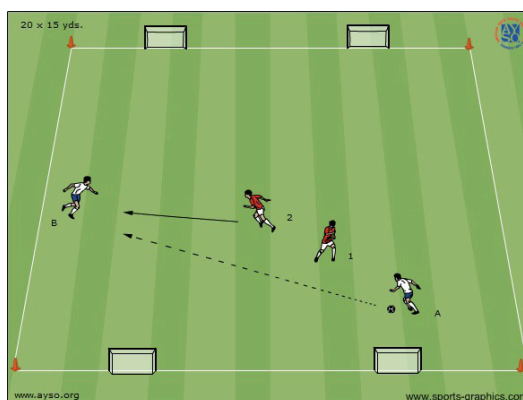
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/12u21](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u21)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 grid w/ 4 small goals positioned on opposite end lines either side of field.
- 2 v 2 to goal.
- With 4 goals, defenders must work together to dispossess and counter.
- Player A is put under pressure from Player 1 and passes to Player B.
- Player 2 must now make up ground to defend Player B.
- Defenders travel to opponent as the ball is moving. Keep the opponent's head down and deny them time to settle.



COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball and get goal side of attacker.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Await opportunity to challenge.
- Don't overcommit or dive in.
- Challenge w/ leading foot to retain balance.
- 1st defender role: delay/pressure.
- 2nd defender role: support/cover.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 4

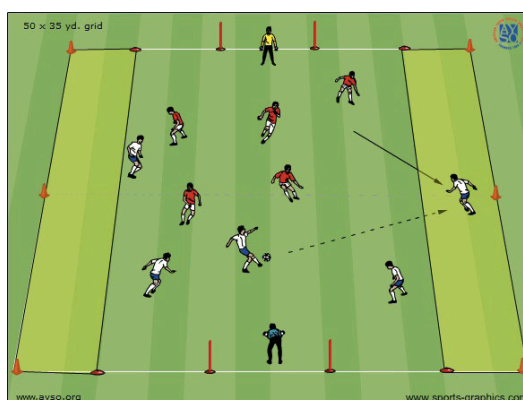
(Small-Sided Match)

- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/12u22](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u22)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small sided match with wide channels, general rules apply.
- Allow only 1 player from each team into wide channels.
- 1 v 1 defending is emphasized.



Player leads static stretching, **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.

COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize defensive role and techniques but let them play.
- Space between defender and opponent should allow for winning the ball and to stay goal side.
- Defender needs to angle stance to direct opponent toward the sideline or a covering defender.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U DEFENDING

CREATED BY
Kuntz
Cal State Fullerton

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

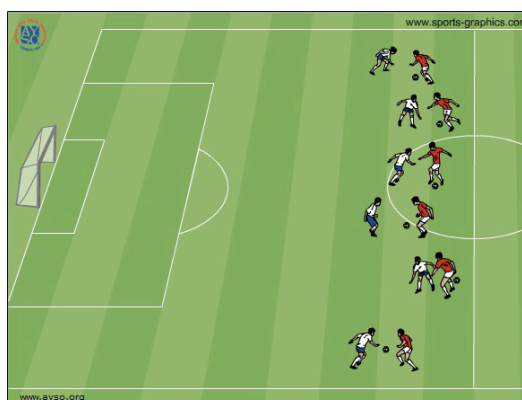
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u23](https://www.aysou.video/12u23)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Pairs w/ 1 ball on 1/2 way line.
- Partner w/ ball dribbles towards partner.
- Defending partner retreats slowly while staying within 1 yard of dribbler, shadowing moves of dribbler as they dribble towards opposite penalty box.
- Once opposite line is reached, players switch roles, repeat exercise and work back towards original starting point.
- > Face-to-face, side-to-side, recovery.

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball quickly and get within playing distance.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Good footwork.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

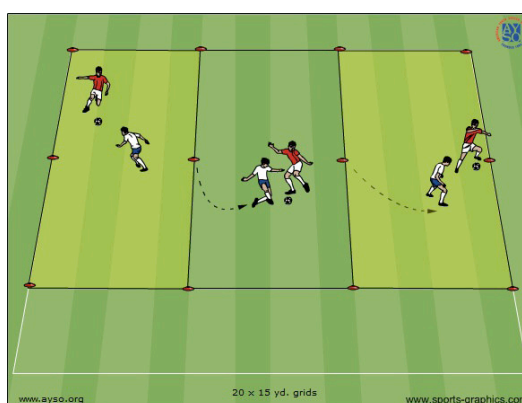
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u24](https://www.aysou.video/12u24)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 12x15 grids (numerous to keep all players active). 1v1.
- Attackers start at opposite ends of the grid with the ball. Defenders start in middle of the grid.
- Attacker tries to get to the opposite end-line of grid with the ball under control. Defender tries to regain possession and penetrate to attacker's end-line.
- Switch roles after each turn.
- Rotate in extra players on both ends.
- Encourage defenders to try to gain possession of the ball and not merely dispossess the dribbler.



COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball quickly & get within playing distance.
- Long strides early to cover yardage. Short strides once defender is within 3 yards of dribbler.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Physical control & emotional restraint.
- Await opportunity to challenge. Don't overcommit or dive in.
- Challenge w/ leading foot to retain balance.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 3

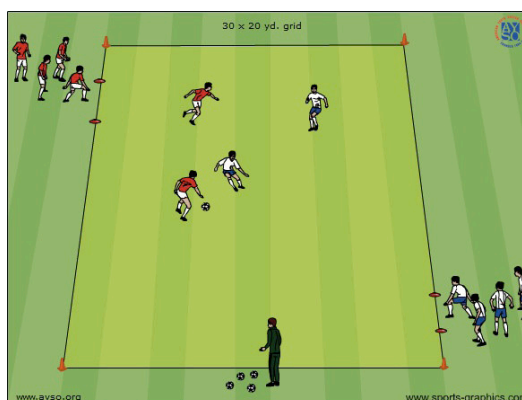
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u25](https://www.aysou.video/12u25)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 grid w/ 2 small goal in opposite corners. 2 teams by each goal.
- Coach serves ball to first 2 attackers who try to score in opposite goal v 2 def.
- Encourage defenders to gain possession of the ball and not merely dispossess the dribbler.
- Defenders must direct/show attackers 1 way. Attackers choose right 1st touch based on defender's angle of approach.
- Switch roles.
- > Change positions of goals.
- Teach difference: defending a target versus a goal line (as in prior activity).



COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball quickly & get within playing distance.
- Long strides to cover yardage. Shorter once defender is w/in 3 yards of dribbler.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Physical control & emotional restraint.
- Await opportunity to challenge. Don't overcommit or dive in. Challenge w/ leading foot to retain balance.
- Communication.
- 1st defender role: delay/pressure.
- 2nd defender role: support/cover.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

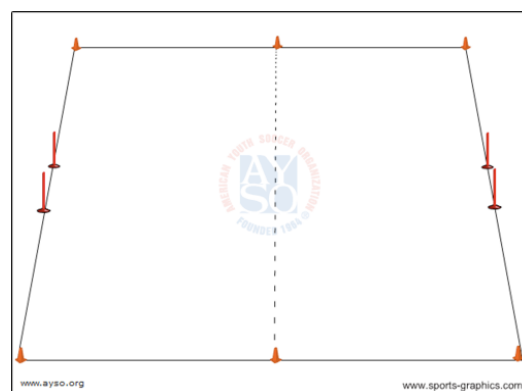
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- Defenders must be organized and communicate with each other especially when pressing the ball & close space or when a switch occurs.

Player leads static stretching, *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize defensive principles and techniques as previous activities, but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U CONTROL

CREATED BY
Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

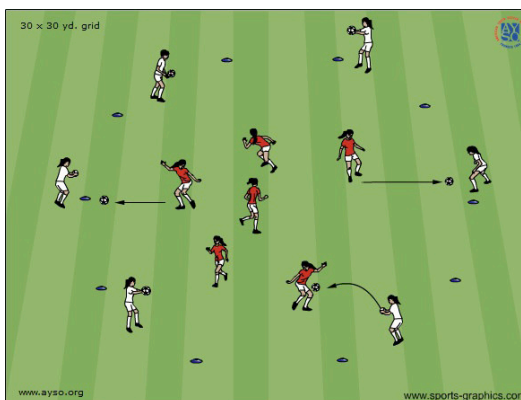
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u26](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u26)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x30 grid w/ inner circle, 6 players inside circle, 6 outside w/ ball as servers.
- Inside players move to any server, who calls "foot" or "thigh." Inside player controls ball in 1 and passes back to server with 2nd touch.
- Receiver *moves* onto free server (rotate servers frequently).
- > Easy under-hand lobs to start. Vary height of serve. Throw-in.
- > Increase/decrease circle size.
- > Left, right foot control, pass, etc.
- > Coach walks through circle as *passive* defender.

