



KICKSTART



**AMERICAN YOUTH
SOCCER ORGANIZATION**

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERIES



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Accredited By:



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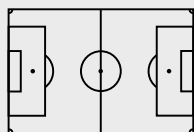
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WELCOME TO **KICKSTART**

KEEPING IT **C**ENTERED ON **KIDS**!

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 and child 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!

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

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 programming, coaching methodology and soccer skills included in this manual have been carefully researched and are designed to welcome young children into the beautiful game in an age and developmentally appropriate play environment.

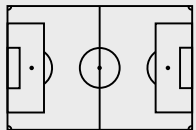
It’s time to ensure the environments we create are as imaginative, vibrant, free and full of wonder as the children they’re meant to inspire.

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

THE WORLD'S LARGEST SOCCER CLUB

Founded in Torrance, CA in 1964, AYSO is a distinguished cornerstone of U.S. Soccer and with approximately 50,000 teams across **all** age groups; AYSO is the world's largest 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, AYSO's contribution to the US game's success is founded upon its unique **Vision**, **Mission** and **Six Philosophies**.

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.

KEEP IN MIND



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

AYSO'S 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 between 3 and 19 years of age 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.

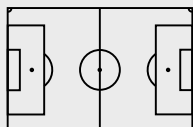
KEEP IN
MIND



AYSO's Philosophies are:

- 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.

THE CHILD IN FRONT OF YOU

Prior to stepping into the imaginative domain of our children, it is important to get to know them and their world to maximize the experience for all involved.

DEVELOPMENTAL ABILITY

Each child is unique, and Program Leaders must show deep respect for each child's individual stage of development and ability. In general, 3 and 4-year-old players present the following developmental characteristics:

Psychosocial Development

- Interested in new experiences and adventures.
- Shy.
- Inquisitive and ask lots questions.
- Able to answer simple questions.
- Creative in their fantasy play and story telling.
- Often able to distinguish between fantasy and reality.
- Have challenges sharing.
- Can identify basic colors.
- Recall key parts of a story.
- Follow three-part instructions.
- Understand big blocks of time, i.e., morning, afternoon, night.
- Able to count.

Physical Development

- Bend over without falling.
- Walk forward and backwards.
- Walk up and down stairs (alternating feet).
- Climb (on anything!).
- Stand on one foot (for approximately five seconds).
- Hop.
- Kick ball forward.
- Throw ball overhand.
- Catch bouncing ball (most of the time).



KEEP IN MIND



As players get older, they are expected to perform technical actions they may not be able to physically execute without the development of sound Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS).

However, please keep in mind that chronological age can be a very limited indicator of developmental ability, especially in educational or programmatic contexts. Applying an individualized approach allows for more accurate assessments and better support tailored to each person's unique strengths, needs, and pace of development.

A TIME OF IMAGINATION

The following chart *generalizes* age characteristics of children ages 3 through 5 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

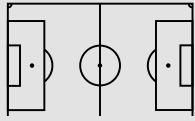


Our players are *not* mini-adults; therefore, our sessions must be adapted to life through their eyes, their interests and most important, their capabilities.

AGE APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISTICS AND ENVIRONMENTS FOR 3 AND 4 YEARS	
3	A time for freedom and imagination! Fundamental Motor Skills: balancing, walking, running, jumping, throwing, etc., should be the priority! Play environments should be rich in fun, imagination, and sensory engagement. Games should be built around adventures, storytelling, and colorful landscapes that spark curiosity and joy. Communication and instruction must be animated, using vivid imagery and expressive language that brings the experience to life.
4	It is essential for leaders to demonstrate activities and maintain a dynamic pace to keep children engaged and prevent boredom or distraction. Equally important is the way leaders connect with participants—by using familiar language and expressions that resonate with children, speaking in their terms and using their words. Most players cannot sustain prolonged activity. Program Leaders must make sure there are adequate breaks for rest and hydration. Even though activities are conducted in a group, it is important that each individual player participates in the activity with their own ball.



FROM THE FIELD



“Fundamental movement skills (FMS) are considered to be the building blocks that lead to specialized movement sequences required for adequate participation in many organized and non-organized physical activities for children, adolescents and adults.”

*Lubans DR, Morgan PJ, Cliff DP, Barnett LM, Okely AD
Fundamental Movement Skills in Children and Adolescents, 2010*

FUNDAMENTAL MOTOR SKILLS

Our Kickstart program is designed to advance the development of Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS), recognizing that today’s children may not acquire these skills solely through free play. As physical demands in sport continue to evolve, we can no longer assume that children are naturally equipped to perform the movements required for success. To prepare them for soccer-specific technical actions—and to help prevent frustration and failure—children must be intentionally guided and encouraged to strengthen their physical abilities through structured development. **Demonstrate each skill in isolation BEFORE the activity, i.e., how to twist and let the children practice with their parents’ guidance.**

Generally speaking, Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS) can be grouped into the following categories:

- Locomotor (running, hopping, skipping, etc.)
- Non-locomotor (balancing and twisting, etc.)
- Object Control (catching and throwing, kicking, etc.)

Children should be exposed to a wide base of FMS in their early years to provide a solid foundation for future physical activities and sports. If this important window of opportunity for the development of Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS) is missed, success in athletics may be hindered.

While watching young children play soccer can be undeniably charming, it’s important to recognize that this alone is not sufficient for their physical and developmental growth. To truly support their physical and cognitive development, our programming must include intentional, motor skill development. These building blocks are essential for long-term success and enjoyment in sport.

FMS HIERARCHY





SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Social and emotional skills can be grouped into three interrelated categories:

1. Cognitive regulation
2. Emotional competencies
3. Social and interpersonal skills

To truly enrich children's lives, we must prioritize the whole child and life lessons presented through our sessions, i.e., leadership, persistence, sportsmanship, etc. For each activity, there are numerous opportunities to enhance the lesson by focusing on SEL opportunities in addition to the physical, technical or tactical.

Ultimately, can we help develop self-awareness and self-management skills to support life success? Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and nurture healthy relationships? Support decision-making and responsible behaviors in sport, home and school.

This effort is a delicate thread that should be woven throughout our sessions.

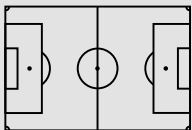
Source: The Aspen Institute Project Play, Calls for Coaches, Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports.

EARLY SPECIALIZATION

Soccer concepts must be carefully and gradually introduced to young players. Specialization in a single sport can limit a child's development of a wide base of Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS).

If children concentrate only on playing soccer, they are likely to develop foot-eye coordination through dribbling and kicking but may not develop comparable hand-eye coordination typically learned through throwing and catching in sports such as baseball or basketball. Children require a comprehensive range of physical ability for more advanced athletic skills and sports; therefore, the more sports and activities they experience the better.

FROM THE **FIELD**



"Specialization, in fact, may potentially limit overall motor skill development, which has implications for long-term physical activity patterns upon retirement from competitive sport"

*Wiersma, L.D., Pediatric Exercise Science,
Risks and Benefits of Youth Sport Specialization: Perspectives and Recommendations*

THE ENVIRONMENT

THE SANDLOT...WHY LESS STRUCTURE JUST MAKES SENSE!

Today's youth sports are increasingly structured and adult-driven, which ultimately drains available resources. The solution: change the game! Like pickleball to tennis and flag-football to football, we must adapt the environments and redefine what makes soccer—soccer.

The streets, parks, and backyards have produced some of the world's most dazzling talents. When we step back and give kids the freedom to play, we're not just building better athletes, we're nurturing healthier, happier, more creative human beings.

So, let's make room for the game to breathe. Let's bring back the joy of free play and give the players what they are crying out for: freedom. And with that freedom comes a host of powerful benefits:

Physical Health, Naturally

Running, dodging, kicking, and sprinting in player-led activity gets kids moving in ways that are fun and self-motivating. It builds cardiovascular endurance, coordination, and motor skills without ever feeling like a training session. Physical activity is more likely to become a natural part of the child's lifestyle, if the participation is self-directed.

Creativity Unleashed

With lesser rules or constant coaching, kids are free to invent. They try new moves, improvise passes, and solve problems on the fly. Every game is different, and every moment demands adaptability. This kind of spontaneous play nurtures the creative spark that turns good players into great ones.

Messi, Ronaldo, Neymar, Maradona, Cruyff, Ronaldinho honed their skills not in academies, but in the streets and sandlots, which nurture the kind of instinctive brilliance that can't be taught in a drill.



Social and Emotional Growth

Child-centric play is a social classroom. Kids learn to negotiate rules, resolve conflicts, and work as a team, all with less adult intervention. These interactions build empathy, cooperation, and emotional intelligence. They also sharpen executive function skills like planning, self-regulation, and quick decision-making.

Confidence and Independence

When kids play without adults directing every move, they take ownership. They learn from their mistakes, celebrate their successes, and build resilience. It's in these unsupervised moments that confidence and independence truly grow.

Accessible and Inclusive

All you need is a ball and a bit of space. AYSO welcomes everyone—regardless of skill level, background, or resources. And a more organic play environment is the most democratic form of the game, and often the most beautiful.

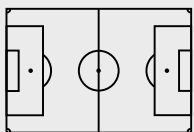
When kids are free to explore and have ownership they stay engaged longer. They play because they want to, not because they have to. And that intrinsic motivation is the foundation of lifelong passion and performance.

So, let's rethink the way we develop young players. Let's create more spaces where the game belongs to the kids. Where the ball is the teacher, and the field is a canvas for imagination.

Because sometimes, the best coaching is knowing when to step back—and let the game do the talking.



FROM THE **FIELD**



"Man, this is baseball. You gotta stop thinking. Just have fun! I mean, if you were having fun, you would've caught that ball."

Benny "The Jet" Rodriguez, The Sandlot.

KICKSTART OVERVIEW

The effective date of age determination shall be the player's age when the program commences.

AYSO Kickstart Soccer has been designed for ages 3-4. However, a child's chronological age can often conflict with developmental age, so flexibility is usually required to accommodate this variable (i.e., early maturers or late maturers).

AYSO Kickstart consists of one day per week for 6-weeks. There is a definitive sequence to the sessions but if a longer program period is required, sessions can be repeated.

It is our developmental recommendation that Kickstart is run in Jamboree framework through 6U, replacing the traditional team-based league structure.

Each Kickstart session includes:

1. A Fundamental Motor Skill Activity, i.e., skipping.
2. A Game-Like Activity to build skill and/or game understanding, i.e., dribbling and direction.
3. 2v2 or 3v3 game.

Each session has a social and emotional learning theme, i.e., helping others.

Session #: 3 of 8		Region: _____		Age: Kickstart Jamboree	Date: _____
EVERYONE PLAYS BALANCED TEAMS OPEN REGISTRATION GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP POSITIVE COACHING PLAYER DEVELOPMENT					

FMS Activity 1: Hunters and Hunted (running, twisting, pivoting, dodging) • Players tuck tails into back of shorts and line up on opposite sidelines. • On Leader command, hunters chase hunted and try to grab tails. • Hunted use twists, pivots and dodging to escape hunter. • If hunter catches hunted, they throw the tail to the ground and chase another player. • If caught, the hunted runs outside grid, around the flag (tree), back \ into the grid (woods) to retrieve their tail and join in again. • Play for one minute, then break for 30 seconds. Continue a few rounds. • Change hunters and hunted. • >Players dribble a ball.	
Game-like Activity 2: Numbers 1 (direction) • Leader selects which team attacks which goal (mark goal(s) w/ same colored vest as team). • Leader rolls 2 balls into the field to start play. • Leader calls a # and players with that # from both teams run out to a ball (one for each player). • One team have to score in one goal and the other team in the opposite one (to help players understand direction). • Keep score. • >Provide extra points to the player who scores first.	
3v3 Activity 3: The Big Match • 3v3 game to goal. • Very simple rules: • Goals • Free-kicks (kicking, tripping, etc) • Kick-offs (start game, when goals are scored) • Ball in and out of play (touchline and goal line) • Throw-ins (don't worry about technique) • Have two halves and switch ends, just like the big match. • Don't worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.	

ROLES

Pick a Position and get in the Game

How many of us have been willing to step up to help but found the roles too challenging or the training too extraneous? Look no further, we've got you covered. Kickstart roles are inclusive, easy, fun and provide camaraderie and gradual development to supporting your child's athletic journey.

Program Leaders

Kickstart sessions are led by a Program Leader who will introduce and explain the game/activity that will relate to a certain fundamental motor skill or technical skill, i.e., balancing or dribbling, etc.

Activity Leaders

Ideally, each group will then have an Activity Leader who will help facilitate the session for an individual group, along with parents. The Program Leader should circulate around the groups providing guidance and help as needed.

(Alternatively, if there are no suitable or willing Activity Leaders, the Kickstart Program Leader should introduce the activity and then circulate around the groups providing guidance as needed to parents and players.)

Parents

Child with a Parent/Guardian provides the best possible dynamic for these youngest participants. Each child must have a parent (or other adult) available on the field to help guide them within each activity.

Game Managers

For the matches/games, 'game managers' play the roles of coach, referee, and facilitator. Different parents should rotate weekly in this role providing gradual involvement and development. **Tips:**

- The game manager will guide the players on the field, track time and carry extra balls to enact the "new ball" rule.
- If possible, try to manage from the sidelines but step onto the field as needed. The minimum is one game manager on the field, but each team may have one game manager each for a total of two on the field.
- Stay close enough to support players but provide enough space stay out of the way.
- The game manager is there to support all players, regardless of team affiliation to ensure that players can learn and have fun.



SESSION STRUCTURE

Duration: 1 hour maximum, includes organizing time and breaks.

Activation and Group Forming (activation game, explanation and group formation by Program Leaders for all helpers)

~12 minutes

FMS Activity 15-minutes (~12-minutes active with 3-minutes of breaks)*

Game-like Activity 15-minutes (~12-minutes active with 3-minutes of breaks)*

Big Match 18-minutes (~4 quarters x 3-minutes active with 3 x 2 minute breaks)*

***Adjust play time and breaks as needed to suit your players, i.e., weather, energy level. Less is more!**

PLAYING AREAS

Each individual activity has grid size recommendations which can fit within the game areas, which are:



EQUIPMENT

- Each player should bring a size 3 soccer ball, athletic footwear and shinguards (covered by socks).
- Ideally, each player should receive the same t-shirt or uniform since it's fun to get all dressed up for sports.
- 24-disc cones (4 x 6 multi-colored).
- 12 tall cones.
- 16 youth scrimmage vests (2 different colors) used to differentiate the newly formed teams each week.
- Four 4 x 6 goals (preferred) or four larger pop-up goals (tall cones can also be used).
- Other fun props to help add dimensions to the session, i.e., hoops, beanbags, beach balls, passing gates, etc. A Kickstart kit is available by emailing marketing@ayso.org

Additionally:

- Ball Pump
- Extra pair of shin guards
- Extra soccer balls (players should bring a ball to every activity).
- Charged cell phone in case of emergency.
- Session plan.
- AYSO Player Registration Forms for each child – which includes the Emergency Treatment Authorization.
- Basic first-aid kit (be familiar with the contents and what's available if needed).
- Parents/Players should bring water to every session.

JAMBOREE FORMAT

A Jamboree is a fun, festival-style structure designed to introduce the sport without the pressure of competition or directive coaching. Teams are formed weekly on the day, promoting flexibility, interaction, and enjoyment over winning. Groups can be initially formed by age but with flexibility to move a child as needed based on their developmental stage.

Key Features:

- Fun-Focused: Ideal for young players, emphasizing enjoyment and a positive first experience.
- Flexible Teams: Players are mixed regularly to encourage social interaction.
- Less Cost: Unifroms can be replaced by pinnies (**which can support registration delays with ordering**).
- No Standings: Scores may be kept, but the focus is not on winning.
- Skill Development: Encourages learning and practicing basic soccer skills in a low-pressure setting.
- Parental Involvement: Parents may participate, especially with younger children.
- Community Building: Fosters connections among players, families, and coaches.

ACTIVATION GAMES AND GROUP FORMATION

Kickstart sessions are based on a Jamboree format and usually include groups of young players of different ages, sizes, and abilities. Smart grouping helps keep sessions fun, safe, inclusive, and active, while staying true to the Kickstart model of free play, inclusion and exploration.

- Grouping is never about labeling players or separating “good” from “new.” It is about creating the right environment so every child can feel welcomed, move, play, and succeed.
- Kickstart Grouping Principles
- Flexible: Groups can change during or between sessions
- Quick: Transitions should be fast to keep energy high
- Positive: Avoid labels like beginner or advanced
- Inclusive: Every child belongs and feels successful
- Developmental: Grouping supports movement and confidence
- Play-Focused: Grouping should never interrupt the flow of play

If grouping feels invisible to players, you’re doing it right.

When to Group

Arrival Play (5–12 minutes)

Use arrival games to observe how players move, interact, and engage (see page 33). Once players are warmed up and comfortable, transition into smaller groups or stations.

Best Grouping Options for Kickstart

1. Age-Based Grouping: Use when mixed ages are present.

- Younger players benefit from smaller groups and more space
- Older players can handle slightly larger groups and longer games
- Focus on developmental readiness, not exact age

Quick tools: birthdays, count-offs, simple lines

2. Size-Based Grouping (Safety First): Use for activities with chasing or light contact.

- Builds confidence for smaller players
- Prevents physical dominance
- Reduces injury risk

Always use neutral group names like Group 1 or Station A.

3. Movement Ability Grouping (ABC): Use when abilities vary widely.

Observe during play:

- Agility: changing direction and reacting
- Balance: body control and stability
- Coordination: moving while using the ball

Group players so activities feel challenging but achievable.

Group Size Guidelines

- Ages 3–4: 4–6 players
- Ages 5–6: 5–8 players

Smaller groups mean more touches, more movement, and more fun.

Simple Grouping Tools That Work

- Count-off numbers (can be difficult with youngers)
- Colored pinnies (can have child preferences)
- Birthday or month groups
- Partner method for younger players
- Friends
- Animals (lions, tigers, panthers, etc.)
- Station rotation with cones or markers

Rotate methods to keep things fresh and fair.

