



U8 Coaches Guidebook

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For Additional Resources...please visit the “Resources” link on our website.

Introduction

Thank you for volunteering, Coach!

“The Coach is first of all a teacher.” – John Wooden

Your dedication as a coach and mentor to our young athletes is to be commended. Noblesville United Soccer Club thanks you for your time, leadership, and service to our community. Without volunteers like you NUSC wouldn't be possible.

As a board, and fellow parents, we hope to provide you with everything you need to ensure your experience as a coach is great one.

Sincerely,

NUSC Board of Directors and Staff

NUSC Mission Statement and Core Values

Our Mission...

Noblesville United Soccer Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to the positive development of our area's youth through their participation in a safe, healthy, and affordable soccer program that is fun and rewarding for all.

NUSC's objectives are to teach individual and team soccer skills to players, provide practice and game experiences to improve players, and foster a love of soccer in players and families that can last a lifetime.

NUSC will provide players with the opportunity to participate in a soccer experience where they can improve both technically and tactically. Most importantly, they will develop positive self-esteem and build character by learning the value of Community, Respect, Leadership, Service, and Integrity. NUSC aims to be the first place every soccer player in Noblesville play in their soccer career and provides a lifelong opportunity to play soccer for the community.



At NUSC we believe in and promote...

Community – We value our community and members within our club. We share common goals to create a unified club that contributes to, receives support from, and represents our community.

Respect – We see and appreciate the value in ourselves and others. It means showing encouragement to your teammates and applauding their effort even when things are not going well. To be truly successful in soccer – and in life – you must treat all the people around you with courtesy, respect, and empathy.

Leadership – Guiding, motivating, or inspiring of others to improve the performance or the achievement of a common goal. Leadership is being consistent, leading by example, performing under pressure and by doing the right things, the right way every day. These values are hallmarks of great leaders, team captains, and individuals.

Service - Looking for a need and filling it to make a positive change on your team, in your club, family or in the community. Leaders know a team, club or group is more important than themselves and they set a good example and lead by doing needed service to the group or team.

Integrity – To be held in the highest regards at NUSC. Being courageous enough to accept reality and do the right thing whatever the outcome may be. Being a person of integrity is one of the hardest things to accomplish, but it is also one of the most valuable traits we can obtain in life.



Noblesville United Soccer Club Rec League Rules

Division	U6	U8	U10	U12
Format/Players	3v3 or 4v4	5v5	7v7	9v9
Ball Size	3	3	4	4
Game Length	4 x 10 Minute Quarters		2 x 25 Minute Halves	2 x 30 Minute Halves
Half-Time	N/A		Yes (5 Minutes)	
Coach on the Field	Yes	No		
Goalkeeper	No	Yes (1-Quarter)	Yes (1-Half)	Yes
Goalkeeper Distribution	N/A	Yes (Throw, Roll, Pass). (No Punting, Drop Kicks). (Defenders move to half field line).	Yes (Throw, Roll, Pass). (No Punting, Drop Kicks). (Defenders move to build out line).	Yes
Minimum Players to Start	3		4	6
Goal Kicks	Yes (Goal Line). (Defenders move to half field line).	Yes (Goal Line). (Defenders move to half field line).	Yes (Anywhere in the Penalty Box). (Defenders move to build out line).	Yes
Throw-Ins	No (Kick-ins from the sideline).	Yes (1 Re-Throw).		Yes
Headers	No (Purposeful header will lead to an indirect kick).			
Direct Kicks	No		Yes	
Offsides	No		Yes (build out line acts as the half field line). (No cherry picking).	Yes
Substitutions	Yes (Unlimited (Usually only for injury)).		Yes (Unlimited (Goal Scored, Throw-In, Goal Kick, and Injury)).	
Slide Tackles	No (For player safety slide tackles are not allowed).			
Playing Time	All players will play ½ of all games. Ideally, players will play half of each half of the game as well.			
Players Equipment	The uniform is a jersey, shorts, soccer socks, shin guards and shoes. Nothing that could potentially cause injury to a player, or another player may be worn (including jewelry and metal hair clips). The goalkeeper must wear a different color jersey (or penny) to distinguish them from the other players.			
Referee(s)	N/A		1 Center	1 Center, 2 Assistant
Code of Conduct	Yes (All Coaches, Parents, and Players will respect everyone at each match. Failure to do so will lead to your removal from the facility).			
Red Card Action	Yes (Coach/Parent (Current game, plus 2 game suspension)). (Player (Current Game, plus 1 game suspension)).			
Guest Players	Yes (Must be approved by the Director of the program at each club).			
Game Day Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An emphasis is to be placed on fun and development.• All players and coaches shall be on one side of the field "team area" opposite from the parents and spectators (Exception for U/8).• Players and coaches shall remain on their own half of the sideline.• No coaches or parents are allowed to sit or stand along the end-lines near the goals.• Coaches should not be on the field of play, unless attending a player for an injury (Exception for U/6).• Players should huddle as a team together during injury on the field away from injured player to allow adults to attend injured player.			
Scoring	No		Yes (Recorded score is only a +4 differential). (Challenge your team in other areas if winning by 4 or more goals.)	

Standing Tiebreakers	N/A	Yes (1. Points, 2. Wins, 3. Ties, 4. Loss, 5. Goals Against, 6. Goal Differential, 7. Goals Scored, 8. Coin Flip (best of three)).
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U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

(Framework- a basic structure underlying a system)

U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

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

U.S. SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Reality Based: The game is what drives changes in behavior, reflection and decision making for the player/the team and the coach

Holistic Approach: Input and consideration for all interconnected aspects of the game, the athlete and the desired outcome

Experiential Learning: The evaluation, analysis and reflection of experiences to develop competencies and improve behavior

KEY QUALITIES OF A U.S. SOCCER PLAYER

1. Read and understand the game and make decisions
2. Take initiative, be pro-active
3. Demonstrate focus
4. Execute with optimal technical abilities
5. Execute with optimal physical abilities
6. Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance

The U.S. Soccer Grassroots Player Development Framework is a simplified overview of the development pathway of U6 to U19+ grassroots players related to the four game models and player ages, based on goals, needs, key qualities, and player/coach behavior.

We define player development as a series of progressive changes leading to a higher level of differentiation and functioning. Two characteristics of development: are change and progress. Differentiation is the developmental process when the qualities of a player are getting more advanced and refined. The combination of growth, maturation and learning lead to a higher level of functioning. When maturing, it is about physical growth. Learning is the process by which experience results in a change in behavior. Children at different ages will process and reason information in different ways.

The stages of player development see development as a regular succession of stages, in a process of continuous progress. This development is a combination of cognitive, psychosocial and motor development.

- Cognitive development is the development of intelligence, conscious thought, and problem solving ability.
- Motor development refers to the development of a child's bones, muscles and ability to move around and manipulate his or her environment.
- Psychosocial development is the development of the personality, including the acquisition of social attitudes and skills

There will be a holistic approach when looking at these different aspects of development. This means, input and consideration for all interconnected aspects of the game, the player and the desired outcome.



U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

GAME MODEL: 4v4

AGES: 6 - 8

4v4

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
<p>"The ball is playing with me... I am playing with the ball."</p> <p>Learning the fundamentals of the game in game-like situations. Understanding the purpose and structure of the game, direction of play, and basic rules.</p>	<p>Activity based games that emphasize exploration and experimentation.</p> <p>Ball experiences in game-like situations.</p> <p>Exploring physical abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reads and analyzes situations regarding the structure of soccer attacking/defending/transition Takes initiative-creates opportunities instead of reacting Wants to score Shows comfort with the ball Is involved and engaged throughout every game/training session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoot Pass or dribble forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the goal Steal the ball 	<p>Small, incidental things are important</p> <p>Always in motion</p>	<p>Appreciate the things they take seriously, even if you don't</p> <p>Use routines to manage them during practice and games</p>
<p>"Playing with my friends."</p> <p>Learning the basic understanding of attacking, defending, and transition by playing together...</p>	<p>Activities focused on the goals of attacking and defending and how to accomplish them</p> <p>Ball experiences in game-like situations with attention for the key qualities of a player</p> <p>Experiences of attacking and defending together (reading & decision making)</p>	<p>In addition to the KQs listed above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies (basic) knowledge of the cues Understands where and when to move themselves and the ball Confronts situations Demonstrates bravery Delivers on agreements and promises Evaluates and reflects on their own performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread out Create passing options Support the attack Plus all player actions above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it compact Keep it compact Plus all player actions above 	<p>Short attention span</p> <p>Live in the moment</p> <p>Focus is on self</p>	<p>Exercises are short and to the point, reminders are necessary</p> <p>Talk about what happens, not what happened</p> <p>Accept their behavior and praise when they share</p>
				<p>A>D Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).</p>	<p>D>A Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).</p>	

U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



GAME MODEL: 7v7

AGES: 9 - 10

7v7

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
"Playing as team." Learning the basic understanding of attacking, defending, and transition by playing as a 7v7 team.	Developing relationships with the other players, how decisions and movement affect others (teammates and opponents)	In addition to the KQs of a 4v4 player: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns own actions with the other players, positions Challenges opponents Deals with adversity Is proficient in 1v1 situations to create or to steal/regain the ball 	U6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoot Pass or dribble forward U7/U8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread out Create passing options Support the attack U9/U10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a 2v1 or 1v1 Change the point of attack 	U6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the goal Steal the ball U7/U8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it compact Keep it compact U9/U10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressure, cover, balance Outnumber the opponent 	Participate enthusiastically in competitive activities Practice repeatedly to get better Take losing hard, in practice and games Want to know "why" Need lots of positive reinforcement	Encourage them to try to win, but always be fair Recognize their effort, give them things to practice on at home Focus on how they play and improve, not the results Guide them toward finding the answers themselves Give plenty of praise
	Experiences in game-like situations for key qualities related to attacking and defending					
	Experiences of attacking and defending as a team					
					A>D Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).	D>A Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).