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Get in line with flight of ball.
- Bring surface up to meet ball.
- At moment of impact, withdraw surface to cushion first touch (like catching an egg).
- Be on toes to react to falling ball.
- Direct touch to space (where you want to go).
- Get comfortable and familiar with ball.
- Spatial awareness.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

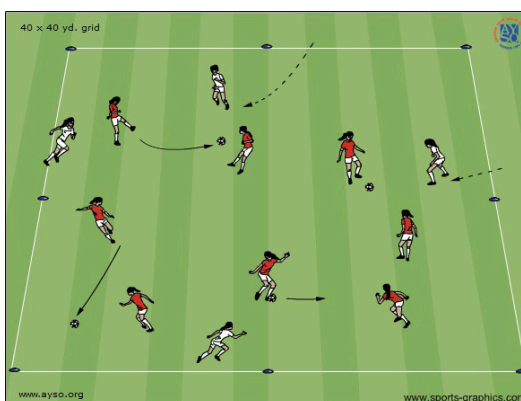
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u27](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u27)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 40x40 yard playing area.
- 8 attackers inside; 4 defenders on outer grid (vary split as needed).
- Attackers have 3-4 balls between them and must pass and move keeping ball under control.
- On coach command, defenders enter the grid and firstly offer *passive* pressure on attackers, who must maintain composure and control of ball.
- Passive progresses to full pressure. Defenders can dispossess attackers until all balls are cleared.
- Switch roles.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality control, passing and movement.
- Direct touch to space (away from defender).
- Fake defender w/ body movement "prior" to receiving ball.
- Creativity to beat defenders.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

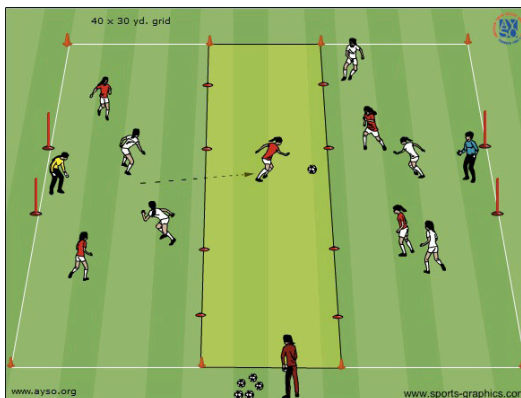
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/12u28](https://www.aysou.org/video/12u28)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 40x30 field w/ goals & GKs. Mark center channel, splitting area into thirds. 3v2 in end zones plus GK (can be used as a player to switch possession in the zone).
- Teams must make 3 passes in their defensive zone *before* player w/ ball is allowed to enter center channel.
- Player w/ ball dribbles across center channel into attacking third to create 3v3 (+ GK).
- Only the ball carrier can enter this area & increase numbers in final third.
- > One defender and two attackers can enter center channel creating 2v1. This affects decision making to either pass (combination play) or run w/ ball into the attacking third.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique w/ positive attitude to beat the defenders with a move (confidence).
- Quality first touch efficiency to maintain control in tight spaces.
- Maximize use of space and teammates.
- Protect the ball from defender either during the move or after you have beaten them (shielding).

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

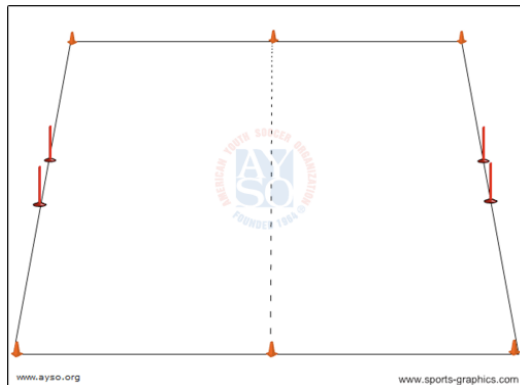
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Balanced 6 v 6 match.
- Match like conditions with general rules.

Player leads static stretching, *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality control techniques and first touch efficiency but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 12U GOALKEEPING

CREATED BY
Walker
AYSO Soccer Camps

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

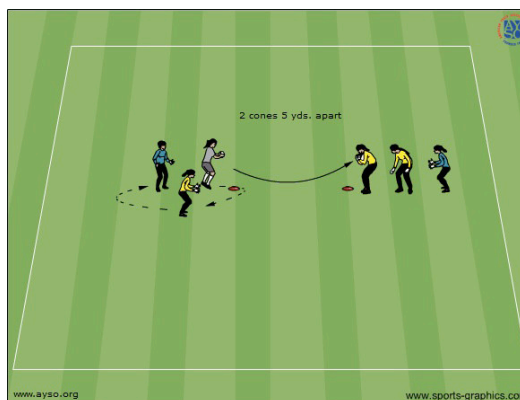
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u29](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u29)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 2 cones, 5 yds. apart w/ 2-3 GKs lined up behind each cone facing each other in GK stance.
- 1st GK serves 2 handed to GK at front of other group & retreats to the right & joins back of line.
- Ball is passed back & forth into GK hands & each GK moves backwards to the right to join back of their group before edging to front again.
- GKs then change direction of their backwards movement to left.
- > Starting GK serves 2 handed ball to GK in other group then shuffles to back of opposite line via right hand side of opposite group. The movement goes from a retreating backward shuffle to a forward movement opening the body and seeing the ball at all times. GKs can then move to the left to join the end of opposite group.
- > Serve high balls for high catch.

Player leads stretching.



COACHING POINTS

- Good GK Position: Knees slightly bent, body weight forward on the balls of their feet. Hands must be positioned in a central location, palms facing out, thumbs close together for ease of catch and movements.
- Soft hands, strong wrists when catching the ball.
- Firm 2 handed serve to cover distance.
- When moving after serving ball (whether forward or backward) be aware of where the ball is. Never take your eyes of the ball during movement.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 2

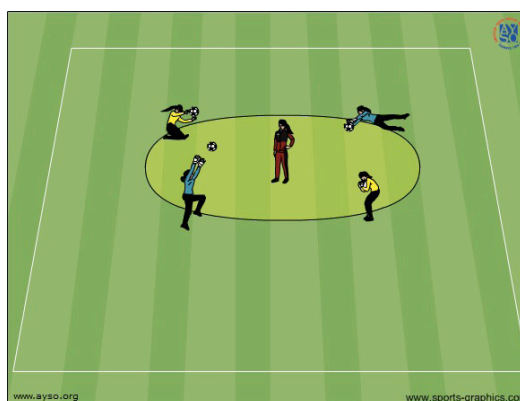
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u30](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u30)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- GKs form circle around coach (ample distance).
- Coach has 4 instructions (Up, Down, L, R):
- Up: GKs serve ball high for themselves & catch ball at highest point. Raised knee, hands at highest point, eye on the ball until safely in hands & call of "keeper".
- Down: GKs roll ball in front of them & chase it collapsing on top of it. Bend knee, 2 hands on the ball, bring the ball into chest & collapsing on ball with back parallel to sky.
- Right/Left: GKs dive to right/left w/ ball in hands: step into dive w/ right/left foot for covering distance, forward & sideward movement, lead w/ hands & collapse the right/left knee following through w/ hips, waist & shoulders.
- > Doubles: "right, right" or "left, left" GKs have to make a double saves.
- > Opposites.



COACHING POINTS

- Maintain good GK position throughout movement, hands in front of the body and thumbs almost touching.
- Agility, reaction, concentration, focus.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☐
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☐

STAGE 3

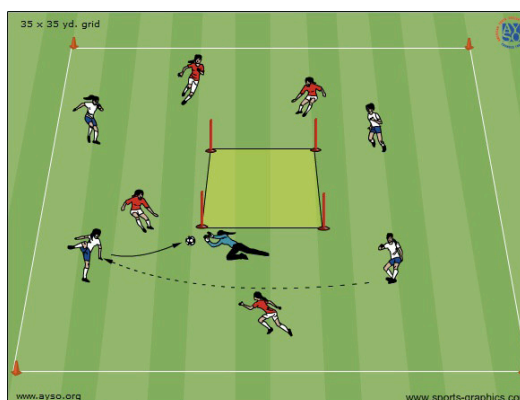
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/12u31](https://www.ayso.org/video/12u31)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 35 x 35 grid with central square goals with one GK in the middle. 3v3, 4v4, etc.
- GK has to move between 4 goals placed in the middle of the field depending on the location of the ball in play.
- Goalkeeper has to be aware of movement of the ball and react by getting into the goal appropriate to where the shot is coming from.



COACHING POINTS

- All general goalkeeping techniques apply (see section on Goalkeeping Techniques).
- Goalkeepers must stay focused at all times.
- Goalkeepers must recover and react after shot and/or save.
- Face opposition at all time and adjust body position for angled shots adjusting to ball line and arc accordingly.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

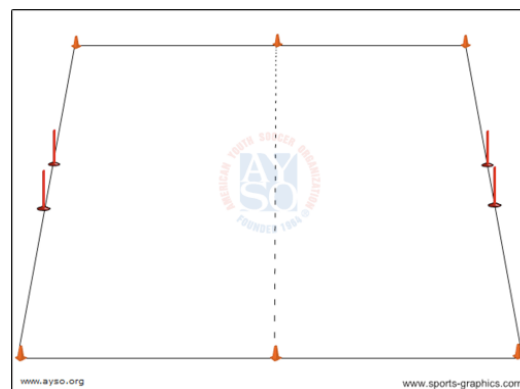
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small sided match with general rules.
- Rotate players through GK position.

Player leads static stretching, *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality GK technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL	☒
PHYSICAL	☒
TECHNICAL	☒
TACTICAL	☒

12U PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PLAYING THE GAME

Field

- Dimensions: 70-80 yards long and 45-55 yards wide (maximum).
- Markings: The field of play must be rectangular and marked with lines shown on the diagram.
- Goals: The maximum goal size is 7' high x 21' wide. The recommended goal size is 6.5' high x 18.5' wide.