Coaching Reminders

- Keep transitions under 30 seconds
- Move immediately into the next activity
- Praise effort, movement, and teamwork
- Adjust groups if something isn't working
- Fun and engagement matter more than perfection

The Big Takeaway

Grouping in Kickstart is a support tool, not the focus of the session. When grouping helps players feel confident, active, and excited to play, it is working.

GAME MODIFICATIONS AND BASIC RULES (FOR THE BIG MATCH)

What do kids want to do most in soccer? Score! Then why only have two goals?

- **Four goal games** (one on each corner approximately 12 yards apart) can increase scoring FUN and help with directional awareness. Each team attacks two goals and defends two goals.

What causes the game to slow down and become boring? Balls going out of play and restarts.

- **Use “new balls”** where the game managers carry a couple of balls to keep the game flowing rather than organized restarts (which can take a lot of time). See Basic Rules. **Restarts: New Balls:** To ensure a flow to the games, and to keep each player involved, the game manager on the field will carry an extra ball or two to facilitate all restarts (after a goal has been scored or is out of play). When the ball goes out of bounds off one team, the game manager will roll a ball to the new team.

Use some willing parents to help the game managers keep the balls “live”. Or, have the parents supply the players to dribble in from the spot the ball went out of bounds. This is also a great way to gradually engage parents.

Stop. Drop. Roll:

1. Stop the play and position the players accordingly.
 2. Drop the opponent back the required amount of space.
 3. Roll the ball (don’t toss it in the air) to the correct team/player who needs to be (re) involved.
- **Restarts Opponents Distance:** On all restarts except for kickoffs or goal kicks where the opponent should drop off to the sideline, the opponent should be a minimum distance of 3 yards away from the restart. ‘Game managers may need to guide players to drop off away from the play.

By backing the opponent away and using the “new ball” restart, game managers can provide the ball to a player who has been unable to get many touches on the ball.

- **Progression of teaching rules:** There are no corner kicks (just use new ball for the team that should be in possession). After a goal has been scored, celebrate, and allow the team that conceded to kick-off by their own goal. Game managers should draw back the opponent to midfield (do the same for ‘goal kicks’).

MODIFYING ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE SUCCESS

Modify activities to gain success, variety or to add new challenges. If an activity or game is not working as planned, consider manipulating **SPEED**, **SPACE** or **OPPOSITION** to change the environment. At this age, it is very important that the participants feel successful. Consider is your group mostly 3-year-olds? 4-year-olds? Early maturers or late maturers?

SPACE: Changing the physical **SPACE** available to players (increasing/decreasing size of playing area makes an activity easier or more challenging). At all times, consider the physical exertion.

SPEED: Varying the **SPEED** of the play (adding time constraints or number of touches changes the playing environment). “Can we now do this at **HYPER-SPEED**?”

OPPOSITION: At this age group, there is not much in the way of **OPPOSITION** but slight modifications to numbers (up or down) or to the role/limitation of players can alter the challenge, i.e., opposition/players are bunnies and can only hop to make it easier for those with the ball, etc.

ON FIELD TIPS

Preparation

Complete Plans are provided for each session. Prior to each session, Program Leaders should review the session plan, the FMS developmental objectives and activities as well as any possible modifications if necessary. Note any special points/ comments to emphasize, including SEL theme.

Appearance - Look the Part

Appropriate attire is expected when conducting Kickstart sessions. Wearing athletic apparel and footwear go a long way toward comforting the children and instilling confidence in the parents that the Program Leader is prepared and able.

Eyes and facial expressions play a key role in communicating effectively with both children and their parents. Sunglasses are discouraged, unless required by medical prescription. Consider removing sunglasses and kneeling down to be at their eye level when speaking with young children.

Energy and Demeanor

Capture the player’s attention and concentration with high energy (unless a calming demeanor is required, i.e., control). This age group needs to be entertained, so create colorful images, vivid landscapes to stimulate imaginations...and get into character for the activity!

Organization

Set up the session 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 further confidence with the parents.** When organizing the 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 have to be picked up or reset.
- Have a place for equipment and breaks.



PARENT ENGAGEMENT

A priority of the program is to engage and encourage parent participation!

Before the sessions start, the very first engagement should be between the Program Leader(s) and parents to explain the overall focus of the program, structure of program sessions, role of the parent, and set realistic expectations for their child's participation.

Program Leaders should (at minimum) cover the following topics in this parent orientation:

1. Discuss the importance of developing Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS) for future success in soccer and sports:

FMS	Transferred to Soccer
- Balancing before twisting and rotating. - Rolling a ball before underarm throwing a ball. - Stopping a rolling ball before catching a ball. - Jumping before skipping.	- Standing on one foot is necessary for kicking or controlling a ball. - Underarm throwing facilitates passing, facing a target, knowing release points, following through and recognizing ball flight. - Twisting and rotating is necessary for dribbling and passing an opponent.

2. Review the Session Format:

Sessions follow a six-week program that meets once per week. There is a defined sequence to the sessions but if a longer program-period is required, sessions may be repeated. Modifications and add-ons are provided for variety and intensity.

- Explanation of the Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS) objective and group formation (Program Leader/Activity Leader).
- FMS Activity 1 (locomotor and non-locomotor).
- Game-like activity 2.
- 2v2, 3v3 games (**explain the modifications, i.e., 4 goals, new balls, etc.**)
- Water/rest breaks!

3. What children will need at each session:

- Soccer shoes or appropriate athletic footwear.
- Shin guards, covered by soccer socks
- Size 3 soccer ball (labeled with initials or last name).
- Water bottle (labeled).

4. Parent Participation:

Be enthusiastic and encouraging. Explain that at this age, children often need the emotional support of a parent as they begin to explore new activities and meet new people. This is why the program is designed as a "Parent and Me" program where parents participate along with their child. Encourage parents to:

- Help the Program Leader organize and create an atmosphere of fun for the children.
- Monitor their player for signs of fatigue, stress, overheating or conditions that compromise their safety – our #1 priority!
- Help their child understand the activity and guide them along as needed.
- Help paint the picture and tell the story of the activity.
- Let them experiment and make mistakes.
- Be patient and tolerant; make them confident learners.
- Thank their child for letting them be part of their soccer world.**



5. Remind parents to avoid:

- Over directing, coaching, correcting their child.
- Comparing children. Remind them that children develop at their own pace.
- Criticizing a child's effort or tell them they aren't working hard enough. Positive encourage is the key.
- Taking it too seriously. It's just a game. Let them Play!

Conclusion

Thank the parents for joining the AYSO family and volunteering to participate with their child in AYSO's age-specific child development program.

Share with them that after the season, their child will be well on their way to developing appropriate skills needed for participating in any sport and the parents will have taken their first steps toward enriching the lives of children in their own community.

Finally, inform the parents that AYSO offers age certification and training for every level and role in the organization if they are curious about furthering their journey along with their child.

WORKING WITH YOUR OWN CHILD

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

But I've Never Coached or Played Soccer Before!

It's okay if you never played soccer or don't know much about it! By reading this manual and gradually getting more involved, you will gather all the valuable tools to succeed. This program is less about soccer and more about exploring the wonderful world of sport through your child's eyes. Learn alongside your child.

No pressure! Do not misinterpret the role you're supposed to play. Go out to enjoy! As well as your child's experience, you should also have fun in the experience.

You're not alone! Most other parents are in the same boat. Don't hesitate to ask questions or share ideas.

If you can create a safe and fun environment for your child, encourage self-expression and normalize mistakes (learning), you are well on your way!

Fun, exercise and the chance to play soccer is what it's all about, particularly at the younger ages.

What's My Role?

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, your role in these early stages is simply to give children the opportunity to discover the game's joys in a safe and nurturing environment.

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 working your own child.

Am I Doing Okay?

Avoid comparing your child's ability to others. Every child is unique with unique qualities, ability and challenges. Some children are early maturers and some are late maturers, but they all get there in the end. Being out there in itself is a huge win!

Don't be afraid to praise your child and acknowledge their strengths and accomplishments at every opportunity.

The (Long) Car Ride Home

Not too relevant today but worth sharing a very important insight for tomorrow!

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 played!



6-WEEK KICKSTART CURRICULUM

This section provides all the session plans needed to successfully run an AYSO Kickstart Soccer Program.

Activities are presented into a comprehensive 6-week curriculum and individually to provide specific guidelines. **Click each graphic for an animation of each activity.** There are also a variety of alternative activities (FMS and soccer-like games) to mix and match as preferred.

Be creative with the names of the games **and modify them to suit your group.** (Is your group mostly 3-year-olds? 4-year-olds? Early maturers or late maturers?) Use creativity and personality; paint in vivid images to effectively communicate with players in a language in which they can understand. If an activity is not working as intended, modify (increase/decrease) the Speed, Space, and Opposition to maximize success.

Remember, **all children are unique so adapt accordingly to achieve success.**

Despite all of the facilitating/teaching techniques that can be utilized, nothing will ever teach Kickstart players more effectively than just **letting them play.**

It's time to have FUN!



SEL THEMES & ACTIVITIES (3-4 YEARS)

Suggested themes and simple guided questions/chats that can be done during break, before an activity or after. The goal is to simply draw awareness to the skill. Expectation and application will increase gradually through the next few programming years and models. These are laced throughout the weeks. Adapt as needed.

Self-Awareness

1. Identify and manage emotions and behaviors (happy, sad, excited, fun, etc)

GQ. How do you feel about being here today?

GQ. Can anyone share feelings about the last activity?

2. Recognize positive qualities in yourself and others

GQ. Share likes and dislikes, i.e., what do you like about playing with others?

GQ. Identify likeable qualities in yourself and others, i.e., what do like about your best friend, favorite teacher, etc?

Social Awareness

3. Recognize other people's feelings

- Recognize that other people feel differently about similar situations (playing GK, being the tagger or chaser)

GQ. Who likes being the chaser? Why? Who doesn't like being the chaser? Why?

4. Show that we can all help each other

- Sharing or not interrupting each other

GQ. How can we help our teammates?

GQ. Why is it important not to talk while I am explaining the game?

GQ. Who can help me pick up the cones today?

Interpersonal Skills

5. Use social skills to effectively communicate with others

- Engage in non-verbal communication with each other (waving or smiling for example when joining the games)

GQ. Share good feelings about someone else, i.e., Who can pick someone who did well in the last game? Why?

GQ. Recognize/share what the other team did well that can be learned, i.e., Who can share why the other team played well?

6. Finding solutions to resolving personal conflicts

- Finds ways that help to self-calm (count to 5, ask to sit down)

GQ. Who can stay calm when they are getting too excited or angry? How?

Responsible Decision Making

7. Applying decision making skills within social situations

- Understanding that we all control our own choices (i.e., taking turns, fixing mistakes)

- To think about the different ways, we could act, and which way is best (provide two options in the activity)

8. What can we learn on the field about decisions off the field

GQ. Who can share a way they help at home (tidy up toys, ask for help, tell people how you feel)?

Source: Adapted from Chicago Fire Soccer in Community SEL Learning Progressions

SEL Theme: Social Awareness**SEL in Activity 1: Recognize other people's feelings****FMS Activity 1: Web-Slinger (running)**

- One player is the Web-Slinger, all others are villains.
- Web-Slinger has numerous scrimmage vests (webs).
- Web-Slinger must chase the villains and throw his web and hit the villain to web that player.
- If a villain gets webbed they must freeze, put their hands in the air and open their legs (can only be released if a teammate crawls through their legs like a snake).
- To win, Web-Slinger must freeze all the villains.
- Swap the Web-Slinger often and at every progression.
- >If player runs out of area, they're frozen when they come back in.
- >Players can dribble a ball and the Web-Slinger must web their ball to get them out.
- >Increase the number of Web-Slingers.
- >Add a time challenge.
- *Who likes being the web-slinger? Why? Who doesn't? Why?*

**Game-like Activity 2: Any Goal (score)**

- Leader rolls numerous balls onto field (at least one per player and ideally a few extra).
- Players look to collect a ball and score in any of the goals.
- Have parents behind goals to re-distribute balls and keep the game flowing.
- Purpose is for players to understand the aim of soccer is to score goals!
- >Once the balls are in the goals, reset and begin again, but now the players must try and score in a different goal.
- >Add a set period of time and keep score.
- >Add corner goals.

**2v2/3v3 Activity 3: The Big Match**

- 2v2 or 3v3 game to goal.
- Very simple rules:
 - 4 goals (2 per team)
 - "New Ball" restarts after goal or out of play (opponents 3 yards away)
 - Use some willing parents to help the game managers keep the balls "live". Or, have the parents supply the players to dribble in from the spot the ball went out of bounds.
 - No corners
 - Don't worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.



Session #: 2 of 6

Region: _____



Age: Kickstart Jamboree

Date: _____

EVERYONE PLAYS

BALANCED TEAMS

OPEN REGISTRATION

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

POSITIVE COACHING

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

SEL Theme: Self-Awareness**SEL in Activity 2: Identify and manage emotions and behaviors (happy, sad, excited, fun, etc)**

FMS Activity 1: Coach Says (running, dodging, twisting/pivoting)

- Players start on end-line with ball at their feet.
- The Leader provides various commands: TAKE ONE (TWO, THREE, ETC.) STEPS FORWARD, *BALANCE ON RIGHT/LEFT LEG, also add: SIT ON BALL, ONE FOOT ON BALL, SPEED UP, SLOW DOWN, ELBOW ON BALL, EAR, PICK BALL UP AND BOUNCE, JUMP OVER BALL, etc.
- Balancing on each leg should be a main focus.
- However, players only react if the direction is preceded by "Coach Says."
- >Change the command from "Coach Says."



Game-like Activity 2: Sharks and Minnows (dribbling)

- The minnows have a tail (pinnie) in the back of their shorts.
- The shark (Leader) moves around the grid catching minnows by pulling out their tails.
- The minnows try to avoid the shark but when a minnow has lost its tail, it must leave the grid (the pond).
- To re-enter the pond, the minnows must perform a FMS, i.e., balance on one leg for 3 seconds, perform 3 ball bounces, etc.
- > If caught, minnows become baby sharks.
- Conduct the activity without a ball first and then introduce a ball.
- *Did anyone enjoy this game? Why?*
- *Did anyone not enjoy the game? Why?*



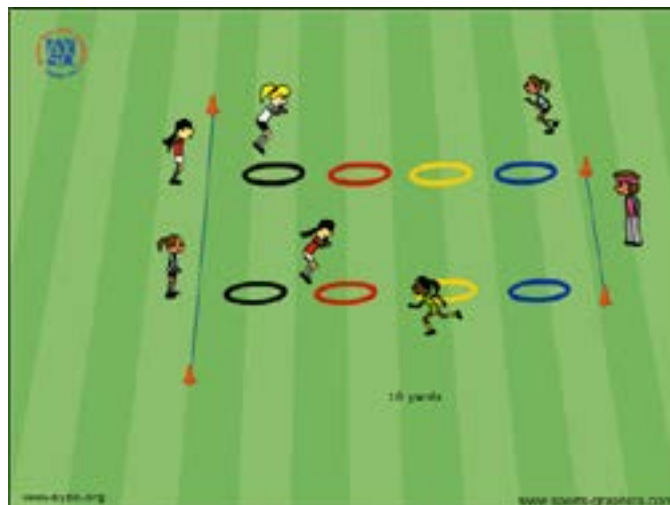
2v2/3v3 Activity 3: The Big Match

- 2v2 or 3v3 game to goal.
- Very simple rules:
 - 4 goals (2 per team)
 - "New Ball" restarts after goal or out of play (opponents 3 yards away)
 - Use some willing parents to help the game managers keep the balls "live". Or, have the parents supply the players to dribble in from the spot the ball went out of bounds.
 - No corners
 - Don't worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.



SEL Theme: Interpersonal Skills**SEL in Activity 2: Engage in non-verbal communication with each other****FMS Activity 1: Frog Jumping**
(jumping, landing, running)

- All children on the start line in two lines facing you at the end line.
- Kids jump like a frog on each lily pad in their row and then run around the marker and back to the start.
- Sing a “frog” song, while the children jump from lily pad to lily pad. Children should “croak” like a frog while leaping.
- > Ask the children to jump in different directions: forwards, backwards and sideways.
- > Increase/decrease distances.

**Game-like Activity 2: Bank Robbery**
(directions)

- All players are standing by a corner cone.
- The Leader yells “Bank Robbery” and at that time all players must sprint to the center of the grid, collect a ball with their feet and return to the cone as quickly as possible, stopping the ball by the cone.
- They then return to the center to get another ball.
- When all the balls have been collected the player who has collected the most balls wins.
- > Have players pick the balls up and carry them back to their nest, or bounce or roll the ball back.
- *Once players get back to their sides, they find a teammate and give them a thumbs up.*

**2v2/3v3 Activity 3: The Big Match**

- 2v2 or 3v3 game to goal.
- Very simple rules:
 - 4 goals (2 per team)
 - “New Ball” restarts after goal or out of play (opponents 3 yards away)
 - Use some willing parents to help the game managers keep the balls “live”. Or, have the parents supply the players to dribble in from the spot the ball went out of bounds.
 - No corners
 - Don’t worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.



Session #: 4 of 6

Region: _____



Age: Kickstart Jamboree

Date: _____

EVERYONE PLAYS

BALANCED TEAMS

OPEN REGISTRATION

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

POSITIVE COACHING

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

SEL Theme: Social Awareness**SEL in Activity 2: Show that we can help each other**

FMS Activity 1: Treasure Hunt (skipping, hopping)

- Lay out orange cones only.
- Start players at one corner cone.
- Upon start, players "skip" around the grid (prioritize technique).
- Object of game is to collect as many cones (gold coins) as possible.
- Once all cones have been picked up, the player with the most cones is the winner.
- > Add the blue (or other) color cones.
- > When the players come upon a different colored cone, they have to "hop" over it before picking it up. These special cones are worth 100 points each.



