

# BIGGER THAN SOCCER



**FOUNDATIONAL PLAYBOOK**  
FOR COACHES OF 5- TO 10-YEAR-OLD PLAYERS

# Meet the author

## *Vince Ganzberg*

As Director of Coach Education for US Club Soccer, Vince Ganzberg is responsible for working with member leagues and clubs to educate and develop coaches. His role supports US Club Soccer membership by leading those areas technically, expanding strategic partnerships and creating new content. Ganzberg earned an MS in Recreation and Sport Sciences from Ohio University.

A former high school teacher, his professional career has been dedicated to coaching education for 20 years, serving as Director of Coaching Education for Indiana Soccer Association (2002-12) and United Soccer Coaches (2015-23). He is also a coaching education instructor for U.S. Soccer since 2007. He was responsible for creating the former 'F' license online course (now grassroots) and delivers 'GR,' 'D,' 'C,' and 'B' license courses for U.S. Soccer. He is also a coach educator developer for U.S. Soccer.

Ganzberg was inducted into the Bethel University Hall of Fame as a player in 2008, Indiana Soccer Hall of Fame in 2015, and was the recipient of the Dr. Tom Fleck Award in 2018. This award is given to the top coach educator for US Youth Soccer.



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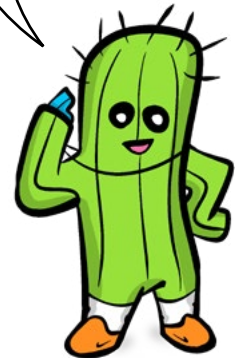
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Hi! I'm Coach Ed, your new assistant coach, providing tips and support to help you in your coaching journey. Get ready to embark on a fun-filled adventure where learning, growth and teamwork flourish. I'm excited by the impact we can have on these kids. First, we'll nurture a love for the game, and then we'll teach the fundamentals. Let's get started!



# Where do I start?



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**What is my “why”**  
What’s your philosophy?



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**What do I do?**  
What do you teach them?



---

**What do I say?**  
Being positive is always the best way.



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**What activities do I use?**  
Pick 3 types of activities and modify them over the season.



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**How do I modify activities?**  
Use the STEP approach.



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**How do I know if they learned?**  
Check for understanding.

# What is my “why”

*What’s your philosophy?*



For inspiration, scan this qr code to watch a TED Talk given by Rita Pierson.

***As a youth coach, I will say “yes” to...***

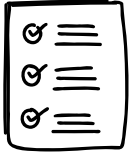
(example: smiles, safety, simple, etc.)

***As a youth coach, my philosophy is...***

This page is also at the back of this book for you to write out your “why” and cut it out if needed.

# What do I do?

## How do I start?



### Set clear objectives

- What is your “why”?
- What are you always going to say “yes” to? (safety, smiles, etc.)
- What are your standards? (respect, integrity, fun, etc.)

### Communicate

- Introduce yourself
- Practice and game times
- Your contact info
- For parent(s) to share important information about their child(ren) that you need to know



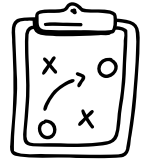
### Equipment suggestions

- First aid kit
- Cones (flat or tall)
- Ball pump
- Training bibs/pinnies
- Pool noodles (primarily for the 5-8 year olds)
- Small goals (bonus if you have these)



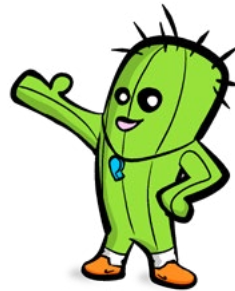
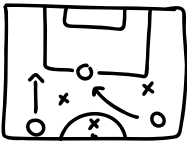
### Planning practices

- Goals are anchored/weighted down & check the field for debris
- Number of players
- Space provided to you
- Length of practice
- Make sure all of the children have been picked up by the designated adult(s)



### Game day management

- Goals are anchored/weighted down & check the field for debris
- Know the rules of the game and format being played
- Greet and thank the referee(s) before and after
- Be a positive role model
- Make sure all of the children have been picked up by the designated adult(s)

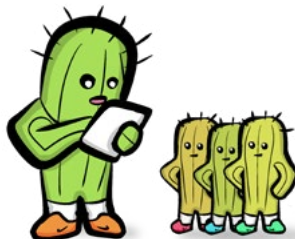


### Taking a knee

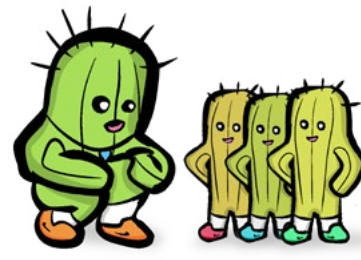
Instead of asking your players to “take a knee” while you stand above them, allow them to stand while *you* take a knee to get on their level.



**Bad**



**Better**



**Best**

# What do I do?

## Sample parent communications

To the parents of Coach Ed's team:

Thank you for registering and allowing your child to play soccer this season. I look forward to meeting you and your child(ren). I am excited about helping your child learn and understand the game of soccer. As their coach, my first emphasis will be on them having fun while playing the most popular sport in the world.

My philosophy of coaching is (insert your 2-3 sentence coaching philosophy).

My first priority is the physical and emotional safety of your child(ren). Teaching players the game and improving their skills throughout the season in a fun way is also a priority. I hope that you share in this philosophy, and while they do play games, the outcome when they are young is not the top priority.

### Practice schedule

We will practice on (insert day of the week) from (insert number of minutes/hour) at (insert address and/or specific directions and field location).

### Game schedule

We will play games on (insert day(s) of the week) starting (insert date) and ending (insert date).

If there is a chance of weather not permitting either practice or games to be played, every effort to make a decision will be determined by (insert time). Please check the club/league website (insert website) prior to this time.

Please inform me of anything I need to be made aware. For example: your child is allergic to bee stings, a specific individual will be allowed to bring your child(ren) home, etc.

There will also be a parent meeting after our first practice to review this information again. If you are unable to be present, that's understandable.

If you would like to help this season in a capacity other than coaching, that is welcomed. For example, if there is a parent that is willing to be the post-game snack manager, please let me know.

Please don't hesitate to contact me via email (insert email). I will be setting up a team group chat.

I look forward to working with your child(ren) and teaching them the love of the game.

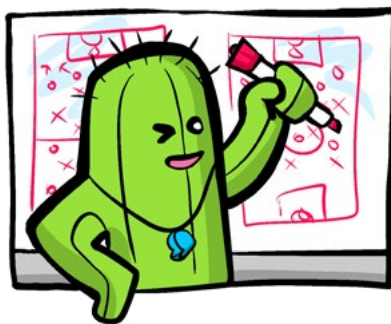
Yours in soccer,

**Coach Ed**



# What do I do?

## Game management



### Sample playing time charts

For the youngest age groups, they should be playing at least 50% of each game. Most roster sizes for these ages are 5, 6, or 7 players, so it is easier to make sure they get at least 50% playing time. Making and keeping track of substitutions can be challenging. Below are some sample playing time charts for the 4v4 playing format. This format is also assuming that the game is played in quarters, not halves. These are also available at the end of this playbook to print out if desired.

### Roster size: 5

| Player Name | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1           | X         | O         | X         | X         |
| 2           | X         | X         | X         | X         |
| 3           | X         | X         | X         | O         |
| 4           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 5           | O         | X         | X         | X         |

**O - out**





# What do I do?

## Game management

### Roster size: 6

| Player Name | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 2           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 3           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 4           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 5           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |
| 6           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |

**Note: 2-3 players in Quarter 4 may be in the entire quarter.**

**X1 - Play first half of quarter**

**O2 - Play second half of quarter**

### Roster size: 7

| Player Name | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 2           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 3           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 4           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 5           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |
| 6           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |
| 7           | O         | X         | X         | O2        |

**Note: One player in Quarter 4 may be in the entire quarter**



# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*



**5- & 6-year-olds (by priority)**

**On the ball**

## **Dribbling**

- Running with the ball unopposed with head up
- Running with the ball keeping it within a hula hoop of their body
- Ball manipulation—two surfaces (laces, bottom of foot to start and stop)

## **Passing (low priority)**

- Pushing the ball with the laces
- Introduce the push pass (does the ball roll as flat as a board?)
- Can they look at their teammate first before passing?

## **Attacking**

- Can you go forward?
- Can you go around someone with the ball?
- Can you keep an opponent from taking your ball away?

## **Striking the ball**

- Introduce striking the ball with instep. They will either strike it naturally with their instep, because they are often pigeon toed or use their toes. (Make the ball go fast!)
- Striking the ball while moving
- Striking/shooting the ball to goal

## **Receiving (low priority)**

- Controlling the ball—not trapping
- Eyes open when receiving a ball
- Introduce receiving ground passes towards the end of the season

## **Defending**

- Can you get the ball back?
- Can you stop someone from going around you?

# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*

## 5- & 6-year-olds (by priority)



### Physical

Note: this part should not be done in isolation but as much as possible with a ball. NO LAPS REQUIRED!

- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Simple motor movements (examples: skipping, hopping, etc.)
- Running forward
- Running backward



### Psychological (SEL)

- Must be a safe environment
- Fun!
- Brave
- Growth mindset
- Positive with self
- Positive with teammates

### Possible weekly themes

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Dribbling with the head up                                     |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Dribbling to go forward  |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Dribbling to turn the ball (get away)                          |
| <b>Week 4</b> | Striking the ball part 1                                       |
| <b>Week 5</b> | "Greatest Hits" (Use the games/activities, they like the most) |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Introduction to passing part 1                                 |
| <b>Week 7</b> | Striking the ball part 2                                       |
| <b>Week 8</b> | Festival-2v2 tournament  |

**Sample session plans are at the end of this document.**



# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*



**7- & 8-year-olds (by priority)**

**On the ball**

## **Dribbling**

### **Novice**

- Running with the ball unopposed
- Keeping the ball within a hula hoop of their body while dribbling
- Ball manipulation (pinky toe and inside of foot)

### **Challenge**

- Running with the ball with eyes up unopposed
- Ball manipulation with the sole and outside of the foot
- Running with the ball while dribbling around an opponent

### **Advanced**

- Pulling the ball back away from an opponent with the sole of the foot
- Dribbling with their eyes up while under pressure

## **Shooting/striking the ball**

### **Novice**

- Introducing striking ball with the laces (note: this will be challenging for this age group)
- Striking/shooting the ball towards the goal

### **Challenge**

- Striking/shooting a moving ball
- Eyes up prior to shooting to see the goal
- Striking/shooting a moving ball with the laces

### **Advanced**

- Striking/shooting the ball with the laces while dribbling
- Striking/shooting the ball after receiving a pass from a teammate

## **Passing**

### **Novice**

- Push passing a stationary ball
- Passing a rolling ball forward using the laces

### **Challenge**

- Passing the ball with the laces while dribbling
- Pushing through the middle of the ball
- Passing a stationary ball with the inside of the foot

### **Advanced**

- Eyes up to make a pass to a teammate
- Passing a moving ball with the inside of the foot

## **Receiving**

### **Novice**

- Introducing receiving a ground ball that is rolling toward them
- Inside of foot “open” to receive (“kiss the ball with your foot”)
- Eyes open when receiving a ground ball
- Arms out for balance when receiving a ground ball

### **Challenge**

- Keep the ball moving when receiving a ground ball (prep touch)
- Inside of the foot “open” and pushing the ball away to a new space

### **Advanced**

- Using the ball with the outside of the foot when receiving a ground ball
- Keeping the ball within a hula hoop of their body after receiving

# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*



**7- & 8-year-olds (by priority)**

**“ On or around the ball**

## Attacking

- Can you go forward? (on the ball)
- Can you go forward by using a teammate? (around the ball)
- Can you go and help your teammate when they have the ball when they are under pressure? (around the ball)
- Can you keep the ball from the opponent? (on the ball)



## Physical

- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Simple motor movements
- Running forward
- Running backward
- Lateral movement
- Changing direction
- Be mindful; they will overheat at this age!