Ball

- Size 4

Players

- Number: Nine per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper. 18 maximum on roster.
- Substitutions: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.
- Playing time: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.
- Teams: Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Players' Equipment

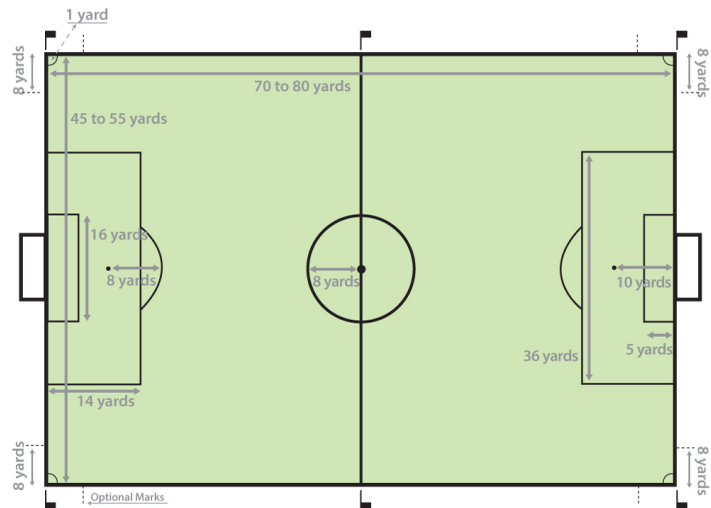
- Footwear: Soccer shoes are recommended (or similar type athletic shoes).
- Shinguards: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Duration of Match

- Matches should have two equal halves not to exceed 30-minutes each.
- Halftime break of 5–10 minutes.

Referee

- AYSO-certified referees. RESPECT!



12U LAWS OF THE GAME

ESSENTIAL FACTS FOR AYSO COACHES

Introduction

The AYSO National Coaching Commission in cooperation with the National Referee Commission has prepared this information to assist coaches in learning and understanding the Laws of the Game. As your coaching experience increases, so will your need for additional instruction. Our courses are designed to support those needs as they arise. You should obtain a copy of “Regional Referee” to supplement your training and understanding of AYSO policies and interpretations of the Laws.

AYSO is an affiliate member of US Soccer, the national governing body of soccer in the United States recognized by FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association), the international governing body of soccer. All AYSO matches are played in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game and the AYSO National Rules and Regulations. Since FIFA meets annually to consider changes to the Laws and AYSO considers proposed changes to its National Rules and Regulations each year at the AYSO Annual General Meeting, it is strongly recommended that each year you obtain the current AYSO edition of the FIFA Laws of the Game and the AYSO National Rules and Regulations to familiarize yourself with the most recent changes.

As you gain knowledge and experience as an AYSO coach you will find that your understanding of the Laws of the Game and of the job of the officials will increase. To truly understand officiating, we recommend strongly that you “walk a mile in his shoes”. That is, try your hand at actually refereeing some matches. Experience as a referee can only improve your skills as a coach and is well worth the effort. Thank you again for volunteering your time and talents.

LAW 1: THE FIELD OF PLAY

Essential Facts About the Field of Play:

- Regular season play: Goal dimensions and field size at discretion of the region.
- Post-season play-off games: The field must conform to all requirements of Law 1.
- A coaches’ area shall be marked, where possible, ten (10) yards on either side of the halfway line, and at least one yard from the touch line.
- Touch lines: Define sides of the field.
- Goal lines: Define ends of the field.
- Goals: The maximum goal size is 7’ high x 21’ wide. The recommended goal size is 6.5’ high x 18.5’ wide.
- Halfway line: Divides field in half and belongs to both halves.
- Center mark: Location for kick-off.
- Center circle: 8-yard radius from center mark.
- Penalty area: Area in which goalkeeper may use hands and where certain fouls result in a penalty kick.
- Penalty mark: 9-inch spot 10 yards from goal line indicates location for penalty kick.
- Penalty arc: 8-yard radius from penalty mark.
- Goal area: Defines location for goal kicks.
- Corner area: 1-yard arc defines location for corner kicks.
- Corner flag: Locates corner of field. May not be moved or removed during corner kicks.
- Optional equipment: Goal nets, halfway flags (1 yard outside touch line), hash mark along the goal line 8 yards from the corner.

LAW 2: THE BALL

Essential Facts Regarding the Ball:

- The referee approves the game ball.
- Ball cannot be replaced without the referee’s permission.
- The size used in AYSO matches is regulated according to age division:
Size 3: 6U, 8U Size 4: 10U, 12U Size 5: 14U+

LAW 3: THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Essential Facts Regarding Number of Players:

- 11 a-side is the norm. AYSO Age Specific Recommendations: 6U: 4 a-side; 8U: 4 a-side; 10U: 7 a-side; 12U: 9-a-side
- A player who has been sent off may not be replaced.
- Substitutes come under the jurisdiction of the referee.
- One player on each team must be designated as the goalkeeper.
- Field players may change places with their goalkeeper at any normal stoppage in play. The referee must be notified that the change is taking place.
- In AYSO, each team member must play a minimum of one half of the match.
- Play may be stopped at any time by the referee to attend to an injured player who may be replaced or the team may play short while the injured player recovers. Only the injured player receives credit for playing that quarter. A dropped ball is used to restart play if the ball was in play at the time of the stoppage.

LAW 4: THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

Essential Facts Regarding Players' Equipment:

- Jersey, shorts, footwear, and shinguards covered by stockings are required. Sleeveless jerseys are permitted as are rolled or tied up sleeves provided, in the opinion of the referee, it is done in a safe manner.
- Shinguards are required in all practices and games.
- The goalkeepers must be distinguishable from all other players on the field.
- Players may not wear anything that could endanger either themselves or another player.
- Casts or splints, jewelry, watches and articles of adornment are not allowed.

LAW 5: THE REFEREE

Essential Facts Regarding the Referee:

- Should interfere with the game as little as possible, penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law, and not whistle for trifling or doubtful offenses.
- Authority includes all pre-match, half-time and post-match activities.
- May refrain from penalizing if it is to the advantage of the team against which the offense was committed.
- Is official record and timekeeper, and may add any time lost through accident or other cause.
- May stop the match and suspend or terminate play for any reason deemed necessary such as: the elements, interference by spectators, or other cause.
- Shall submit a detailed report of any misconduct.
- Allows no person other than the players and assistant referees to enter the field of play without permission.
- May stop the match to have an injured player attended.

LAW 6: THE ASSISTANT REFEREES

Essential Facts Regarding the Assistant Referees:

- Indicate when the ball is out of play.
- Indicate which side is entitled to a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in.
- Indicate when a player may be penalized for an offside offense.
- Indicate when a substitution is requested.
- Assist the referee in the control of the match in accordance with the Laws.
- May signal any misconduct, incident, or breach of the Laws which occurred out of view of the referee.
- Assistant referees' decisions may be overruled by the referee.
- Referee decisions may not be overruled by an assistant referee.
- Referees may consult with and accept the decision of neutral assistant referees to determine whether or not a legal goal was scored

LAW 7: THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

Essential Facts Regarding the Duration of the Game:

- The match is divided into two equal periods (halves), which varies with age group. Halves in 12U matches may not exceed 30 minutes each.
- The teams will defend each goal for one period (half).

- Players have a right to an interval at half-time, which, in AYSO, shall be a minimum of five and maximum of ten minutes.
- Allowance shall be made, at the discretion of the referee, for time lost due to injury, substitution, time wasting or other cause.
- Time shall be extended to permit a penalty kick to be taken at or after the expiration of the normal time period.
- The referee is the sole timekeeper for the match.

LAW 8: THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY

Essential Facts Regarding the Start of Play:

- Play is started with a kick-off from the center mark:
 - At the beginning of the match.
 - At the beginning of the second half.
 - Following a goal.
 - At the beginning of overtime periods.
- Play is restarted with a dropped ball where the ball was when the play was stopped while the ball was in play:
 - Following an injury where no foul occurred.
 - For outside interference.
 - For needed repairs to the ball or field equipment.
 - When the ball hits or touches the referees under certain circumstances per Law 9.
 - For any cause not mentioned in the Laws.
- The team winning the coin toss chooses either the goal they would like to attack or to take the kick-off. Based on the previous decision, the other team takes the kick-off or decides which goal to attack in the first half.
- The ball is in play from a kick-off once it has been kicked and moves.
- Every player, except for the player taking the kick-off, must remain in his own half of the field, and players of the team not taking the kick-off must remain at least eight yards from the ball until the ball is in play.
- The player taking the kick-off shall not touch the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player. The penalty for this “double touch” is an indirect free kick.
- A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.
- The kick-off shall be retaken for any infringement occurring before the ball is in play.
- The ball is dropped to one player from the team that last touched the ball before play was stopped. All other players from both teams must be at least 4.5 yards away. A dropped ball in the penalty area is dropped to the goalkeeper if the ball was in the penalty area or the last touch was in the penalty area.
- The dropped ball is in play once it has touched the ground.
- The dropped ball is retaken if it is touched by a player before it has touched the ground or if it goes out of play without being touched by any player.

LAW 9: THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

Essential Facts Regarding Ball In and Out of Play:

- The ball is out of play when:
 - It has wholly passed over the goal line or touch line, either on the ground or in the air.
 - The referee has stopped play
 - It touches a match official, remains on the field of play and:
 - A team starts a promising attack or
 - The ball goes directly into the goal or
 - The team in possession changes
 - In all these cases, play is restarted with a dropped ball.
- It is the position of the ball and not the player playing the ball which determines whether or not the ball is out of play.
- The ball remains in play unless signaled out of play by the referee.