Game-like Activity 2: Bumper Ball (teamwork)

- Two teams.
- Parents stand on the touchlines and goal lines to stop the ball going out of play.
- Ball stays in play and prevents the need for corners, goal kicks or throw ins.
- Keep score.
- Give teams colorful and fun names.
- *How did we help our teammates in this game?*



2v2/3v3 Activity 3: The Big Match

- 2v2 or 3v3 game to goal.
- Very simple rules:
 - 4 goals (2 per team)
 - "New Ball" restarts after goal or out of play (opponents 3 yards away)
 - Use some willing parents to help the game managers keep the balls "live". Or, have the parents supply the players to dribble in from the spot the ball went out of bounds.
 - No corners
 - Don't worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.



SEL Theme: Interpersonal Skills**SEL in Activity 1: Finds ways that help to self-calm (count to 5, ask to sit down)**
FMS Activity 1: Ice Cream Cones
(running, balance)

- Players on both sides with team names.
- On Leader command, players run into middle pick up cone/ball to make an ice cream cone (parents help as needed) and carry it back to their starting cone.
- Play continues until all balls have been collected.
- Count number of balls each player collects.
- > Vary distance.
- > Players dribble the ball back.
- > Add a FMS challenge on way back, i.e., stop and balance on one leg for 3 seconds.
- > The ice cream scoop is freezing so players must throw it in the air and catch it on way back.
- *Why is it important to stay calm when you are getting too excited? You can drop the ice cream out the cone.*


Game-like Activity 2: Slippery Snake
(dribbling)

- All players form a snake-like line; each player has a ball at their feet and must dribble their ball to follow the lead player (the head of the snake).
- When the leader yells "Shed Your Skin" the player at the end of the snake dribbles forward and becomes the front of the snake.
- >Add FMS commands: Stop, **balance on left leg**, etc., Go!


2v2/3v3 Activity 3: The Big Match

- 2v2 or 3v3 game to goal.
- Very simple rules:
 - 4 goals (2 per team)
 - "New Ball" restarts after goal or out of play (opponents 3 yards away)
 - Use some willing parents to help the game managers keep the balls "live". Or, have the parents supply the players to dribble in from the spot the ball went out of bounds.
 - No corners
 - Don't worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.



Session #: 6 of 6

Region: _____



Age: Kickstart Jamboree

Date: _____

EVERYONE PLAYS

BALANCED TEAMS

OPEN REGISTRATION

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

POSITIVE COACHING

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

SEL Theme: Decision Making**SEL in Activity 2: Understanding we all control our own choices (i.e., taking turns, fixing mistakes)**

FMS Activity 1: Hunters and Hunted (running, twisting, pivoting, dodging)

- Players tuck tails into back of shorts and line up on opposite sidelines.
- On Leader command, hunters chase hunted and try to grab tails.
- Hunted use twists, pivots and dodging to escape hunter.
- If hunter catches hunted, they throw the tail to the ground and chase another player.
- If caught, the hunted runs outside grid, around the flag (tree), back into the grid (woods) to retrieve their tail and join in again.
- Play for one minute, then break for 30 seconds. Continue a few rounds.
- Change hunters and hunted.
- > Players dribble a ball.
- **How did you choose who to chase?**



Game-like Activity 2: Big Bad Bear (dribbling)

- The Leader is the Big Bad Bear (always growling) and must try to capture the players as they dribble around the area.
- The "Big Bad Bear" cannot capture the players if they can dribble into and hide in one of the caves.
- The players can only stay in a cave for 10 seconds and must go to the other cave to avoid capture.
- If a player is captured, they become a "Wee Bad Bear" and help the "Big Bad Bear" capture the remaining players.
- Last player to be captured is the winner.
- >Start without balls.
- >Only 1 player per cave at a time
- >All Bears must hold hands (or a scrimmage vest) while trying to capture the remaining players.



2v2/3v3 Activity 3: The Big Match

- 2v2 or 3v3 game to goal.
- Very simple rules:
 - 4 goals (2 per team)
 - "New Ball" restarts after goal or out of play (opponents 3 yards away)
 - Use some willing parents to help the game managers keep the balls "live". Or, have the parents supply the players to dribble in from the spot the ball went out of bounds.
 - No corners
 - Don't worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.



BLANK SESSION PLAN

In addition to completed Session Plans, enclosed is a blank training plan for creating a Kickstart session. However, it is important to stay within the general framework and flow as previously referenced. Remember, there is a hierarchy to Fundamental Motor Skills, i.e., walking before running, jumping before skipping, etc. Each group will be unique so modify activities as needed to make them easier or more challenging in order for everyone to feel successful.

Also, it is always good to reinforce the lessons from the previous session, i.e., “Does everyone remember last week, when we were being chased through the jungle by the crazy monkeys? Can anyone show me how we used our arms to help us run faster?”

If mixing and matching activities, remember to also pick an SEL theme to introduce.

1. FMS Activity: Start with a simple activity to get the children warmed up AND focus on their Fundamental Motor Skills, i.e., running, balancing, twisting.

2. Game-Like Activity: This activity should introduce a soccer skill and/or game information, i.e., passing, my teammates, etc.

3. Game: This segment replicates the match environment (direction, team, targets, competition, simple rules, etc.) in a 2v2 or 3v3 model.



Session #: _____ Region: _____



Age: Kickstart Jamboree

Date: _____

EVERYONE PLAYS

BALANCED TEAMS

OPEN REGISTRATION

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

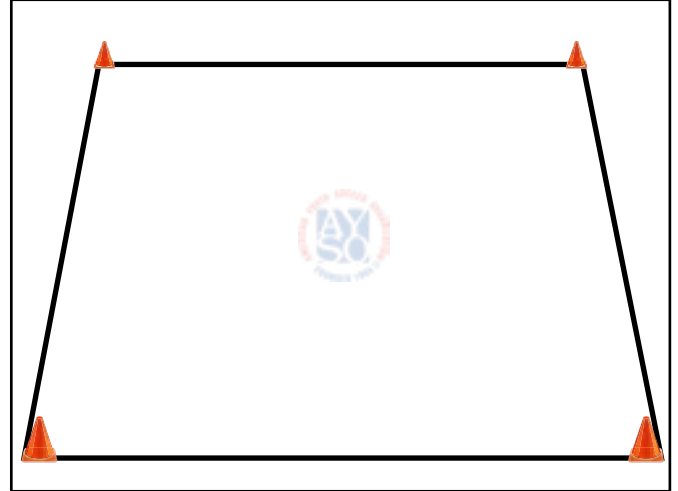
POSITIVE COACHING

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

SEL Theme: _____ SEL Activity: _____

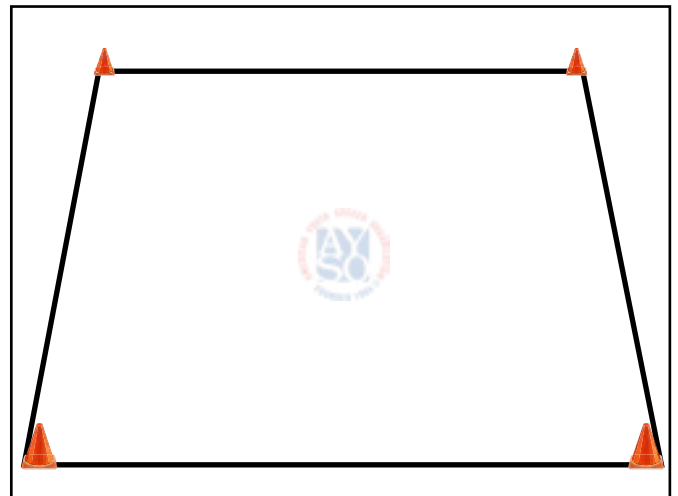
1. FMS Activity

Set Up



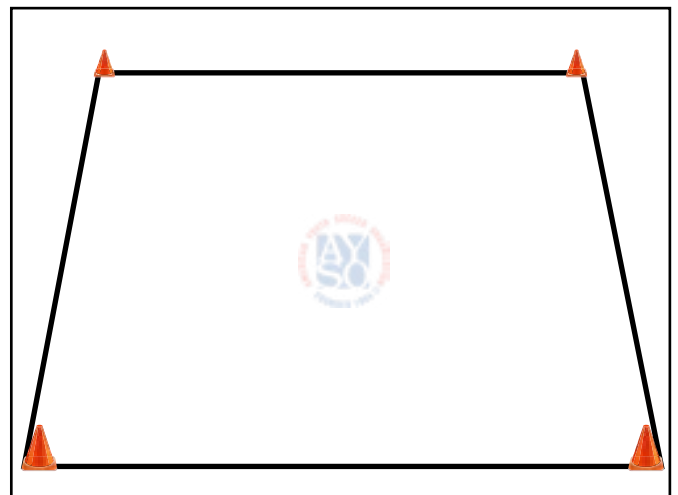
2. Game-like Activity

Set Up



3. 2v2 / 3v3 Game

Set Up



ACTIVATION ARRIVAL GAMES

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

RED LIGHT / GREEN LIGHT

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Coach creates 40 x 40 ft. grid (or uses as much space as possible) and at each end (North / South) creates an end zone defined by spots / cones / lines 5 ft off each end line. Players line up on one end line facing opposing end line and are asked to follow coach instructions without the ball. Players need to make their way to the opposite end zone.

PROGRESSION

- Coach uses red & green colored objects (spots, cones, pinnies) to represent the action needed. This non-verbal instruction will see the players getting their head up and eyes open while appropriately reacting to each instruction.

SKILL SETS COVERED

Dribbling, Ball Control / Possession, Shooting.

FREEZE TAG

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Each child dribbles a ball in a given space. Coach is "it" and tries to tag players.

PROGRESSION

- If tagged, children put their ball in soccer position and cannot move until they receive a high five from a teammate
- If tagged, children put their ball in soccer position and cannot move until a ball passed through their legs
- Coach adds a 5 x 5 ft. coned area. This space becomes a safe zone for only one player at a time to stop in to prevent being tagged. If a child is in the zone and a teammate enters, they must leave.

SKILL SETS COVERED

Change of Speed, Accelerating away from pressure.

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

SHOOTING ACTIVITIES

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Children pair up, one ball per pair. Child without the ball jogs throughout the playspace, child with the ball dribbles throughout the playspace. On coach's whistle, partner shoots the ball across the space to their partner, striking the ball with their laces and keeping the ball on the ground. **Keep safety in mind here.** Limit the number of balls in play in cases where players struggle with controlling their shots or where space is limited.

PROGRESSION

- Each child has a ball dribbling in 1/2 the playspace. Coach is standing at midfield with goals on the end line opposite the children. When their name is called players pass their ball to Coach who lays the ball off for them to score on goal.

SKILL SETS COVERED

Striking the ball with laces, shooting on target, shooting a moving ball.

HUNGRY HIPPOS

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Teams are split so that each group has their own goal (depending on numbers of children and goals). Balls are gathered in the middle of the play space. One at a time children run out, turn with the ball and score it on their goal. Once the ball crosses the black PUGG strap, the next player may run out to get a ball. Teams count the number of balls in their goal once all the balls have been scored.

PROGRESSION

- Teams compete to see if they can beat their record from previous rounds.
- Coach instructs a specific turn that must be used to gather the balls (inside chop, outside hook, drag back, Cruyff, etc.)

SKILL SETS COVERED

Turning, Shooting.

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

NUMBERS GAME

AGES: 4

(6+ if 50/50 ball Enforced)

DESCRIPTION

Group is split in half, each team standing next to their own goal which is on the opposite end of their opponents. Each child on both teams is assigned their own number by Coach (same numbers should be assigned on both teams). Two balls are placed in the center of the playspace. Coach then calls out a number. The players assigned those numbers race to fetch a ball and score it in their opponent's goal.

PROGRESSION

- Players must turn and score the ball in their own goal.
- Only one ball is placed in the center, creating a 50/50 battle between the players called out.
- Two numbers are called out; giving teammates support to score the center ball.

SKILL SETS COVERED

Dribbling, Scoring (50/50 balls, Teamwork).

RELAY SHOOTING

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Set up 2 goals with cones 15-20 yards in front. Group is split into two teams, each team lined up next to a goal, each player with a ball. The first player in line from each team dribbles from the goalpost around the cone, shoots in the goal. Shooter then sprints to high five the next player in line on the post. **Keep safety in mind here**, reminding the players on the goalposts to keep their head up and be weary of missed shots.

PROGRESSION

- Turning cones are replaced by a gate of tall cones. Players must perform an assigned number of toe taps, sole rolls, etc. in between tall cones before turning and shooting.
- Coach instructs a specific turn that must be used between the tall cones (inside chop, outside hook, drag back, Cruyff, etc.)
- Two balls per group. First child dribbles out to the cone (which is now 25+ yards away), turns and passes to the second child who is standing 5-10 yards away from the goal. After receiving the pass the second child turns and shoots. After passing, the first child replaces the second child's spot. The third child who has the other ball then dribbles out and repeats.

SKILL SETS COVERED

Turning, Dribbling, Shooting, Passing.

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

MISSISSIPPI GAME

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Players lined up next to a goal 15–20 yards from a ball. One child at a time runs out to the ball, turns and goes to goal. Meanwhile, the rest of the class times the child by counting, "One Mississippi, Two Mississippi..." Each round the children try and beat their previous time. (If high numbers, two/three children may go at a time)

PROGRESSION

- Coach adds tall cones in between the goal and the ball for players to dribble through. If a cone gets knocked over, two seconds are added to their time.
- Group is split into two teams, each team lined up next to a goal which is set up on opposite ends. Coach places two balls in the center. One at a time a team member will run out, turn and score a goal, racing the player on the other team to see who can finish first.
- Coach instructs a specific turn that must be used to retrieve the ball (inside chop, outside hook, drag back, Cruyff, etc.)

SKILL SETS COVERED

Turning, Dribbling, Shooting.

WORLD CUP

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Children pair up and choose a country. Coach sets up goals along the outskirts of the play space, enough so each pair has their own goal. One partner defends a goal (no hands), one in the center. All against all, central players compete for possession of the two soccer balls to score on a defended goal. Players rotate once a goal is scored as Coach immediately serves a new ball.

PROGRESSION

- Only one ball in play (be weary of aggressive play)
- "Defenders" become stationary wall passer for their teammate
- Last pair to score becomes wall players for the other pairs in the next round

SKILL SETS COVERED

Possessing 50/50 balls, Shooting, Wall Passes.

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

OVER THE BRIDGE

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Play space is divided in half with a line of upside down PUGG goals. Children are split into two even groups, one on each side of the goals. All of the balls are at the far end of one half. Players with the balls must dribble them to the "bridge" (PUGGS), find a teammate on the opposite side and pass them the ball. The receiving player must turn and score the ball in an upright goal.

PROGRESSION

- Switch roles of the players.
- Coach times how long it takes for all the balls to be scored, setting a record for the group to beat.
- Kids chip/flick the ball over the black strap of the upside down PUGG goals.
- Coach adds defensive pressure in goal.

SKILL SETS COVERED

Dribbling, Passing, Vision, Shooting.

BANANA GAME REMIX

AGES: 4

DESCRIPTION

Group is split into two even teams, each distinguished by a different pinnie color. All members of one team have a ball each. Within the playspace the children without a ball run around. The children with balls chase those without, changing their speed and direction in an effort to remain as close as possible to a member of the other team. On coach's whistle, children without the ball freeze, children with the ball take soccer position. Coach asks the team with balls to point to the child on the opposite team that they were chasing and to then try and make a pass to their feet.

PROGRESSION

- Passes must be made through target's straddled legs.
- Partners are assigned, making children work to keep close to one specific player.

SKILL SETS COVERED

Change of Speed, Change of Direction, Passing Accuracy.

ADDITIONAL FMS ACTIVITIES

(Demonstrate each skill in isolation BEFORE the activity, i.e., how to twist and let the children practice with their parents' guidance.)

WEB-SLINGER

FMS: **Running**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Create a 15 x 15 grid with 4 or more cones. Scrimmage vests. Ball per player (for progressions).
- All players are required to play within the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- One player is the Web-Slinger, all others are villains.
- Web-Slinger has numerous scrimmage vests (webs).
- Web-Slinger must chase the villains, throw his web and hit the villain to web that player.
- If a villain gets webbed they must freeze, put their hands in the air and open their legs.
- A villain can only be released if a teammate crawls through their legs like a snake.
- To complete the game, the Web-Slinger must have all villains frozen at the same time.
- Swap the Web-Slinger often and at every progression.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- If a player runs out or is chased out of the area, they are frozen when they come back in.
- Players can dribble a ball and the Web-Slinger must web their ball to get them out.
- Increase the number of Web-Slingers.
- Add a time challenge.

FMS POINTS (running)

- Head up, eyes forward.
- Head and body stable.
- Body leans slightly forward.
- Move arms back and forth.
- Relaxed shoulders with elbows bent 90 degrees.
- High knees and heels to bottom.
- Opposite arm to opposite leg.
- Drive from balls of feet and land on heels.
- Stay on narrow path.

[aysou.org/video/fms1](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms1)

COACH SAYS

FMS: **Balancing +**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 1 ball per player.
- Create a 15 x 15 grid with 4 or more cones.
- All players are required to play within the grid.

To see this activity in action visit:
aysou.video/coachsays



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players start on end-line with ball at their feet.
- The Leader provides various commands: TAKE ONE (TWO, THREE, ETC) STEPS FORWARD, *BALANCE ON RIGHT/LEFT LEG, also add: SIT ON BALL, ONE FOOT ON BALL, SPEED UP, SLOW DOWN, ELBOW ON BALL, EAR ON BALL, PICK BALL UP AND BOUNCE, JUMP OVER BALL, etc.
- Balancing on each leg should be a main focus.
- However, players only react if the direction is preceded by "Coach Says."

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Change the command from "Coach Says."

FMS POINTS (balance)

- Body stable and weight over base.
- Eyes and head focused forward.
- Leg raised off ground and not touching supporting leg.
- Supporting leg still and foot flat on contact point.
- Arms out to the side at shoulder height for counter balance.
- Tighten muscles to gain balance and stability.

aysou.video/fms8

HUNTERS AND HUNTED

FMS: **Running, twisting, pivoting, dodging**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a 15 x 10 grid (woods), two flags (trees) 5 yards outside grid on either sideline, two teams (hunters and hunted), 2 sets of scrimmage vests (tails).