U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

GAME MODEL: 9v9
AGES: 11 - 12

9v9

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
<p>"Playing my role and position for the team."</p> <p>Learning the fundamentals given his/her role, position, and tasks in the 9v9 team.</p>	Gaining fundamental understanding of the meaning of role, position and task in a team	<p>In addition to the KQs of a 1v1 player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remains calm and composed Is technically proficient to be effective Is coordinated in their movement Is adaptable and flexible in dealing with (unexpected) challenges and problems Articulates their own learning needs 	<p>U6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shield Pass with subtle forward <p>U7/U8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread out Creates passing options Support the attack <p>U9/U10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a 2v1 or 1v1 Change the point of attack <p>U11/U12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the pace/rhythm Switch positions 	<p>U6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the goal Steal the ball <p>U7/U8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it compact Keep it compact <p>U9/U10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressure, cover, balance Outnumber the opponent <p>U11/U12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay involved Mark the player/mark the area 	<p>Ready and eager to learn</p> <p>Will try more complex tasks</p> <p>Notice indifference and unfair treatment</p> <p>Players will develop at different rates (gender differences in maturation)</p> <p>I like to organize themselves without the coach</p>	<p>Come to training prepared with ideas to guide your players</p> <p>Encourage players to be creative and try new things</p> <p>Be consistent in what you say and how you treat individuals/the team</p> <p>Organize groups to guarantee fun and challenge for every player</p> <p>Support their being independent and self-responsible</p>

A2/D1 defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

U1A Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



GAME MODEL: 11v11

AGES: 13+

11v11

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
<p>"Being the best player that I can be for my role and position in the team."</p> <p>Learning the alignment of the roles, positions, and designated tasks in the 11v11 team.</p>	<p>Gaining understanding of the meaning of role, position and designated task in a team</p> <p>Experiences of the alignment of position specific task execution during defending and attacking</p>	<p>All key qualities at U13+</p>	<p>All Player Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoot • Pass or dribble forward • Spread out • Create passing options • Support the attack • Create a 2v1 or 1v1 • Change the point of attack • Change the pace/rhythm • Switch positions 	<p>All Player Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the goal • Steal the ball • Make it compact • Keep it compact • Pressure, cover, balance • Outnumber the opponent • Stay involved • Mark the player/mark the area 	<p>Engage in problem solving activities</p> <p>Challenge ideas</p> <p>Demonstrate mood shifts</p> <p>Differences between genders</p> <p>Do not always play fairly</p>	<p>Use guided questions to support their thinking/decision making</p> <p>Listen first and consider their perspective</p> <p>Be patient and consistent in your treatment</p> <p>Give each player individual attention and care</p> <p>Encourage self-regulation, e.g. refereeing own games at training</p>

A>D Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

D>A Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

PROFILE OF THE GRASSROOTS COACH

THE PROFILE SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK.



COACHING GAMES (CG) Create an environment which supports and guides players toward giving their best contribution to the game in order to further develop and score more goals than the opponent.

THE COACH IS ABLE TO:	OUTCOMES:
PRE-GAME	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organize all necessary aspects of the game before it begins link game preparation to prior training session goals communicate with individual players and the team relative to game objectives communicate with individual players and the team relative to game objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> every one involved is organized the game environment is safe and the team is ready to play there is a connection between training and game objectives players are informed and understand game objectives players are informed and understand game objectives
GAME	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a safe, fun, inclusive and organized environment for players demonstrate a basic understanding of attacking, defending and transition encourage and support players playing freely and making their own decisions in the game apply the Player Development Initiatives for the age-group coached read the game for the appropriate age group give players positive, specific, developmentally-appropriate and honest feedback at the appropriate moments balance silent observation with verbal feedback balance silent observation with verbal feedback 	PLAYERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate their understanding of the game enjoy playing are safe play with confidence feel respected by and connected to one another the grassroots roadmap is applied when reading the game players play freely and make their own decisions players improve as a result of playing the game players play according to U.S. Soccer's Player Development Initiatives information about player & team behavior during the game players are motivated and engaged desired behavior is reinforced unsuccessful behavior is improved players play freely and make their own decisions players play freely and make their own decisions
POST-GAME	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a short routine after each game to check players' well being give positive, basic and developmentally appropriate and honest feedback from the game organize the week ahead and say "good-bye" for the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> players are physically and emotionally stable following the game players are motivated and engaged Feedback is based on game objectives players/parents are informed
EVALUATING AND REFLECTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check if the outcomes have been achieved reflect on own behavior relative to desired outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved outcomes based on the task of coaching games continuous assessment of own impact on players and team

PROFILE OF THE GRASSROOTS COACH



COACHING TRAINING SESSIONS (CTS) Facilitate an environment which supports and guides players on the field in order to develop them to their full potential as well as prepare players/the team for the game.

THE COACH IS ABLE TO:	OUTCOMES:
PREPARING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> select a developmentally-appropriate "Play-Practice-Play" training session for the age-group/game model coached implement a weekly plan for players based on the game model and age group coached consider potential adaptations to the selected training session plan based on perceived player needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the selected training session meets the developmental needs of the players a weekly plan the training session meets the needs of the players
EXECUTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check and adapt according to the five elements of a training session create a safe, fun & developmentally-appropriate training environment facilitate the selected training session to maximize activity time and minimize management/lecture time demonstrate an understanding of attacking, defending and transition for the game model coached encourage players to play freely and make their own decisions give players positive, specific, developmentally-appropriate and honest feedback celebrate players' successes and view mistakes as opportunities for learning provide demonstrations effectively guide players through mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the five elements are checked during the training session the training session is adapted, as necessary, to meet player needs The training session is safe, fun & developmentally appropriate the coach demonstrates an understanding of U.S. Soccer's Grassroots Player Development Philosophy players participate in game-like activities for the majority of the training session players understand what they are doing and why players play freely and make their own decisions interventions are limited and effective players are motivated and engaged desired behavior is reinforced unsuccessful behavior is improved players experience success and use mistakes as meaningful learning opportunities. Errors are normalized players see what it is they are being asked to do players feel safe and learn through their mistakes
EVALUATING THE TRAINING SESSION WITH THE PLAYERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a short routine after each training session to check players' well being give positive, specific, developmentally appropriate and honest feedback from the training session organize the week ahead and say "good-bye" for the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> players' physical and emotional well-being is checked motivated players feedback is based on training objectives informed players/parents
EVALUATING AND REFLECTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check if the outcomes have been achieved reflect on own behavior relative to desired outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved outcomes based on the task of coaching training sessions continuous assessment of own impact on players and team

PROFILE OF THE GRASSROOTS COACH



LEADING THE TEAM (LT) Create an environment of inclusion and engage players based on agreed upon team behaviors and goals.

THE COACH IS ABLE TO:	OUTCOMES:
DEVELOPING A POSITIVE TEAM CULTURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate an understanding of age-appropriate team values create a sense of team spirit & unity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> agreed upon team behaviors, based on the development stage of the players willingness of each player of the team to work together with loyalty and enthusiasm
EVALUATING AND REFLECTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check if the outcomes have been achieved reflect on own behavior relative to desired outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved outcomes based on the task of leading the team continuous assessment of own impact on players and team

LEADING THE PLAYER (LP) Give players individual, unconditional attention and mentor them to fulfill their potential.

THE COACH IS ABLE TO:	OUTCOMES:
GUIDING PLAYERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the developmental stage of the age-group coached and recognize the relative ability level of the players unconditionally guide each player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> players are coached based on their stage of development and ability level all players receive unconditional attention
EVALUATING AND REFLECTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check if the outcomes have been achieved reflect on own behavior relative to desired outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved outcomes based on the task of leading the player continuous assessment of own impact on players and team

PROFILE OF THE GRASSROOTS COACH



MANAGING THE PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENT (MPE) Influence off-the-field circumstances and persons in order to create the best possible conditions for the development and performance of the players.

THE COACH IS ABLE TO:	OUTCOMES:
ANALYZING THE CONDITIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the performance environment and think of ways to positively influence it understand & identify the key people and factors which influence the performance environment (e.g. parents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the performance environment is recognized and considered as it related to the players' experiences factors and people which influence the performance environment are identified (e.g. parents)
CREATING AN OPTIMAL SITUATION FOR PERFORMANCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a plan for child safety & risk management effectively manage the week to week routines for and with the team build relationships with those who can influence the performance environment (e.g. parents) delegate responsibilities to more effectively develop the team and its players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> players are safe and risks are mitigated the week to week routines are carried out key people within the team environment are informed and engaged (e.g. parents) tasks are shared among the coach, players and parents
EVALUATING AND REFLECTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check if the outcomes have been achieved reflect on own behavior relative to desired outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieved outcomes based on the task of managing the performance environment continuous assessment of own impact on players and team

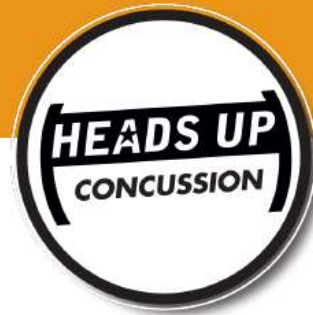
PROFILE OF THE GRASSROOTS COACH



LEADERSHIP (L) Demonstrate coaching actions which are guided by a player-centered philosophy in order to accomplish defined team and player goals.

THE COACH IS ABLE TO:	OUTCOMES:
LEADING ONESELF	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulate a grassroots coaching philosophy • reflect on own performance and seek feedback from others • articulate own learning needs and take action to address them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a grassroots coaching philosophy • the coach practices reflection • the coach plans for further development and takes action to improve
LEADING OTHERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be a role model in appearance and behavior within all team environments, on and off the field • lead the team in meetings, electronic communication and the practicing of digital citizenship (social media) • prevent, recognize and manage conflict effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the coach is a role model for others to follow • communication is effective and responsible • conflicts are reduced and compromises found
EVALUATING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check if the outcomes have been achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieved outcomes based on the task of leadership

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs of a concussion:

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE:

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS/ GUARDIANS:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

DANGER SIGNS

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child or teen should be seen in an emergency department right away if s/he has:

- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

1. **SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY**
A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities, including sports.
2. **KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF PLAY.**
Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon - while the brain is still healing - risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
3. **TELL YOUR CHILD'S COACH ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION.**
Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION OR OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN INJURY?

- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.
- Wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture.
 - However, helmets are not designed to prevent concussions. There is no "concussion-proof" helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for kids and teens to avoid hits to the head.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL SAFELY AFTER A CONCUSSION?

Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

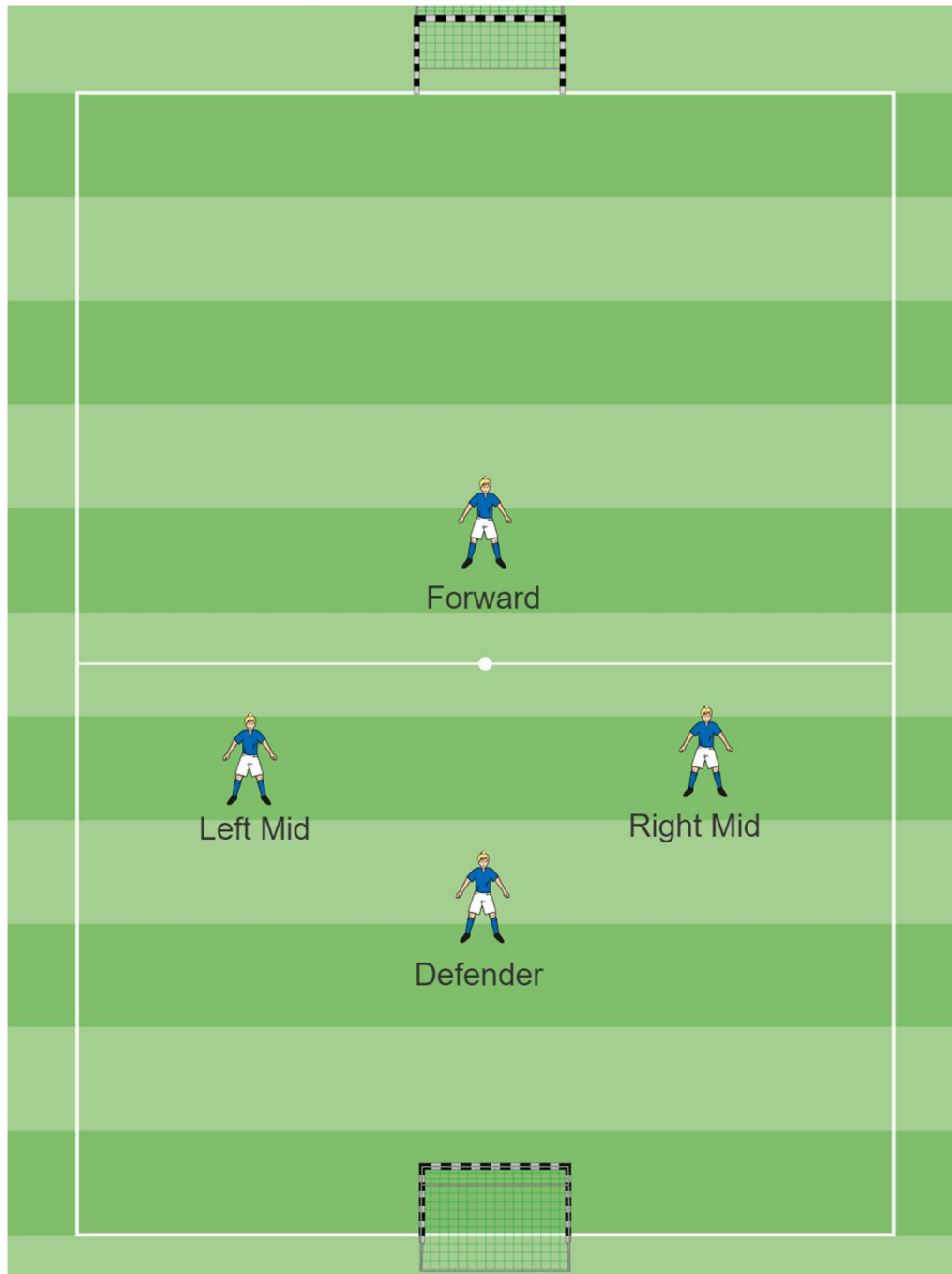
- Take rest breaks as needed
- Spend fewer hours at school
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments
- Receive help with schoolwork
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer

Talk with your child's teachers, school nurse, coach, speech-language pathologist, or counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually.

Formations 4 v 4 + Goalie

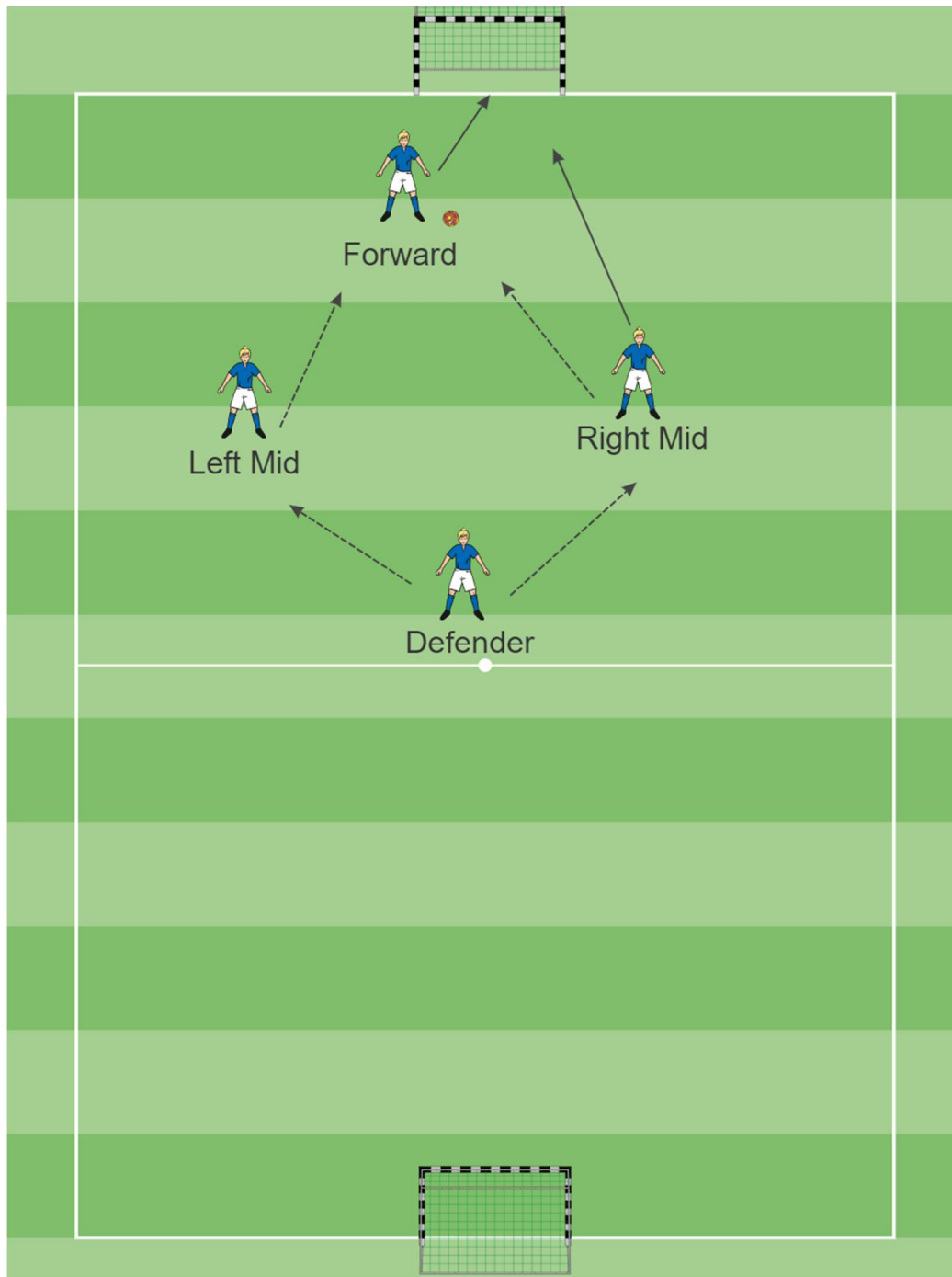
Base Formation

1-2-1: This formation provides balance between defense and attack. It will help the players develop discipline and learn responsibility. One player has the main defensive responsibility and one the main attacking responsibility. Two midfielders are able to support both the attack and defense. *(Note the diamond shape players create)



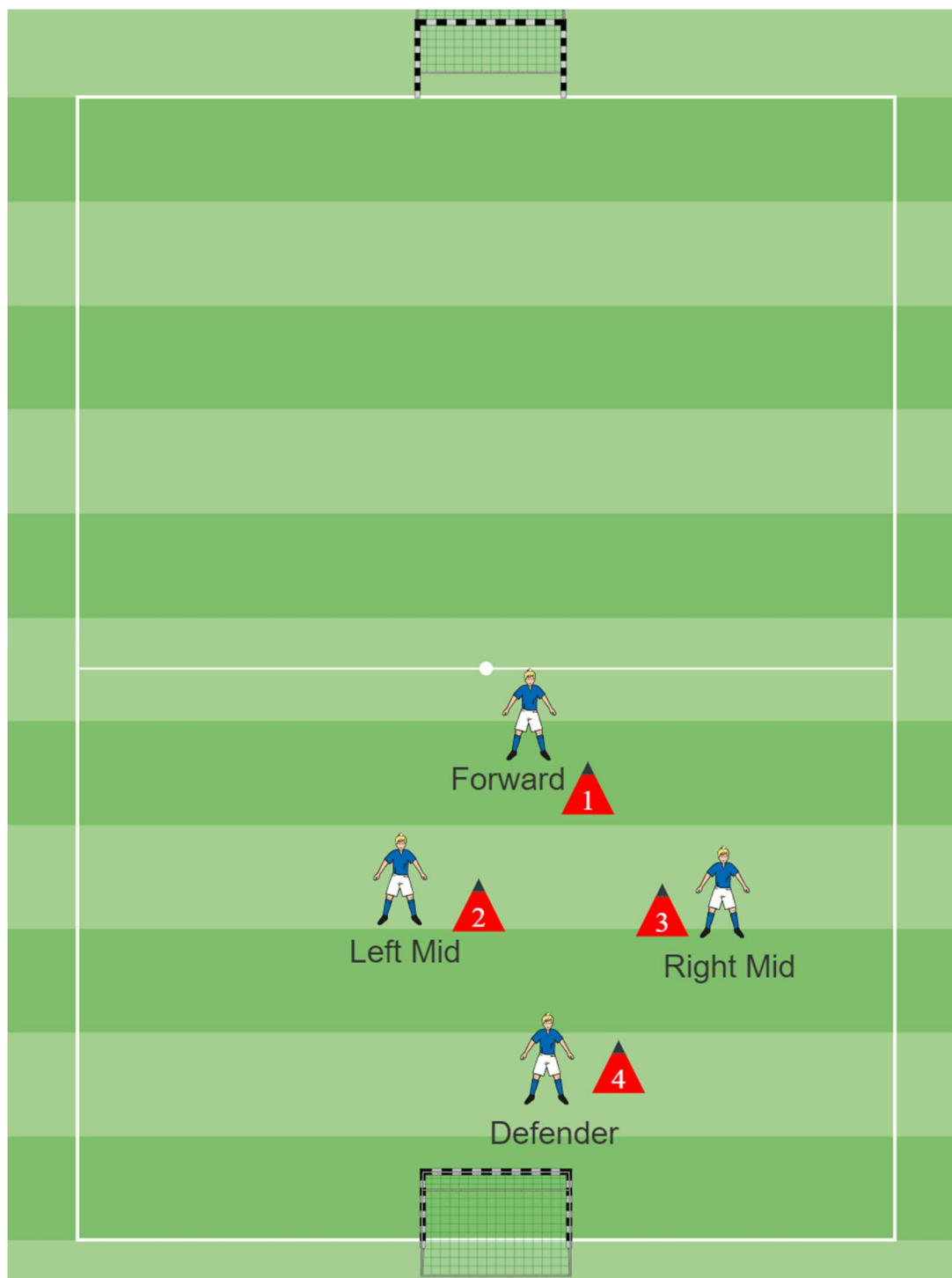
Offensive Formation 4 v 4 + Goalie

1-2-1: Offensively we are looking for our players to create triangles and diamonds. We are also looking for coverage of the field and for passing and goal scoring chances. Note the Defender crosses the mid field line to support in the attack. *(Players maintain space and shape)