LAW 10: THE METHOD OF SCORING

Essential Facts Regarding Method of Scoring:

- The ball must completely cross the goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar for a goal to be scored.
- Only the referee may award or disallow a goal.
- The referee may accept the opinion of a neutral assistant referee regarding a possible goal that the referee did not see.
- The position of the ball is relevant when determining whether a goal has been scored, not the position of the goalkeeper.

- In cases of an outside agent (spectator, dog, etc.) interfering with play prior to the ball entering the goal, the referee may stop play. If the ball is going into the goal and the interference by the outside agent did not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded, even if contact was made with the ball.
- A goal should not be awarded if the Laws of the Game were violated by the attacking team immediately prior to the ball entering the goal.
- The referee may reverse his decision regarding the scoring of a goal as long as play has not yet been restarted.

LAW 11: OFFSIDE

Essential Facts Regarding Offside:

- A player is in an offside position if he is nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second to last defender. Being in an offside position in itself is not an offence. A player is not in an offside position if:
 - He is in his own half of the field of play or
 - He is level with the second last opponent or
 - He is level with the last two opponents
- The player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball is touched or played by a teammate, the referee considers him to be actively involved in the play by:
 - Interfering with play or
 - Interfering with an opponent or
 - Gaining an advantage from being in that position
- There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:
 - A goal kick or
 - A throw-in or
 - A corner kick
- The punishment for being offside is an indirect free kick for the opposing team.
- The indirect free kick is taken from the location of the offside player.
- The referee may or may not declare a violation of the Offside Law depending upon his judgment of the circumstances.

LAW 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Essential Facts Regarding Fouls:

There are two categories of fouls; direct free kick fouls from which a goal may be scored directly and indirect free kick fouls from which a second player on either team must touch or play the ball before a goal may be scored. If a direct free kick foul is committed by a player in his or her own penalty area, the opponents are awarded a penalty kick (see Law 14).

Essential Facts Regarding Direct Free Kick Fouls:

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offenses against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or done with excessive force:

- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Trips or attempts to trip
- Jumps at
- Charges
- Strikes or attempts to strike, including head-butt
- Pushes
- Tackles or challenges

A direct free kick is also awarded if a player:

- Commits a handball offense (except for the goalkeeper inside his own penalty area)
- Holds an opponent
- Impedes an opponent with contact
- Bites or spits at someone
- Throws an object at the ball, an opponent or a match official, or makes contact with the ball with a held object.

Essential Facts Regarding the Indirect Free Kick Fouls:

An indirect free kick is awarded if a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner.
- Impedes the progress of an opponent without contact being made.

- Is guilty of dissent or other verbal offenses.
- Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player.
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands.
- An indirect free kick is awarded if a goalkeeper, inside their penalty area, commits any
- of the following offences:
 - Touches the ball with the hands/arm after releasing it and before it has touched another player.
 - Touches the ball with the hand/arm after:
 - It has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate.
 - If the goalkeeper has clearly kicked or attempted to kick the ball from a pass or throw-in from a teammate and the kick is unsuccessful, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball without committing an offense.

Essential Facts Regarding Cautionable Offenses:

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if guilty of:

- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent, by word or action,
- Persistent offenses
- Delaying the restart of play
- Failing to respect the required distance during corner kicks, free kicks, dropped ball, or throw-ins
- Entering, re-entering, or deliberately leaving the field of play without permission of the referee

Essential Facts Regarding Sending-Off Offenses:

A player, substitute, or substituted player who commits any of the following offenses is sent off and shown the red card:

- Serious foul play.
- Violent conduct.
- Biting or spitting at someone.
- Denying opposing team a goal or obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing deliberate handball offence (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area).
- Denying opposing team a goal or obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a non-deliberate handball offence outside their own penalty area.
- Denying a goal or obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick.
- Using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures.
- Receiving a second caution in the same game.

Additionally, coaches can be warned, cautioned and shown the yellow card, or sent-off and shown the red card for misconduct. Where the offender cannot be identified, the senior coach will receive the sanction.

LAW 13: FREE KICKS

Essential Facts Regarding Free Kicks:

- Direct free kicks are awarded for direct free kick fouls and a goal may be scored directly against the opponents.
- Indirect free kicks are awarded for indirect free kick fouls and certain technical offenses, including heading at 12U. After the ball is in play, it must touch or be played by a second player from either team before a goal can be scored.
- The opposing team must remain at least eight yards from the ball until the ball is kicked into play.
- The ball is in play from a free kick once it has been kicked and has clearly moved.
- The player taking the free kick may not touch the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player. The penalty for violation is an indirect free kick for the opponents from the point of the offense. When a defensive wall consists of three or more members of the defending team, all attacking players must remain 1 yard from the wall until the ball is in play.

LAW 14: THE PENALTY KICK

Essential Facts Regarding Penalty Kick:

- A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.
- The kick is taken from the penalty mark located ten yards from the goal line.
- The ball is in play once it has been kicked and clearly moves. The ball must be kicked forward.

- All players must be on the field of play, outside the penalty area, eight yards from the ball, and must stand behind the penalty mark, except for the kicker and the opposing goalkeeper.
- The defending goalkeeper remains on the goal line between the goalposts facing the kicker until the ball has been kicked. The goalkeeper must have at least part of one-foot touching, in line with, or behind, the goal line.
- The kicker must wait for the referee's signal before taking the kick.
- The player taking the penalty kick may not play the ball twice in succession without it first touching another player (penalty is an indirect free kick for the opposing team).
- Once completing the run-up, players may not feint to kick the ball. Players can feint during the run-up.
- For infringements of the Law by the defending team, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has not been scored.
- For infringements of the Law by the attacking team, except for the kicker playing the ball twice in succession, the kick shall be retaken if a goal was scored.

LAW 15: THE THROW-IN

Essential Facts Regarding Throw-In:

- The throw-in shall be taken from the point at which the ball left the field.
- The thrower must face the field and part of both feet must remain on or behind the touchline.
- The ball must be thrown with both hands from behind and over the head.
- Opposing players must stand no less than 2 yards from point at which the throw-in is taken.
- The ball is in play as soon as it is both released and has entered the field of play.
- The thrower may not play the ball a second time in succession (penalty is an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the point of the infraction).
- If the ball is improperly thrown in, it shall be retaken by a player of the opposing team.
- A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.
- Exception to Offside Law is permitted for the first person to receive the ball from a throw-in.

LAW 16: THE GOAL KICK

Essential Facts Regarding Goal Kick:

- The ball may be placed anywhere within the goal area.
- The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves.
- Opposing players must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is kicked.
- A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.
- The player taking the goal kick may not play the ball twice in succession (penalty is an indirect free kick for the opposing team).
- Exception to Offside Law is permitted for the first person to receive the ball from a goal kick.

LAW 17: THE CORNER KICK

Essential Facts Regarding Corner Kick:

- The ball is placed within the corner arc at the nearest corner flag post.
- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- The ball is in play after it has been kicked and clearly moves.
- Opposing players must remain eight yards from the corner arc until the ball is in play.
- The corner flag must not be moved or removed during the taking of the corner kick.
- The kicker may not play the ball twice in succession (penalty is an indirect free kick for the opposing team).
- Exception to Offside Law is permitted for the first person to receive the ball from a corner kick.

Heading: Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division players 11U (12U for programs without single age divisions) and below in both practices and matches. An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team if a player age 10 or younger deliberately touches the ball with his/her head during a match. The indirect free kick will be taken from the place where the player touched the ball with his/her head.

Players 10 years old and younger, approved to play up in a division where heading is allowed, are still prohibited from heading the ball. The player, parents and coaches are responsible for ensuring the player does not head the ball in practice or in matches consistent with the standards set by US Soccer.

APPENDIX A:

SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

SAFE HAVEN INTRODUCTION

Agreeing to a background check is also required for each volunteer. Safe Haven® is both a child AND volunteer protection program.

The child protection aspect is intended to prevent child abuse, promote education and awareness, enforce policies and screen and train volunteers. It includes proactive steps that promote a positive, healthy environment for children. Volunteer protection comes into play as a result of volunteer training, certification and continuing education. The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides certain legal protections for volunteers *who have been trained and certified and act in accordance with a written job description*. Safe Haven includes these three elements, giving volunteers the highest degree of protection available under the law.

KEEP IN MIND



To ensure the safety of both children and volunteers, each volunteer is **required** to take a class or online training session called AYSO's Safe Haven® focusing on safety and appropriate behavior with children as well as other on-field issues.

To coach in AYSO, you MUST complete this course!

RISK MANAGEMENT BASICS

Covered in detail within our Safe Haven course, below are some general excerpts regarding risk:

Supervision

- One adult for every 8 or fewer children.
- **At least 2 adults present at ALL times.**
- At least 1 adult of the same gender as players.
- Adults should never be alone with a child except their own (including transporting a child in a car).
- Team Coach is responsible for players on team until they are picked up or otherwise leave the area.
- **No child shall be left unsupervised** after a game or training session.
- When necessary to speak privately with a child, select a spot out of earshot but within sight of others.
- The AYSO "Buddy System" requires a minimum of 3 players whenever children are allowed to enter a restroom alone, etc. Necessary for preventing player-on-player abuse.
- Adult supervisors of children must ensure that players are not allowed to abuse other players during AYSO activities.

Physical contact with children should be:

- In response to the need of the child only.
- With the child's permission.
- Respectful of any resistance or hesitation.
- Careful to avoid private parts (hug from the side only).
- In the open, never in private.
- Brief in duration.
- Age and developmentally appropriate.