To see this activity in action visit:

[aysou.video/hunted](https://www.aysou.org/video/hunted)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players tuck tails into back of shorts and line up on opposite sidelines.
- On Leader command, hunters chase hunted & try to grab tails.
- Hunted use twists, pivots and dodging to escape hunter.
- If hunter catches hunted, they throw the tail to the ground and chase another player.
- If caught, the player runs outside grid, around the flag(tree), back into the grid (woods) to retrieve their tail and join in again.
- Play for one minute, then break for 30 seconds. Continue a few rounds.
- Change hunters and hunted.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Players dribble a ball.

FMS POINTS (running)

- Head up, eyes forward.
- Head and body stable.
- Body leans slightly forward.
- Move arms back and forth.
- Relaxed shoulders with elbows bent 90 degrees.
- High knees and heels to bottom.
- Opposite arm to opposite leg.
- Drive from balls of feet and land on heels.
- Stay on narrow path.

FMS POINTS

[aysou.video/fms1](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms1)

(twisting/pivoting)

- While turning, plant one foot or keep one foot of the body stable.
- Push off with the other foot to turn.
- Bend knees slightly.
- Use arms-move them in the direction of the rotation.
- While turning, head is focused forward and line with the body.
- Step forward for forward pivot, step back for backward pivot.

[aysou.video/fms6](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms6)

FMS POINTS (dodging)

- Head and eyes focused forward.
- Plant one foot and push to change direction.
- Bend knees getting into low body position.
- Step and lean one way, then move in the other direction, all in one action.
- Fake with head and shoulders.

[aysou.video/fms5](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms5)

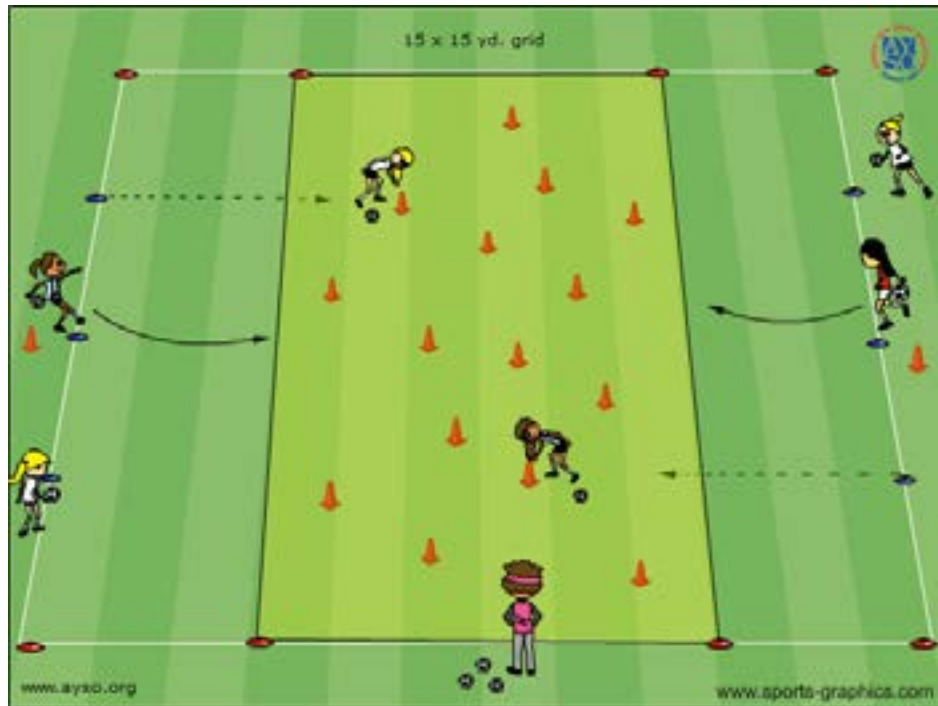
KINGPIN

FMS: **Rolling a ball**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Create a 15 x 15 grid with 4 or more cones. Ball per player, plus spares.
- Randomly scatter 12+ tall cones in a central channel.
- Line up players evenly on either end-line.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players must roll/bowl the ball and try and knock down as many cones as possible by using an underarm throw.
- When they knock down a cone they must run, pick it up and place it on a pile beside them outside the grid.
- Winning player / team is those with most pins.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Vary distance.
- Add time challenge.
- Players kick the ball.

FMS POINTS (rolling a ball)

- Hold ball using fingers, palm side up.
- Stand facing target.
- Bring arm down and back, rocking onto back foot.
- Step forward with opposite foot to hand.
- Bend at knees and swing arm forward to body.
- Release ball in front of the lead foot in smooth, fluid motion.
- Follow through in direction of target.
- Keep the ball low.

[aysou.video/fms13](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms13)

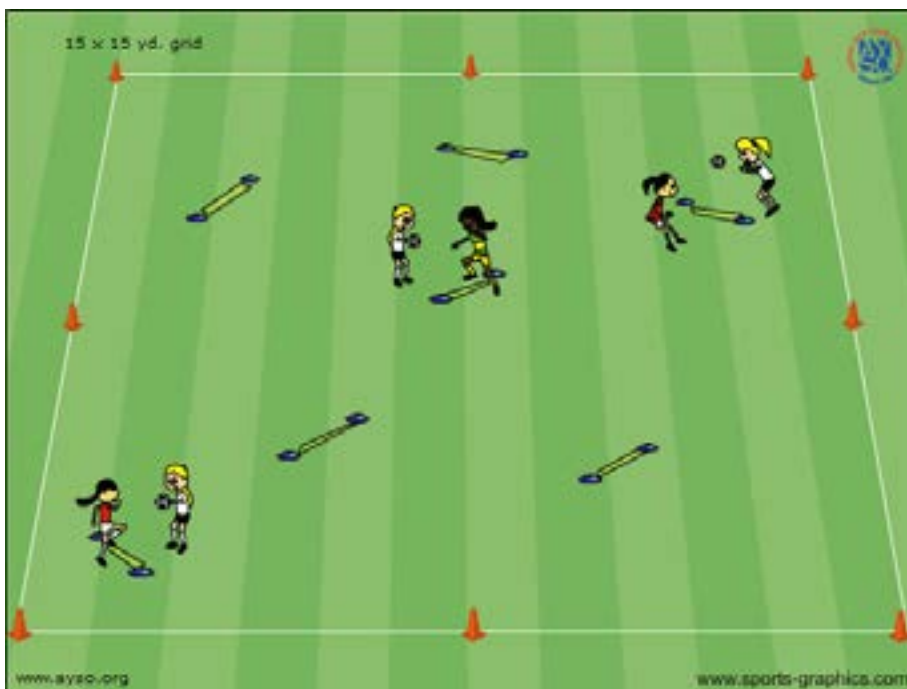
KENTUCKY DERBY

FMS: **Jumping/landing and catching a ball**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark 15 x 15 grid, players in pairs, one ball per pair.
- Make 6-10 small gates with disc cones (have more gates than pairs) placed randomly in grid. Lay a scrimmage vest between the gates as a connecting line.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players move through the grid from gate to gate with ball in hands.
- At each gate, players stand 1-2 yards apart on either side.
- One player throws underarm (softly) to the other to catch. Once the ball is caught, the thrower then jumps over the scrimmage vest to join their partner.
- After each gate, the pair move onto another set of empty gates to score (catcher becomes the thrower and soon).
- Each pair counts how many gates they score in a set period of time.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Increase number of times pair must throw and catch the ball through gates before moving on.
- Players can pass the ball on the ground.

FMS POINTS (jumping/landing)

- Head up, feet slightly apart.
- Bend hips, knees and ankles into crouch position pre-takeoff.
- Arms reach/swing behind the body and simultaneously swing upwards and forwards above the head.
- Legs extend and explode from crouch position pushing from toes.
- Arms and legs work together.
- Clear shape and control in the air.
- Ankles, knees and hips bend and arms lower on landing.
- When jumping for distance, arms propel forward more and landing arms reach forward for balance.

FMS POINTS (catching)

- Eyes stay focused on object.
- In preparation to catch: feet and body face the object with knees flexed and feet shoulder width apart. Also, elbows are bent, hands are in front of body, palms facing each other with fingers in a 'W' position presenting large surface area.
- When catching, body moves in line with the object.
- Track the flight of the object while moving hands.
- As the ball is caught, fingers close around it.
- Elbows and knees bend to absorb the force of the ball.

[aysou.video/fms16](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms16)

TREASURE HUNT

FMS: **Skipping, Hopping**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 12 orange disc cones placed randomly in a 15 x 15 yard grid.
- 6 blue (or different color) disc cones for the progression.
- All players are required to play within the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Lay out orange cones only.
- Start players at one corner cone.
- Upon start, players “skip” around the grid (prioritize technique).
- The object of the game is to collect as many cones (gold coins) as possible.
- Once all cones have been picked up, the player with the most cones is the winner.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Add the blue (or other color) cones.
- When the players come upon a different colored cone, they have to “hop” over it before picking it up. These special cones are worth 100 points each.

FMS POINTS (skipping)

- Step forward on to front foot and hop upwards.
- Opposite leg-lift knee sharply upward in front of body.
- Use arms for balance and to create upward movement.
- Non-supporting leg pushed down to the floor and straighten.
- Land softly after each skip to avoid injury.

FMS POINTS (hopping)

- Lift one leg, bent at the knee.
- Head up looking forward with head and trunk stable.
- Bend knee of supporting leg.
- Leg straightens to push off.
- Swing arms back, forward and upward.
- Arms continue to move upward as you jump.
- Push from toes to take off.
- Land softly, bending the knee.
- Take off and land on same foot.

[aysou.video/fms3](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms3)

ICE CREAM CONES

FMS: **Running, Balance**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 15 x 15 yard grid.
- Numerous tall cones, numerous soccer balls, numerous scrimmage vests (to secure ball), disc cone per player.
- Players line up on opposite end lines by a starting disc cone.
- At halfway mark, randomly place numerous tall cones atop numerous balls, atop numerous scrimmage vests, i.e., ice cream cones. Mark this channel.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Give both sides team names.
- On Leader command, players run into middle pick up cone/ball to make an ice cream cone (parents help as needed) and carry it back to their starting cone.
- Play continues until all balls have been collected.
- Count number of balls each player collects.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Vary distance.
- Players dribble the ball back.
- Add a FMS challenge on way back, i.e., stop and balance on one leg for 5 seconds.
- The ice cream scoop is freezing so players must throw it in the air and catch it on way back.

FMS POINTS (running)

- Head up, eyes forward.
- Head and body stable.
- Body leans slightly forward.
- Move arms back and forth.
- Relaxed shoulders with elbows bent 90 degrees.
- High knees and heels to bottom.
- Opposite arm to opposite leg.
- Drive from balls of feet and land on heels.
- Stay on narrow path.

[aysou.video/fms1](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms1)

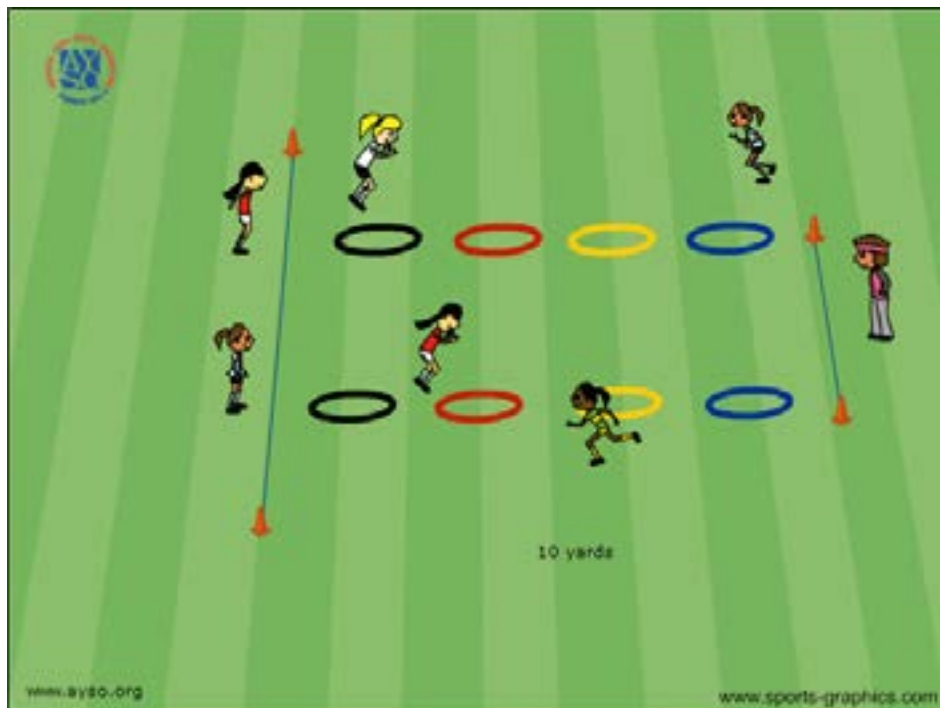
FROG JUMPING

FMS: **Jumping/Landing and Running**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- With 2 cones, mark a start line. Mark four lily pads using placement pads or hula hoops. Repeat this four or five times. Mark an end line using tall cones approximately 10 yards away.
- Create two lines of lily pads.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- All children on the start line in two lines facing you at the end line.
- Kids jump like a frog on each lily pad in their row and then run around the marker and back to the start.
- Sing a “frog” song, while the children jump from lily pad to lily pad. Children should “croak” like a frog while leaping.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Ask the children to jump in different directions: forwards, backwards and sideways.
- Increase/decrease distances.

FMS POINTS (jumping/landing)

- Head up, feet slightly apart.
- Bend hips, knees and ankles into crouch position pre-takeoff.
- Arms reach/swing behind the body and simultaneously swing upwards and forwards above the head.
- Legs extend and explode from crouch position pushing from toes.
- Arms and legs work together.
- Clear shape and control in the air.
- Ankles, knees and hips bend and arms lower on landing.
- When jumping for distance, arms propel forward more and landing arms reach forward for balance.

[aysou.video/fms2](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms2)

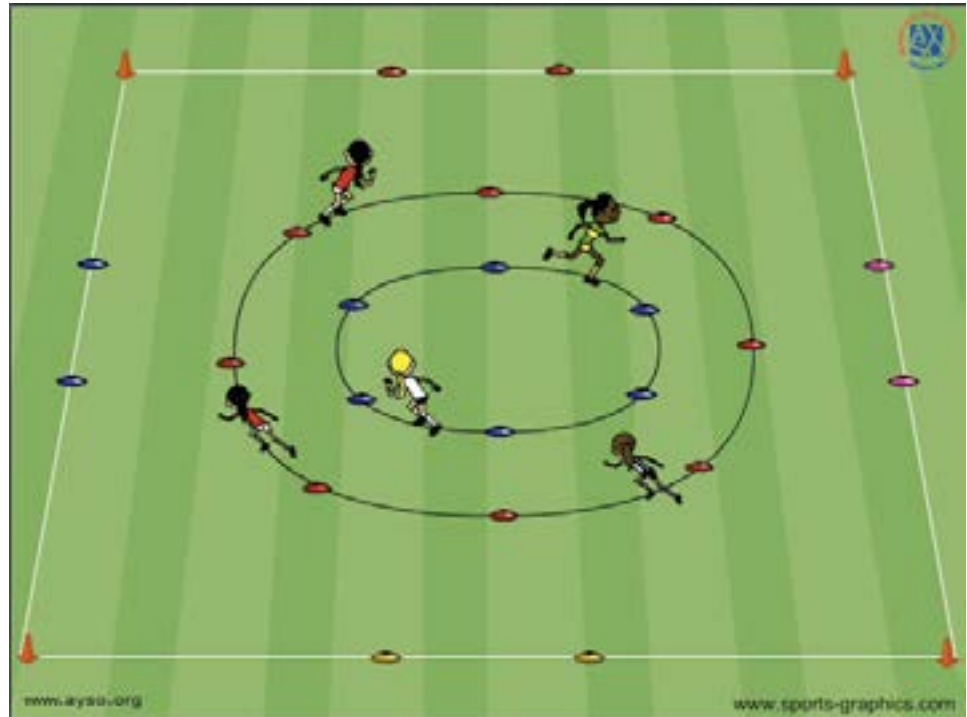
COYOTES AND RABBITS

FMS: **Running**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a 15 x 20 grid. Inside, mark a small circle in the middle of a larger one (like a bullseye).
- On the outer grid, mark four small gates of different colors (or names).

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Place some players in the middle circle (coyotes) and some players in the outer circle (rabbits).
- Rabbits run clockwise around their circle, coyotes run clockwise around theirs.
- The Leader calls out the the color (name) of a gate and the rabbits need to make it through that gate before the coyotes tag them.
- If they are tagged by a coyote, they switch roles.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Vary the running style around the circle, i.e., skipping, galloping, etc.
- Players have ball, i.e., bounce in hands, toe taps, etc., until Leader calls the gate, then they drop ball and run.
- Players can dribble their ball to start; leave it and run; or take it with them.

FMS POINTS (running)

- Head up, eyes forward.
- Head and body stable.
- Body leans slightly forward.
- Move arms back and forth.
- Relaxed shoulders with elbows bent 90 degrees.
- High knees and heels to bottom.
- Opposite arm to opposite leg.
- Drive from balls of feet and land on heels.
- Stay on narrow path.