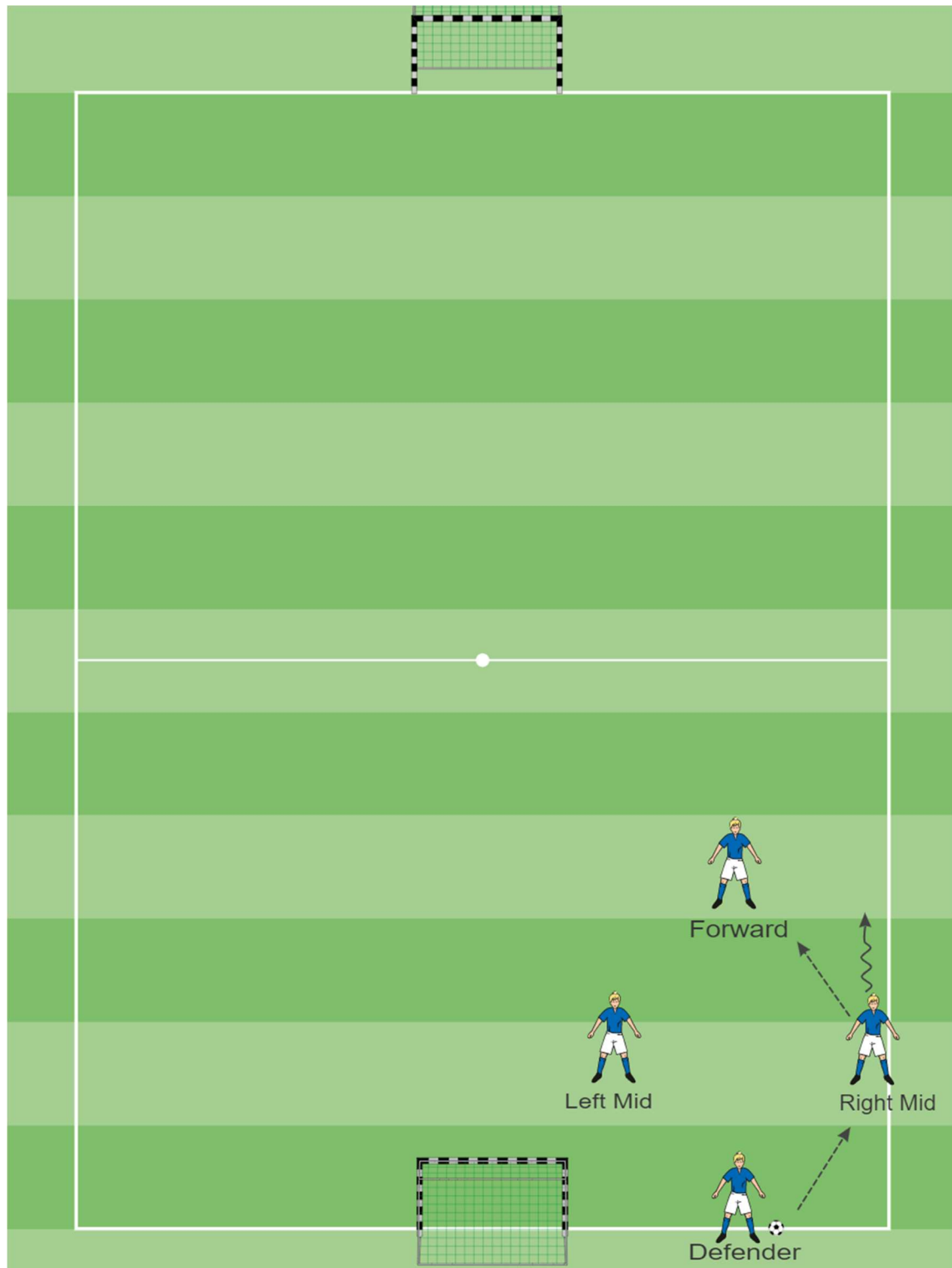
Defensive Formation 4 v 4+ Goalie

1-2-1: Defensively we want to stay compact and constantly create pressure, cover, and balance on the field. To be most effective the Defender must maintain discipline and not get too high when helping on the offensive attack. When playing defense all players should learn to cover both a space and a player.



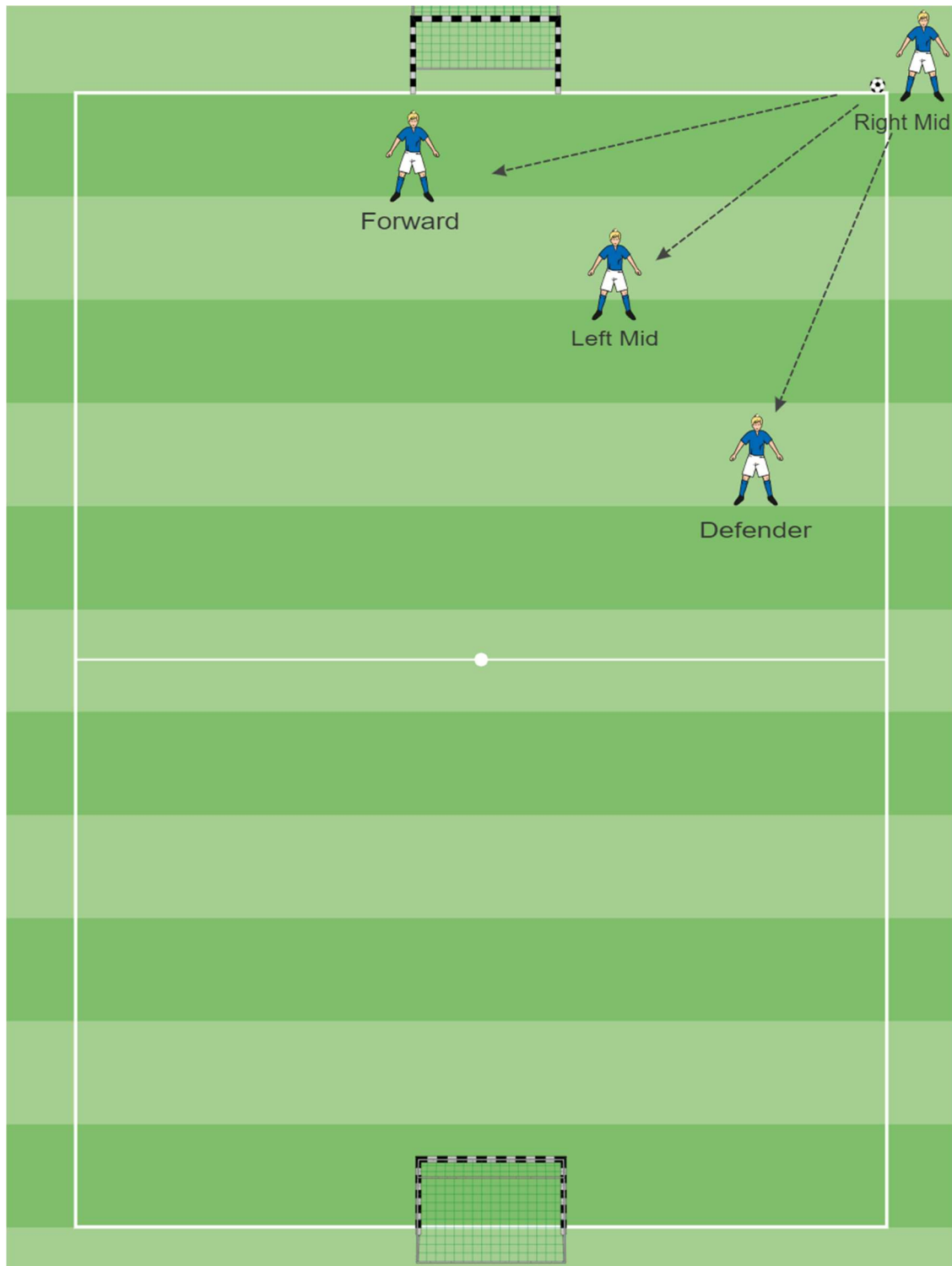
Goal Kick 4 v 4+ Goalie

1-2-1: Players line up in their formation and the Defender makes a touch inbounds to one of the Midfielders who can then carry the ball or pass ahead to the forward. Players work together to transition to offense while maintain their space and shape.



Corner Kick 4 v 4+ Goalie

1-2-1: Midfielder takes the kick from the corner and is looking to make a pass to the Forward, Midfielder, or the Defender.



COMMON PRACTICE PROBLEMS

#1 Having an odd number of players at practice

- If you have an assistant or a spare parent, have them work with a goalkeeper
- When doing pair activities, make a triangle instead
- In small group activities, add a shadow defender with no tackling allowed
- Scrimmage 5v4 and have team with less players loaded with stronger players
- Scrimmage 5v4 and have team with more players attacking small goal
- Scrimmage 5v4 and have team with less players with goalie, other team without
- Use assistant, parent, brother/sister to even teams out
- Play yourself

#2 Picking teams for scrimmages

- Use your knowledge and judgment to evenly match up individuals
- Random Teams
 - Choose one player to give everyone a number. Turn away and pick random numbers for teams
 - Choose players by birthday month or day

#3 Increasing competition for more advance players

- In pairs, match up players according to ability
- If one exceptional player, match up against assistant or parent
- Reduce the space
- Limit number of touches

#4 In eliminating games players sit out for long periods of time

- In games like knockout players should do a skill activity that allows them back into the game. Rather than a single winner, count number of times required to do the skill activity. Least number wins. Skill activities could include dribbling to a distant cone and back, juggle the ball x times, do x jumping jacks, etc.

#5 Defenders always win the ball without offense gaining experience

- Have defense play as a shadow
- Restrict movement of defense by playing as a crab on all 4's
- Increase the playing area

***TIP: Change games so that the players are competing against the coaches.
Kids love this challenge!**

STRETCHING EXERCISES

1. Arms/Neck

- Roll arms around in a 'windmill type' action. First rotate right arm forward 10 times, then switch to left arm. This can be done using both arms at the same time. Then, change to rotating arms backwards using the same sequence.
- Move head up and down holding each position for 8-10 seconds. Move head from side to side holding each position for 8-10 seconds.