## Defending

- Can you win the ball back? (on the ball)
- Can you stop the player with the ball from going around you? (on the ball)
- Can you and a teammate stop the ball from going around you? (around the ball)

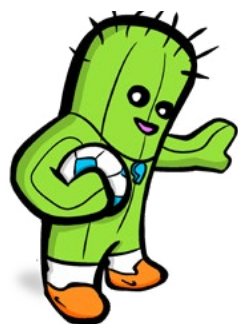


## Psychological

- Fun!
- Brave
- Safe
- Growth mindset
- Positive with self
- Positive with teammates
- Adults, like a coach and/or a teacher, can be more influential

# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*



**9- & 10-year-olds (by priority)**

**On the ball**

## **Dribbling**

### **Novice**

- Use of bottom of foot to stop and start
- Feints and fakes to get away from an opponent
- Using the farthest foot when dribbling around an opponent
- Changing speed when dribbling

### **Challenge**

- Feints and fakes to dribble around an opponent
- Changing speed when dribbling around an opponent
- Change of direction to set up a pass

### **Advanced**

- Using feints and fakes at speed while dribbling around a defender
- Holding off an opponent while shielding

## **Shooting/striking the ball**

### **Novice**

- Shooting while running with the ball; prep touch: ball outside the line of body
- Surface selection (instep vs. inside)
- Keeping head and shoulders over ball for a long-range shot
- Placement of plant foot (shifting weight)

### **Challenge**

- Shooting a rolling ball one touch
- Shooting a ball that is rolling away (placement of plant foot is slightly ahead of the ball)

### **Advanced**

- Shooting/striking a ball after a pass from a teammate (one-touch finishing)
- Shooting across the body with instep to the far post

## **Passing**

### **Novice**

- Weight and accuracy of short-range passes (5-10 yards) with the inside of the foot
- Introduce passing with the outside of the foot while dribbling
- Placement of plant foot while passing
- Making eye contact with teammate when passing

### **Challenge**

- Introduction of one-touch passing
- Introduce using the instep to make a longer pass
- Using the outside of the foot to make a 3-5 yard push pass when dribbling at an opponent.

### **Advanced**

- Passing to combine around a teammate
- Passing to set up a teammate
- Chipping a ball into space

## **Receiving**

### **Novice**

- Receiving a ground pass with the inside of the foot to move forward, “keep the ball within a hula hoop of the body”
- Receiving a ground pass with the inside of the foot to move away from an opponent

### **Challenge**

- Using the outside of the foot when receiving a ground pass
- Introduce turning and receiving a ground pass with the inside of the foot

### **Advanced**

- Introduce turning and receiving a ground pass with the outside of the foot
- Making a feint/fake before receiving a ground pass
- Introduce receiving a bouncing ball with the feet and thighs

# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*



**9- & 10-year-olds (by priority)**

**“On, around, and away from the ball”**

## **Attacking**

### **Can we go forward? (Penetrate)**

- Try to score
- Try to move the ball forward via dribbling or passing
- Can we create a 2v1 or 1v1 to penetrate?

### **Can we help our teammate(s)? (Support)**

- Move to help the player with the ball
- Combine with teammates around the ball
- Move to draw defenders out of position

### **Can we go wide? (Width)**

- Spread out (note: they are just learning this concept)
- Create space from side to side
- Draw defenders from out of the middle (stretch the defense)

### **Can we move forward or backward? (Depth)**

- Create space from front to back (stretch)
- Provide options for forward passes
- Provide options for safe back passes



## **Physical**

- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Simple and advanced motor movements
- Improving body strength
- Lateral movement
- Changing direction
- Jumping (standing)
  - » One leg
  - » Two legs
- Running & jumping
  - » Forward (sprinting)
  - » Backwards
- Twisting & jumping
- Speed development (proper form)

## **Defending**

### **Can we win the ball back? (Pressure)**

- Win the ball back as soon as you lose it
- Try to stop forward progress

### **Can we help our teammates win the ball back? (Cover/support)**

- Move to help defend around the ball
- Follow attackers running into dangerous spaces

### **Squeeze toward the ball from the sides (Balance)**

- Eliminate/reduce space from side to side
- Defend space and opponents from the weak side

### **Squeeze toward the ball from front to back (Compactness)**

- Manage the depth of the team
- Defending shape is “like a fist” as a team



## **Psychological**

- Fun!
- Brave
- Safe
- Growth mindset
- Becoming more serious about their performance
- Can be self-starters
- Adults, like a coach and/or a teacher, can be more influential

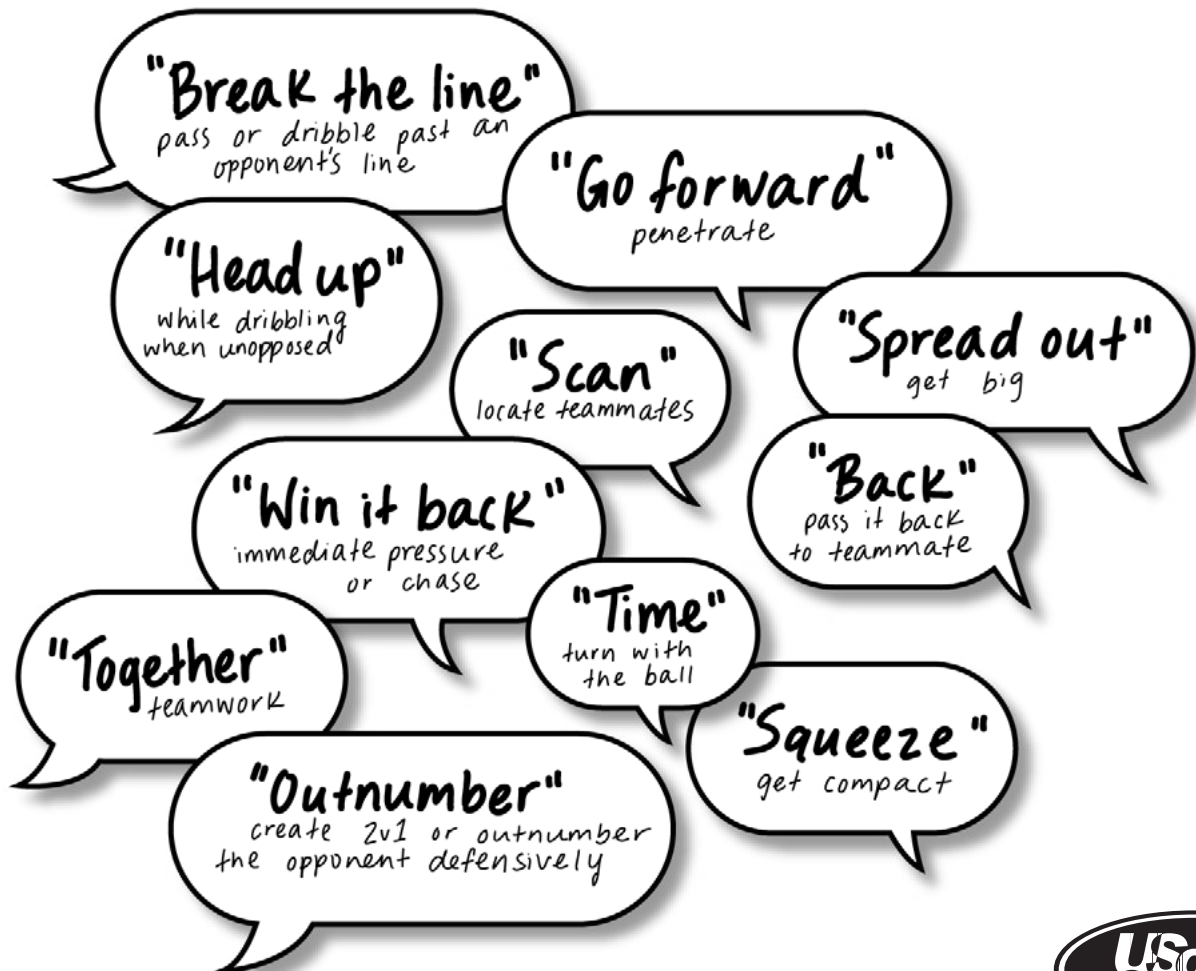
# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*

## 9- & 10-year-olds

|               |                                  |   |
|---------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Dribbling to maintain possession | Dribbling to beat an opponent             |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Passing (Short range)            | Receiving short range passes              |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Passing (Medium range)           | Introduction of receiving a bouncing ball |
| <b>Week 4</b> | 1v1 attack/defend                | 2v2 attack/defend                         |
| <b>Week 5</b> | Finishing (inside the box)       | Finishing (outside the box)               |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Outnumber the opponent attacking | Outnumber the opponent defending          |
| <b>Week 7</b> | Defending in the attacking half  | Attacking from the defensive half         |
| <b>Week 8</b> | Festival (4v4 games)             | Festival (4v4 games)                      |

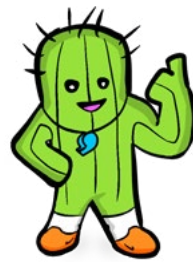
## Common language





# What do I say?

*Being positive is always the best way.*



“Brains in Pain” cannot learn. As a coach, your words and actions matter. Remember you are not just coaching a child, but a future adult. Negative comments or actions can really impact a child’s experience. “If you have nothing nice to say, then don’t say anything at all.” Sound familiar? One of your main goals as a youth coach is that they sign up again next season. A bonus if they request you for their coach.

## Ideas

As they arrive to practice, tell them how glad you are to see them.

Try to say their names at least two to three times a practice.

Praise, but be specific with it. Example: “That’s a great turn you did to get away from the defender.”

Provide more positive feedback than negative (5 positives to 1 corrective or 5 glows and 1 grow).

Use the sandwich technique (start with a glow/positive comment, add a grow/corrective comment, end with another glow/positive comment).

Use open-ended questions (avoid yes or no questions).

Three things player like to hear:

- I believe in you!
- You have a purpose!
- Ask them what they need or “how can I help you?”

Explain the “why.” Provide rationale.

Usually, when you yell at them, when they are playing in a game about a mistake they made, it’s too late. Praise (specific) when they do something that was great in the game.

Reward effort, not outcome.

Coach the bench, praise the play.

While the game is going on, coach the players on the bench. Example: Ask what they’re seeing?

# What do I say?

*Being positive is always the best way.*

## Practice “BAGS”

### **BELONG**

#### **Instant activity**

- Have a game or an activity that is very simple, so they can jump right in.
- Examples: Small-sided game, tag game that they have played before, etc.

#### **Group meeting**

- Bring them in as a group and have them:
  - » Turn and talk with someone. Example: “Turn & talk and discuss with each other one good thing that has happened to you today.”
- Let’s give everyone on our team a high five!

#### **Preview time**

- Provide a very short (30-45 seconds) preview of what they are going to learn today.
- Example: “Today, we are going to work on dribbling and keeping the ball within a hula hoop of our body. Let’s get started!”



## **ACTIVITY (not drill) TIME**

- Everything is timed!
- Have 2-4 activities prepared
- Examples:
  - » Play a tag game with a ball
  - » Play a keep-away game with a ball
  - » Play a target game with a ball
  - » Play a small-sided game with a ball
- Plan water breaks between activities.
- After a water break, give them a challenge.
  - » Example: “Let’s see how many toe taps you can get in 20 seconds.”
  - » Example: “Who can sit down, grab their toes and then bring them to their nose without letting go!”

## **GAMES**

- At least one small-sided game or two with a ball

## **SHOUTOUTS**

- End practice with “shoutouts”
  - » Who do you want to say good job to today?
  - » Who showed a lot of hustle/effort today?