Social Media!

To help address the growing need to protect children from abuse, which includes the invasion of privacy rights and/or volunteers from misunderstandings and false accusations, the following recommendations are suggested for electronic communications and the use of social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter.

- Maintain transparency in communications with children while protecting children's identity and privacy. It is the responsibility of adults to maintain appropriate boundaries!
- All communications regarding AYSO activities and participation in the program must be directed to parents and guardians including voice messages, e-mails and text messages (it is up to the child's parents to communicate necessary information).
- If, for older players or youth volunteers, parents/guardians allow direct communications with a player or youth volunteers, parents must still be copied on any and all messages.
- Adults should refrain from private, personal, on-going electronic conversations with children.
- It is not advised to provide player access to your personal social media site (i.e., Facebook). Settings should be set to 'Private.'

The lines between personal, private and public are becoming very thin in today's tech-dominant world, please be responsible and fully aware of the challenges!

GENERAL GUIDELINES TO INJURY MANAGEMENT

In dealing with injuries, the coach must be competent and in control of the situation and remain calm to prevent panic. When at all unsure, GET professional help!

DO NOT

- Try to diagnose a serious injury.
- Touch the injury, but rather ask the injured player to move the affected area.
- A serious injury will not allow movement by the injured player and will give the coach a clue to the seriousness of the injury.

DO

- Seek professional help for all but minor injuries.
- Put the child's welfare ahead of the team's needs. AYSO philosophy emphasizes healthy competition in a proper perspective. Playing youngsters with serious injuries is incompatible with our value system.

Is a player ready to return to play?

- Can the player walk without limping?
- Can the player run in a straight line? Or cut from side to side?
- Can the player execute other demands of the game?
- Is the player safe from further injury?
- If the answer is no to any of these, do **not** return player to the game.

General Care and Treatment of Injuries or Conditions

Injury	Treatment
Blisters	Don't pop blister or cut dead skin away. Cover with Vaseline. Apply blister-specific Band-Aids or moleskin (cut piece out to surround blister, do not place directly on blister).
Sprain (Ankle, Knee, Wrist, Elbow)	Pressure wrap, ice for 20 minutes per hour during first 48 hours. Elevate when possible. RICE - Rest Ice Compression Elevation
Muscle Strain (Pull)	RICE
Contusion (Bruise)	RICE
Cramp	Apply light pressure with hand. Stretch muscle with steady pressure. Ensure player is well hydrated.
Nose Bleed	Direct pressure (pinch nostrils.) Sit player up. Don't blow nose.
Bleeding	See Safe Haven
Cut or Abrasions	Stop bleeding with direct pressure. Wash with antiseptic. Close with adhesive strip or butterfly. Cover with dry sterile dressing.
"Wind Knocked Out"	Lie on side or back. Encourage slow, relaxed breathing. Try to reduce anxiety.
Heat Exhaustion - Player Feels Cool, Clammy and Damp	Move to shade. Douse with cool water. Give fluids.
Unconsciousness	Check airway, breathing, and pulse. Don't move (risk of spinal injury). Get help!
Concussion (Possible With or Without Consciousness)	Look for loss of memory, confusion, headache, dilated pupils, nausea. Do not send player back into game. Refer to CDC's signs & symptoms. If any doubt, get help.
Choking - Object Blocking Wind Passage	Use Heimlich Maneuver. Get help!
Fracture/Dislocation	Immobilize area. Get help!
Heat Stroke - Player Feels Hot and Dry	Hospital now!
Hypothermia	Shield from wind and cold, wrap in warm blankets and cover head. Get Help!

When at all unsure GET professional help!

APPENDIX B:

TEAM MANAGEMENT

ORGANIZING THE TEAM

1. Develop a Team Goal.

“Development over Winning” or “Players having FUN while learning about soccer” are good bases for a team goal. Develop in conjunction with your players and parents.

2. Develop a Coaching Philosophy.

You can base your personal coaching philosophy on your own perspective or the AYSO Coach Pledge (see *Appendix E*).

3. Conduct a Parents’ Meeting!

- Discuss AYSO’s Vision, Mission and Six Philosophies! Remember, **this is what makes AYSO unique!**
- Explain your Coaching Philosophy. Your guidelines and expectations (share your coaching experience or lack thereof), and team policies regarding:
 - ☐ Equipment brought to practice by each player: water, ball (properly inflated), shin guards, appropriate clothing, footwear, (sunscreen), etc.
 - ☐ Attendance at practices and games.
 - ☐ Player and parent behavior. You can discuss expectations of players and parents based on the Player and Parent Pledges as well as introduce Kids Zone.
- Discuss the team’s goal(s).
- Introduce the small-sided match and why we play it.
- Educate parents briefly on the *Laws of the Game* specific to this age group. Distributing the ABC’s of AYSO (contact your Regional Commissioner for more info) is a great way to introduce new parents to soccer and AYSO.
- GET HELP – You will need:
 - ☐ Assistant Coaches
 - ☐ Team Manager for administrative duties such as phone calls, coordinating carpools, etc.
 - ☐ Team Parent to develop snack schedule, plan social activities, etc.

MATCH DAY MANAGEMENT

Prior to Match Day

- Remind parents where and what time your team will meet.
- Ask parents to have players arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to kick-off in order to account for late arrivals, warm-up and prepare accordingly.

Match Day

- **Check Your Equipment Before You Leave Home:** make sure you have all the equipment you need.

Before the Match

- Arrive early: at least 10 minutes before the time you expect your players.
- Gather team: begin “free play activity” as players arrive.
- Conduct a warm-up, which should include a ball per player or pair. Avoid long lines. Players need to get moving and familiar with the ball.
- Talk: Excite them about getting ready to play.
- Remind them to have fun and to do their best!
- Review training that was practiced and how it should be integrated into the game.
- A quick reminder of the rules can be most beneficial (pending age).

After the Match

- Limit any post match speeches! At the most a very brief review of what went well.
- Ask if anyone is hurt.
- Thank the players for participating and congratulate players who worked particularly hard.
- Remind players (and parents) of next practice or match.
- Wish them well for the remainder of their weekend!



APPENDIX C:

SOCCER FITNESS AND NUTRITION

STAYING HEALTHY

Fitness

Fitness can be defined as a combination of speed, strength, stamina, suppleness and skill and should be specific to meet the demands of the sport. Speed and stamina are two main components of fitness that all soccer players require (and vary depending on the player's role in the team). There are two types of stamina that we will address: aerobic and anaerobic.

Aerobic Conditioning

Aerobic fitness uses oxygen to perform exercise. Physical exercise such as jogging constantly improves the body's ability to transport oxygen to the muscles and allows the athlete to work at a constant rate without being completely fatigued. Aerobic exercise helps to build athletic stamina for sustained performance.

Anaerobic Conditioning

Anaerobic fitness is high intensity exercise without the use of oxygen. High-energy activities such as sprinting and jumping require the use of energy (ATP, glycogen) that is stored in the muscles. This happens when the body needs to get energy quickly. Anaerobic capacity can be improved by performing high intensity exercises for short durations.

Soccer-Specific Fitness

Soccer players need a combination of aerobic and anaerobic fitness. Some positions require a higher level of aerobic fitness, while others require more anaerobic-specific fitness.

Midfield Players tend to cover the most distance during a game as they are expected to continuously link with the offense and defense. Because of this, midfield players need a more all-round fitness profile with an emphasis on both aerobic and anaerobic capacity.

Attackers and Defenders need more training that prioritizes speed. Although defenders and attackers can often get more rest time than midfielders, they are also required to perform sprints at a faster speed to be successful in their crucial phases of play. For improvements in acceleration, repeated sprints of around six seconds in duration will be effective.

Hydration

With 70-75% of your total weight made up from water, it is essential to stay hydrated throughout the day, not just prior to activity. Ultimately, fluid intake is based on the size of the player, temperature, humidity and length of game (minutes played) or practice. In general, players need:

- Two to three hours prior to participation, players should drink approx. 16 fl. oz. (2 cups) to 20 fl. oz. (2.5 cups).
- Ten to 20 minutes prior to activity the players should drink approx. 7 fl. oz. (0.875 cups) to 10 fl. oz. (1.25 cups) of fluids.

Children don't sweat as effectively as adults and without adequate fluid replacement, fatigue can quickly set in (when the body loses as little as 5% of its water it can reduce physical performance by 20-30%). Therefore, it is essential for soccer players to regulate their fluid intake in order to play at their top level. Water is adequate before a game, while sports drinks can be used at halftime or after the game to help replenish lost electrolytes and carbs (they also taste good so kids are more likely to drink them).

The Importance Of What We Eat

Soccer players require the right level of energy, which can be produced from eating a balanced diet high in carbohydrates. Carbohydrates provide the most energy to the body and can be split into 'simple' or 'complex'. It is important to know the right types of foods to eat and which foods provide the best source of energy.

'Simple' carbohydrates (sugar) can be found in candy, soda, sweets and cakes, and while they can provide energy, players can experience highs and lows from this type of food. Simple sugars are still a good source of energy but should be consumed from natural foods such as fruit and vegetables.

‘Complex’ carbohydrates (starches) take longer to break down providing a longer lasting energy source. Starches include grain products such as bread, crackers, pasta and cereals. Eating whole grain starches also provides the body with fiber, which is another important nutrient to aid digestion.