2. Quadriceps

- These muscles are the big muscles that cover the front of your thigh. Use a goal post, a wall, or a teammate to balance. Stand straight. Bend one leg and hold your ankle or the top of your foot. Pull your bent leg until your heel is close to your bottom. Hold for 10 seconds. Switch legs. (Diagram 1)

3. Hamstrings

- These are the muscles at the back of your thigh. In a sitting position with your left leg straight, place the sole of your right foot against the inside of your left thigh. Bend your trunk toward your extended leg, keeping your knee straight and foot in a relaxed position. Hold for 10 seconds. Switch legs. (Diagram 2)

4. Groin (Butterfly stretch)

- In a sitting position with your back straight, bend your knees and place the bottoms of your feet together. Pull your feet towards your groin. Place your elbows on your knees and gently push the knees toward the floor. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat. (Diagram 3)

5. Calves

- In a sitting position with legs straight, place right heel on top of left toes. Pull right toes towards body with hands. Hold for 10 seconds. Switch legs.



BASIC PRACTICE PLAN

- Warm-up/Stretch...5-10 minutes
 - This section will get the players moving (with or without the ball) to warm up their muscles prior to stretching. This warm-up may be as simple as dribbling, juggling, passing or a review of a skill from prior practices.
 - Be sure to stretch every practice...the earlier in life the players get in the habit of stretching, the better! See attached sheet on major stretches to be done.
- Practice activities/games...10-15 minutes **(Play)**
 - This section will involve games that will further develop the skill of the day.
- Skill of the Day Instruction...10-15 minutes **(Practice)**
 - This section will be where you teach the players the proper way to dribble, pass, shoot, etc. It will also include a short drill to practice technique. Take this time to give one-on-one instruction and correct any mistakes.
- Water Break/Recap/Game Prep...2- 5 minutes
 - Use this time to give the players a rest, recap the practice and organize for the scrimmage.
- Small/Full-Sided Scrimmages...10-15 minutes **(Play)**
 - This is often the most fun part of practice, for players and coaches! Small-sided scrimmages (teams of 2-4 each) are great because each player gets plenty of touches on the ball and less aggressive players do not get lost in the shuffle of a game. Large scrimmages are a great place to teach positions and to warn against bunching.

***Times are approximate and should be adjusted according to your team's needs and practice duration.**

***The game will tell you what the team needs to learn. Observe and take notes during your matches and you'll have good ideas on topics for future training sessions. However, this approach is only for the short term.**

***If a training session isn't going how you'd hoped it would break it up and focus on the small things within that session you know your team really needs to focus on. If the session is going terrible reset with the team, communicate what it is you're trying to accomplish and or maybe even pivot to a fun drill/game that is still goal oriented.**

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve building up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass or dribble forward

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, technical execution

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Attacking

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents and create chances.

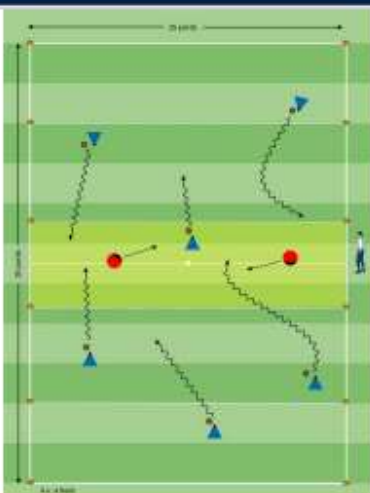
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 16 x 25-yard fields, each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Opening, move forward, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What should you do if you see an opening?

ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. 3) Pass or dribble through it.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): Dribbling Game

OBJECTIVE: To dribble past opponents.

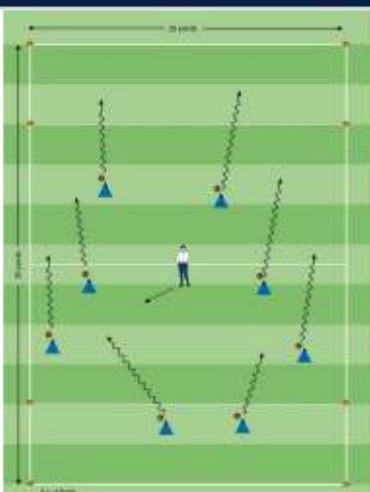
ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with a defending zone and two end zones. Players dribble back and forth into the end zones to earn points. Two defenders are stationed in the defending zone. They switch with the attackers when they win the ball, or every two minutes. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, soft touches, hard touches

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you keep the ball close? 2) How do you dribble faster? 3) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?

ANSWERS: 1) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 2) Use hard touches. 3) You have to use a different part of the foot.

NOTES: Start here at the Core Activity after the first Play Phase. If the challenge is too difficult, move to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, move to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): Dribbling Game

OBJECTIVE: To dribble past opponents.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except the coach acts as a defender so that players have to make decisions. All the players go in the same direction.

KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, soft touches, hard touches

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you keep the ball close? 2) How do you dribble faster? 3) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?

ANSWERS: 1) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 2) Use hard touches. 3) You have to use a different part of the foot.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.


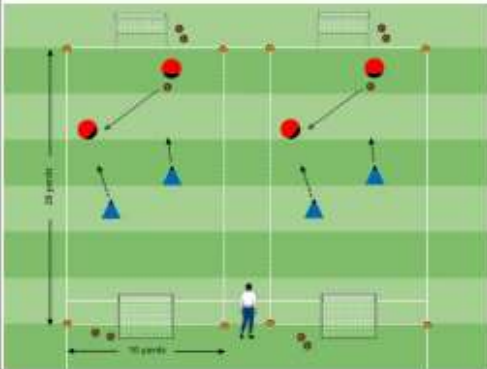
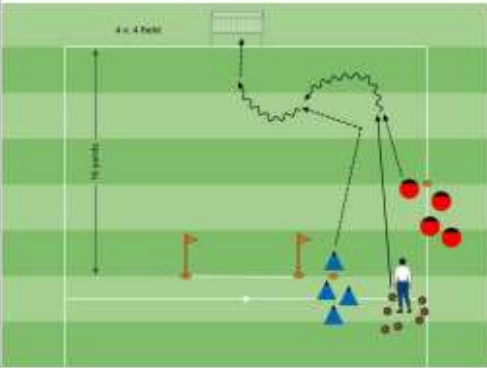
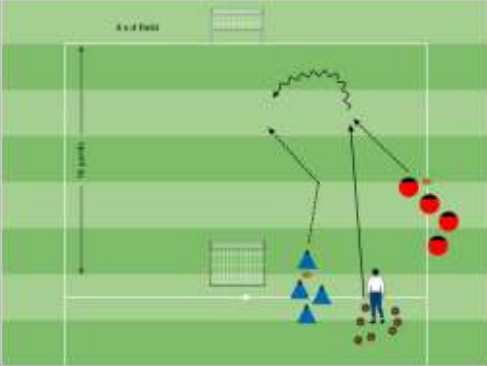
	<p>PRACTICE (More Challenging): Dribbling Game</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To dribble past opponents.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except the two defenders may defend anywhere but the end zones. They switch with the attackers when they win the ball, or every two minutes.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, soft touches, hard touches</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you keep the ball close? 2) How do you dribble faster? 3) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 2) Use hard touches. 3) You have to use a different part of the foot.</p> <p>NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.</p>
	<p>2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents and create chances.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Opening, pass, dribble, soft touches, hard touches</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What should you do if you see an opening? 4) How do you keep the ball close? 5) How do you dribble faster? 6) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. 3) Pass or dribble through it. 4) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 5) Use hard touches. 6) You have to use a different part of the foot.</p>

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

<p>TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION</p> <p>GOAL: Improve preventing the opponent from building in their own half</p> <p>PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal the ball</p> <p>KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus</p>	<p>U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players</p> <p>MOMENT: Defending</p> <p>DURATION: 60:00 min</p> 
	<p>1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To disrupt the buildup in the opponent's half, win the ball back and score.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Mark out two narrow fields (20 x 10 yards), each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Attack the ball</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are you supposed to do if you lose the ball? 2) What else could you do? 3) What's the advantage of attacking high up the field?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Drop back and defend our goal. 2) Stay forward and try to win the ball back right away. 3) The opponent never gets near our goal. And if we do win the ball back, we can immediately shoot.</p> <p>NOTES: First break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. Second break: Players share answers with coach and each other.</p>
	<p>PRACTICE (Core Activity): 1 v 1 after Pass behind Attacker</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To win the ball back.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Set up one small goal and one goal line about 16 yards apart. Choose four attackers (Red) and four defenders (Blue) and position them as shown. The ball is played in behind the attackers, and the first attacker and defender run in after it. They play 1 v 1 until a goal is scored. Red attacks on the goal line, Blue on the small goal.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Attack the ball</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Defenders, what should you do when the ball is played in behind the attacker? 2) What don't you want the attacker to do? 3) Why?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Quickly run in after the ball and immediately put pressure on the attacker. 2) Turn around and start dribbling toward you. 3) Because then the attacker can shoot.</p> <p>NOTES: Start here at the Core Activity after the first Play Phase. If the challenge is too difficult, move to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, move to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.</p>
	<p>PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 1 v 1 after Pass behind Attacker</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To win the ball back.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except both players attack on small goals.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Attack the ball</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Defenders, what should you do when the ball is played in behind the attacker? 2) What don't you want the attacker to do? 3) Why?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Quickly run in after the ball and immediately put pressure on the attacker. 2) Turn around and start dribbling toward you. 3) Because then the attacker can shoot.</p> <p>NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.</p>



PRACTICE (More Challenging): 1 v 1 from Sideline

OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack and win the ball back.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except the attackers dribble in from the sideline to start the 1 v 1.

KEY WORDS: Attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Defenders, how can you keep the attacker from scoring? 2) What don't you want the attacker to do? 3) So what do you need to do? 4) And when should you try to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) By running toward the attacker. 2) Get the ball past you. 3) Don't run at the attacker too fast - keep a little distance. 4) When they let the ball get too far away or try to dribble past.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To disrupt the buildup in the opponent's half, win the ball back and score.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS: Attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are your options after you lose the ball? 2) What have we been practicing today? 3) And what's the advantage of that?

ANSWERS: 1) Drop back and defend our goal, or stay forward and try to win the ball back. 2) Staying forward and winning the ball back right away. 3) The opponent never gets near our goal. And if we do win the ball back, we can immediately shoot.

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY - U.S. SOCCER PLAY - PRACTICE - PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve building up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass or dribble forward, spread out, shoot

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, take initiative, technical execution

U8 / 4 v. 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Attacking

DURATION: 60:00 min

**1st PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play**

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents, create chances and score goals.