# What do I say?

## Transferring knowledge into understanding

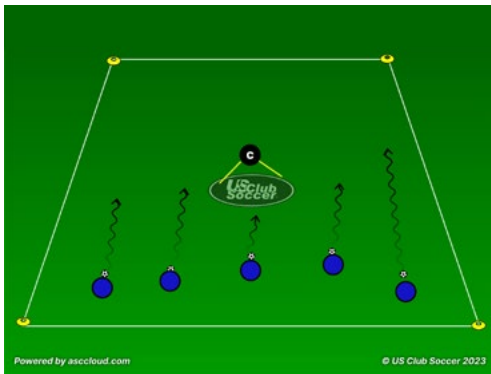


Great coaches can simplify their teaching so the athletes can understand it. For younger players, try using metaphors, analogies, etc. to teach the mechanics of a technique. Try using external focus of attention to teach the “how.” Below are some examples of internal focus of attention (detailed mechanics of a technique) and external focus of attention (the effect of the technique). Using external focus of attention may be easier for a player to understand as opposed to the finer details of a technique or internal focus of attention

| Technique                    | Internal Focus of Attention  | External Focus of Attention   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Dribbling (running forward)  | “Use the laces of your shoe and point your foot down and in to push the ball forward.”   | “Keep the ball within a hula hoop of your body.”  |
| Dribbling (turning the ball) | “Use the inside of your foot, make sure your heel is down and toe is up in the shoe.”  | “Make the ball stick to the inside of your foot.”   |
| Short passing                | “Place your non-kicking foot next to the ball, bend your knees, Use the inside of your foot while keeping your heel down and toe up.”  | “Your non-kicking foot is next to the ball, using the inside of the foot, make the ball roll as flat as a board.” (Non-kicking foot is like Google Maps. It guides the direction of the pass) |
| Long passing                 | “Place your non-kicking foot next to the ball, use your laces to strike through the middle of the ball.”   | “Make the ball go fast.”  |
| Receiving (ground pass)      | “Be balanced as the ball is rolling towards you. Take a slight hop on the non-receiving foot. With the receiving foot, cushion the ball.”  | “Keep the ball within a hula hoop of your body when receiving a pass.”  |
| Shooting                     | “Place your non-kicking foot next to the ball, keep your head, shoulders and knee over the ball. Strike the ball with the laces. Follow through by landing on your shooting foot.” | “Strike the ball so it either “dips” or has little to no spin.”   |

# What activities do I use?

Pick different types of activities and modify them over the season



## Tag game

“The Octopus”

All players have a ball and get on a line facing one direction. The coach or an approved adult is “it” and has a pool noodle in each hand. They are the Octopus. The fish (players not “it”) try to dribble their ball from one side to the other without the Octopus trying to touch their ball with one of the pool noodles. If their ball gets touched, they do 3 touch ups/toe taps on the spot. When the players get to the other side, they stop. The Octopus then turns around and the players go the other way.



## Target game

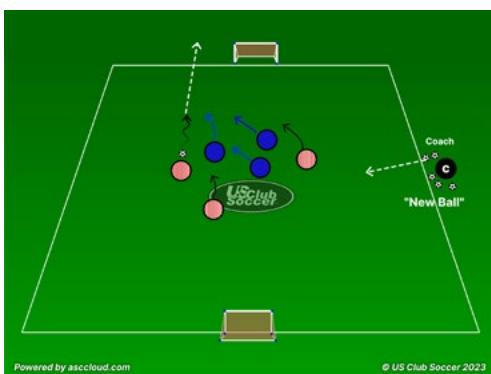
“Lights”

Players line up on one end with a ball. The coach stands in the middle of the field. The coach shouts either “red” or “green” light. Red signals to stop and put your foot on top of the ball; green signals go forward by dribbling the ball. If a player doesn't stop and have their foot on the ball when “red” is called, they have 3 toe taps. Play until they get to one side and then turn and start again.



## Keep-away game

The coach is in the middle of a circle. The players pass the ball and keep the ball away from the coach. When the coach gets the ball 3 times, that game is over and a player can go in the middle or the coach can stay.



## Small-sided games

“New ball”

2 teams and 2 small goals on each end. Play a normal game. The coach has a collection of balls. When a ball goes out, the coach shouts “new ball” and rolls a new ball onto the field. Play until all of the balls have been used and then go again.



# How do I modify activities?

Use the **STEP** approach



Timothy Gallwey, the author of *The Inner Game of Tennis*, says: “Variety can also be accomplished by simply rearranging the order in which activities are practiced.” (Gallwey, W.T. 2008)

Here’s an idea to help you take a familiar activity and change it: STEP it up! Using an acronym “STEP” can be beneficial to both you and your players.

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <div style="background-color: #003366; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">Space</div> <p><b>Make the space:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longer</li> <li>▪ Shorter</li> <li>▪ Wider</li> <li>▪ Narrow</li> <li>▪ Circle, triangle, etc.</li> </ul> | <div style="background-color: #FF6600; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">Time</div> <p><b>Time can mean:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longer</li> <li>▪ Shorter</li> <li>▪ Faster</li> <li>▪ Slower</li> <li>▪ # of seconds</li> </ul> | <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">Equipment</div> <p><b>Add, reduce, modify, and/or eliminate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Balls</li> <li>▪ Cones</li> <li>▪ Flags</li> <li>▪ Pool noodles</li> </ul> | <div style="background-color: #FF0066; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">Process</div> <p><b>Add, change, and/or eliminate a:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rule</li> <li>▪ Player(s)</li> <li>▪ Challenge</li> <li>▪ Condition</li> <li>▪ Method of scoring</li> <li>▪ Choice</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|--|

Below are a few activities that you should scan with a mobile device to see some examples of how to use STEP to modify an activity or game.



The Octopus (dribbling game for 5-7 year olds)



4-goal game (small-sided game for 8 and up)



Gallwey, W. Timothy. (2008). *The inner Game of Tennis: The classic guide to the mental side of Peak performance*. Random House.



# How do I know if they learned?

## Check for understanding



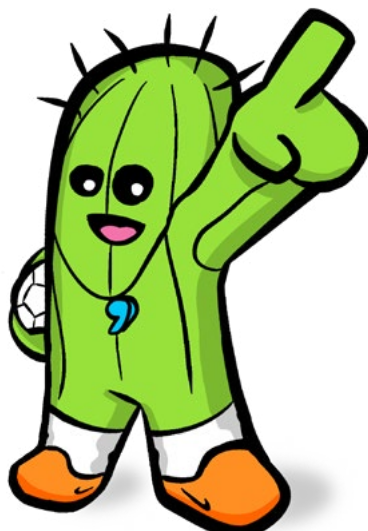
The famous basketball coach, John Wooden, has a quote that sums up the meaning of coaching.

***“You haven’t taught them until they have learned.”***

So, how do you know if they have learned? This is called checking for understanding. If you ask them after explaining to them, “does that make sense?” they will probably tell you yes. They are also indirectly telling you that they just want to get back to playing and to be quiet!

- “Avoid saying “Does that make sense?”
  - » Instead, insert a why, when, where, how?
  - » Ex: “Why does this make sense?”
- Visual
  - » “Show me,” Ask them to show you how to do something.
- Repeat back to me
- Small groups
  - » Have them get in small groups and give them an open-ended question to answer. After they have discussed in their small groups, get their answers.

- After you explain/show something, tell them that you will be looking for 3 good examples.
  - » Example, you have shown them how to do a push pass. As they are playing, you say out loud: “There’s one great push pass; there’s two; there’s three. Way to go!”
- Theory of opposites
  - » What does a good shot look like?
  - » What does a bad shot look like?
- Slow-motion model
  - » Show them, or better yet, have a player model what good looks like.
  - » After the model, have the players perform the same action but in slow motion.



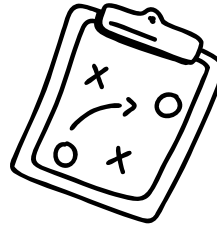
# Remember to...

- 1** *Make it fun!*
- 2** *Make sure no child walks around with a hole in their heart!*
- 3** *Keep in mind you may be the best thing happening in their life. Be their champion!*
- 4** *First and foremost, make sure the environment is safe!*
- 5** *When all else fails, refer back to #1 and FUN!*



# Sample session plans

For 5- & 6-year-olds



**Below is a sample weekly curriculum for 5- & 6-year-olds**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Dribbling with their head up                                   |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Dribbling to go forward  |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Dribbling to turn the ball (get away)                          |
| <b>Week 4</b> | Striking the ball part 1                                       |
| <b>Week 5</b> | "Greatest Hits" (Use the games/activities, they like the most) |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Introduction to passing part 1                                 |
| <b>Week 7</b> | Striking the ball part 2                                       |
| <b>Week 8</b> | Festival-2v2 tournament  |



# What do I say?

*Being positive is always the best way.*

## Practice “BAGS”

### **BELONG**

#### **Instant activity**

- Have a game or an activity that is very simple, so they can jump right in.
- Examples: Small-sided game, tag game that they have played before, etc.

#### **Group meeting**

- Bring them in as a group and have them:
  - » Turn and talk with someone. Example: “Turn & talk and discuss with each other one good thing that has happened to you today.”
- Let’s give everyone on our team a high five!

#### **Preview time**

- Provide a very short (30-45 seconds) preview of what they are going to learn today.
- Example: “Today, we are going to work on dribbling and keeping the ball within a hula hoop of our body. Let’s get started!”



## **ACTIVITY (not drill) TIME**

- Everything is timed!
- Have 2-4 activities prepared
- Examples:
  - » Play a tag game with a ball
  - » Play a keep-away game with a ball
  - » Play a target game with a ball
  - » Play a small-sided game with a ball
- Plan water breaks between activities.
- After a water break, give them a challenge.
  - » Example: “Let’s see how many toe taps you can get in 20 seconds.”
  - » Example: “Who can sit down, grab their toes and then bring them to their nose without letting go!”

## **GAMES**

- At least one small-sided game or two with a ball

## **SHOUTOUTS**

- End practice with “shoutouts”
  - » Who do you want to say good job to today?
  - » Who showed a lot of hustle/effort today?

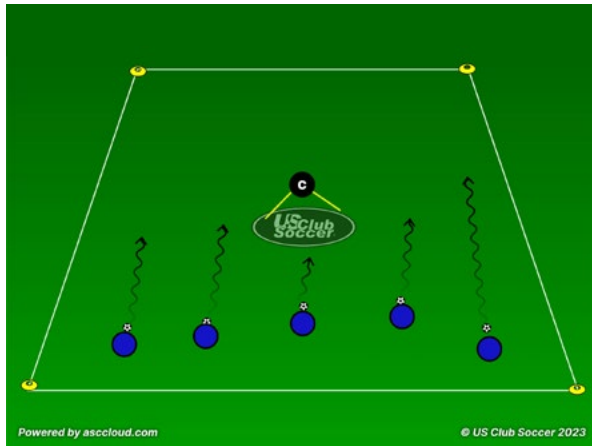


# Five core activities/games

*The following 5 activities/games will be used for the 5- & 6-year-old curriculum. The 5 activities will be modified throughout the season.*



As the season goes on use a different type of ball. Example: beach ball, tennis ball, etc.



## Activity (welcome game)

Pick-up soccer

Have goals and small field set up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed, the coach(es) can fill in and also participate.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most, of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.

## Activity (tag game)

"The Octopus"

All players have a ball and get on a line facing one direction. The coach or an approved adult is "it" and has a pool noodle in each hand. They are the Octopus. The fish (players not "it") try to dribble their ball from one side to the other without the Octopus trying to touch their ball with one of the pool noodles. If their ball gets touched, they do 3 touch ups/toe taps on the spot. When the players get to the other side, they stop. The Octopus then turns around and the players go the other way.

## Activity (tag game)

The "Gate" Escape

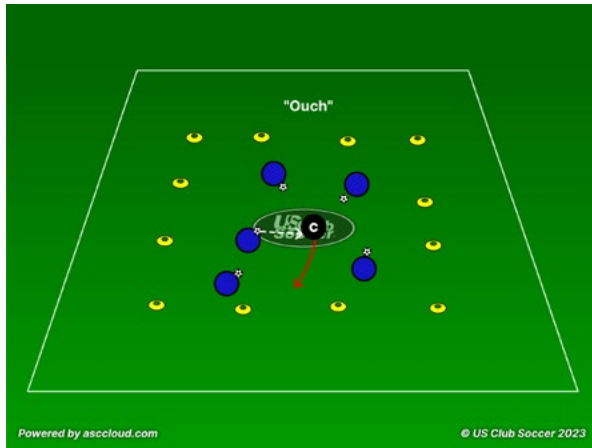
Make small gates (3-4 steps) apart and spread them around the field. Note: Make at least one more gate than there are players. All of the players have a ball.

Each player has a ball. The coach or an approved adult is "it." An option is to hold a pool noodle or have a pinny/bib in their hand to throw at a ball. All players start in one gate. When the coach shouts "go," "escape," etc. they try and dribble through as many gates as time allows. As they are dribbling, the coach tries to either tag them on the shoulder, touch the ball with their pool noodle, or throw a pinny/bib at their ball.