Foods that contain protein such as meats are an integral part of an athlete’s diet. Foods rich in protein help to build, maintain and replace damaged tissues. While all meats contain protein, there are some that are easier to digest than others. White meats (chicken and fish) are easier to digest than red meats (beef) and can be eaten to provide the right protein levels. Milk, yogurt, eggs, soybeans are also good sources of lean protein.

Pre-Game (starts days prior)

It is important for soccer players to eat the right diet on a daily basis and not rely solely on a pre-game meal. Energy required and expended during a game comes from what was eaten two to three days prior, not that day. A typical routine should be to gradually decrease training intensity while increase the percentage of total diet made up of carbohydrates. This helps muscles load up glycogen needed for the game.

Eating the right foods on game day will provide some energy, but its main focus is to compliment the existing energy stores, and to avoid hunger during the game. Eating light foods such as fruit smoothies, yoghurt or cereal two to three hours prior to a game or workout will provide a carb-rich diet that is light on the stomach and easy to digest. Eating in moderation at this time is important so that you do not completely fill your stomach. Avoid high fat, fiber and protein pre-game and also foods you are familiar with to avoid an adverse reaction.

During a Game

During the game, hydration is the priority. Water is great anytime but sports drinks can benefit if activity is going to be longer than an hour. Their sweet taste encourages kids to drink them, and they provide small amounts of carbohydrate to keep muscles fueled, and salts to help replace what’s been lost through sweating.

Post-Game

After exercise, kids need to refuel with some healthy carbohydrates and protein (within 30 minutes after the game and again within two hours when muscles are most receptive to carb replacement). Chocolate milk is an effective recovery food since it provides fluid, potassium, carbohydrates and protein – all of which the body craves after activity. Other great post-exercise foods are sandwiches, fruits, bagels, raisins, pretzels, yogurt and smoothies.

Healthy Snacks

Many younger soccer players run from school directly to practices or games and have no time to stop for a high-energy snack to boost energy for performance. To stay fueled, players should keep water and healthy snacks accessible in their backpacks, lockers and coolers. Some healthy suggestions:

Bananas and other whole fruits, low-fat muffins, trail mix, whole grain crackers and cheese, fruit snacks, raisins, yogurt, carrots, apple wedges with peanut butter, granola bars, string cheese, and pretzels.

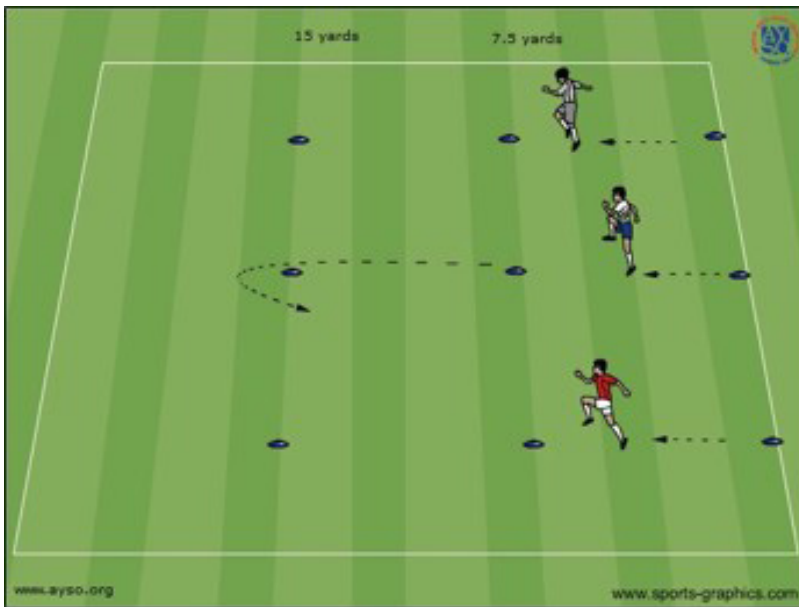
NOTE: At your team meeting, find out about any food allergies, i.e., peanuts, to avoid dangerous situations.

APPENDIX D:

DYNAMIC STRETCHES

GET READY TO PLAY

Dynamic stretching, in conjunction with static (pending the player's specific need) help prepare the muscles, increase the range of motion and warm up the body. Exercises can either be done freely within an open grid (more suitable for younger players) or organized similar to the option below.



Mark 10 x 15 yards area with a starting cone, a middle cone 7.5 yards from the starting one and an end cone 15 yards from starting one.

Create three sets of cones to have three groups of players working at the same time. Players perform dynamic stretches until the halfway point (cone) and then jog to the end cone, before returning to the starting cone (by jogging forwards or backwards). The process moves continuously until a dynamic stretch has been completed for each main body part.

Suggested dynamic stretches (for short video demonstrations visit [aysou.video/stretches](https://www.aysou.org/video/stretches)):

- Skipping
- Jogging forwards with arms rotating in forwards circles
- Jogging backwards with arms rotating in backwards circles
- Knees into the chest
- Heels to the backside
- Side shuffle
- Opening the leg (up and over motion)
- Closing the leg (up and over motion)
- Cariocca
- Swing leg across body
- Forward lunges

Coaching Points

- TPF (Teach Proper Form).
- Select player to lead the stretches (leadership, responsibility, reward, esteem).

APPENDIX E:

PLEDGES

AYSO COACH PLEDGE

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Enthusiastically support and practice the AYSO mission to “enrich children’s lives” by embracing our Philosophies of: **Everyone Plays®, Open Registration, Balanced Teams, Positive Coaching, Good Sportsmanship and Player Development.**
2. Stay informed about sound principles of coaching and child development.
3. Respect the game and know the Laws.
4. Emphasize to my players that they must abide by the *Laws of the Game* at all times.
5. Develop a true respect for all referees judgments.
6. Develop a team respect for our opponents and each other.
7. Ensure a safe environment for my players.
8. Never yell at or ridicule a player.
9. Always set a good example.
10. Remember that soccer is a game and all games should be fun.
11. Let the players play without constant instructions or commentary from sidelines.
12. Role model good sporting behavior.

AYSO PLAYER PLEDGE

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Play for the sake of playing a game, not just to please a parent or coach.
2. Always give my best effort and work as hard for my teammates as I do for myself.
3. Treat all players as I would like to be treated.
4. Be a team player.
5. Be a good sport and support good plays whether they are made by my team or my opponents.
6. Abide by the *Laws of the Game*.
7. Cooperate with my coaches, teammates, opponents and the referee.
8. **Never argue with or complain about referee calls or decisions.**
9. Control my temper when I feel I have been wronged.
10. Not use offensive or abusive language.
11. Remember that the object of the game is to win, but the goal is to enjoy myself and give my best effort.

AYSO PARENT PLEDGE

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Attend and participate in team parent meetings as requested.
2. Be on time or early when dropping off or picking up my child for training or game.
3. Ensure my child is supported and encouraged by family or loved ones at games.
4. Encourage my child to have fun and keep sport in its proper perspective.
5. **Define winning for my child as doing his/her very best and appreciate Development over Winning.**
6. Endeavor to understand the Laws (rules) of soccer and support the efforts of referees.
7. Honor the game and show respect for all involved including coaches, players, opponents, spectators and referees.
8. **Applaud and encourage players from both teams and not yell out instructions** (as this causes confusion to the players and ultimately hinders development).
9. Refrain from making negative comments about the game, coaches, referees or players, especially from the sidelines.
10. Encourage others to refrain from negative or abusive sideline behavior.
11. As parents, keep the game in perspective for our children (as a pastime, sport, fun, exercise).
12. Abide by the tenets of Kids Zone for appropriate sideline behavior and support AYSO’s vision to enrich children’s lives.

APPENDIX F: TRAINING PLAN

[illegible]

APPENDIX G: PLAYER EVALUATION

Player: _____ Number: _____ Age: _____ Position: _____

TECHNICAL	RATING	COMMENTS
Ball Control	1 2 3 4 5	
Receiving	1 2 3 4 5	
Passing	1 2 3 4 5	
Dribbling	1 2 3 4 5	
Running with the Ball	1 2 3 4 5	
Finishing	1 2 3 4 5	
Creativity	1 2 3 4 5	
TACTICAL		
Offensive Awareness	1 2 3 4 5	
Defensive Awareness	1 2 3 4 5	
Position-Specific Awareness	1 2 3 4 5	
PHYSICAL		
Agility & Balance	1 2 3 4 5	
Speed	1 2 3 4 5	
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5	
Strength	1 2 3 4 5	
Explosiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Perception & Awareness	1 2 3 4 5	
PSYCHOSOCIAL		
Competitiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Confidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Teamwork	1 2 3 4 5	
Leadership	1 2 3 4 5	
Communication	1 2 3 4 5	

1: Needs Improvement

2: Below Average

3: Average

4: Above Average

5: Skill Mastery

APPENDIX H: COACH REFLECTION

Technique/Topic: _____

PREPARATION: Did I...	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Prepare a written training plan			
Arrive timely to prepare coaching area			
Use Free Play (upon player arrival +)			
Introduce objective/topic			
COACHING: Did I...			
Effectively demonstrate where possible			
Involve player(s) where possible			
Observe and correct			
Effectively present coaching points			
Progress/modify activity (speed, space, opposition)			
Scrimmage (emphasize topic but let them play!)			
ASSESSMENT: Did I...			
Minimize verbal instructions			
Teach appropriate laws where possible			
Minimize use of 3 Ls			
Provide adequate water breaks			
Engage and inspire the players			
Educate!			
Accomplish the goals of my training plan			
Finish on time			

One thing to improve for next training session: _____

APPENDIX I:

EPIC

EPIC PROGRAM

Integrating the “EPIC” Player into Your Region

An EPIC player (Everyone Plays In our Community) is a player whose physical and/or mental challenges make it difficult to successfully participate on a mainstream soccer team.