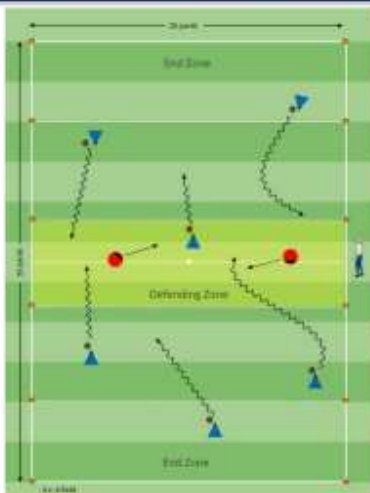
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 18 x 12-yard fields, each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Free play. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Opening, go forward, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What do you do if you see an opening?

ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. 3) Pass or dribble through it.

NOTES: 1st break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. 2nd break: Players share answers with coach and each other.

**PRACTICE (Core Activity): Dribbling Game**

OBJECTIVE: To dribble past opponents, create chances, and score.

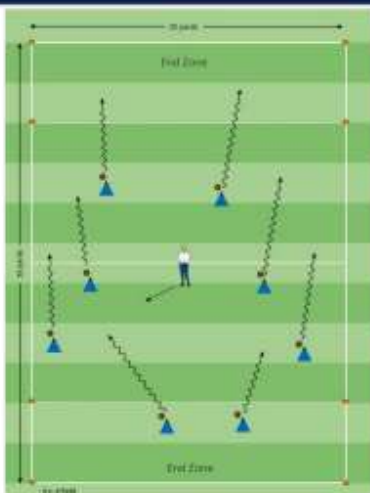
ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with a defending zone and two end zones. Players dribble back and forth into the end zones to earn points. Two defenders are stationed in the defending zone. They switch with the attackers when they win the ball, or every two minutes. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, soft touches, hard touches

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you keep the ball close? 2) How do you dribble faster? 3) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?

ANSWERS: 1) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 2) Use hard touches. 3) You have to use a different part of the foot.

NOTES: Start here at the Core Activity after the first play phase. If the challenge is too difficult, move to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, move to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.

**PRACTICE (Less Challenging): Dribbling Game**

OBJECTIVE: To dribble past opponents, create chances, and score.

ORGANIZATION: Same as Core Activity, except the coach acts as a defender so that players have to make decisions. All the players go in the same direction.

KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, soft touches, hard touches

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you keep the ball close? 2) How do you dribble faster? 3) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?

ANSWERS: 1) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 2) Use hard touches. 3) You have to use a different part of the foot.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (More Challenging): Dribbling Game

OBJECTIVE: To dribble past opponents, create chances, and score.

ORGANIZATION: Same as Core Activity, except the two defenders may defend anywhere but the end zones. They switch with the attackers when they win the ball, or every two minutes.

KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, soft touches, hard touches

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you keep the ball close? 2) How do you dribble faster? 3) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?

ANSWERS: 1) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 2) Use hard touches. 3) You have to use a different part of the foot.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



2nd PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents and create chances.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Play 4 v 4 for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max). LOTG.

KEY WORDS: Opening, pass, dribble, soft touches, hard touches

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What do you do if you see an opening? 4) How do you keep the ball close? 5) How do you dribble faster? 6) What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side?

ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. 3) Pass or dribble through it. 4) Be gentle/soft with the ball. 5) Use hard touches. 6) You have to use a different part of the foot.

NOTES: Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs).

Five Elements of a Training Activity

1. **Organized:** Is the activity organized in the right way?
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Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve preventing the opponent from building up and creating chances in our half

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal the ball, defend the goal

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Defending

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To deny chances.

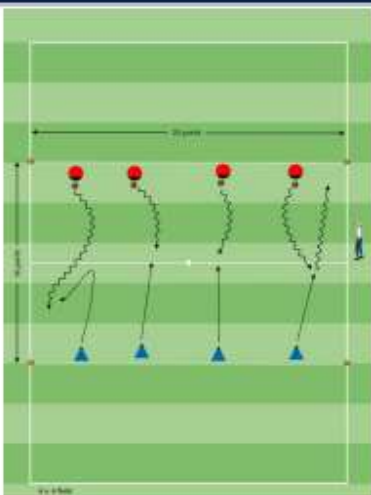
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 16 x 25-yard fields, each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Where is the goal? 2) So which path do you need to block if you want to keep the opponent from shooting?

ANSWERS: 1) In the middle. 2) The path to the middle.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): 4 x 1 v 1 on Endlines

OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack and win the ball back.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 16 x 25-yard field. Divide players into two teams. The attackers (Red) line up on one endline; each one has a ball. The defenders (Blue) line up on the opposite endline. At the coach's signal, all the attackers dribble onto the field at the same time and try to dribble across Blue's endline. The defenders try to stop them, steal the balls and counterattack on their endline. Play two rounds.

KEY WORDS: Steal the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) With all these players running at you, how can you win a ball? 2) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 3) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1.) Pick one attacker, block their path and steal the ball from them. 2.) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 3.) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 4 x 1 v 1 on Endlines

OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack and win the ball back.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except on a 16 x 18-yard field.

KEY WORDS: Attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) With all these players running at you, how can you win a ball? 2) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 3) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) Pick one attacker, block their path and steal the ball from them. 2) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 3) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.

	<p>PRACTICE (More Challenging): 4 x 1 v 1 on Endlines</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack and win the ball back.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except with just two defenders on the field at a time.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Attack the ball</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) With all these players running at you, how can you win a ball? 2) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 3) What's a good moment to steal the ball?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Pick one attacker, block their path and steal the ball from them. 2) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 3) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.</p> <p>NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.</p>
	<p>2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack, deny chances and win the ball back.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Defend the goal, attack the ball</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Where is the goal? 2) So which path do you need to block if you want to keep the opponent from shooting? 3) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 4) What's a good moment to steal the ball?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) In the middle. 2) The path to the middle. 3) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 4) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.</p>

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve scoring goals

PLAYER ACTIONS: Shoot, pass or dribble forward,

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, technical execution

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Attacking

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To create chances and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 25 x 10-yard fields, each with two double goals. If you don't have enough goals, use poles to mark goals of the proper size. Players are divided into teams of two and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, pass, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What should you do if you see an opening?

ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. Pass or dribble past an opponent. 3) Shoot.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): 1 v 1 Race to the Goal

OBJECTIVE: To score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Set up one small goal and one goal line about 16 yards apart. Two groups of four (attackers and defenders) start at positions behind the goal line. As soon as the first attacker starts dribbling forward, the race begins. The defender tries to win the ball and score on the goal line. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Dribble, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What should attackers do when the path to the goal is open? 2) How close to the goal do they need to get before shooting? 3) What should they do if the defender catches up to them?

ANSWERS: 1) Dribble toward it as quickly and directly as possible. 2) As close as necessary to be sure of scoring. 3) Cut across in front, block the defender's path and shoot. NOTES: Start here at the core activity after the first play phase. If the challenge is too difficult, move to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, move to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the practice phase.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 1 v 1 Race to the Goal

OBJECTIVE: To score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except a second small goal is added, creating a double-wide goal.

KEY WORDS: Dribble, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What should attackers do when the path to the goal is open? 2) How close to the goal do they need to get before shooting? 3) What should they do if the defender catches up to them?

ANSWERS: 1) Dribble toward it as quickly and directly as possible. 2) As close as necessary to be sure of scoring. 3) Cut across in front, block the defender's path and shoot.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.

	<p>PRACTICE (More Challenging): 1 v 1 Race to the Goal</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To score goals.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except attacker and defender start out side by side on the goal line.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Dribble, shoot</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What should attackers do when the path to the goal is open? 2) How close to the goal do they need to get before shooting? 3) What should they do if the defender catches up to them?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Dribble toward it as quickly and directly as possible. 2) As close as necessary to be sure of scoring. 3) Cut across in front, block the defender's path and shoot.</p> <p>NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.</p>
	<p>2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward, create chances and score goals.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 min.).</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Opening, dribble, pass, shoot</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What do you do if you see an opening? 4) What should attackers do when the path to the goal is open? 5) How close do you need to be to shoot? 6) What should you do if the defender catches up to you?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. 3) Shoot, pass or dribble through it, depending on the game situation and your position on the field. 4) Dribble toward the goal quickly and directly 5) As close as necessary to be sure of scoring. 6) Cut across in front, block the defender's path and shoot.</p>

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION**GOAL:** Improve preventing the opponent from scoring**PLAYER ACTIONS:** Protect the goal, stay compact**KEY QUALITIES:** Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Defending**DURATION:** 60:00 min**1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play****OBJECTIVE:** To prevent the opponent from scoring.

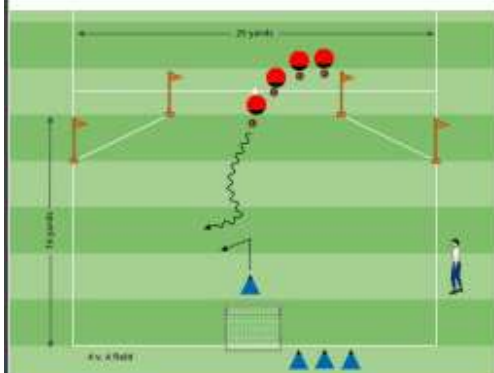
ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 20 x 25-yard field. Place two youth goals side by side on each endline to create a double-wide goal. If you don't have four small goals, use poles instead. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal, stay compact

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Take a look at the goals. What do you notice? 2) How can you keep the opponent from scoring on them even though they're big?

ANSWERS: 1) The goals are big. 2) We have to drop back as a group, block the path to the goal and keep them from shooting.

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

**PRACTICE (Core Activity): 1 v 1 on Small Goal****OBJECTIVE:** To prevent the opponent from scoring.

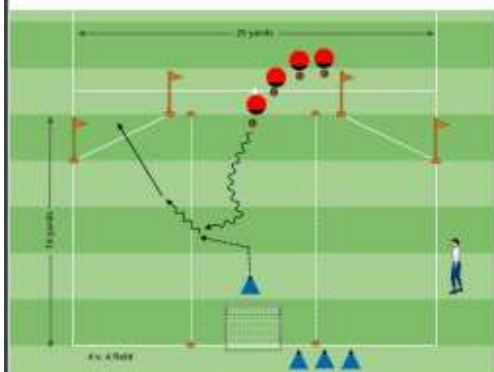
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two diagonal goal lines 16 yards from a small goal. Assign attackers (Red) and defenders (Blue) to starting positions as shown. The first attacker runs onto the field for the 1 v 1. The defender anticipates the attacker, blocks the path to the goal and looks for a chance to win the ball. Play continues until a goal is scored. Afterward, the next attacker starts. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attacker from scoring? 2) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) Block the path to the goal, force the attacker outside and steal the ball. 2) When the attacker lets it get too far away.