# Five core activities/games

*The following 5 activities/games will be used for the 5- & 6-year-old curriculum. The 5 activities will be modified throughout the season.*



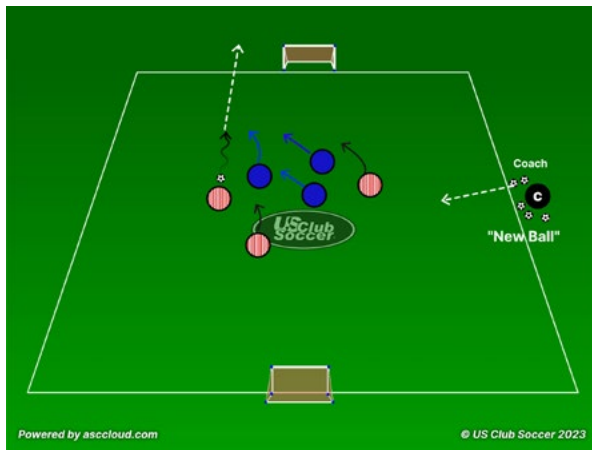
## Activity (target game)

"Ouch"

Make a grid 15-20 x 15-20. All the players have a ball. The coach is in the grid and doesn't have a ball. The players are trying to dribble their ball towards the coach and hit them below the knee. When a coach gets hit they scream "ouch."

Play 30 second games x 4-6

- Round 1 or 2: Play normal
- Round 3 or 4: After a player hits the coach below the knee, they get a point. Can they try to get the coach to say "ouch" three times? If someone does, the game is over and a new one begins.



## Activity (small-sided game)

There are 3 versions of small-sided games within the 5 & 6 year-old curriculum:

1. "New ball" (diagram)
2. 2v2-4v4 four goal game
3. 2v2-4v4 SSG (end game)

"New ball"

Play a small game to two goals. When the ball goes out, the players don't chase the ball. The coach shouts "new ball" and rolls in (keyword) another ball. The game keeps going until all of the balls have been used. When this happens, ask the players to run as fast as they can to gather them and get them back to the coach.

Question to ask players: How can you make the game last longer? (Not let the ball go out of bounds)

Follow-up: How can you make sure the ball doesn't go out of bounds? (Keep the ball closer, keep the ball away from the other team, dribble)



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: Dribbling with the head up

Time: 45-60



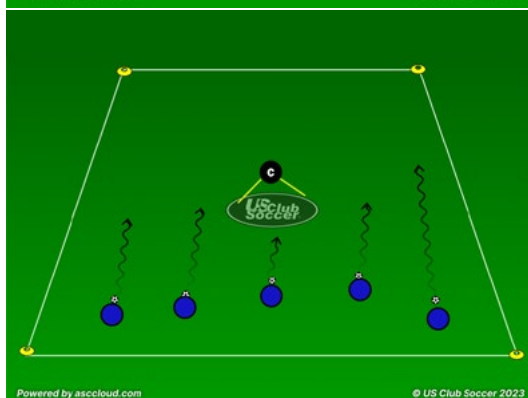
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



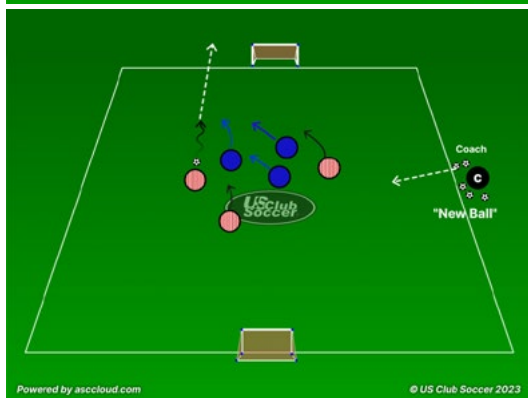
Activity (Tag Game)  
"The Octopus"

All players have a ball and get on a line facing a direction. The coach or an approved adult is "it" and have two pool noodles in their hands. They are the Octopus. The fish (players not it) try to dribble their ball from one side to the other without The Octopus trying to touch their ball with one of the pool noodles. If their ball gets touched, they do 3 touch-ups/toe taps on the spot. When the players get to the other side, they stop. The Octopus then turns around and the players go the other way.

Play for 5-10 minutes.

Question to ask: "Where do your eyes or headlights need to be in order to see the shark?" (up)

Question to ask: "How far should the ball be away from your foot?" (within a hula hoop, leg's length, etc. away)



Activity (Small-sided game)

"New" Ball

Play a small game to two goals.

When the ball goes out, the players don't chase the ball. The coach shouts "new ball" and rolls in (keyword) another ball. The game keeps going until all of the balls have been used. When this happens ask the players to run as fast as they can to gather them and get them back to the coach.

Question to ask: How can you make the game last longer? (Not let the balls go out of bounds)

Follow-up: How can you make sure the ball doesn't go out of bounds? (Keep the ball closer, keep the ball away from the other team, dribble or find space)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related.

Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: Dribbling to go forward

Time: 45-60



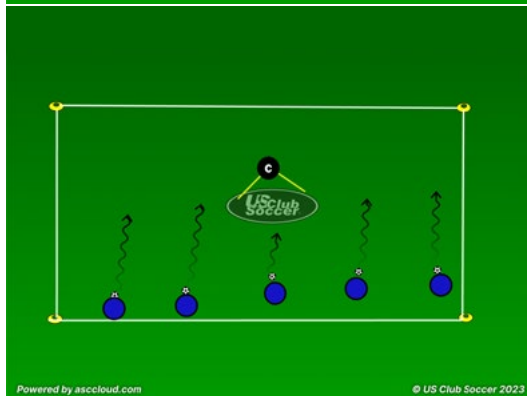
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity (Tag Game)

The Octopus (Short and wide)

Note: Make the field short and wide. This will encourage them to get forward faster.

All players have a ball and get on a line facing a direction. The coach or an approved adult is "it" and have two pool noodles in their hands. They are the Octopus. The fish (players not it) try to dribble their ball from one side to the other without The Octopus trying to touch their ball with one of the pool noodles. If their ball gets touched, they do 3 touch-ups/toe taps on the spot. When the players get to the other side, they stop. The Octopus then turns around and the players go the other way.

Rounds 1 & 2: The shark uses both pool noodles

Round 3 & 4: The shark uses one pool noodle.

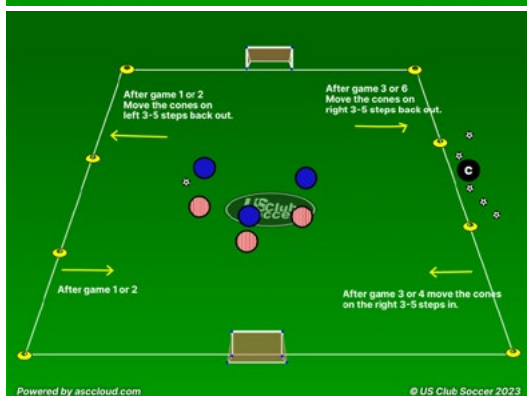
Round 5 & 6: Make the field more narrow by moving the cones inward. The shark uses both noodles

Round 7 & 8: Same as 3 but the shark uses only one pool noodle.

Question to ask: "How can you get across faster but not let your ball get touched by the pool noodle?" (Go forward fast)

Follow up question: When the shark is away from you, should you take bigger or smaller touches and why? (Bigger because the shark is further away.)

Follow up question: When the shark is close to you should you take bigger or smaller touches and why? (smaller so you can keep the ball close to go around the shark)



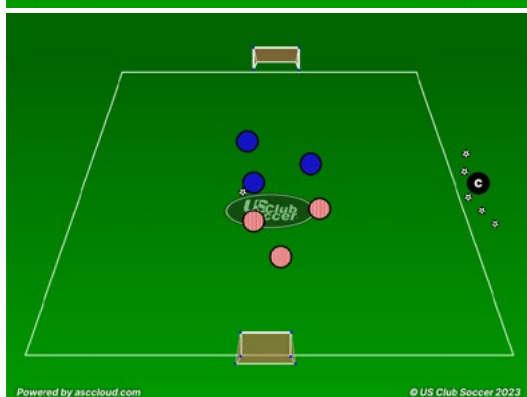
Activity (Small-Sided Game)

The Accordion Game

Place two goals on each end. Line both sides of the field with small cones. Play a normal small-sided game. After the first 2 to 2:30 minute game, move the cones on the left sideline in 3-5 steps. Play another game or two. After that 2 to 2:30 minute game, move the right sideline in 3-5 steps. Play another game or two. After that game 2 to 2:30 minute game, move the cones on the left back out 3-5 steps. Play another game or two. After that game move the cones on the right back out 3-5 steps. Now the cones should be back in their original location.

Question to ask: What happens when the field gets smaller? (the space is smaller)

Follow-up question: When the space is smaller and we want to go forward what type of touches (big or small) should we take? (small)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related.

Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: Dribbling to get away

Time: 45-60



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity (Tag Game)

The "Gate" Escape

Make small gates (3-4 steps) apart and spread them around the field. Note: Make at least one more gate than there are players. All of the players have a ball.

Each player has a ball. The coach or an approved adult is "it". An option is to hold a pool noodle or have a pinny/bib in their hand to throw at a ball. All players start in one gate. When the coach shouts "go", "escape", etc. They try and dribble through as many gates as time allows. As they are dribbling the coach tries to either tag them on the shoulder, touch the ball with their pool noodle, or throw a pinny/bib at their ball. If a player is tagged or their ball gets touched they have to do 3 toe taps. A player is safe if they can stop their ball with the bottom of their foot when the coach is chasing them. When the coach says time, they go back to their starting gate.

Play 30 second games 4-6 times.

Question to ask: What should you do to get away from the coach and get through a gate? (get your eyes/headlights up, and turn the ball and our body to get away)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

The Accordion Game Part 2

Place two goals on each end. Line both sides of the field with small cones. Play a normal small-sided game. After the first 2 to 2:30 minute game, move the cones on the left sideline in 3-5 steps. Play another game or two. After that 2 to 2:30 minute game, move the right sideline in 3-5 steps. Play another game or two. After that game 2 to 2:30 minute game, move the cones on the left in another 3-5 steps. Play another game or two. After that game move the cones on the right in another 3-5 steps. After the last game, start moving the cones back out. Note: You can move both line of cones at once if desired.

Question to ask: What happens when the field gets smaller? (the space is smaller)

Follow-up question: When the space is smaller what do we need to do to keep the ball from someone? (protect it)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related.

Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: Striking The Ball Part 1

Time: 45-60



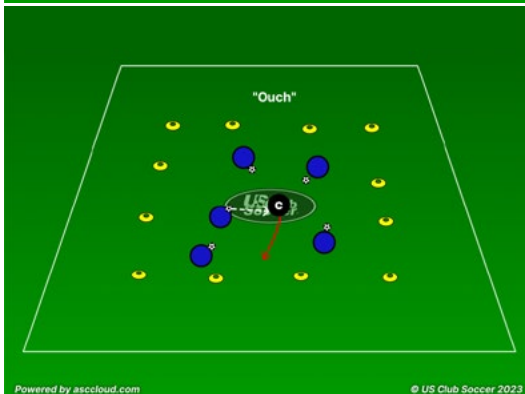
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity (Target Game)

Make a grid 15-20 x 15-20. All the players have a ball. The coach is in the grid and doesn't have a ball. The players are trying to dribble their ball towards the coach and hit them below the knee. When a coach gets hit they scream "ouch".

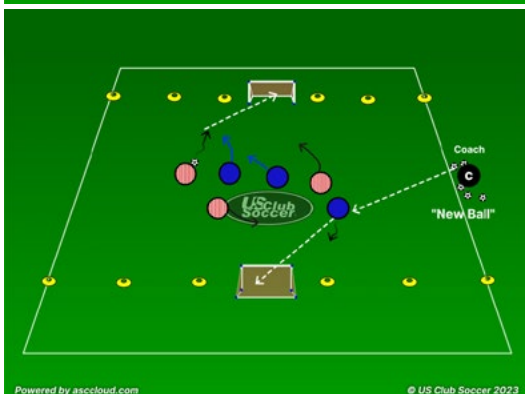
Play 30 second games x 4-6

Round 1 or 2: Play normal

Round 3 or 4: After a player hits the coach below the knee they get a point. Can they try to get the coach to say "ouch" three times. If someone does the game is over and a new one begins.

Question to ask: "Where should your eyes/headlights be when you are trying to hit the coach below the knee?" (up)

Follow-up question: "How can you make sure you hit the coach below the knee with the ball?" (strike the ball on the ground/flat as a board)



Activity (Small-sided game)

"New" Ball Part 2 or Goals Galore

Play a small game to two goals. Bring the goals closer than the first version of the game. This should encourage them to shoot/strike the ball quicker. When the ball goes out, the players don't chase the ball. The coach shouts "new ball" and rolls in (keyword) another ball. In this version of the game, the coach can roll out a 2nd or a 3rd ball. The game keeps going until all of the balls have been used. When this happens ask the players to run as fast as they can to gather them and get them back to the coach.