[aysou.video/fms1](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms1)

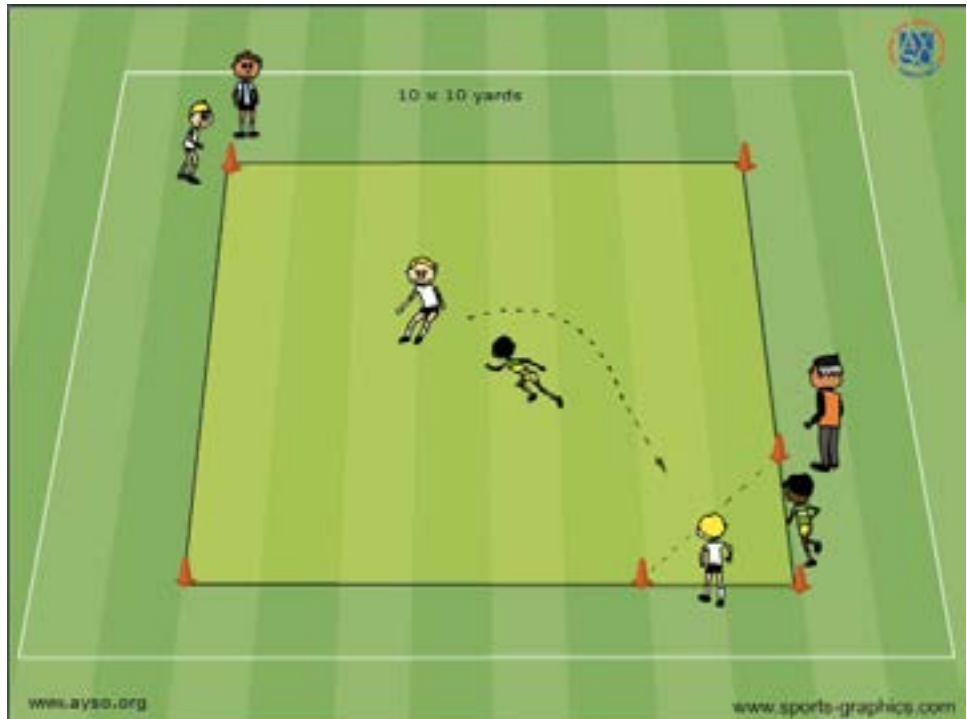
SHARK ATTACK

FMS: **Twisting/Pivoting and Dodging**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a 10 x 10 grid (ocean), with a gate at one corner (beach).
- Split players into two groups (swimmers and sharks) and place on opposite corners.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Swimmers have to run past the shark by twisting, pivoting and dodging to reach the beach.
- Shark's try and tag the swimmer before they get to the beach.
- Keep score sharks versus swimmers.
- If swimmers run out of area, point goes to sharks.
- Once the swimmers have had a run at shore, players switch ends/roles.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Can the swimmers perform a full spin to get away from the sharks?
- Send out 2 swimmers and 2 sharks.

FMS POINTS (twisting/pivoting)

- While turning, plant one foot or keep one foot of the body stable.
- Push off with the other foot to turn.
- Bend knees slightly.
- Use arms-move them in the direction of the rotation.
- While turning, head is focused forward and line with the body.
- Step forward for forward pivot, step back for backward pivot.

[aysou.video/fms6](https://www.aysou.video/fms6)

FMS POINTS (dodging)

- Head and eyes focused forward.
- Plant one foot and push to change direction.
- Bend knees getting into low body position.
- Step and lean one way, then move in the other direction, all in one action.
- Fake with head and shoulders.

[aysou.video/fms5](https://www.aysou.video/fms5)

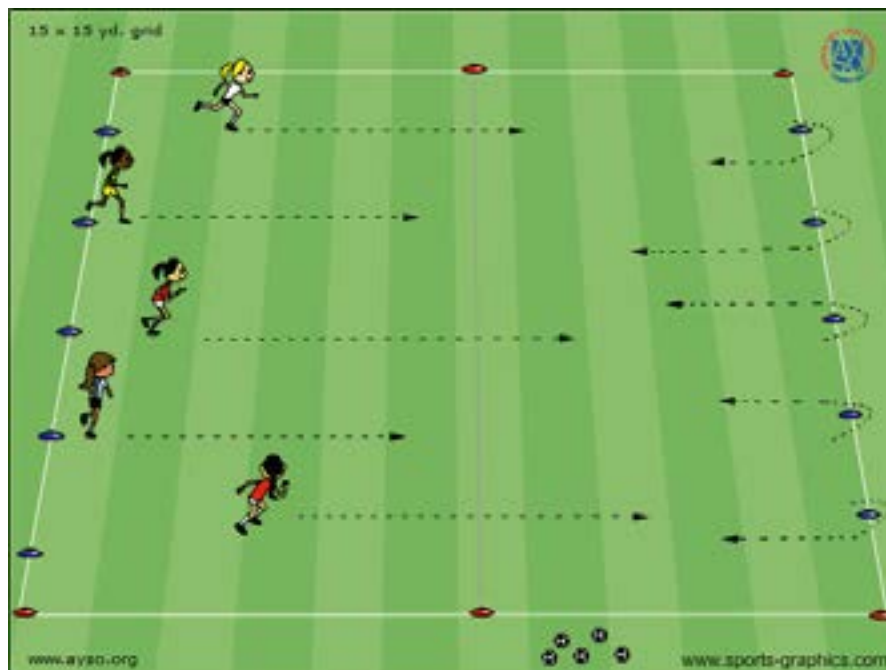
THE BIG RACE

FMS: **Running +**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a 15 x 15 yard grid with a center line (for progression).
- Create two lines of lily pads.
- 2 cones per player (start cone and finish cone).
- (1 ball per player for progression).
- Place each player across from a cone that is placed on the opposite end of the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- The Leader calls, "Start Your Engines" after which he will yell "Go!"
- The players must run out and around their opposite cone and back to the starting line.
- The first player back is the winner of the big race.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Race in teams of two or three players.
- Have the player's race individually against the clock (time trials).
- At mid-point, players must perform an additional FMS, i.e., balance on one leg for 3 seconds.
- Have players skip or gallop.
- Add a ball for players to dribble.

FMS POINTS (running)

- Head up, eyes forward.
- Head and body stable.
- Body leans slightly forward.
- Move arms back and forth.
- Relaxed shoulders with elbows bent 90 degrees.
- High knees and heels to bottom.
- Opposite arm to opposite leg.
- Drive from balls of feet and land on heels.
- Stay on narrow path.

[aysou.video/fms1](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms1)

ADDITIONAL SOCCER ACTIVITIES

SHARKS & MINNOWS

TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Running**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 4 or more cones to mark a 15 x 15 yard grid, 1 ball for each player and some type of tail (scrimmage vest) for each player.
- Ball per player. Players must play within the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- The minnows have a tail in the back of their shorts.
- The shark (Leader) moves around the grid catching minnows by pulling out their tails.
- The minnows try to avoid the shark but when a minnow has lost its tail, it must leave the grid (the pond).
- To re-enter the pond, the minnows must perform a FMS, i.e., balance on one leg for 5 seconds, perform 5 ball bounces, etc.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- If caught, minnows become baby sharks.
- Conduct the activity without a ball first and then introduce a ball.
- Limit players to only use L foot, R foot, outside of R or L, or use inside of both feet.

FMS POINTS (running)

- Head up, eyes forward.
- Head and body stable.
- Body leans slightly forward.
- Move arms back and forth.
- Relaxed shoulders with elbows bent 90 degrees.
- High knees and heels to bottom.
- Opposite arm to opposite leg.
- Drive from balls of feet and land on heels.
- Stay on narrow path.

[aysou.video/fms1](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms1)

SLIPPERY SNAKE

TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Balancing**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 4 or more cones to mark 20 x 20 yard grid, 1 ball per player, spare balls.
- All players are required to play within the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- All players form a snake-like line; each player has a ball at their feet and must dribble their ball to follow the lead player (the head of the snake).
- When the Leader yells “Shed Your Skin” the player at the end of the snake dribbles forward and becomes the front of the snake.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Limit players to only use L foot, R foot, outside of R or L, or use inside of both feet.
- Ensure that all players become the head of the snake at one time or another.
- Have the players add their favorite soccer fake (move) when they are the head of the snake for others to copy.
- Add FMS commands: Stop, **balance on left leg**, etc., Go!

FMS POINTS (balance)

- Body stable and weight over base.
- Eyes and head focused forward.
- Leg raised off ground and not touching supporting leg.
- Supporting leg still and foot flat on contact point.
- Arms out to the side at shoulder height for counter balance.
- Tighten muscles to gain balance and stability.

[aysou.org/video/fms8](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms8)

BIG BAD BEAR

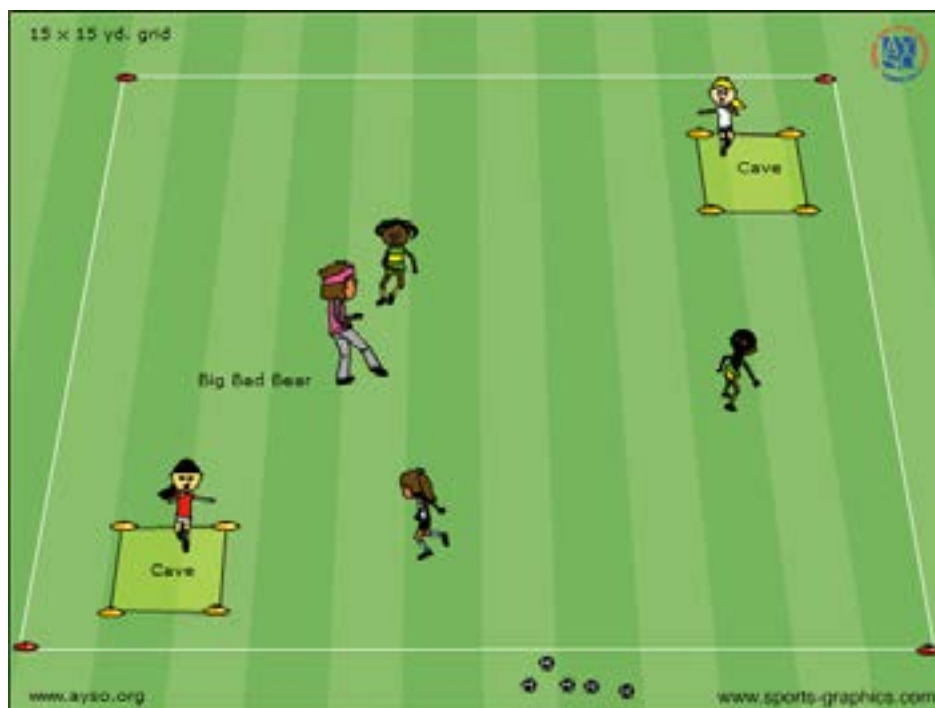
TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Twisting, Pivoting, Dodging**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 4 cones to mark grid, 8 cones to make two caves and a ball per player.
- Create a 15 x 15 yard grid. Make two 3 x 3 yard caves.
- Players must stay within the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- The Leader is the “Big Bad Bear” and must try to capture the players as they dribble around the area.
- Bears must always be growling.
- The “Big Bad Bear” cannot capture the players if they can dribble into and hide in one of the caves.
- The players can only stay in a cave for 10 seconds and must go to the other cave to avoid capture.
- If a player is captured, they become a “Wee Bad Bear” and help the “Big Bad Bear” capture the remaining players.
- Last player to be captured is the winner.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Only 1 player in cave at a time.
- While in the cave, players must perform a FMS, i.e., balance on one leg for 5 seconds, etc., before they exit.
- All Bears must hold hands (or a scrimmage vest) while trying to capture the remaining players.
- Play without the balls.

FMS POINTS (twisting/pivoting)

- While turning, plant one foot or keep one foot of the body stable.
- Push off with the other foot to turn.
- Bend knees slightly.
- Use arms-move them in the direction of the rotation.
- While turning, head is focused forward and line with the body.
- Step forward for forward pivot, step back for backward pivot.

[aysou.org/video/fms6](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms6)

FMS POINTS (dodging)

- Head and eyes focused forward.
- Plant one foot and push to change direction.
- Bend knees getting into low body position.
- Step and lean one way, then move in the other direction, all in one action.
- Fake with head and shoulders.

[aysou.org/video/fms5](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms5)

THE MOSQUITO

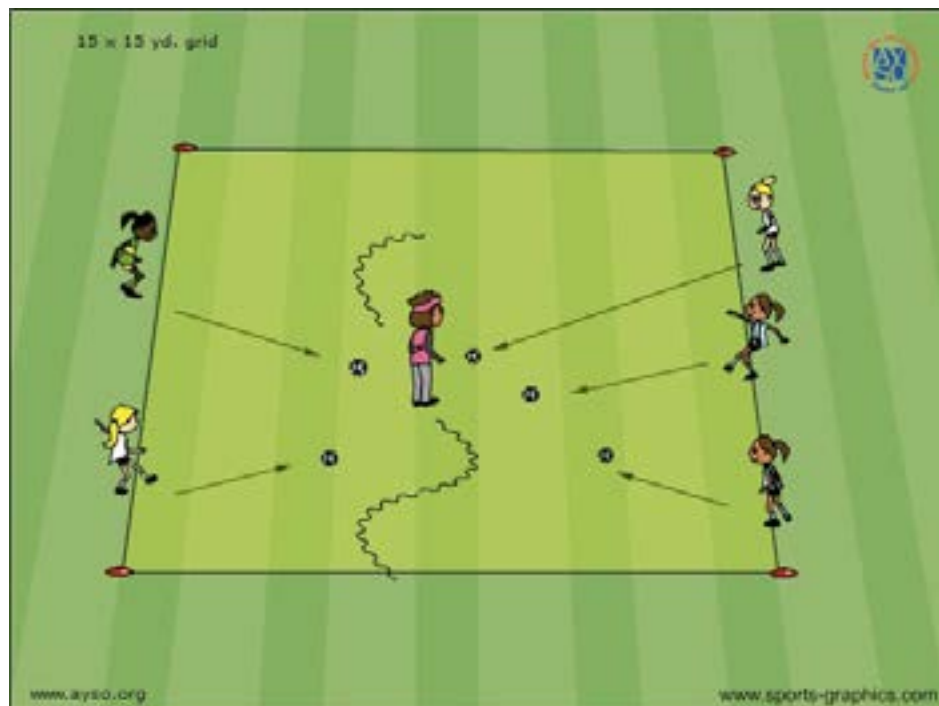
TECHNIQUE: **Passing**

FMS: **Rolling a ball**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 4 cones to mark 15 x 15 yard grid, 1 ball for each player.
- Split players on either side of the grid with a ball at their feet.
- Leader (the Mosquito) will center himself at a mid-point of the grid.

To see this activity in action visit:
aysou.video/mosquito



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- The Leader (the Mosquito) will dash across the grid trying to avoid being hit with the balls that the Exterminators (players) are shooting at him.
- Before heading back to the starting point, the Leader will allow the players to collect their ball and line up on the other side of the grid for one more go at the Mosquito.
- See who hits the Mosquito the most times in a set number of runs.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Have players strike the ball with the left and right foot.
- Vary pace of Mosquito.
- Have players roll/bowl the ball.

FMS POINTS (rolling a ball)

- Hold ball using fingers, palm side up.
- Stand facing target.
- Bring arm down and back, rocking onto back foot.
- Step forward with opposite foot to hand.
- Bend at knees and swing arm forward to body.
- Release ball in front of the lead foot in smooth, fluid motion.
- Follow through in direction of target.
- Keep the ball low.

aysou.video/fms13

ONE PIN BOWLING

TECHNIQUE: **Passing/Shooting**

FMS: **Jumping and landing**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark 10 x 10 grid, 2 balls for each player and a disc cone for each player.
- Place each player across from a cone with a ball atop located at the midpoint of the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- One at a time each player tries to knock the ball off the cone directly in line with them.
- Let each player try it once before you start over from first player.
- After each player has attempted five shots, the player who has knocked the most balls off the cone is the winner.
- As the players collect their ball, they try and jump over the target cone.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Have players roll/bowl the ball.
- Have players strike the ball with their left and right foot.
- Change the distance that the balls are away from the players.
- Try to get all five balls at the end of the grid by the end of the training session.

FMS POINTS (jumping/landing)

- Head up, feet slightly apart.
- Bend hips, knees and ankles into crouch position pre-takeoff.
- Arms reach/swing behind the body and simultaneously swing upwards and forwards above the head.
- Legs extend and explode from crouch position pushing from toes.
- Arms and legs work together.
- Clear shape and control in the air.
- Ankles, knees and hips bend and arms lower on landing.
- When jumping for distance, arms propel forward more and landing arms reach forward for balance.

[aysou.video/fms2](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms2)

PAC GAL

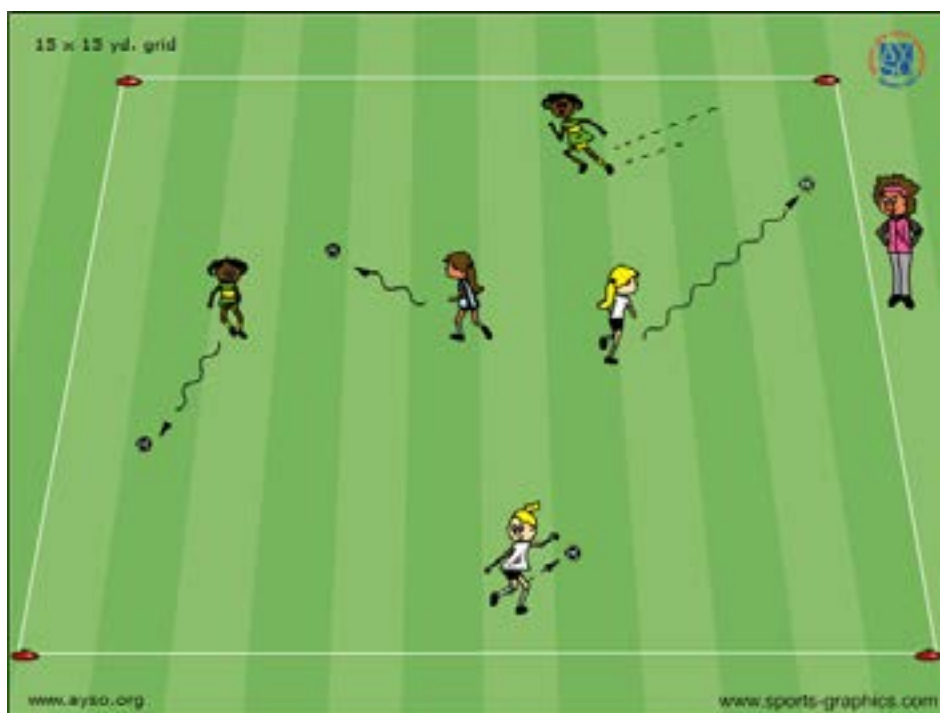
TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Skipping**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Create a 15 x 15 yard grid marked with cones.
- All players have a ball and are required to play within the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- The Pac Gal chases the players as they dribble through the grid.
- Any player that dribbles outside the grid or has their ball kicked outside the grid by the Pac Gal, becomes the Pac Gal.
- The initial Pac Gal will use the ball of the player who dribbled out of the grid or whose ball was kicked out of the grid.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Limit players to only use L foot, R foot, outside of R or L, or use inside of both feet.
- Pac Gal must skip.
- Players who are caught become Pac Gals also.