NOTES: Start here at the Core Activity after the first Play Phase. If the challenge is too difficult, move to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, move to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.

**PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 1 v 1 on Small Goal****OBJECTIVE:** To prevent the opponent from scoring.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except the attacker has to stay inside a 10-yard-wide lane marked down the middle of the field.

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attacker from scoring? 2) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) Block the path to the goal, force the attacker outside and steal the ball. 2) When the attacker lets it get too far away.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (More Challenging): 1 v 1 on Small Goal

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from scoring.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except the starting positions are different. The coach gives the signal for the 1 v 1 to begin.

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attacker from scoring? 2) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) Block the path to the goal, force the attacker outside and steal the ball. 2) When the attacker lets it get too far away.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from scoring.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal, stay compact

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Where is the goal? 2) So which path do you need to block if you want to keep the opponent from shooting? 3) And what if they manage to get in front of the goal anyway?

ANSWERS: 1) In the middle. 2) The path to the middle. 3) Then we have to attack them and make sure they can't shoot.

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve building up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, create passing options, pass or dribble forward

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Attacking

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents and create chances.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 16 x 25-yard fields, each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Opening, move forward, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What should you do if you see an opening?

ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. 3) Pass or dribble through it.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): 4 v 3 on Two Goals Each

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 20 x 25-yard field with two goal lines on each endline. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 3 on two goal lines each. The attackers have eight balls to attack with. If a ball goes out or a goal is scored, they start a new attack from their endline. Each defender sits out two attacks. After eight attacks, teams switch roles. Which team scores more goals? Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) What are the ball carrier's options? 3) When should attackers dribble? 4) And when should they pass?

ANSWERS: 1) They should form a diamond with one player in back, one in front, one on the right and one on the left. 2) Dribble or pass. 3) When they have space. 4) When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 4 v 2 on Two Goals Each

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except teams play 4 v 2. The attackers have eight balls as above. The defenders rotate on and off in pairs every two attacks.

KEY WORDS: Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) What are the ball carrier's options? 3) When should attackers dribble? 4) And when should they pass?

ANSWERS: 1) They should form a diamond with one player in back, one in front, one on the right and one on the left. 2) Dribble or pass. 3) When they have space. 4) When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (More Challenging): 4 v 4 on Two Goals Each

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except teams play 4 v 4. The attackers have eight balls as above. Defenders do not rotate; teams switch roles after eight attacks.

KEY WORDS: Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) What are the ball carrier's options? 3) When should attackers dribble? 4) And when should they pass?

ANSWERS: 1) They should form a diamond with one player in back, one in front, one on the right and one on the left. 2) Dribble or pass. 3) When they have space. 4) When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents, move the ball forward and create chances.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS: Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) How do you find an opening? 3) How do you create an opening? 4) What should you do if you see an opening?

ANSWERS: 1) They should form a diamond with one player in back, one in front, one on the right and one on the left. 2) Look at the opponent's position. 3) Make the opponent move. 4) Pass or dribble through it.

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve preventing the opponent from building in their own half

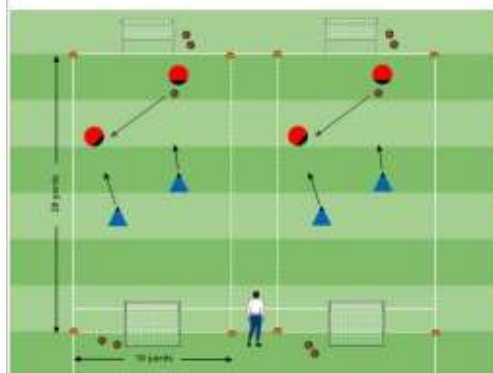
PLAYER ACTIONS: Stay compact, steal the ball

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Defending

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To disrupt the buildup in the opponent's half, win the ball back and score.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out two narrow fields (20 x 10 yards), each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are you supposed to do if you lose the ball? 2) What else could you do? 3) What's the advantage of attacking high up the field?

ANSWERS: 1) Drop back and defend our goal. 2) Stay forward and try to win the ball back right away. 3) The opponent never gets near our goal. And if we do win the ball back, we can immediately shoot.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): 3 v 3 on Goal Lines on Wings

OBJECTIVE: To disrupt the buildup in the opponent's half, win the ball back and score.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 16 x 25-yard field with a small goal plus two goal lines on the wings. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 3 v 3. The attackers (Red) start out with the ball. If a ball goes out or a goal is scored, they start a new attack from their endline. Each defender sits out two attacks. The attackers have eight balls to attack with. After eight attacks, teams switch roles. Which team scores more goals? Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Move with the ball, attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attackers from scoring? 2) What do you have to watch out for? 3) What if they pass the ball onto the other wing?

ANSWERS: 1) By attacking them and keeping them from shooting. 2) They'll try to dribble past us. 3) Then we have to run onto the other wing.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 3 v 1 on Goal Line in Middle

OBJECTIVE: To disrupt the buildup in the opponent's half, win the ball back and score.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except Blue defends a single goal line in the middle.

KEY WORDS: Move with the ball, attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attackers from scoring? 2) What do you have to watch out for? 3) What if they pass the ball onto the other wing?

ANSWERS: 1) By attacking them and keeping them from shooting. 2) They'll try to dribble past us. 3) Then we have to run onto the other wing.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (More Challenging): 3 + 1 v 3 on End Zone

OBJECTIVE: To disrupt the buildup in the opponent's half, win the ball back and score.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except Blue defends the whole end zone instead of goal lines. To score, the attackers must successfully dribble or pass into the end zone.

KEY WORDS: Move with the ball, attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attackers from scoring? 2) What do you have to watch out for? 3) What if they pass the ball onto the other wing?

ANSWERS: 1) By attacking them. 2) They'll try to dribble past us. 3) Then we have to run onto the other wing.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To disrupt the buildup in the opponent's half, win the ball back and score.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS: Move with the ball, attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are your options after you lose the ball? 2) What have we been practicing today? 3) And what's the advantage of that?

ANSWERS: 1) Drop back and defend our goal, or stay forward and try to win the ball back. 2) Staying forward and winning the ball back right away. 3) The opponent never gets near our goal. And if we do win the ball back, we can immediately shoot.

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

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

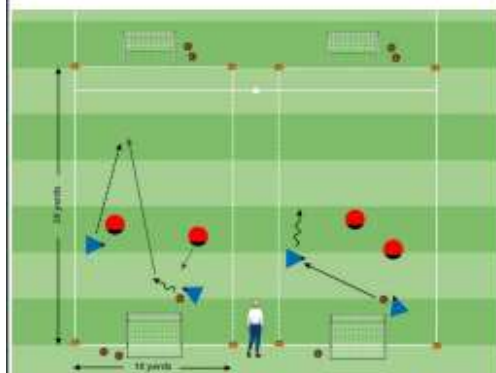
PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass or dribble forward, create passing options

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, technical execution

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Attacking

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents, move the ball forward and score goals.

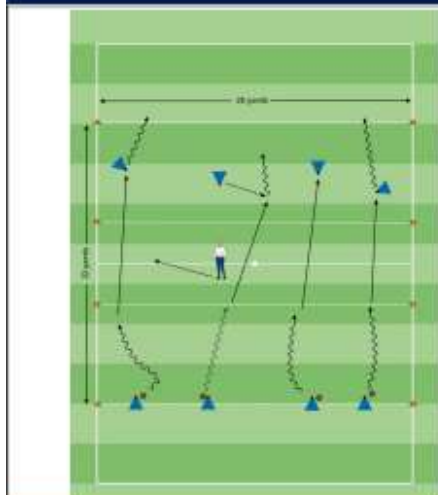
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 20 x 10-yard fields; each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Look up, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are your options when you have the ball? 2) When is it a good time to dribble? 3) And when should you pass?

ANSWERS: 1) Dribble, pass or shoot. 2) When there aren't any defenders near me and I have space. 3) When a defender is blocking my path and a teammate is open.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): Passing Game

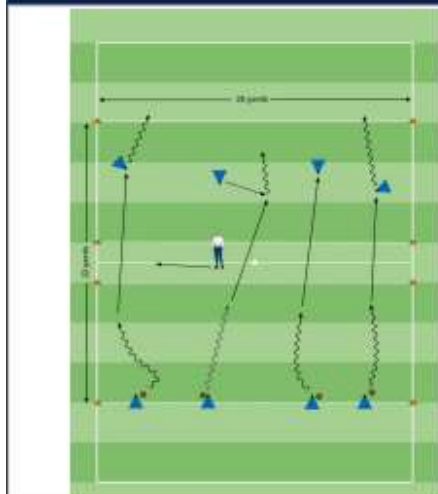
OBJECTIVE: To pass the ball past opponents and move the ball forward.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 22 x 25-yard field with an 8-yard center zone. Assign four players to each end of the field. One of these groups (the attackers) has one ball for each player; the other has none. The attackers all try to get the ball across the center zone and pass to a player on the other side. Receivers dribble across the endline and start over again. The coach stands in the center zone and acts as a defender, blocking passing lanes and intercepting balls. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Look up, pass, be open

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) When can I pass to a player on the other side? 2) How can I tell if it's open? 3) How can the players on the other side help?

ANSWERS: 1) When the passing lane is open. 2) Look up from the ball and see the position of the defender. 3) Show for the ball in good receiving positions (open lanes).
NOTES: Start here at the Core Activity after the first play phase. Decide if the challenge is too easy or too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): Passing Game

OBJECTIVE: To pass the ball past opponents and move the ball forward.

ORGANIZATION: Same as Core Activity, except the center zone (passing distance) is shortened to about 4 yards.

KEY WORDS: Look up, pass, be open

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) When can I pass to a player on the other side? 2) How can I tell if it's open? 3) How can the players on the other side help?

ANSWERS: 1) When the passing lane is open. 2) Look up from the ball and see position of the defender. 3) Show for the ball in good receiving positions (open lanes).

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this Less Challenging activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (More Challenging): Passing Game

OBJECTIVE: To pass the ball past opponents and move the ball forward.

ORGANIZATION: Same as Core Activity, except there are two players defending in the center zone. If a pass is intercepted, the defender switches roles and positions with the passer.

KEY WORDS: Look up, pass, be open

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) When can I pass to a player on the other side? 2) How can I tell if it's open? 3) How can the players on the other side help?

ANSWERS: 1) When the passing lane is open. 2) Look up from the ball and see position of the defender. 3) Show for the ball in good receiving positions (open lanes).