Question to ask: How can you score goals quicker? (Get our eyes/headlights up and find the goal.)

Follow-up: What type of speed should the ball be struck towards the goal? (FAST-talk to them about striking the ball and try to make it go fast on the ground)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."

# Greatest hits practice

*Let the players pick their favorite activities*







Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: Introduction to Passing

Time: 45-60



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

**"Pick-up" Game**

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity (Target Game)

**"Gate Attack"**

Make small gates (3-4 steps) apart and spread them around the field. Players pair up and share one ball between them. Note: Make at least one more gate than there are pairs.

Each pair shares a ball. All pairs start in one gate. When the coach shouts "go", "attack", etc. They try and dribble up to a gate, pass the ball through to their teammate who should be on the other side. Challenge them to pass the ball through the gate 5 steps before getting to it. Like the previous activity, when they pass and stop the ball they shout "1st Gate". Then they move together to a new gate, pass through it to a teammate and shout "2nd Gate". When the coach says time, they go back to their starting gate.

Play 30 second games 4-6 times.

Round 1 or 2: Players are trying to pass through as many gates without opposition.

Round 2 or 3: The coach (shown in diagram) walks from gate to gate. If the coach is in a gate, pairs can not pass the ball through that gate.

Rounds 3 or 4: The coach now walks around with a pool noodle, bib/pinny and tries to touch the ball with a pool noodle or bib/pinny. If a pairs ball gets touched they both do 3 toe tap.

Question to ask: How do you know your teammate is on the other side of the gate? (By keeping our eyes/headlights up to see them)

Follow-up question: What type of pass would make it easier for your teammate to control? Super fast, fast, just right, slow, very slow? (just right.)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

**New Ball 4-goal game**

2 teams and 4 small goals needed-2 on each end. Note: Place the goals closer together to encourage more passes into the goal. Play a normal game. The coach has a collection of balls. When a ball goes out, the coach shouts "new ball" and rolls a new ball onto the field. Play until all of the balls have been used and then go again.

Play 2 to 2:30 minute games x 3-4 times

Game 1 or 2: Play normal

Game 3 or 4: A bonus point is given for each pass they make to a teammate.



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

**2v2-4v4 game to small goals.**

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: Striking The Ball Part 2

Time: 45-60



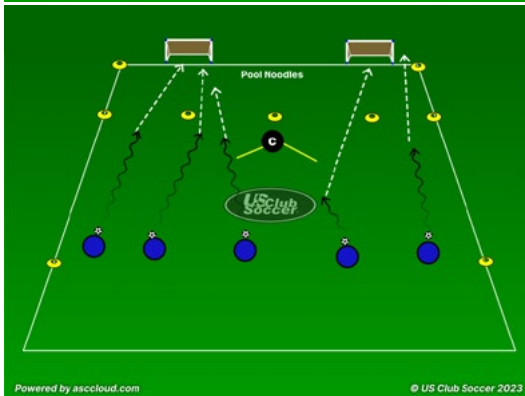
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity-Target Game

"The Octopus-Goals Version"

Place two small goals (cones, poles, or sticks) can be used on one end. Place the two goals approximately 10 yards apart. The coach is in the middle of the two goals and has 1-2 pool noodles. All of the players line up on a line approximately 15-20 steps from the goals.

When the coach shouts "go", all of the players dribble and try to score a goal without their ball being touched by a pool noodle. If their ball gets touched, they go back and try again. After a player strikes the ball into the goal they go after it and bring it back to the cone line and go again.

Play 45-60 second games x 4-6.

An option is to add more adults (approved) with pool noodles, bibs/pinnies, etc. Another option is to just use one goal.



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

New Ball 4-goal game

2 teams and 4 small goals needed-2 on each end. Note: Place the goals closer together to encourage more passes into the goal. Play a normal game. The coach has a collection of balls. When a ball goes out, the coach shouts "new ball" and rolls a new ball onto the field. Play until all of the balls have been used and then go again.

Play 2 to 2:30 minute games x 3-4 times

Game 1 or 2: Play normal

Game 3 or 4: A bonus point is given for each pass they make to a teammate.



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: 2v2 Festival

Time: 45-60



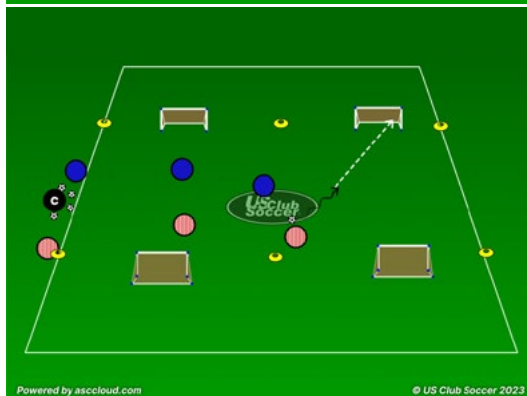
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity-(Small-Sided Game)

2v2 to 4 goals Short Field

Place two goals on each end. Each team has 2 goals to attack and defend. Play 2v2 for 45-90 seconds. Then have the extra players (subs) go on and replace someone on the field. Due to the field being shorter it should help to create more attacking and defending possibilities.

Question to ask: "What can you do when you are going to one goal but you can't score?" (Go to the other one)

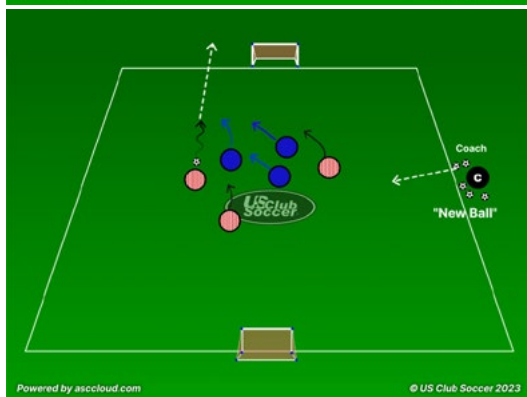


2v2 New Ball-Short Field (Small-Sided Game)

Make a small field with a goal on each end. On the field it's 2v2. If more than 4 players than they are subs and can help gather balls after they go out of bounds.

When a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds, the coach shouts "new ball" and roll a new ball on the field. Play until all of the balls have been used and then start a new game. The player(s) that were sitting out, come on the field to play.

Try to keep the games very short (1-2 minutes at the most). Rotate players so they are playing with and against someone new.



Activity (Small-sided game)

"New" Ball

Play a small game to two goals.

When the ball goes out, the players don't chase the ball. The coach shouts "new ball" and rolls in (keyword) another ball. The game keeps going until all of the balls have been used. When this happens ask the players to run as fast as they can to gather them and get them back to the coach.

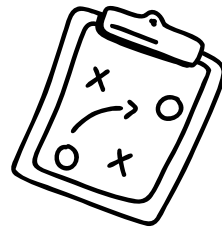
Question to ask: How can you make the game last longer? (Not let the balls go out of bounds)

Follow-up: How can you make sure the ball doesn't go out of bounds? (Keep the ball closer, keep the ball away from the other team, dribble or find space)

# What do I do?

*What do you teach them?*

**7- & 8-year-olds (by priority)**



**“You build a player like you build a house. In the house, there is a basement, a foundation, which, for a player is technique. It is developed between the ages of 7 and 14. If you have no quality technical skill by the age of 14, you can forget it, you will never have a soccer player.” -Arsene Wenger**

Jozak, R., Kepčija, I., & Hercigonja-Moulton, H. (2018b). Phases of Development. In Development curriculum: Croatian Football Federation. essay, Vivid & Shine j.d.o.o.

## **Possible weekly themes**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Running with the ball   |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Dribbling to beat an opponent                                 |
| <b>Week 3</b> | “They” have the ball (taking the ball away)                   |
| <b>Week 4</b> | “Greatest Hits” (Use the games/activities they like the most) |
| <b>Week 5</b> | Striking the ball part 1                                      |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Striking the ball part 2 (scoring)                            |
| <b>Week 7</b> | Playing with a teammate                                       |
| <b>Week 8</b> | Festival 2v2 - 4v4  |

# Five core activities/games

*Below are activities/games that will be used for the 7- & 8-year-old curriculum.*



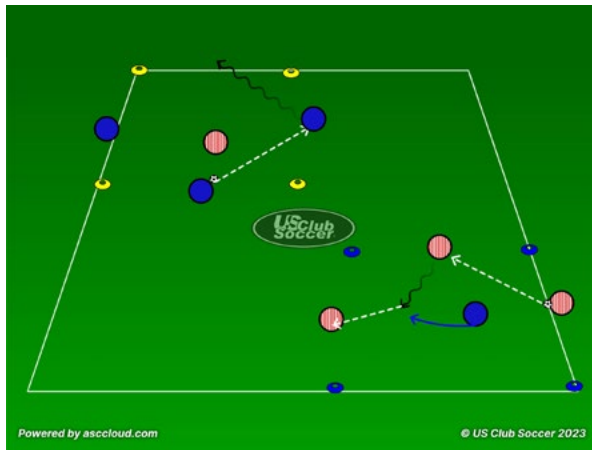
## Activity (welcome game)

Pick-up soccer

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed, the coach(es) can fill in and also participate.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most, of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



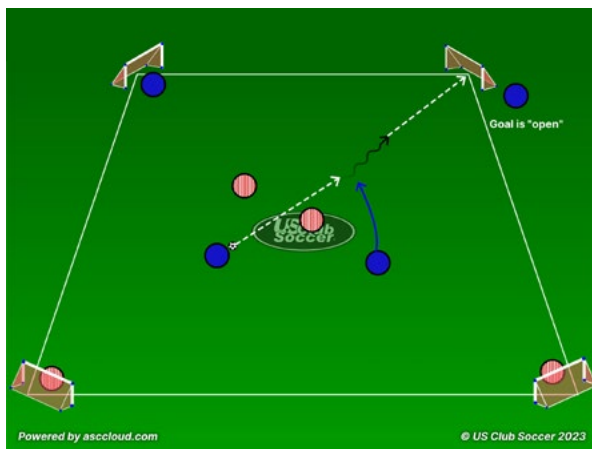
## Activity (keep-away game)

“3v1”

All players have a ball and get on a line facing one direction. Make two grids 10x10, 12x12, or 15x15. Two teams. Each team sends 3 players to one grid and 1 player to the other grid.

The team of 3 plays keep-away against the 1 defender. The only way to score is if one of the 3 players can dribble to an open line.

The player attempting to dribble across can opt to pass it to another attacker. Each time they are successful in dribbling and stopping the ball to an open end they get a point. If the 1 defender wins the ball, then they get a point for their team.



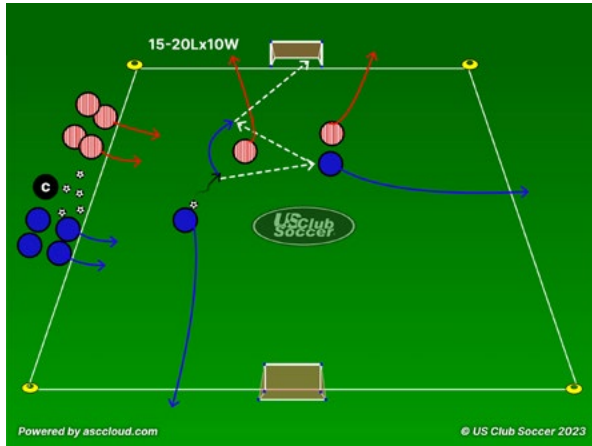
## Activity (small-sided game)

4-goal game

The diagram is just one example of how to play a 4-goal game. A 4-goal game is when each team attacks two goals and defends two goals. If small goals with nets aren't available, consider using cones, laundry baskets, or sticks/bicycle flags.

# Five core activities/games

**Below are activities/games that will be used for the 7- & 8-year-old curriculum.**



## Activity (target game)

“Get out of here!”

Activity: SSG

Make a field with a small goal on each end. The coach has all of the balls. Create two teams. Players line up in pairs on both sides of where the coach is standing.