FMS POINTS (skipping)

- Step forward on to front foot and hop upwards.
- Opposite leg-lift knee sharply upward in front of body.
- Use arms for balance and to create upward movement.
- Non supporting leg pushed down to the floor and straighten.
- Land softly after each skip to avoid injury.

[aysou.video/fms4](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms4)

SOCCER CROQUET

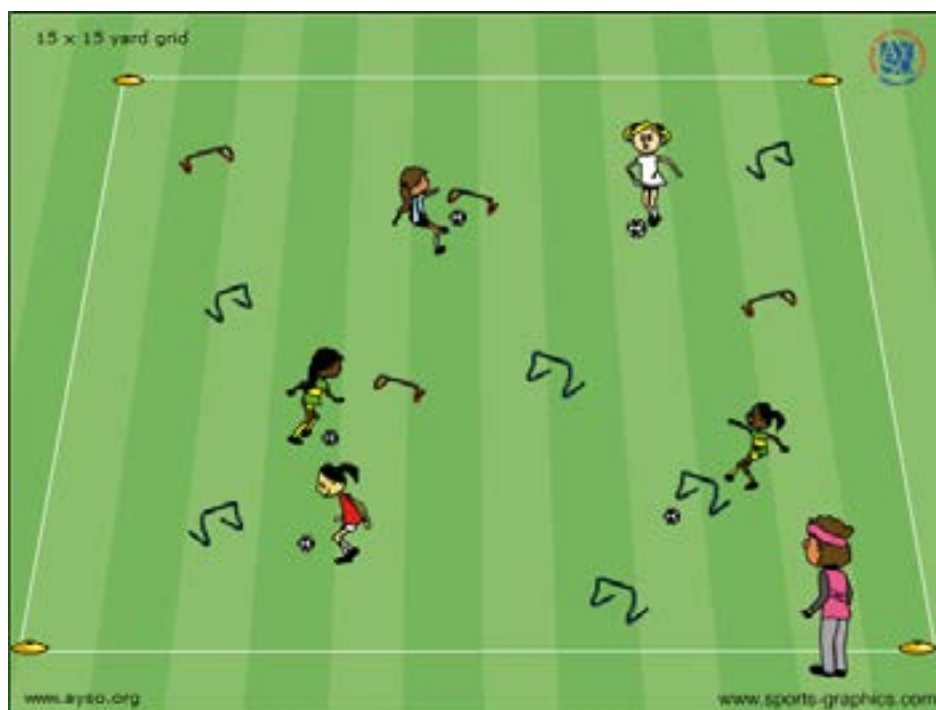
TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Dribbling, Kicking and Trapping a ball, Jumping/Landing.**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 4 or more cones to mark a 15 x 15 yard grid, 1 ball for each player.
- Numerous passing gates (or cones placed randomly within (more than players).
- Players must play *within* the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players dribble ball through the area.
- Upon Leader command, player must dribble to a free gate and pass the ball through to the other side.
- Players collect balls at other side and keep dribbling until Leader calls again.

VARIATIONS PROGRESSIONS

- Remove command and let players dribble gate to gate.
- Add a time challenge.
- Can players jump over the gate to get their ball?
- Players in pairs. Player 1 passes through gate for Player 2 to trap the ball. Player 2 passes back to Player 1 to trap. Once both players have trapped the ball, they move onto an open gate to start again.

FMS POINTS

(dribbling a ball)

- Keep head up with eyes focused forward.
- Body leans forward.
- Small taps of the ball using different parts of the foot.
- Ball is kept close to body.
- Use both feet.
- Arms for balance.

[aysou.video/fms7](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms7)

FMS POINTS

(kicking a ball)

- Position behind ball to the side.
- Head over ball.
- Step forward and plant non kicking foot to side of ball.
- Kicking leg swings back and forward through to kick the ball.

[aysou.video/fms14](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms14)

- Use arms for balance.
- Make contact with middle of ball.
- Lean slightly back on contact
- Leg follows through toward the target.

FMS POINTS

(trapping)

- Move body into path of ball.
- Keep eyes focused on the ball at all times.
- Present larger surface area and let the ball meet foot.
- Stop ball with side of foot.
- Let foot cushion the impact of the ball.

[aysou.video/fms11](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms11)

LA FREEWAY

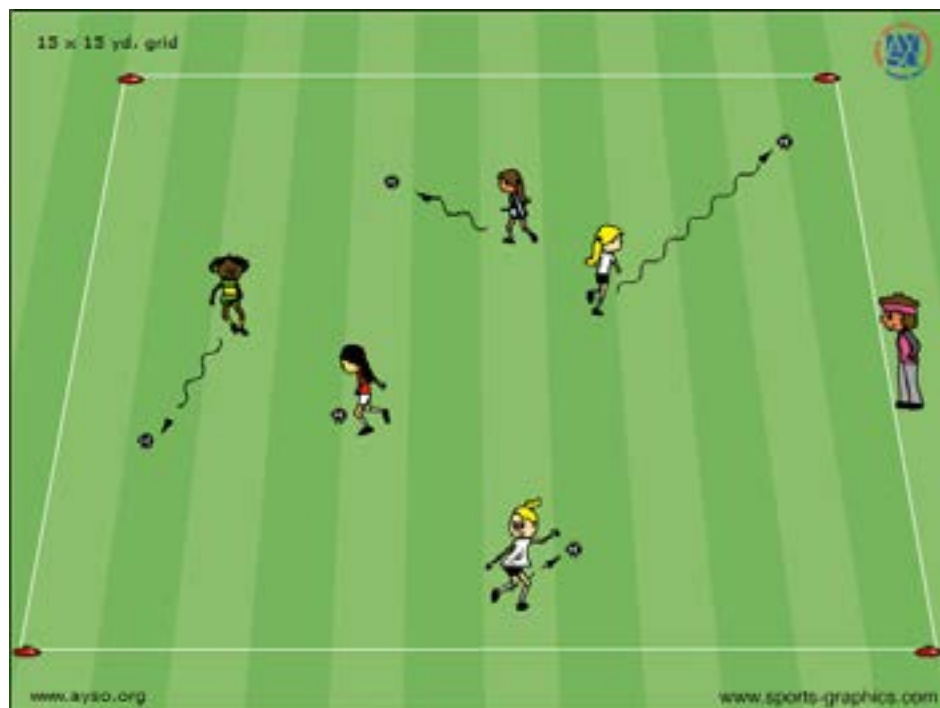
TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Running, Balance**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Create a 15 x 15 yard grid marked with 4 or more cones. Ball per player.
- All players are required to play within the grid.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players dribble around and through the grid.
- They react to the following directions given by the LAPD (the Leader):
“Green” is go, “Yellow” is slow down, “Red” is stop with foot on the ball for 3 seconds, “Crash” all players must fall to the ground, and “Runaway Speeder” the Leader runs in the grid and kicks the balls out of the grid.
- If their ball is kicked out, they bring it back into the area, stand with the ball above their head with their legs apart in a stationary position to make a tunnel.
- The player can get back into the game only when a teammate dribbles their ball through their legs (tunnel).

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Limit players to only use L foot, R foot, outside of R or L, or use inside of both feet.
- Use different cars to signify different speeds, i.e., Ferrari = super speed, mini-van = super slow, etc.
- Add FMS command, i.e., when Leader makes police siren sound, players must stop their ball, freeze and balance on one leg for 5 seconds.

FMS POINTS (balance)

- Body stable and weight over base.
- Eyes and head focused forward.
- Leg raised off ground and not touching supporting leg.
- Supporting leg still and foot flat on contact point.
- Arms out to the side at shoulder height for counter balance.
- Tighten muscles to gain balance and stability.

[aysou.video/fms8](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms8)

PITCH AND PUTT

TECHNIQUE: **Passing/Shooting**

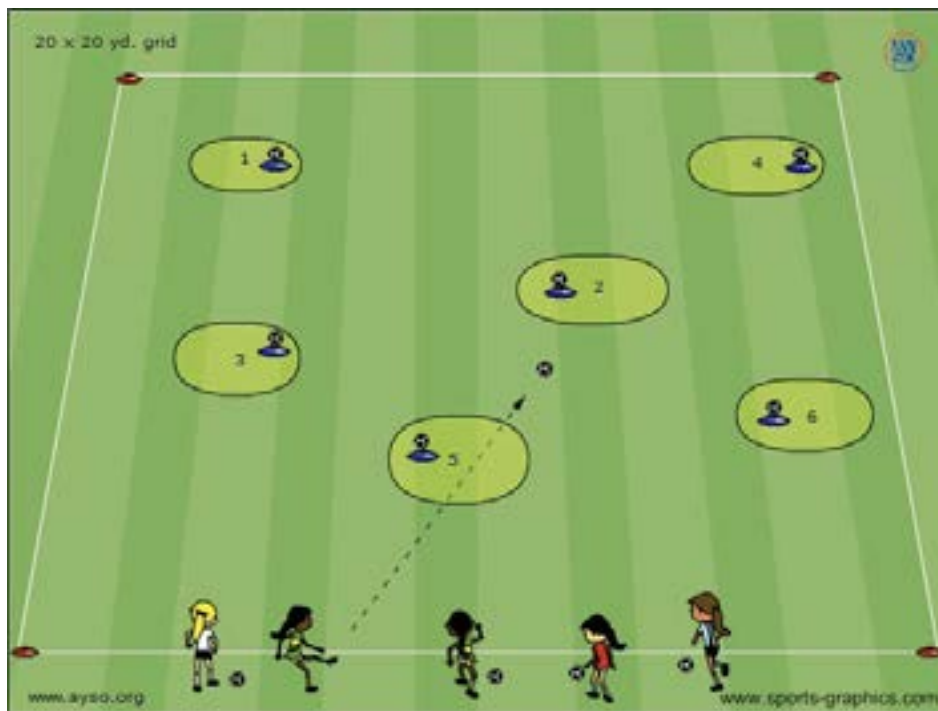
FMS: **Rolling a ball**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 4 cones to mark 20 x 20 yard grid and 6 disc cones to place soccer balls on, 7 or 8 soccer balls.
- If available, 6 hula-hoops to mark the greens.
- Randomly place 5 or 6 disc cones with soccer ball atop within the grid.

To see this activity in action visit:

[aysou.video/pitchputt](https://www.aysou.org/video/pitchputt)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- One at a time, each player tries to knock a ball off of the cones.
- After a miss the Leader resets the balls and the next player is up.
- Players can shoot from any place on the line.
- The first player to knock all six balls of the cones is the winner.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Adjust distance as needed to ensure success.
- Have players strike the ball with the left and right foot.
- Have players roll/bowl the ball.

FMS POINTS (rolling a ball)

- Hold ball using fingers, palm side up.
- Stand facing target.
- Bring arm down and back, rocking onto back foot.
- Step forward with opposite foot to hand.
- Bend at knees and swing arm forward to body.
- Release ball in front of the lead foot in smooth, fluid motion.
- Follow through in direction of target.
- Keep the ball low.

[aysou.video/fms13](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms13)

MR. WOLF

TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Balancing, hopping, etc.**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Make a circle about 20 yards in diameter.
- One ball per player.
- Starting cone per player.

To see this activity in action visit:
aysou.video/mrwolf



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- The Leader is the “Big Bad Bear”
- Players spread around edge of the circle with a ball each.
- The Leader stands in the middle and is Mr. Wolf.
- Every child is a sheep and asks the question very loudly, “What time is it Mr. Wolf?”
- The Wolf says a time, i.e., “2 O’Clock.” Each player must then dribble the ball forward two steps and stop the ball with their foot.
- When the players get close enough to the center the Leader may announce, “Dinner Time” and attempts to steal the soccer balls from the sheep.
- The players must turn and get back to their cone, outside the circle before being captured.
- When a sheep is caught they become a baby wolf in the middle to help Mr. Wolf.
- The winner is the last remaining sheep.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Start without a ball.
- Limit players to only use L foot, R foot, outside of R or L, or use inside of both feet.
- Wolf can also request a FMS challenge, i.e., “BalanceTime”... balance on right leg for 5 seconds, etc., or “Hopping Time”... players hop forward for two then hop back for two, etc.

FMS POINTS (balance)

- Body stable and weight over base.
- Eyes and head focused forward.
- Leg raised off ground and not touching supporting leg.
- Supporting leg still and foot flat on contact point.
- Arms out to the side at shoulder height for counter balance.
- Tighten muscles to gain balance and stability.

aysou.video/fms8

FMS POINTS (hopping)

- Lift one leg, bent at the knee.
- Head up looking forward with head and trunk stable.
- Bend knee of supporting leg.
- Leg straightens to push off.
- Swing arms back, forward and upward.
- Arms continue to move upward as you jump.
- Push from toes to take off.
- Land softly, bending the knee.
- Take off and land on the same foot.

aysou.video/fms3

HOSPITAL TAG

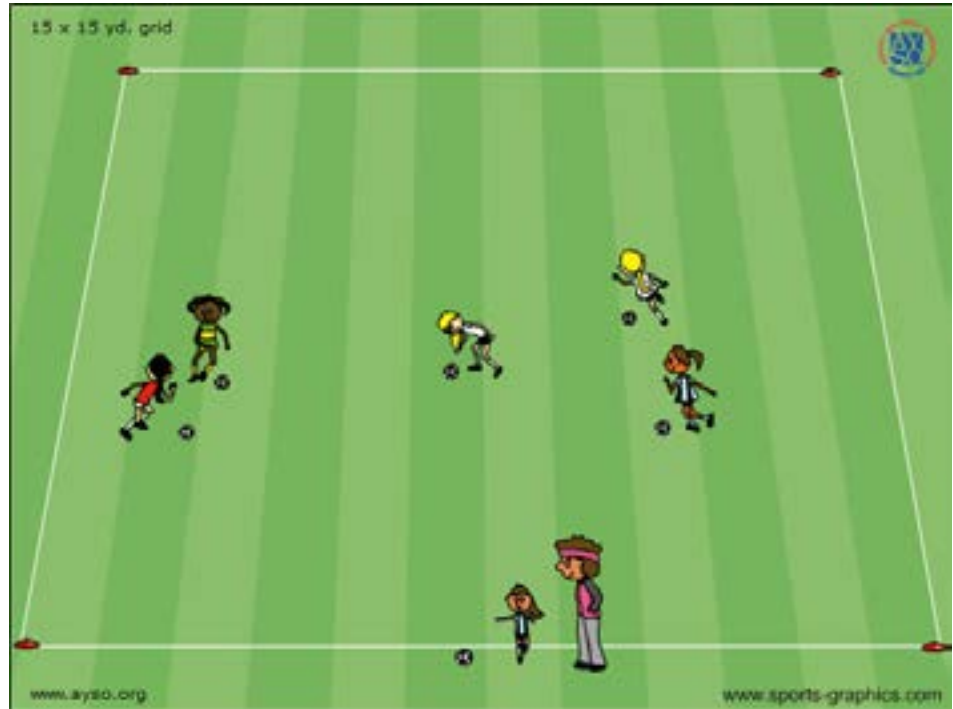
TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Balancing, Hopping**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a 15 x 15 grid and have all players with a ball inside.

To see this activity in action visit:
aysou.video/hospital



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Every player can tag every player in this game.
- Players dribble around grid trying to tag teammate.
- If a player is tagged they hold the body part that is tagged.
- When tagged again, the other hand holds the body part tagged.
- When tagged for the third time, players must go to see the Dr. (Leader) and must get some "medicine" (complete a task assigned by Leader to get healed, i.e., balance on one leg, jumping jacks, etc).
- Players re-enter the grid free to tag again.

VARIATIONS PROGRESSIONS

- Start without a ball.
- Get creative with "the medicine" but keep the tasks simple and related to improving the player's physical coordination and FMS, i.e., balancing on one leg or hopping, etc.

FMS POINTS (balance)

- Body stable and weight over base.
- Eyes and head focused forward.
- Leg raised off ground and not touching supporting leg.
- Supporting leg still and foot flat on contact point.
- Arms out to the side at shoulder height for counter balance.
- Tighten muscles to gain balance and stability.

aysou.video/fms8

FMS POINTS (hopping)

- Lift one leg, bent at the knee.
- Head up looking forward with head and trunk stable.
- Bend knee of supporting leg.
- Leg straightens to push off.
- Swing arms back, forward and upward.
- Arms continue to move upward as you jump.
- Push from toes to take off.
- Land softly, bending the knee.
- Take off and land on same foot.

aysou.video/fms3

KNOCK IT OFF

TECHNIQUE: **Passing/Shooting**

FMS: **Catching a ball, Rolling a ball**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- 4 cones to mark 20 x 20 grid and 10 to place balls on, 11 soccer balls, (a nerf ball for variation).
- Place balls on top of 5 cones lined up along each end line.
- Two teams.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Leader determines which team attacks which end line.
- Leader rolls a ball into the grid to start play.
- Each team competes for possession; the team that gains possession attacks and the other team tries to regain possession.
- The game is won when all the balls on the end line that a team is attacking are knocked off the cones.
- If the ball goes out of play, the Leader rolls it back into the grid.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Can only shoot with the foot the Leader designates.
- Let any team attack any ball, team that knock off the most balls wins.
- Have players on the same team alternate knocking off the ball (one player can't knock off two in a row).
- Using a nerf ball or similar, players can play with ball in hands (like handball). Start off walking to allow players to adjust to catching the ball. To score they have to roll the ball at the target.