What is successful participation? It should be defined by the player’s enjoyment and the safety of all team members.

The player who has only a physical disability is likely to have many of the expectations and capabilities of a non-disabled player and should be coached accordingly. Every effort should be made to integrate these players into mainstream teams, as much as safety allows.

EPIC is an AYSO program designed to provide a quality soccer experience for EPIC players. EPIC teams offer many players with disabilities the least-restrictive and safest environment in which to learn and enjoy the game of soccer. Contact your Regional Commissioner, Regional Coach Administrator, Regional EPIC Administrator or the AYSO National Office to obtain AYSO’s special EPIC training materials and information on how to begin a EPIC program.

APPENDIX J:

AYSO COACHES CORNER, Q&A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

My team is very strong and often is many goals ahead early. Understanding a blowout doesn't really help anyone, what can I do to contain it within reason?

This is a delicate topic but a very important one. Although we do not have an official policy on this, from a coaching perspective, the challenge is *not* to penalize the winning or scoring team (the purpose of the game after all), but not humiliate or discourage the opposing team who are being easily beaten. A few pointers for consideration:

- Coaches should be proactive *early* in the game if they see an obvious disparity.
- Winning team should *not* be penalized, i.e., reducing players, stopping scoring or sitting better players.
- Losing team should *not* be patronized, i.e., blatant efforts like playing two players down.
- Rather, we should look at some *proactive and challenging coaching conditions* for coaches potentially *about* to run up a score:
 - ❑ Rotate players' positions on winning team (GK plays striker, strikers play GK/defender, etc.)
 - ❑ Introduce a specific number of passes to score (again, a reasonable challenge that is less noticeable).
 - ❑ Ball needs to be played "wide" before being put into offensive area.
 - ❑ Selected players can only shoot using weaker foot.
 - ❑ Players must perform a specific turn or move, i.e., step-over before shooting.

In actuality, there is no guaranteed way to lessen a blowout or ensure it doesn't happen; however, a proactive awareness and effort by the winning coach *can* help lessen the impact. It should also be noted that prioritizing "development over winning" from day one could help the player's perspective.

Why do we have to be trained to coach the kids?

Age appropriate training and certification benefits *all* members of the organization. Most importantly, **our players** receive age appropriate and current coaching methods, which ultimately boosts their soccer (and personal) development, as well as their overall AYSO experience.

Our volunteer coaches are given insight to the modern game; learn about our wonderful organization (what makes AYSO unique); and are introduced to the most innovative and current coaching methodologies and activities. This not only provides great education, but also a comfort level to coaching their selected age group (maximizing their volunteer experience). After all, coaches need to have fun as well!

Coach training provides **our parents** with the comfort of knowing that the individual working with *their* child is age appropriately trained and qualified. As well as soccer-specific training, the fact each coach has been trained and certified in our child and volunteer protection course, Safe Haven, further promotes a confidence level for our parents when they hand over their precious ones each week.

Locally, we create a strong reputation for quality programming for our **Regions** to stimulate their volunteer and player base. And finally, **nationally**, requiring age-specific coach training separates ourselves from other youth sports groups in our resolute commitment to Player Development.

In conclusion, coach training is a major component in ensuring our players; parents and coaches enjoy their AYSO experience to the max!

Why “no goalkeepers” until 10U?

Soccer games without goalkeepers provide a better experience for young children for several reasons, which is why not only AYSO but U.S. Youth Soccer and the U.S. Soccer Federation discourage the use of goalkeepers at the 8U level and below.

First of all, the goalkeeper is denied a chance to run around and chase the ball. The boy or girl who must guard the goal is being prevented from doing what he or she signed up for - play soccer!

Depending on the game, the young goalkeeper is in danger of being bored (if the action is on the other end) and getting discouraged if the ball keeps flying into the goal. In the worst-case scenario, players who are forced to play goalkeeper at the early ages lose their enthusiasm for the sport.

Also, we want young players to shoot at goal as much as possible, because striking the ball is such an important skill for players to master. Young kids are more likely to shoot often when they’re aiming a goalkeeper-free net. With a goalkeeper there, they become apprehensive, looking for the perfect shot that they are not physically mature enough to pull off. Nor are the very young kids physically prepared to make saves. They may get in front of a tough shot now and again, but they just don’t have the tools for the position’s requirements and are inclined to feel devastated when scored upon.

In fact, not using goalkeepers makes the coach’s job much easier because the coach doesn’t need to cajole players to take turns in goal.

And the use of goalkeepers at such young ages also creates a temptation for the coach to make his bigger and more advanced athletes play goalkeeper, because this will greatly increase his team’s chances of winning. In other words, the use of goalkeepers encourages the results-driven approach to coaching that hinders long-term player development and can suck the fun out of soccer. The players who are more advanced athletically at the young ages shouldn’t be kept from enjoying field play so that the coach can rack up some wins.

When goalkeepers are used, at the 10U level for example, the goalkeepers should be rotated frequently. Even players who enjoy playing goalkeeper should not be restricted to the position and should get plenty of time playing in the field. Players shouldn’t specialize at any one position until they are well into their teens.

Many of the nation’s best goalkeepers - Hope Solo, Tim Howard, Brad Friedel and AYSO alum Brad Guzan - spent much of their youth as field players. This not only prevented them from burning out on the position, but honed the foot skills goalkeepers need and their ability to read the game, which is crucial to being good goalkeeper.

Kids don’t juggle in a game, so why is it so important?

Diego Maradona was once asked why he worked so hard in training perfecting tricks and juggling the ball, to which he answered, “Because I can.”

Tapping the ball in the air over and over means players are learning to hit the sweet spot while developing a good touch. Juggling with feet, thighs and all controlling surfaces trains players to be comfortable with the ball and develops striking and controlling skills.

Juggling helps with foot-eye coordination, and is a great way to work on balance. It also develops the weak foot. A key to developing soccer skills is to play with the ball as much as possible, and juggling can be done anytime, anywhere and on your own. If you can encourage your players to juggle, you’re giving them a way to work on their skills outside of organized practice and games (an important element in development).

Ball mastery gives players a competitive edge and makes tactical understanding easier to comprehend.

Why Does AYSO play “small-sided” matches at 6U, 8U, 10U and 12U?

The most influential soccer organizations in the world all agree that small-sided matches are the best way to develop soccer players. Almost every national soccer program from Brazil, Spain, England and the United States as well as the largest professional clubs including Barcelona, Manchester United and the Los Angeles Galaxy promote small-sided matches as the best tool to develop young players. This is formally confirmed in the US Soccer Player Development Initiatives.

Small-sided matches encourage young players to be engaged in the game at all times. They have more touches on the ball, which helps players build confidence on the ball. It also allows for coaches to spend more time on each player helping them develop their individual skills. It allows the younger players to make less complex decisions as they learn the game. Lastly, it allows for more opportunities for goals and success and excitement for the young players.

With the new heading restriction limiting heading in AYSO until 14U, is there anything we “can” do to help develop technique prior to this age?

In support of U.S. Soccer’s Concussion Initiative, the need to teach players the proper technique for heading a ball is an important component of player safety. For 10U and 12U players, in a controlled and individual environment (where heading is an isolated skill being taught *away* from any form of opposition or other aspects of the game), the use of lightweight balls (**foam, balloon, etc.**) would be acceptable for teaching heading technique.



TIPS FOR A POSITIVE SIDELINE AND PLAYER-CENTERED PLAYING ENVIRONMENT

Today, as youth soccer in the U.S. sees the need for a Referee Abuse Prevention (RAP) program, AYSO has a unique opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to our mission. While some may view the RAP as a strict corrective measure, we see it as a chance to lead by example—by reinforcing the positive, respectful, and enriching play environments we’ve always championed.

As coaches, we set the standard!

We are 100% responsible for our actions and the atmosphere we create on the sidelines. Let’s lead with respect, perspective, and positivity—because our players and referees thrive in a fun, family-friendly environment. Be clear, this is not a goal—it is a responsibility!

1. Set Clear Expectations Early

- Preseason meeting:
 - Outline AYSO and team values, sportsmanship, and importance of positive sideline behavior.
 - Distribute the new Code of Conduct.
 - Emphasize respect for referees, no coaching from the sidelines, and positive-only comments.
 - Overview the Referee Abuse Prevention Program.

2. Encourage Positive Communication

- Cheer don’t coach! Remind parents to support all players with encouragement and respect, not instructions.
- Model behavior: Coaches and team leaders should demonstrate calm, respectful interactions. At ALL times respect officials!
- Help communicate and reinforce our core values to your team and parents.

3. Provide Opportunities for Involvement

- Give parents roles like team parent, snack coordinator, team photographer, or fundraiser lead. Involvement can foster a sense of community and reduce sideline stress.
- Create a Parent Liaison Role:
- Appoint a trusted parent to act as a bridge (sideline captain) between the coaches and other parents to help monitor the crowd and quietly remind others of expectations if needed. This helps diffuse tension and keeps communication flowing.

4. Model and Celebrate Sportsmanship

- Your own sideline conduct sets the tone. If you’re composed, respectful, and focused on the kids, it sends a strong message.
- Highlight examples of good behavior from both players and parents.
- Consider a “Positive Parent of the Game” shoutout or small reward.
- Send brief weekly reminders or updates that reinforce the values of the team and highlight positive sportsmanship (e.g., “Loved the positive support on Saturday!”).