A pair from each team goes on the field. They play 2v2 until a goal is scored or the ball goes off the field on either end. When this happens, the coach says “get out of here!” and the players on the field run off. When both pairs are off, a new pair from each team now runs onto the field. The coach then passes in a new ball and the game continues.

Note: If the ball goes out on the side (touchline), then it’s a pass or dribble-in for the team that has possession.

Play to a set number of points or a period like 3-4 minutes.

## Activity (small-sided game)

There are 4 versions of small-sided games within the 7- & 8-year-old curriculum:

1. “New ball” (diagram)
2. “New ball” with numbers
3. 2v2-4v4 four-goal game
4. 2v2-4v4 SSG (end game)

“New ball”

Play a small game to two goals. When the ball goes out, the players don’t chase the ball. The coach shouts “new ball” and rolls in (keyword) another ball. The game keeps going until all of the balls have been used. When this happens, ask the players to run as fast as they can to gather them and get them back to the coach.

Question to ask players: How can you make the game last longer? (Not let the ball go out of bounds)

Follow-up: How can you make sure the ball doesn’t go out of bounds? (Keep the ball closer, keep the ball away from the other team, dribble)



# What do I say?

*Being positive is always the best way.*

## Practice “BAGS”

### **BELONG**

#### **Instant activity**

- Have a game or an activity that is very simple, so they can jump right in.
- Examples: Small-sided game, tag game that they have played before, etc.

#### **Group meeting**

- Bring them in as a group and have them:
  - » Turn and talk with someone. Example: “Turn & talk and discuss with each other one good thing that has happened to you today.”
- Let’s give everyone on our team a high five!

#### **Preview time**

- Provide a very short (30-45 seconds) preview of what they are going to learn today.
- Example: “Today, we are going to work on dribbling and keeping the ball within a hula hoop of our body. Let’s get started!”



## **ACTIVITY (not drill) TIME**

- Everything is timed!
- Have 2-4 activities prepared
- Examples:
  - » Play a tag game with a ball
  - » Play a keep-away game with a ball
  - » Play a target game with a ball
  - » Play a small-sided game with a ball
- Plan water breaks between activities.
- After a water break, give them a challenge.
  - » Example: “Let’s see how many toe taps you can get in 20 seconds.”
  - » Example: “Who can sit down, grab their toes and then bring them to their nose without letting go!”

## **GAMES**

- At least one small-sided game or two with a ball

## **SHOUTOUTS**

- End practice with “shoutouts”
  - » Who do you want to say good job to today?
  - » Who showed a lot of hustle/effort today?





**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach "Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: Running with the ball (flipper dribbling)

Time: 60



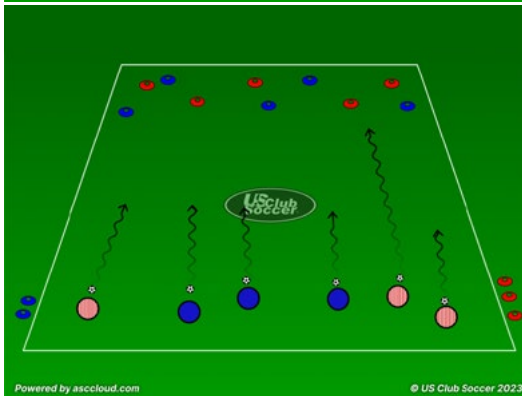
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

**"Pick-up" Game**

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

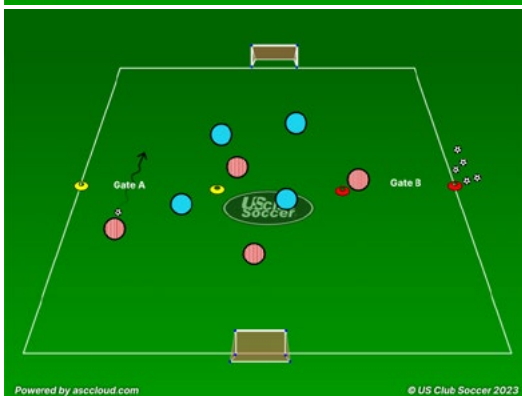
Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



**Flipper Dribbling Race**

Each player has a ball. Each team is assigned a cone color. Example: blue-blue cones, red-red cones. On the coach's command, they dribble the ball from one end to the other. When they get to the other end, they pick up a cone and dribble it back to the end. They drop the cone in a designated spot as shown. When they get back they can go again.

Flipper dribbling=dribbling with the laces of their shoes.



**New Ball with gates**

Two teams play 3v3 or 4v4 if possible. Make two gates in the middle of the field as shown. Encourage the players to dribble through one of the two side gates as fast as they can to get to the other half of the field. Every time the ball goes out of bounds, pass in a new ball from the side of the field.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Question to ask: Why are the gates on the sides of the field? (Because if you are going to dribble into space, then doing so on the sides/outside is safer to do)



**Activity (Small-Sided Game)**

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."





**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: Week 2: Dribbling around a defender/beat an opponent

Time: 60



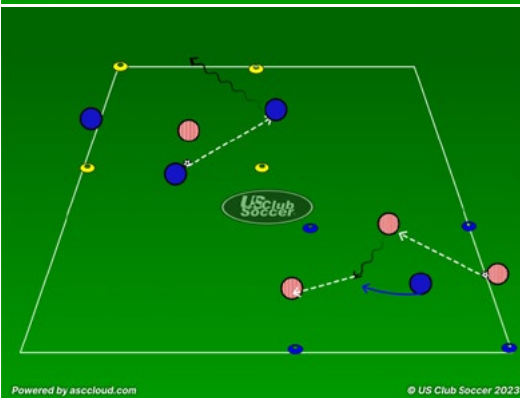
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

**"Pick-up" Game**

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.

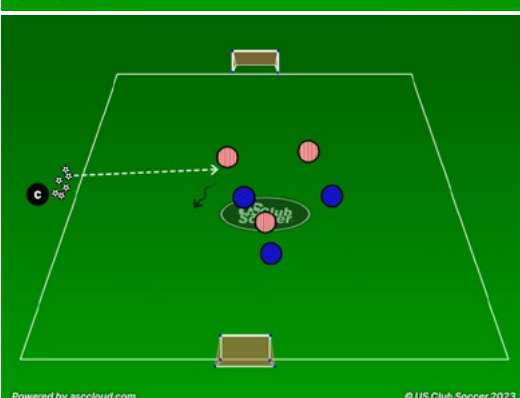


**3v1 Dribble to score**

Make two grids 10x10, 12x12, or 15x15. Two teams. Each team sends 3 players to one grid and 1 player to the other grid. The team of 3 plays keep-away against the 1 defender. The only way to score is if one of the 3 players can dribble to an open side. The player attempting to dribble across can opt to pass it to another attacker. Each time they are successful in dribbling and stopping the ball to an open end they get a point. If the 1 defender wins the ball then they get a point for their team.

Play 30-second rounds x4. Switch the defender each time.

Challenge them to dribble across the grid to get 2 points.



**New Ball "Three Touch"**

Play a game to two small goals.

Every time the ball goes out of bounds the players leave it and the coach rolls in a new ball.

The only rule is that when they receive a ball they must take at least 3 touches. This rule may encourage them to keep the ball and dribble to take someone on. Play until all of the balls have been used. Then asked the players to run and gather all the balls back to the coach.

Good looks like:

1. Players are changing speed to get around a defender.
2. Players are keeping the ball within a hula hoop of their body when they are going around a defender.
3. Players are using the foot farthest from the defender to go around a defender.

Question to ask:

1. Why is it important to change speeds in order to go around a defender? (So they can get the defender to stand up or slow down. Then when they see that, they should go fast. Encourage them to go fast-slow-fast)
2. Where on the field is it better to try and dribble around the opponent? (When they are closer to their goal/attacking side of the field.)



**Activity (Small-Sided Game)**

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: Week 3: "They have the ball" (Intro to individual defending) 7 & 8

Time: 60



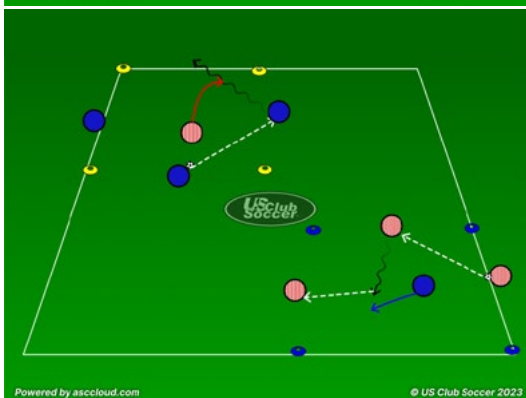
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.

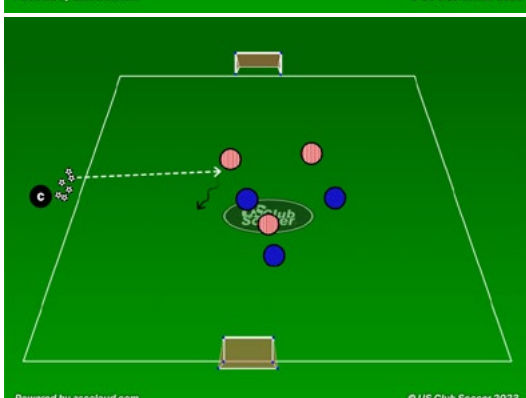


3v1 "Stop the dribbler"

Make two grids 10x10, 12x12, or 15x15. Two teams. Each team sends 3 players to one grid and 1 player to the other grid. The team of 3 plays keep-away against the 1 defender. The only way to score is if one of the 3 players can dribble to an open side. The dribbler can opt to pass to an attacker when they get inside the grid. Each time they are successful in dribbling and stopping the ball to an open end they get a point. If the 1 defender wins the ball then they get a point for their team. Note: The focus is on defending individually.

Play 30-second rounds x4. Switch the defender each time.

Challenge the defender to stop the dribbler or force them to make a pass.



New Ball "Three Touch"

Play a game to two small goals.

Every time the ball goes out of bounds the players leave it and the coach rolls in a new ball.

The only rule is that when they receive a ball they must take at least 3 touches. This rule may encourage them to keep the ball and dribble to take someone on. You can also focus on individual defending. Play until all of the balls have been used. Then asked the players to run and gather all the balls back to the coach.

Good looks like:

1. Players are stopping the dribbler from going forward.
2. Players are poking the ball away from the dribbler without fouling.

Question to ask:

1. Why is it important to slow down when approaching an attacker? (To make the attacker stand up and slow down)
2. What part of the foot do you use to poke the ball away from the attacker? (The toes)
3. When should you try to poke the ball away from the attacker? (When the ball is away from their foot)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: Week 4: Playing with a teammate (2's) (7 & 8's)

Time: 60



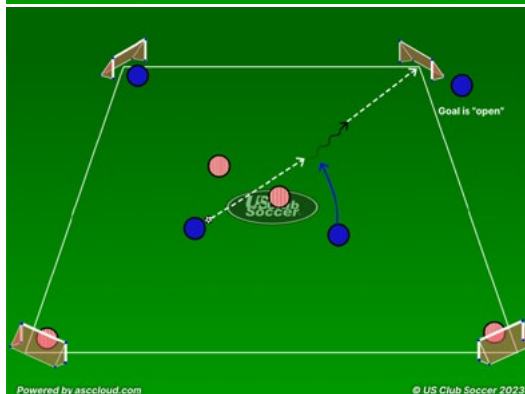
Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity: 4-goal game

Field space: 20-25Lx15W

Place two small goals in the corners of the field at an angle. Each team has two players on the field. The other players go into a corner goal in the end their team is trying to score on. When the other team wins the ball, they attack one of the two goals and that is open. The players in the goals need to recognize this (pay attention) to when they should step out or away from the goal.

The players on the field are trying to score in an open goal. That is determined by one of their teammates who is standing in the goal. Whatever goal is open is the one they score in. At any time the player that stepped away from the goal can step back into the goal. At this time the player on the other side should step out so there is always an open goal.

Play 45-to 60-second games and then switch the player's roles.

What I say: Can they recognize when to work with their teammate to get the ball forward vs. keep it themselves? (The open goal should determine this.) Encourage them to work with their teammate to get forward to score a goal. If the emphasis is on defending then how can they work with their teammate to not allow the other team to get forward.