FMS POINTS (catching)

- Eyes stay focused on object.
- In preparation to catch: feet and body face the object with knees flexed and feet shoulder width apart. Also, elbows are bent, hands are in front of body, palms facing each other with fingers in a 'W' position presenting large surface area.
- When catching, body moves in line with the object.
- Track the flight of the object while moving hands.
- As the ball is caught, fingers close around it.
- Elbows and knees bend to absorb the force of the ball.

[aysou.video/fms16](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms16)

FMS POINTS (rolling a ball)

- Hold ball using fingers, palm side up.
- Stand facing target.
- Bring arm down and back, rocking onto back foot.
- Step forward with opposite foot to hand.
- Bend at knees and swing arm forward to body.
- Release ball in front of the lead foot in smooth, fluid motion.
- Follow through in direction of target.
- Keep the ball low.

[aysou.video/fms13](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms13)

BANK ROBBERY

TECHNIQUE: **Dribbling**

FMS: **Running, Rolling a ball**

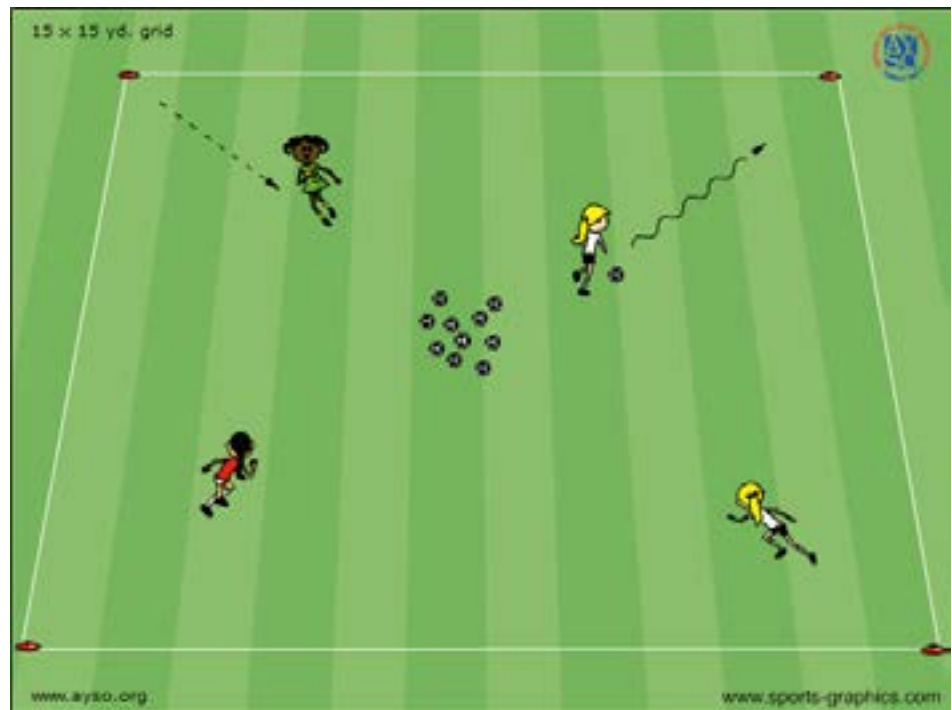
EQUIPMENT

ORGANIZATION

- 10 to 12 soccer balls.
- Create a 15 x 15 grid with 4 or more cones.
- All players are required to play *within* the grid.

To see this activity in action visit:

[aysou.video/bankrob](https://www.aysou.org/video/bankrob)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- All players are standing by a corner cone.
- The Leader yells “Bank Robbery” and at that time all players must sprint to the center of the grid, collect a ball with their feet and return to the cone as quickly as possible, stopping the ball by the cone.
- They then return to the center to get another ball.
- When all the balls have been collected the player who has collected the most balls wins.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Limit players to L foot, R foot, outside of R or L, or use inside of both feet.
- Add more balls to the center and enlarge the grid.
- Once all balls are taken from the center, players can steal from each other’s banks (watch time on this as it can be very tiring).
- Have players pick the balls up and carry them back to their nest, or roll the ball back.

FMS POINTS (rolling a ball)

- Hold ball using fingers, palm side up.
- Stand facing target.
- Bring arm down and back, rocking onto back foot.
- Step forward with opposite foot to hand.
- Bend at knees and swing arm forward to body.
- Release ball in front of the lead foot in smooth, fluid motion.
- Follow through in direction of target.
- Keep the ball low.

[aysou.video/fms13](https://www.aysou.org/video/fms13)

ADDITIONAL GAME-LIKE ACTIVITIES

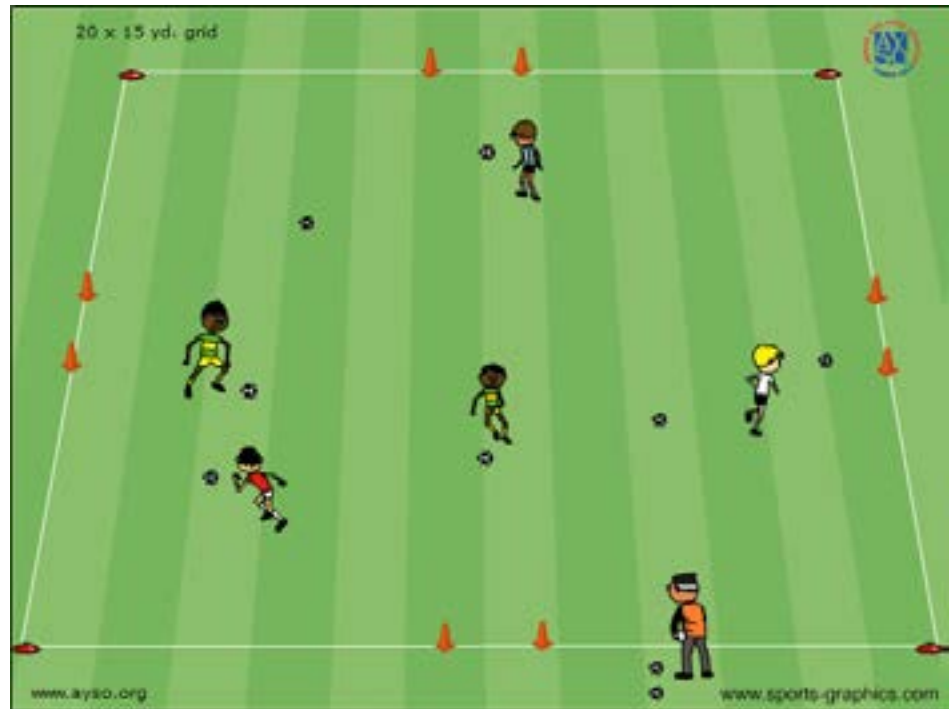
ANY GOAL

EMPHASIS: **Score!**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a 20 x 15 yard grid with a central goal on each end line.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Leader rolls numerous balls onto field (at least one per player and ideally a few extra).
- Players look to collect a ball and score in any of the goals.
- Have parents behind goals to re-distribute balls and keep the game flowing.
- Purpose is for players to understand the aim of soccer is to score goals!

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Once the balls are in the goals, reset and begin again, but now the players must try and score in a different goal.
- Add a set period of time and keep score.
- Add corner goals.

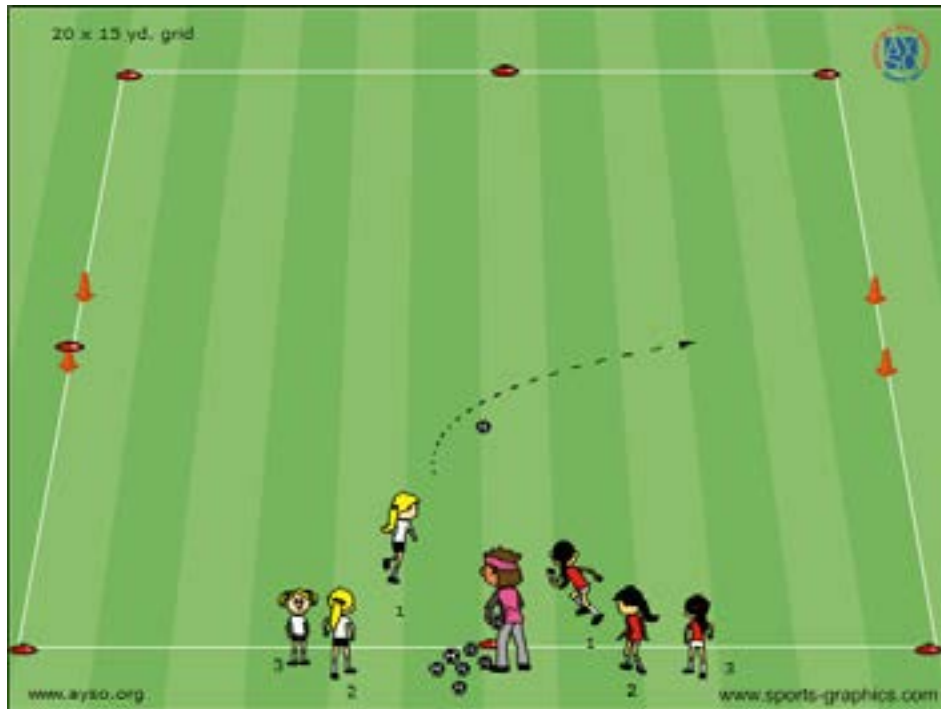
NUMBERS 1

EMPHASIS: **Direction**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a small-sided field with a goal at either end.
- Two teams, numbered 1-3, line up either side of the Leader in central position on touch line.
- Use scrimmage vests and give colorful team names.
- Encourage team cheering.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.org/video/numbers1](https://www.aysou.org/video/numbers1)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Leader determines which team attacks which goal (mark goal(s) with the same colored scrimmage vest as team).
- Leader roles 2 balls into the field to start play.
- Leader calls a number and players with that number from both teams run out to a ball (one for each player).
- One team have to score in one goal and the other team in the opposite one.
- This is to help players understand direction.
- Keep score.
- Have numerous balls on hand to keep the game flowing.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Provide extra points to the player who scores first.

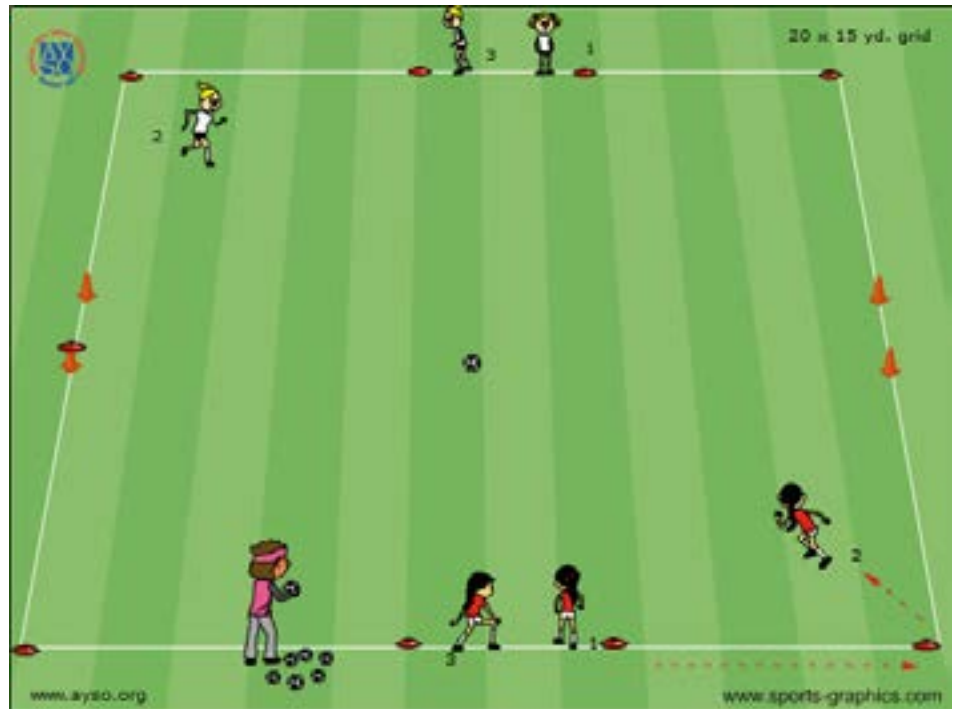
NUMBERS 2

EMPHASIS: **Competition**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a small-sided field with a goal at either end.
- Two teams, numbered 1-3+, line up on opposite touch lines within two cones.
- Use scrimmage vests and give colorful team names.
- Encourage team cheering.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/numbers2](https://www.aysou.org/video/numbers2)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Leader determines which team attacks which goal (mark goal(s) with the same colored scrimmage vest as team).
- As Leader calls a number, player's with that number from both teams run to their right, go around the corner cone, and cut into the field to compete 1v1 to goal.
- As players are running, Leader rolls out one ball for players to compete.
- Once goal is scored or ball goes out of play, the play is over and players return to their team.
- Be sure to encourage players to try to steal the ball and not run into each other (serve the ball more to one side to avoid collision).
- Have numerous balls on hand to keep the game flowing.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Change directions.

NUMBERS 3

EMPHASIS: **Teamwork**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a small-sided field with a goal either end.
- Two teams, numbered 1-3, line up on opposite touch lines within two cones.
- Use scrimmage vests and give colorful team names.
- Encourage team cheering.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/numbers3](https://www.aysou.org/video/numbers3)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Leader determines which team attacks which goal (mark goal(s) with the same colored scrimmage vest as team).
- The Leader will call two player's numbers (i.e., 1 and 2).
- As Leader calls a number, player's with that number from both teams run to their right, go around the corner cone, and cut into the field to compete 2v2 to goal.
- As players are running, Leader rolls out one ball for players to compete.
- Encourage players to work together to introduce teamwork.
- Once goal is scored or ball goes out of play, the play is over and players return to their team.
- Have numerous balls on hand to keep the game flowing.

VARIATIONS/ PROGRESSIONS

- Change directions.
- Players can sit crossed legged, facing different direction, bouncing, etc., challenging them to react.
- Have players run round corner cone, onto the goal and enter through the goals.

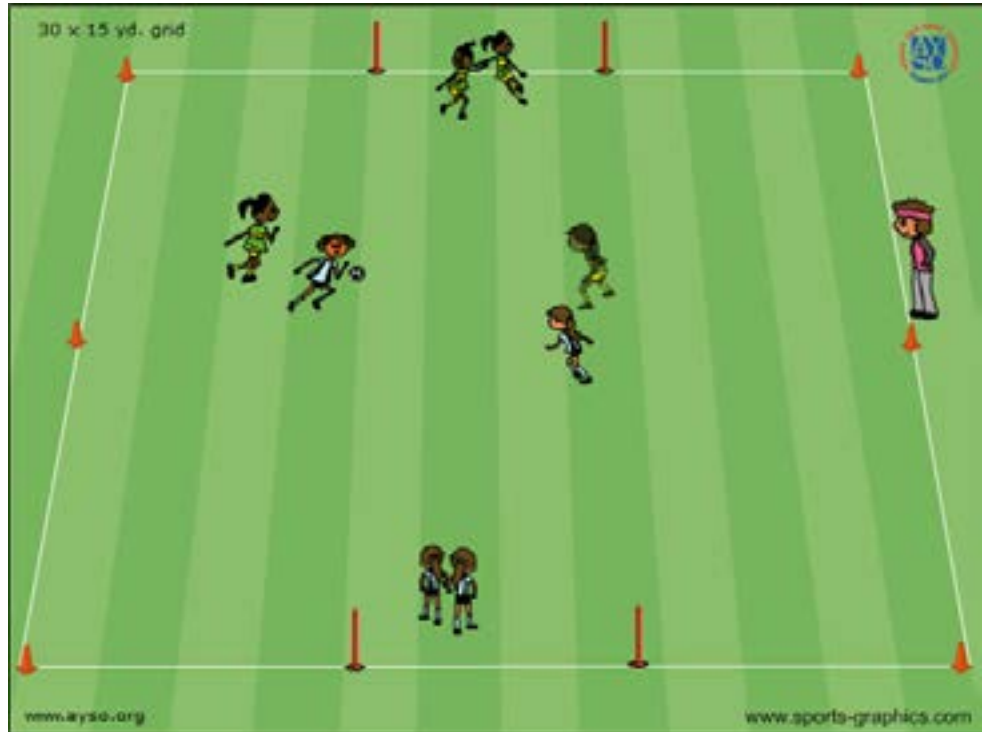
CHANGE GAME

EMPHASIS: **Rules**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a small-sided field large enough to play 4v4 or more. Make goals large enough for easy scoring.
- Put players into two teams. Then split each team into two groups. Half the team are outfield players and the other group link arms and become the “goalkeeper centipede” to block shots with their feet.
- Use scrimmage vests and give colorful team names.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Teams play against each other and try to score in opponents goal.
- Centipede in goal cannot break link to make saves but must move as unit.
- The other group play on the field and try to score a goal.
- Centipede players switch places with the field players on Leader command “change” and/or each time ball leaves playing area.
- Players will begin to understand that play stops when the ball leaves the playing area.
- Introduce very simple **rules**:
 - Goals (only count below the knee)
 - Free-kicks (kicking, tripping, etc)
 - Kick-offs (start game, when goals are scored)
 - Ball in and out of play (touchline and goal line)
 - Throw-ins (don’t worry about technique)
- Don’t worry about enforcing strict rules, simply **introduce** them and keep the game flowing.

VARIATIONS PROGRESSIONS

- Introduce one rule at the time it occurs.