TIPS FOR A POSITIVE SIDELINE AND PLAYER-CENTERED PLAYING ENVIRONMENT

5. Address Issues Promptly and Privately

- If issues do occur during a match, the coach, assistant coach, or designate deals with them promptly and effectively (in a private and non-confrontational method to avoid embarrassment).
- Be direct but respectful: “I appreciate your passion, but we agreed to create a positive environment. I need your help to make that happen.”
- Escalate if needed: If behavior persists, involve regional leadership.

6. Share Educational Resources

- Explain the “Why”: Help parents understand the damage caused by negative sideline behavior: undermining confidence, confusing kids with mixed coaching, embarrassing the team, and driving away referees.
- Offer articles or short videos on youth sports psychology, the impact of parental behavior, and the benefits of positive reinforcement.

7. Players!

- At all times take ownership for on field and sideline player behavior! Players should also know their responsibilities!





CONSEQUENCES OF REFEREE ABUSE

Although we hope this issue does not affect you directly, it is important to recognize that this initiative applies to AYSO as a national member association. As such, we must acknowledge and address the growing crisis in youth soccer related to referee abuse and the associated disciplinary measures.

Referee abuse—whether verbal, emotional, or physical—has become a serious concern across the country. This behavior not only undermines the integrity of the game but also contributes to a significant decline in referee recruitment and retention. Without referees, the game cannot go on.

As part of a U.S. Soccer national effort to combat this crisis, AYSO is committed to supporting stronger policies, increasing awareness, and enforcing appropriate penalties for misconduct.



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NON-PHYSICAL OFFENSES of gross misconduct, abuse, and / or assault

NON-PHYSICAL *	MIN. GAMES	TIME
Insulting, Belittling, Insinuating or Taunting Behavior Undermining Referee Authority	2	
Harassment, Intimidation, Retaliation, Abusive, or Threatening (Non Physical) Language	4	
Aggression, Attacking, Derogatory, Cyberbullying, Doxing or Threatening (Physical / Violence) Language	6	6 - 24 Months
Offensive or Discriminatory Act	10	12 - 24 Months

PHYSICAL OFFENSES of gross misconduct, abuse, and / or assault

PHYSICAL *	MIN. GAMES	TIME
Minor or Slight Deliberate Touching	3	1 - 6 Months
Pushing, Grabbing, Pulling, Squeezing, Pinching, Lightly Slapping, Use of Object in Non Striking Manner, or Physical Property Damage	10	6 - 24 Months
Hitting, Punching, Elbowing, Kicking, Biting, Spitting, Choking, Tackling, Throwing or Use of Object or Any Part of Body (Forearm, Knee, Head) in a Striking Manner		12 Months - Lifetime

(*) **Disclaimer:** These are only a few examples of abuse – other actions or statements may also fall into this category.

KEY PENALTY FACTORS

- Single offenses are at **minimum the prescribed game penalty or time penalty** for non red zone offenses
- Penalties can be **both game and time depending on severity** / circumstances
- Second time offenders receive **double punishment**
- Third time offenders receive a **lifetime ban**
- More than one offense at the same time is **at least the punishment for the most serious offense**
- Offenses against minors are automatically subject to a **“minor multiplier” resulting in triple punishment**
- **One offense warning per league** to be managed by states and leagues collaboratively
- Game consequences are **inclusive of 1 game penalty for any red cards given**

APPENDIX M:

GLOSSARY

Activity: Drill or exercise.

Balance: Reading the attack and providing an equal or greater number of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.

Center: To pass the ball from a wide position on the field into the penalty area, i.e., crossing.

Clear: A throw or kick by the goalkeeper or a kick by the defender in an attempt to get the ball away (clear) from the goal area.

Combination Play: Passing combinations executed by two or more players, i.e., wall pass.

Compact: Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area makes it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball.

Corner kick: Awarded to the opposing team when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least ten yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in 12U games. Refer to the *Laws of the Game* for further details.

Cover: A player creates a second defensive line in order to provide defensive support of a teammate or teammates.

Delay: Slowing down the attack by closing the gap and denying space to allow the defense to get organized.

Dribble: A way of advancing the ball by a series of short taps with one or both feet.

Dynamic: Moving, i.e., dynamic stretching (during warm up).

Far Post: Side of the goal or goal post farthest from the ball.

Forward: Striker. Primarily an attacking player.

Goalkeeper: The last line of defense. The goalkeeper is the only player who can use his hands within the field of play (limited to within the penalty area).

Goal line: Define ends of the field.

Grid: A marked (usually with cones), restricted playing area.

Half-volley: Kicking the ball just as it is rebounding off the ground.

Handball: Illegal act of intentionally touching the ball with the hands or arms.

Heading: A method of scoring, passing, and controlling the ball by making contact with the head.

Inside of the Foot – Push Pass: This technique is used to advance the ball or to maintain possession by passing to a teammate.

Inside of the Foot – Ball: Technique used to control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

Control/Restraint (Composure): Staying calm, disciplined and organized in the face of an attack by maintaining proper defensive techniques and positioning.

Instep Kick: Technique used for long passes and strong shots on goal using the instep of the foot.

Lob: Or chip. A high, soft kick, which lofts the ball over the heads of the opponents or goalkeeper.

Match: Game.

Marking: Guarding an opponent.

Midfielder: A player who is primarily responsible for moving the ball from the defenders to the forwards.

Mobility: Players changing positions (filling in for one another when necessary) and moving off the ball creates numerical advantages and thereby attacking/scoring opportunities.

Near Post: Side of the goal or goal post closest to the ball.

Obstructing: Preventing the opponent from going around a player by standing in the path of movement.

One-Touch Pass: A pass made without controlling (trapping) it first.

Overlap: The attacking play of a defender or midfielder going down the touch-line past his or her own winger.

Penetration: Advancement. Moving the ball and/or players past an opponent in order to get into position to shoot and/or score, and is achieved by shooting, dribbling, and passing.

Pitch: Another name for the field of play.

Pressure: Action of a defender to restrict time and space available to the offensive player.

Physical: A player's physical attributes: speed, agility, endurance, strength and power, etc.

Psychosocial: Respect, motivation, confidence, cooperation, competitiveness, etc., and how these emotions and feelings impact a player's development. Includes a player's ability to reason, learn and solve problems.

Screen / Shielding: Retaining possession and protecting the ball by keeping your body between the ball and opponent.

Set Play: A planned offensive movement to be executed at a free kick or corner kick.

Shoulder-Charge: Legally upsetting an opponent's balance by shoulder-to-shoulder contact.

Sliding Tackle: Attempting to take the ball away from the opponent by sliding on the ground and using the feet or legs to block and hold the ball.

Static: Stretching against muscle and holding for approximately 30 seconds.

Striker: A central forward position with a major responsibility for scoring goals.

Support: Supporting teammates by creating safe options for the player with the ball or movement to influence opponent's position to help a teammate receive the ball.

Tackling: Attempting to or taking the ball away from an opponent when both players are playing the ball with their feet.

Tactical: A player's capacity to use their skill and ability within a game environment (competition), i.e., playing out of the back, possession and transition, offense/defensive and quick transition, etc.

Takeover: A 2 vs. 1 combination play in which the two offensive players move toward each other and the ball is transferred from one player to the other.

Technical: A player's ability to master ball skills, i.e., ball control, shooting, etc.

Through Pass: A pass that goes between two players and behind the defense.

Throw-In: Used to restart the game after the entire ball has crossed the touchline, whether on the ground or in the air.

Touch line: Define sides of the field.

Training (team): Practice (individual).

Trap: Controlling a ball by means of the feet, thighs, or chest.

Two-Touches: One touch is used to control the ball and the second touch is used to pass the ball.

Volley: Kicking the ball while it is in flight.

Wall Pass: A pass to a teammate, followed by a return pass on the other side of the opponent. Also called "give-and-go" or "one-two."

Warm-Up: The warm-up activity should physically prepare your players for the session as well as introduce the technical component of your session, i.e., dribbling or ball control, etc.

Width: Attacking on a broad front (players spread out) stretches the defense and creates space for players to advance.

Wing: Area of the field near the touch-line.

Winger: Name given to the right and left outside forwards.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU!

AYSO National Coaching Advisory Commission

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Jim Liston, CATZ

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(Marty Walker, Nik Alsop, Gary Gamble, Marc Davis, Stuart Barlow, Roy Collins, Lee Hartley)

Dave Chesler, US Soccer

Ian Barker, United Soccer Coaches

Robert Benavidez, Region 677

Adam Arentz, Region 165

John Kerr and Mike Brady, Duke University

Amanda Vandervort, United Soccer Coaches

John Kerr Sr.

Tim Penner, National Academy of Sports Medicine, Certified Personal Trainer

Players: Jillian Nelson, Jorgia Jasper, Olivia Snyder, Maddie Snyder,
Jarod Fountaine, Nathan Miller, Ikaika King

Scott Gimple, AYSO National

Scott Snyder, AYSO National

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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AYSO VISION

is to provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

AYSO MISSION

is to develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which promote a fun, family environment based on AYSO's Six Philosophies:

AYSO SIX PHILOSOPHIES

- Everyone Plays®
- Balanced Teams
- Open Registration
- Positive Coaching
- Good Sportsmanship
- Player Development



AYSO National Office

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everyone plays®