What do



Activity-(Small-Sided Game)

2v2 to 4 goals with bumpers

Field space: 20-25Lx15W

Place two goals on each end. Each team has 2 goals to attack and defend. Play 2v2 for 45-60 seconds. Then have the extra players (subs) go on and replace someone on the field. Each team also has a "bumper" on the sides of the field. They can be passed to if needed. If they receive a pass they can not be defended. If a bumper player receives a pass they have to pass it back into the field as quickly as possible.

Question to ask: "What can you do when you are going to one goal but you can't score?" (Go to the other one). "When should you use a bumper on the side?" (When we can't go forward but need to keep the ball from the opponent.)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: Week 5: Striking The Ball Part 1

Time: 60



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity: 4-goal game "Shootout"

Field space: 20x20

Place two small goals in the corners of the field at an angle. Note: If small goals are not available, cones, poles, sticks, can be used. Each team has two players on the field. The other players are off by the coach. The coach has a collection of soccer balls next to them. Inside the area they play 2v2. Each team has two goals to score in and 2 to defend. When a goal is scored, or the ball goes out of bounds, all players inside leave and the resting players go in.

What I say: When they get the ball try to score. If they can't then get to a teammate so they can try. Encourage the will, praise the skill.



Small-Sided Game "Get Out Of Here!"

Field space: 20Lx15W

Each team has 2 players on the field. Small goals are on each end. The coach has a collection of soccer balls. Play 2v2. When a team scores a goal or the ball goes out of bounds on the end, all the players leave the field and the players that were off come on. If the ball goes out of bounds on the side, then they just do a kick or dribble in. As shown in the diagram you can have the players run around a goal before coming on.

Progression:  
 1. The players off run on the field.  
 2. The players off run around the goal (diagram) before going onto the field.  
 3. The players lie on their stomachs or sit. Then when a goal is scored or goes out of bounds they pop up and either run directly on the field or around the goal.

What I say: When you get the ball look to shoot first. If not then get it to a teammate who can shoot.



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: Week 6: Striking The Ball Part 2

Time: 60



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Small-Sided Game  
"Get Out Of Here!"

Field space: 20Lx15W

Each team has 2 players on the field. Small goals are on each end. The coach has a collection of soccer balls. Play 2v2. When a team scores a goal or the ball goes out of bounds on the end, all the players leave the field and the players that were off come on. If the ball goes out of bounds on the side, then they just do a kick or dribble in. As shown in the diagram you can have the players run around a goal before coming on.

Progression:

1. The players off run on the field.
2. The players off run around the goal (diagram) before going onto the field.
3. The players lie on their stomachs or sit. Then when a goal is scored or goes out of bounds they pop up and either run directly on the field or around the goal.

What I say: When you get the ball look to shoot first. If not then get it to a teammate who can shoot.



Activity: Small-sided game

New Ball-short field  
Field space: 15Lx20W

On the field is at least 3v3 but can be 2v2 or 4v4. Due to the goals being closer, more shots should be attempted. Whenever the ball goes out of bounds the coach rolls or passes in a new ball. When a new ball is played, one player from each team comes off and the subs go on. Note: There should be a rotation. An idea is to give each player a number and have them rotate that way. (see diagram)

When all of the balls have been used, switch teams around and make the field either longer or shorter.



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

2v2-4v4 game to small goals.

Play a small game to two goals. Play and implement the rules of the game format in which they are or will be playing.

Play 1-2 minute games x 4-6.

Encourage and/or remind them between games the theme of the practice.

After the game bring players in and do "shoutouts". This is when either you, the players, or both acknowledge something good they saw during the practice. Note: It can be non-soccer related. Example: "Ed showed good sportsmanship."

# Greatest hits practice

*Let the players pick their favorite activities.*





**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation:

Theme: 2v2 Festival

Time: 45-60



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

"Pick-up" Game

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate. If coach(es) participate, just keep the game going by playing 1 or 2 touch and NOT score.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity-(Small-Sided Game)

2v2 to 4 goals Short Field

Place two goals on each end. Each team has 2 goals to attack and defend. Play 2v2 for 45-90 seconds. Then have the extra players (subs) go on and replace someone on the field. Due to the field being shorter it should help to create more attacking and defending possibilities.

Question to ask: "What can you do when you are going to one goal but you can't score?" (Go to the other one)

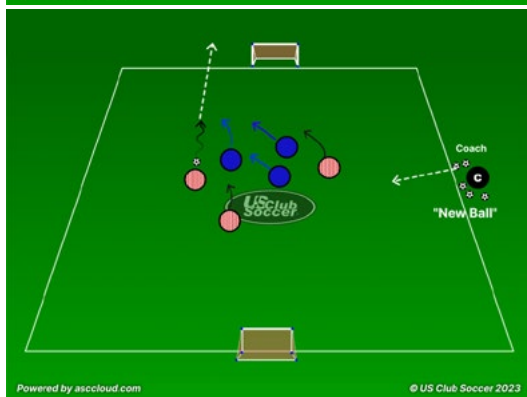


2v2 New Ball-Short Field (Small-Sided Game)

Make a small field with a goal on each end. On the field it's 2v2. If more than 4 players than they are subs and can help gather balls after they go out of bounds.

When a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds, the coach shouts "new ball" and roll a new ball on the field. Play until all of the balls have been used and then start a new game. The player(s) that were sitting out, come on the field to play.

Try to keep the games very short (1-2 minutes at the most). Rotate players so they are playing with and against someone new.



Activity (Small-sided game)

"New" Ball

Play a small game to two goals.

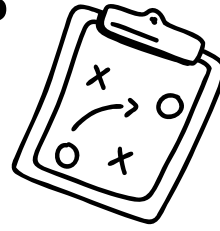
When the ball goes out, the players don't chase the ball. The coach shouts "new ball" and rolls in (keyword) another ball. The game keeps going until all of the balls have been used. When this happens ask the players to run as fast as they can to gather them and get them back to the coach.

Question to ask: How can you make the game last longer? (Not let the balls go out of bounds)

Follow-up: How can you make sure the ball doesn't go out of bounds? (Keep the ball closer, keep the ball away from the other team, dribble or find space)

# Sample session plans

For 9- & 10-year-olds



## Possible Weekly Themes

|               |   |  |
|---------------|---|--|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Dribbling to maintain possession                          | Dribbling to beat an opponent/<br>get forward                                  |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Passing (Short-medium range)                              | Winning the ball back<br>(individual)  |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Receiving short-medium range<br>passes                    | 2v1/3v1 attacking  |
| <b>Week 4</b> | Finishing (inside the box)                                | Winning the ball back (pairs)  |
| <b>Week 5</b> | Outnumbering the opponent<br>(attacking)                  | Attacking from the defending<br>half   |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Attacking in the attacking half                           | Winning the ball back (3-4<br>players)   |
| <b>Week 7</b> | Attacking after winning the ball<br>back (counter-attack) | Switching the field  |
| <b>Week 8</b> | Festival (4v4 games)                                      | Greatest hits (use activities they<br>enjoy the most throughout the<br>season) |



# What do I say?

*Being positive is always the best way.*

## Practice “BAGS”

### **BELONG**

#### **Instant activity**

- Have a game or an activity that is very simple, so they can jump right in.
- Examples: Small-sided game, tag game that they have played before, etc.

#### **Group meeting**

- Bring them in as a group and have them:
  - » Turn and talk with someone. Example: “Turn & talk and discuss with each other one good thing that has happened to you today.”
- Let’s give everyone on our team a high five!

#### **Preview time**

- Provide a very short (30-45 seconds) preview of what they are going to learn today.
- Example: “Today, we are going to work on dribbling and keeping the ball within a hula hoop of our body. Let’s get started!”



## **ACTIVITY (not drill) TIME**

- Everything is timed!
- Have 2-4 activities prepared
- Examples:
  - » Play a tag game with a ball
  - » Play a keep-away game with a ball
  - » Play a target game with a ball
  - » Play a small-sided game with a ball
- Plan water breaks between activities.
- After a water break, give them a challenge.
  - » Example: “Let’s see how many toe taps you can get in 20 seconds.”
  - » Example: “Who can sit down, grab their toes and then bring them to their nose without letting go!”

## **GAMES**

- At least one small-sided game or two with a ball

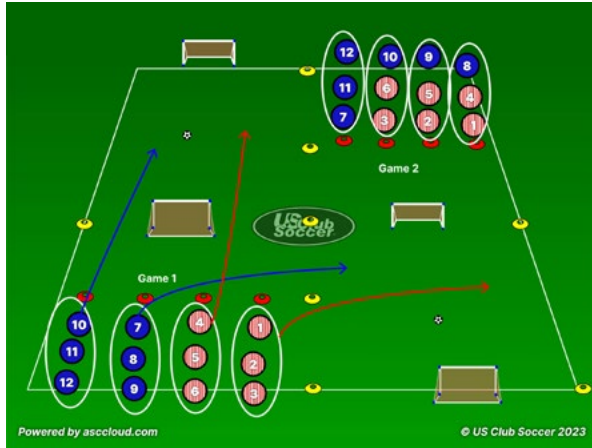
## **SHOUTOUTS**

- End practice with “shoutouts”
  - » Who do you want to say good job to today?
  - » Who showed a lot of hustle/effort today?

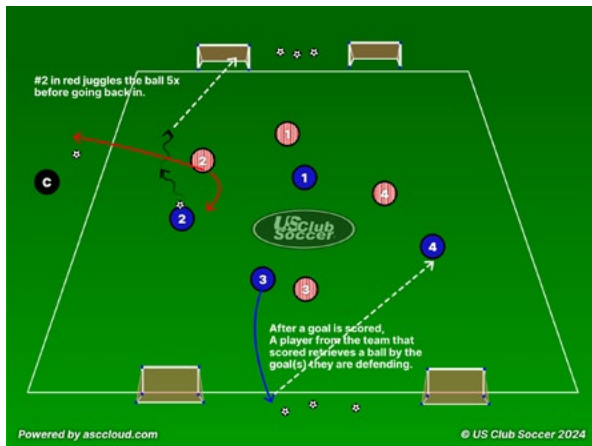


# Six core activities/games

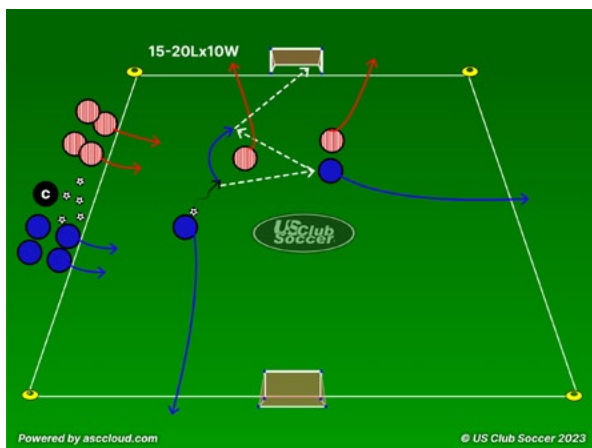
The following 6 activities/games will be used for the 9- & 10-year-old curriculum. The 6 activities will be modified throughout the season.



As the season goes on, use a different type of ball. Example: beach ball, tennis ball, etc.



This game is called “match-up”



This is the standard version of **Get out of here**.

## Activity (welcome game)

Street soccer

Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.

Before each game, players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: after they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.

Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.

## Activity (small-sided game)

4-goal game

The diagram is just one example of how to play a 4-goal game. A 4-goal game is when each team attacks two goals and defends two goals. If small goals with nets aren't available consider using cones, laundry baskets, or sticks/bicycle flags.

## Activity (small-sided game)

“Get out of here!”

Make a field with a small goal on each end. The coach has all of the balls. Create two teams. Players line up in pairs on both sides of the coach.

A pair from each team goes on the field. They play 2v2 until a goal is scored or the ball goes off the field on either end. When this happens, the coach says “get out of here!” and the players on the field run off. When both pairs are off a new pair from each team now runs onto the field. The coach then passes in a new ball and the game continues.

Note: If the ball goes out on the side (touchline), then it's a pass or dribble-in for the team that has possession.



# Six core activities/games

The following 6 activities/games will be used for the 9- & 10-year-old curriculum. The 6 activities will be modified throughout the season.



## Activity (small-sided game)

There will be several different small-sided games presented in this age group.

### “Score & Go”

Set up 3 fields. Each field has 2-3 players per team. Play 2-3 minute games.

Play a normal small-sided game. When a player scores, they must leave that field and run to one that needs their help. This should create numbers up and down situations to coach either attacking or defending themes.