THE BIG MATCH

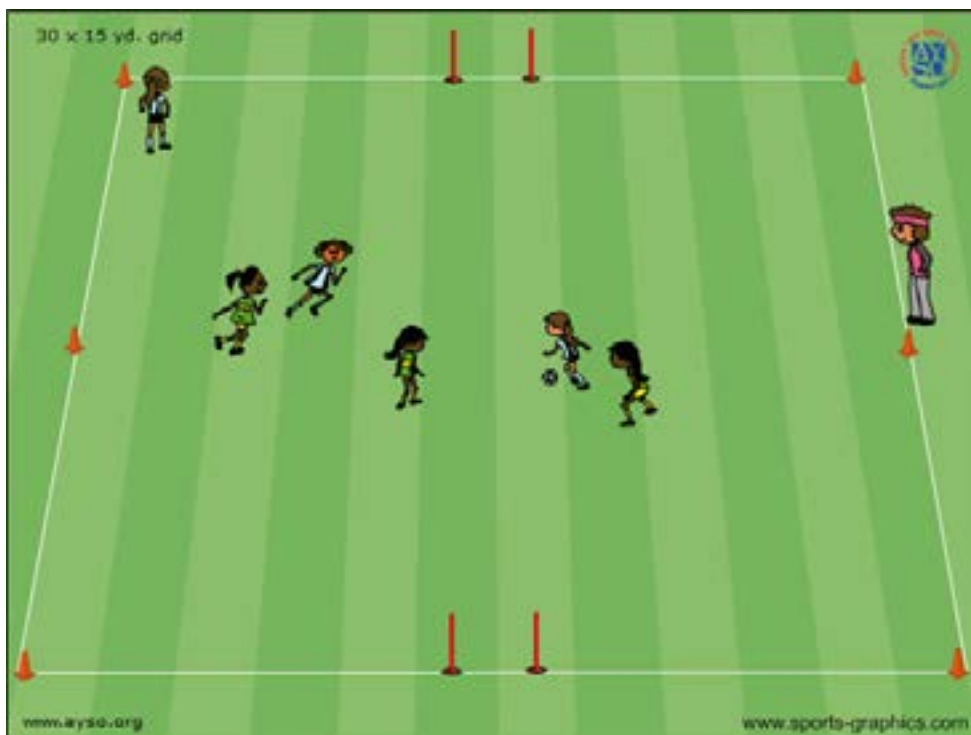
(play 3v3 for last 3 sessions to help players gain familiarity)

EMPHASIS: **3v3**

EQUIPMENT/ ORGANIZATION

- Mark a small-sided field with small goals.
- Two teams of three.
- Use scrimmage vests and give colorful team names.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- 3v3 game to goal.
- Very simple rules:
 - Goals
 - Free-kicks (kicking, tripping, etc)
 - Kick-offs (start game, when goals are scored)
 - Ball in and out of play (touchline and goal line)
 - Throw-ins (don't worry about technique)
- Have two halves and switch ends, just like the big match.
- Don't worry about enforcing strict rules, simply introduce them and keep the game flowing.

VARIATIONS PROGRESSIONS

- To start or restart games, ask players to find a space and freeze when the ball goes out of play.
- Give the ball to either the player in most space or a player who may not have had as many touches in the game as others. Allow them a few seconds to travel towards goal before you allow the others to move freely.
- This encourages spatial awareness and involves each player (prevents one or two players to dominate, as is often the case in 3v3).

BUMPER BALL!

EMPHASIS: **Targets, Direction, Competition and Rules.**

EQUIPMENT ORGANIZATION

- Create a 30 x 15 yard field with goals marked with flags or tall cones at either end.
- Two teams.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Parents stand on the touchlines and goal lines to stop the ball going out of play.
- Ball stays in play and prevents the need for corners, goal kicks or throw ins.
- Keep score.
- Give teams colorful and fun names.

VARIATIONS PROGRESSIONS

- Remove parents from either goal line or touchline to **gradually** introduce throw ins, corners or goal kicks.

SHOOT!

EMPHASIS: Direction, Targets and Competition

EQUIPMENT ORGANIZATION

- Create a 30 x 30 yard square and smaller inner 15 x 15 yard square.
- Four small goals central on each touchline of the outer square.

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



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Two teams, each player with a number dribbling inside the inner square.
- When Leader calls a number, the player from each team dribbles out the inner square and shoots on any goal.
- Only the first player to score gets a point for their team.

VARIATIONS PROGRESSIONS

- Limit players to only use L foot, R foot, outside of R or L, or use inside of both feet.
- Call multiple numbers.
- Mark line a few yards from goals so players must kick before that line.

FMS VIDEO LINKS



aysou.video/fms1



aysou.video/fms8



aysou.video/fms9



aysou.video/fms10



aysou.video/fms6



aysou.video/fms3



aysou.video/fms2



aysou.video/fms4



aysou.video/fms5



aysou.video/fms13



aysou.video/fms15



aysou.video/fms17



aysou.video/fms16



aysou.video/fms12

CHECKLIST

First Practice

- ☐ Host a preseason meeting with parents to discuss your program philosophy, goals and intentions
- ☐ Ask every player which name they prefer and call them by that name
- ☐ Talk with youth athletes about how to seek out and connect with other adults they trust
- ☐ Co-create and set positive norms, rules and routines for practices and games

Planning Practice / Pregame

- ☐ Collaborate with other coaches to design effective practices
- ☐ Ensure the physical environment is free of safety concerns
- ☐ Set high expectations and clear limits on behavior
- ☐ Have players set goals and intentions regarding their physical, social, emotional and cognitive skill development
- ☐ Allow athletes to serve in leadership roles and maintain a rotation schedule so all players have the opportunity to lead

During Practice / Day of Game

- ☐ Start and end practices on time
- ☐ Participate in drills with players
- ☐ Practice positive interactions that are encouraged of players
- ☐ Adjust the structure of practice and activities to accommodate players' emotions
- ☐ Create community by adopting practices such as composing a team cheer, selecting a team name, logo or slogan, or incorporating team-building activities into games and practices
- ☐ Encourage high-fives or handshakes for greetings

After Practice / Postgame

- ☐ Give shoutouts for achievement, effort and improvement at the end of the practice: players to players, coach to players and players to coach
- ☐ Collect athlete feedback and incorporate into practices
- ☐ Talk with parents/caregivers about issues arising with their children
- ☐ Encourage parents and caregivers to reinforce these skills by talking about what they are, what they mean and what these behaviors can look like at home

Ongoing: Every Practice, Every Game

- ☐ Reinforce the norms, rules and routines
- ☐ Ensure all youth are included, with equitable access to activities, being sensitive to different learning styles
- ☐ Establish a code of conduct that prohibits bullying and establishes consequences
- ☐ Ask questions to get to know every youth, their families and their motivations
- ☐ Organize formal meetings with your players throughout the season in order to help them express their feelings, wants and needs
- ☐ Be cognizant of your own and others' perspectives
- ☐ Practice self-care, engage in reflection around your own social and emotional well-being
- ☐ Talk to every youth at every practice and during every game

Learn more at as.pn/callsforcoaches



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CALLS FOR COACHES

01

KNOW EVERY ATHLETE'S STORY

Build positive adult-youth relationships

02

ESTABLISH A SUPPORTIVE TEAM CULTURE

Create a safe space that supports social and emotional skill development

03

CELEBRATE EFFORT

Embody effective leadership strategies that emphasize effort, autonomy and learning

04

FOCUS ON THE SKILLS THAT MATTER

Prioritize and provide opportunities for direct skill building and practice

05

BE A ROLE MODEL

Model good character and decision-making

06

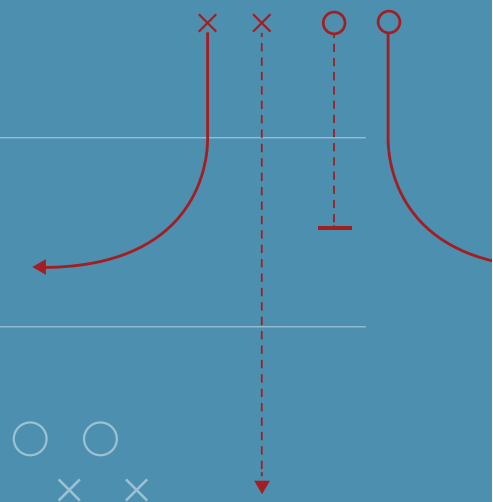
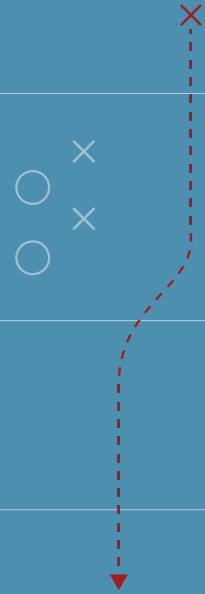
BE COACHABLE

Seek opportunities for support, training and professional development

07

JOIN FORCES

Engage with families, schools and other community organizations





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Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Relationship Building

Objectives

1. Learn everyone's preferred name.
2. Make sure everyone understands the program expectations (e.g. commitment, sportsmanship, relationships).
3. Explain your purpose in focusing on relationship building.

Skills and Competencies in Focus

1. Increasing prosocial behaviors
2. Teamwork

Facilitate a conversation with your team using these talking points

- We demonstrate respect by learning names and using preferred names.
- We want our teammates to get involved and really commit. That means show up to practice, work hard for self and team, and make their season a priority.
- Encourage each other and hold each other accountable. Challenge teammates to represent each and the team through their actions on and off the field.



Tune into Team Progress

Listen to how your players talk to each other and what names they are using. When you hear something that doesn't sound right, correct it. Remember: demonstrate what you want to see or hear. When you see or hear it, acknowledge it positively.



Summary (coaches deliver to the team)

Model respect by learning names, explain your commitment to the team as their coach, and how you plan to represent them on and off the field too.





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Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Social Engagement

Objectives

1. Students will understand expectations for how to interact with officials.
2. Students will understand expectations for how to interact with each other.

Skills and Competencies in Focus

1. Understanding social cues and demonstrating basic conflict resolution strategies
2. Collaborating and working with others as part of a team

Facilitate a conversation with your team using these talking points

Officials are people, not objects of frustration. We will treat officials with decency and respect because without their willingness to do this job, we wouldn't have games. This means we will:

- React appropriately when calls don't go our way.
- Respectfully and calmly ask for clarification when you don't understand a call.
- ALWAYS express gratitude to the officials at the end of a match.

Teammates are people and will also make mistakes. We will treat our teammates with decency and respect because we care about them. This means that we will:

- Not get angry about mistakes but explain/show how to do something better.
- Encourage each other with our words, not tear each other down.
- Find ways to demonstrate positive sportsmanship and lead by example.

Opponents are people, and we will respect them as competitors. This means that we will:

- Use respectful language when talking to them or about them.
- Congratulate them when they win, encourage them after you win.
- Recognize game: when they make a good play, tell them. It's okay to tip the hat or high five an opponent. It doesn't show weakness.

Tune into Team Progress

What to look for:

- Count how many times your players say "nice play" or "good catch" to each other and opponents.
- Count how many times players handle themselves coolly and calmly when they miss a shot or strike out.

Remember: Highlight and acknowledge publicly when you see what you want to see. This reinforces the behavior for the other kids too.





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Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Recognizing Strengths

Objectives

1. Athletes will identify strengths in each other (1 athletic attribute and 1 personal attribute)
2. Athletes will self-identify strengths (1 athletic attribute and 1 personal attribute)
3. Athletes will set a goal based on improving their strengths

Skills and Competencies in Focus

1. Understanding and recognizing emotions in oneself and others.
2. Longer term goal-setting and planning.

Facilitate a conversation with your team using these talking points

- It's easy to be hard on ourselves and others, but we perform better when we recognize strengths in ourselves and others.
- After identifying strengths, have players discuss how their strengths make the team better.
- Have players identify one way they can continue improving their strengths.



Tune into Team Progress

Get familiar with your players' goals, whether you helped set them or they did it independently. You can help them determine how they will measure success towards their goal and help them track their success.



Summary to close

Good teammates continually look for ways to improve so they can help the team and build others up. We may not be good at everything yet but can commit to get better at something everyday. Don't be afraid to ask for help or advice from teammates and be humble when giving help or advice to your teammates.





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Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Respect for Others

Objectives

1. Players understand their roles as ambassadors of the team
2. Players understand types of questions they can ask in order to get to know other people

Skills and Competencies in Focus

1. Engaging in more complex conflict resolution and friendships.
2. Demonstrating empathy and perspective-taking.

Facilitate a conversation with your team using these talking points

- In the community, athletes represent your team. Within your program, you represent each other, your coach(es), and your sport. In both settings - represent to the best of your ability by showing respect for yourself and others.
- Respect can be hard at times, especially when you don't "get" the other person. Learn how to engage with your peers, coaches and other adults. Ask questions in order to better understand each other. When we understand how people think or reasons behind their actions, it is easier to be respectful of their feelings and actions.

Activity/Assignment

Before the next practice, have each player engage with any adult of their choosing, other than their coach, and "interview" them. These should be short one-on-one conversations, not in groups. *(Note: Their adult can be anyone they interact regularly with; a teacher, a parent, whoever brought them to practice that day, a friend's parent, even an older sibling.)*

- Ask your adult about their favorite thing about what they do.
- Ask your adult about the biggest challenge of being an adult.
- Ask your adult about how they stay motivated in spite of their challenges.
- Ask your own follow-up question.
- Be ready to talk about what you learned about your adult next week.

*Bonus assignment: Meet another kid you don't know and ask them the same questions.



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Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Empathy

Objectives

1. Students will understand their role as ambassadors and leaders
2. Students will analyze the effectiveness of showing respect and empathy and how they impact their relationships with others.

Skills and Competencies

1. Increasing prosocial behaviors.
2. Understanding and recognizing emotions in oneself and others.

Activity/Assignment Follow Up

- Ask for volunteers to summarize the conversations they had with their adults.
- Ask each of them how understanding their adult's challenges makes them feel about their adults. You may already have some well-informed players who are already well aware of the challenges that adults face. If you can do so delicately, ask them how they have adapted in order to be more supportive of the adults in their lives.
- Have the students discuss how they exhibit leadership through demonstrating respect and empathy for their adults.



Tune into Team Progress

What to look for (Big Picture): You want to see how kids are interacting with the adults in their lives. Get creative for how you check on this: watch how kids interact with other coaches, referees and families while leaving practice, ask them directly, etc.



Closing

When you can show empathy towards others, they are more likely to show empathy towards you. Often when we treat others how we wish to be treated, they do the same. Sometimes, they don't. However, part of your role as a leader is to stay true to your character and to those you represent, even when it might be hard.





Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Responsible Decision Making

Objectives

1. Students will learn how to apply ethics to decision making

Skills and Competencies in Focus

1. Thinking flexibly and redirecting attention.
2. Understanding and recognizing more complex emotions and situations.

Discussion

Ask: *What are ethics?* (looking for: moral principles or something similar. Younger kids may not have an answer.)

Ask: *What is more important, winning a game or acting ethically?*

Scenario: The game is close and time is running out. The official blows the whistle and calls the ball out of bounds on the other team. (*This is a basketball scenario. Make applicable to your own sport.) However, you know with absolute certainty that you stepped out of bounds with the ball first. What is your ethical responsibility?

Tell the official	Don't tell the officials
Cons: Other team gets the ball, you might lose. Teammates might get mad at you.	Cons: Maybe none. Maybe the other team knows the truth and they get mad at you.
Pros: In the moment, maybe none. Official will show you appreciation. If your team thinks ethics are important, maybe they'll affirm your decision too.	Pros: You get the ball. Your team might win.
Long term: Your coach will know. How will they react?	Long term: Your coach will know. How will they react?

Tune into Team Progress

What would you do? This will actually require a lot of introspection on your part. You have to determine what you would expect a player to do in the above scenario or any other. Your reaction to these scenarios will ultimately determine your players actions.



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Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports Responsible Decision Making

Objectives

1. Students will use problem solving skills to address a school issue
2. Students are able to think through three stages of problem solving

Skills and Competencies in Focus

1. Organizing information to solve problems.
2. Collaborating and working with others as part of a team.

Activity

Three stages of problem solving:

*If there is another applicable problem or issue you think would better apply to your athletes, please feel free to use instead.

1. **Identify a problem:** Social media use by students

Explain: Social media can be pretty negative and filled with lots of trolls and even bullies.

2. **Analyzing Situations:**

Ask students why they think people can be negative on social media. (possible answers: They think it's funny, they are mad about something, maybe they are unhappy and are taking out frustrations on other people, some people think it's cool to put down other people, etc.)

Ask students how it probably feels to be the target of online trolls or bullies.

3. **Solving Problems:**

Ask students how they think they can help solve the problem. (note: this problem is pretty widespread, which the kids will probably acknowledge. So, turn the conversation to how they can do their part to make it better, even if it doesn't fix the problem.)

Challenge: Encourage kids to commit to making one positive post about someone or something every day.

(note: If somebody gives an awesome solution that could lead to a better challenge, use it.)





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Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports Identifying Emotions

Objectives

1. Students will discuss emotions and how they respond to strange feelings

Skills and Competencies in Focus

1. Understanding and recognizing more complex emotions and situations.

Discussion

Ask: *Have you ever been mad for no reason, or sad but can't figure why? Or, have you ever just been in a bad mood with no real reason why?*

Take their answers.

Explain that we all deal with a lot of strange emotions, and sometimes they don't make sense. You can discuss hormones and brain chemicals at a basic level and reassure them that this happens a lot to this age group simply because their bodies and minds are developing.

Explain that learning to deal with these emotions involves being able to identify when they have these feelings, even if unexpected. Ask: *When you are feeling down or angry, and don't know why, what can you do?*

Answers: Talk to friends, talk to parents, talk to teachers, talk to you. Be explicit that they don't just have to get over it. If it doesn't pass, then they should talk to somebody. If they can't shake their strange feelings, it doesn't mean something is wrong with them. It just means that they need to find some outlet for their feelings and they can also talk to their coaches for support.

Tune into Team Progress

What to look for: Observe how kids handle their emotions during practice and games. Do they shut down? Do they lash out? Do they shake it off quickly? Do they tell a peer why they are frustrated? Create your team atmosphere as a safe space for having these discussions and expressing their emotions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chicago Fire Soccer in the Community

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Australian Sports Commission Indigenous Sports Program

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