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this More Challenging activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents, move the ball forward and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS: Look up, pass, dribble, be open

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are your options when you have the ball? 2) When is it a good time to dribble? 3) And when should you pass? 4) How can you tell if they're open? 5) How can the other players help?

ANSWERS: 1) Dribble, pass or shoot. 2) When there aren't any defenders near me and I have space. 3) When a defender is blocking my path and a teammate is open. 4) By looking up from the ball to see where my teammates and opponents are. 5) By showing for the ball in good receiving positions (open lanes).

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve preventing the opponent from building up and creating chances in our half

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal the ball, defend the goal

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Defending

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To deny chances.

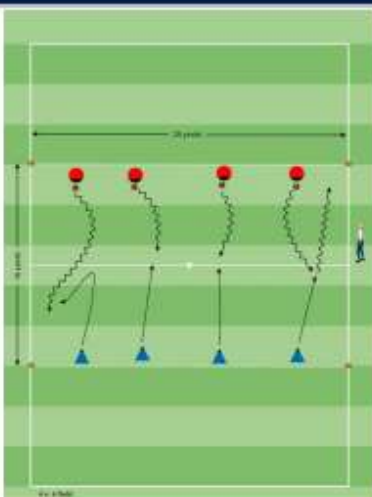
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 16 x 25-yard fields, each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Where is the goal? 2) So which path do you need to block if you want to keep the opponent from shooting?

ANSWERS: 1) In the middle. 2) The path to the middle.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): 4 x 1 v 1 on Endlines

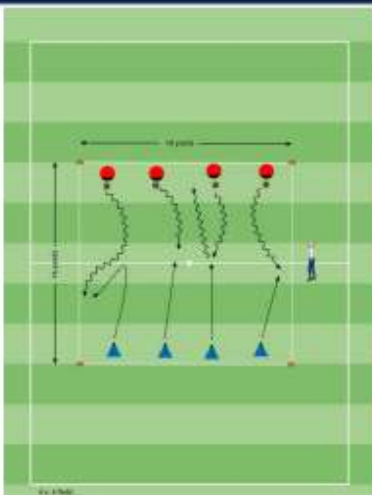
OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack and win the ball back.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 16 x 25-yard field. Divide players into two teams. The attackers (Red) line up on one endline; each one has a ball. The defenders (Blue) line up on the opposite endline. At the coach's signal, all the attackers dribble onto the field at the same time and try to dribble across Blue's endline. The defenders try to stop them, steal the balls and counterattack on their endline. Play two rounds.

KEY WORDS: Steal the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) With all these players running at you, how can you win a ball? 2) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 3) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) Pick one attacker, block their path and steal the ball from them. 2) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 3) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 4 x 1 v 1 on Endlines

OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack and win the ball back.

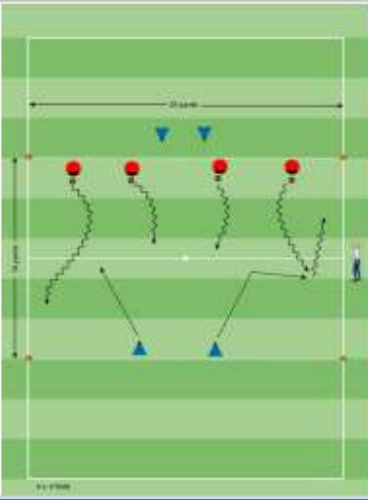

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except on a 16 x 18-yard field.

KEY WORDS: Attack the ball

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) With all these players running at you, how can you win a ball? 2) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 3) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) Pick one attacker, block their path and steal the ball from them. 2) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 3) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.

	<p>PRACTICE (More Challenging): 4 x 1 v 1 on Endlines</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack and win the ball back.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except with just two defenders on the field at a time.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Attack the ball</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) With all these players running at you, how can you win a ball? 2) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 3) What's a good moment to steal the ball?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Pick one attacker, block their path and steal the ball from them. 2) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 3) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.</p> <p>NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.</p>
	<p>2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To stop the opponent's attack, deny chances and win the ball back.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Defend the goal, attack the ball</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Where is the goal? 2) So which path do you need to block if you want to keep the opponent from shooting? 3) How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? 4) What's a good moment to steal the ball?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) In the middle. 2) The path to the middle. 3) By tackling or knocking the ball away. 4) When the attacker lets the ball get too far away. When the ball is not protected.</p>

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve scoring goals

PLAYER ACTIONS: Shoot, pass or dribble forward, create passing options

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus

U8 / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Attacking

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To create chances and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 20 x 25-yard field. Place two youth goals side by side on each endline to create a double-wide goal. If you don't have four small goals, use poles or cones instead. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Pass, dribble, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are your options when you have the ball? 2) When should you shoot? 3) And when should you dribble or pass?

ANSWERS: 1) Dribble, pass or shoot. 2) When I'm close to the goal and I have a clear shot at it. 3) When I'm farther away or a defender is blocking my shot.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): 3 v 1 on Mini Goal

OBJECTIVE: To create chances and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Divide a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) into two fields, each with one mini goal and two diagonal goal lines. Divide players into two groups of four. Choose one defender from each group. Teams play 3 v 1. Each attack begins with the attackers at their starting positions. The defenders counterattack on the goal lines. Each team gets four balls/attacks. Which team scores more goals? Afterward, choose new defenders. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Be open, pass, dribble, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can the attackers make the most of their advantage? 2) When should you shoot? 3) When should you pass?

ANSWERS: 1) The middle attacker should dribble at the defender, look for passing opportunities on the right and left, and pass to a teammate. 2) When I'm past the defender and the goal is open. 3) When the defender is blocking the goal.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 3 v 1 on Double Goal

OBJECTIVE: To create chances and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except extra goals are added to create double-wide goals. If you don't have four small goals, use poles instead.

KEY WORDS: Be open, pass, dribble, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can the attackers make the most of their advantage? 2) When should you shoot? 3) When should you pass?

ANSWERS: 1) The middle attacker should dribble at the defender, look for passing opportunities on the right and left, and pass to a teammate. 2) When I'm past the defender and the goal is open. 3) When the defender is blocking the goal.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (More Challenging): 2 v 1 on Mini Goal

OBJECTIVE: To create chances and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except teams play 2 v 1. Assign two attackers and two defenders to each field and switch defenders after each round.

KEY WORDS: Be open, pass, dribble, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can the attackers make the most of their advantage? 2) When should you shoot? 3) When should you pass?

ANSWERS: 1) The middle attacker should dribble at the defender, look for passing opportunities on the right and left, and pass to a teammate. 2) When I'm past the defender and the goal is open. 3) When the defender is blocking the goal.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward, create chances and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS: Be open, pass, dribble, shoot

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What are your options when you have the ball? 2) When should you shoot? 3) When should you dribble? 4) When should you pass?

ANSWERS: 1) Dribble, pass or shoot. 2) When I'm close to the goal and I have a clear shoot 3) When I have open space in front of me but I'm too far away from the goal to shoot. 4) When the defender is blocking my path and a teammate is open.

Five Elements of a Training Activity

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

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?

TITLE: PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY TRAINING SESSION

GOAL: Improve preventing the opponent from scoring

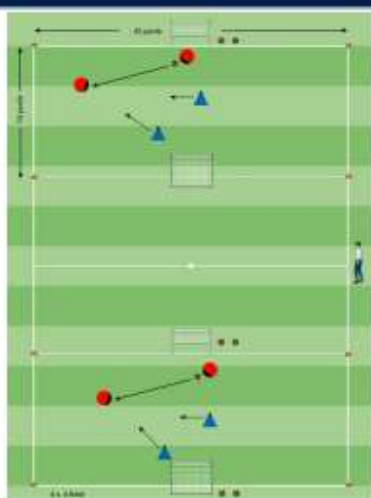
PLAYER ACTIONS: Stay compact, protect the goal

KEY QUALITIES: Decision-making, reading the game, initiative, focus

UB / 4 v 4 / 8 players

MOMENT: Defending

DURATION: 60:00 min



1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from scoring.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out two 10 x 25-yard fields, each with two small goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Stay compact, defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Take a look at the field. What do you notice? 2) What does that mean for the attackers? 3) What do the defenders need to do to stop them?

ANSWERS: 1) It's a very short field. 2) They can immediately get to the goal and shoot. 3) Block the path to the goal and don't let them shoot.

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



PRACTICE (Core Activity): 2 v 1 + 1

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from scoring.

ORGANIZATION: Set up a small goal and a goal line 20 yards apart. Assign attackers (Red) and defenders (Blue) to starting positions as shown. At the coach's signal, the attackers run onto the field to play 2 v 1 + 1. One defender is waiting for the attackers in front of the goal; the other runs in behind them. Play continues until a goal is scored. Afterward, the next group starts.

KEY WORDS: Stay compact, defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What's the job of the defender in front of the goal? 2) And what's the job of the other defender?

ANSWERS: 1) Block the path to the goal, keep the attackers from scoring and play for time. 2) Quickly run in, even the odds and attack the ball carrier.

NOTES: Start here at the Core Activity after the first Play Phase. If the challenge is too difficult, move to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, move to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 2 v 2

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from scoring.



ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except both defenders start out on the field (2 v 2).

KEY WORDS: Stay compact, defend the goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attacker from scoring? 2) What's a good moment to steal the ball?

ANSWERS: 1) Block the path to the goal, force the attacker outside and steal the ball. 2) When the attacker lets it get too far away.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.

	<p>PRACTICE (More Challenging): 2 v 2</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from scoring.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Same as core activity, except both defenders start out on the endline with the attackers. The coach gives the signal for the 2 v 2 to begin.</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Stay compact, defend the goal</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the attacker from scoring? 2) What's a good moment to steal the ball?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1) Sprint downfield, block the attacker's path to the goal and force them onto the wings. 2) When the attacker lets it get too far away.</p> <p>NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.</p>
	<p>2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from scoring.</p> <p>ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 4. Play using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).</p> <p>KEY WORDS: Stay compact, defend the goal</p> <p>GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) Where is the goal? 2) So which path do you need to block if you want to keep the opponent from shooting? 3) And what if they manage to get in front of the goal anyway?</p> <p>ANSWERS: 1.) In the middle. 2.) The path to the middle. 3.) Then we have to attack them and make sure they can't shoot.</p>
<p>Five Elements of a Training Activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organized: Is the activity organized in the right way? 2. Game-like: Is the activity game-like? 3. Repetition: Is there repetition, when looking at the overall goal of the session? 4. Challenging: Are the players being challenged? (Is there the right balance between being successful and unsuccessful?) 5. Coaching: Is there effective coaching, based on the age and level of the players? 	<p>Training Session Self-Reflection Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session? 2. What did you do well? 3. What could you do better?