## Activity (small-sided game)

Half court soccer (9 & 10 year-old size field)

The game is similar to half-court basketball. There are two teams plus a goalkeeper. One team attacks the large goal while the other team defends it. There is a take-back line. If a team that is attacking the large goal scores, they get to go again (make it, take it). If the team that is defending the goal wins the ball, they have to attempt to score into one of the 3 small goals that are approximately 5 yards past the take-back line. Regardless if they score or not, once they try, they now turn around and attack the large goal. The team that was attacking now defends the large goal. Play for time or number of points.



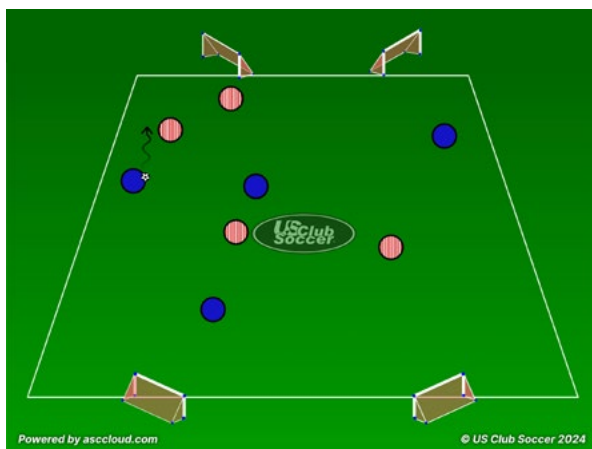
## Activity (4 goal game)

Angled Goals

Goals are angled out and in, and the space is 35-45 x 25-25. Two teams of 4-6 players. On one end the two small goals are angled out at 45 degrees. At the other end, the goals are angled in at 45 degrees. Play 3-4 minute games. After two games, teams switch ends.

Attacking emphasis: when attacking, the goals that are angled out force the players to spread out and have an option in the middle. When the goals are angled in, the attacking team needs to spread out to open up space in the middle through quick passing.

Defending emphasis: whether defending the goals angled out or in, one defender shouldn't be isolated, but have at least one teammate to provide help or cover.





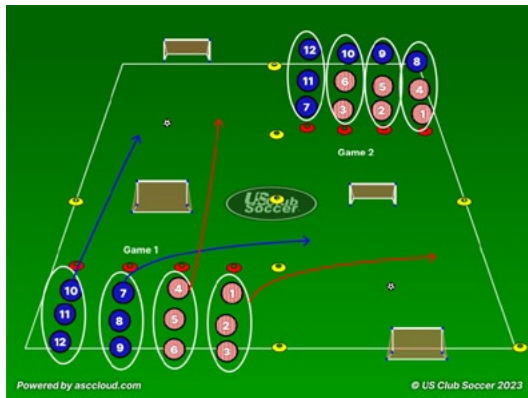
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W1-P2: 9 & 10-Dribbling to beat an opponent and/or get forward

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game

"Street Soccer"

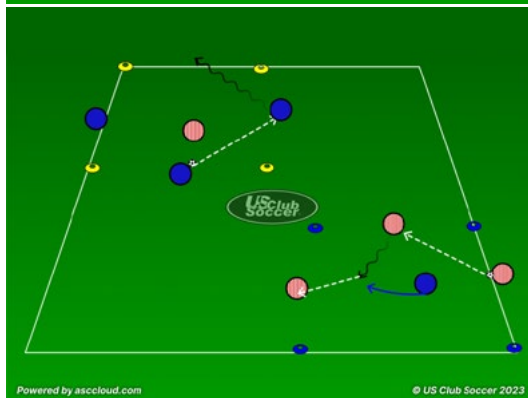
Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.

Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.

Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.

Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.

Make a rule that if someone scores they have to play for the other team until the game ends. One team plays numbers up for the rest of the game. This rule would put them into situations when they are numbers up and/or down

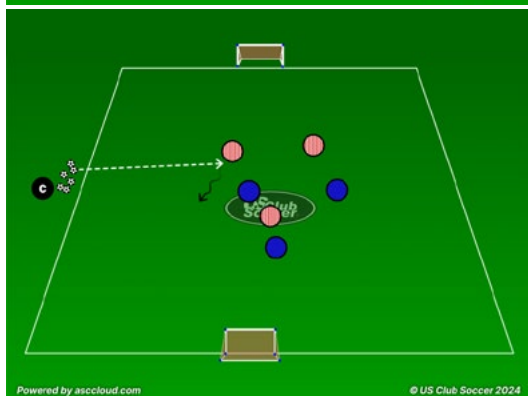


3v1 Dribble to score

Make two grids 10x10, 12x12, or 15x15. Two teams. Each team sends 3 players to one grid and 1 player to the other grid. The team of 3 plays keep-away against the 1 defender. The only way to score is if one of the 3 players can dribble to an open side. The player attempting to dribble across can opt to pass it to another attacker. Each time they are successful in dribbling and stopping the ball to an open end they get a point. If the 1 defender wins the ball then they get a point for their team.

Play 30-second rounds x4. Switch the defender each time.

Challenge them to dribble across the grid to get 2 points.



New Ball "Three Touch"

Play a game to two small goals.

Every time the ball goes out of bounds the players leave it and the coach rolls in a new ball.

The only rule is that when they receive a ball they must take at least 3 touches. This rule may encourage them to keep the ball and dribble to take someone on. You can also focus on individual defending. Play until all of the balls have been used. Then asked the players to run and gather all the balls back to the coach.

Good looks like:

- Attacking:
  1. A player with the ball is looking to take players on and change their speed.
  2. A player with the ball is looking to take players on and dribble around an opponent using the farthest foot.
  3. A player with the ball sees open space and pushes the ball forward.

Defending:

- 1. Players are stopping the dribbler from going forward.
- 2. Players are poking the ball away from the dribbler without fouling.

What I say:

- Attacking:
  1. Try to go fast-slow-fast when dribbling around an opponent.
  2. "Why should we use our farthest foot when we are dribbling around a defender?" (To keep our body between the ball and the defender. (When you go right, use your right foot. When you go left, use your left foot.)

Defending:

- 1. Why is it important to slow down when approaching an attacker? (To make the attacker stand up and slow down)
- 2. What part of the foot do you use to poke the ball away from the attacker? (The toes)
- 3. When should you try to poke the ball away from the attacker? (When the ball is away from their foot)



Activity: Small-Sided Game

The "End Game"

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

Consider the following variations:

1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.
2. If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.
3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



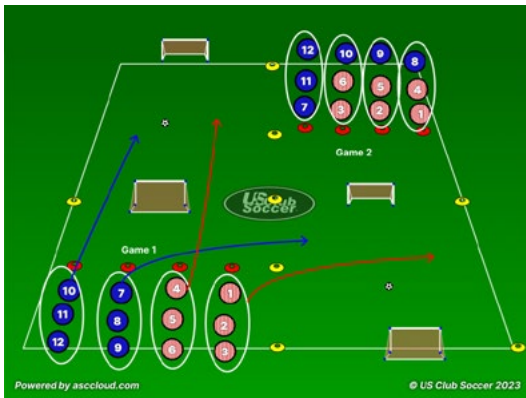
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W1-P2: 9 & 10-Dribbling to beat an opponent and/or get forward

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game

**"Street Soccer"**

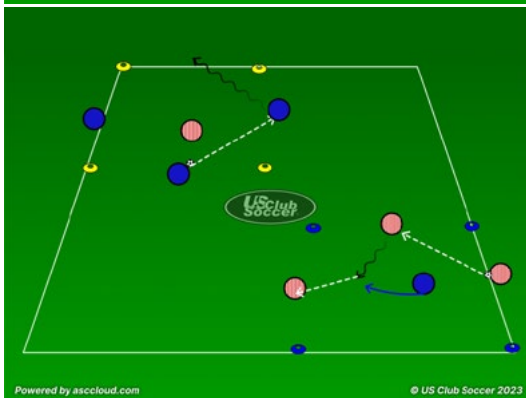
Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.

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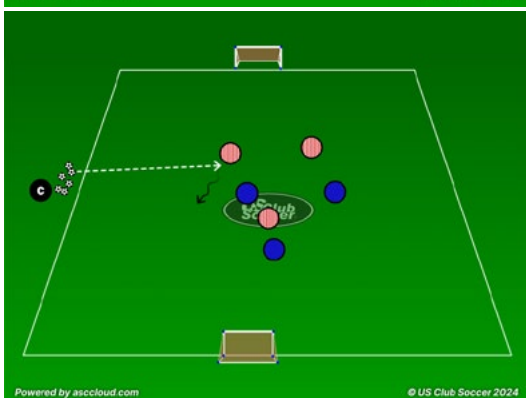


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Play 30-second rounds x4. Switch the defender each time.

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**Activity: Small-Sided Game**

**The "End Game"**

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

Consider the following variations:

1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.
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3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



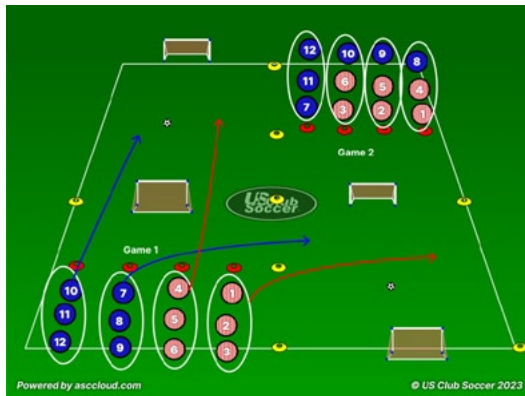
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

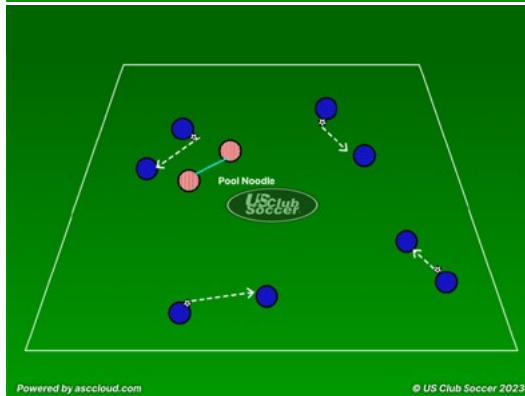
Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W2-P3: 9&10 YO: Passing (short & medium range)

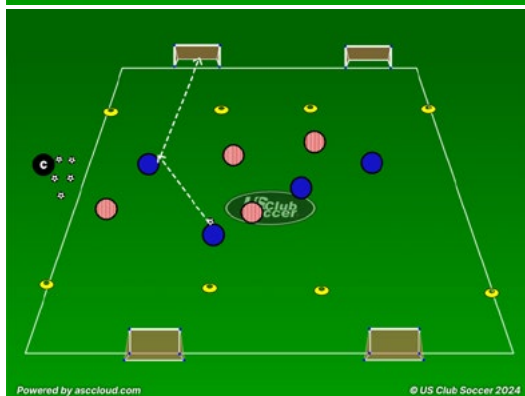
Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game  
**"Street Soccer"**  
 Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.  
 Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.  
 Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.  
 Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.  
 Make a rule that if someone scores they have to play for the other team until the game ends. One team plays numbers up for the rest of the game. This rule would put them into situations when they are numbers up and/or down



**Tag Game #3 "Passing Pairs"**  
 Players find a teammate and share one ball together. One pair is designated as "it" and they hold a pool noodle between them. The pair that is "it" move around holding the pool noodle or bib/pinny. They are trying to tag anyone that has the ball. They are not trying to steal the ball. If they tag a player that has the ball then they are no longer it and the pair that got tagged becomes it and gets the pool noodle.  
 Space: Make the space smaller or larger depending on ability.  
 Time: The pair that passes together the longest in each round get a point.  
 Equipment: Instead of pairs holding a pool noodle, they pass a ball instead. If they pass their ball and it hits a pair not it, they switch.  
 Process: Instead of tagging the player with the ball, the "it" pair has to tag the player without the ball.



Activity: Small-Sided Game (4-goal)  
**"Oasis"**  
 Make a small field approximately 35Lx25-30W. Place two goals on each end. Place a line of cones (as shown) approximately 5-10 yards in front of the goals. Play a normal small-sided game but the rule is that a goal must be scored in between the line of cones. The space between cones and the goal is a no entry zone. Note: extra players can be placed in between the two small goals.  
 Round 1: Play a normal game  
 Round 2: Move the goals either closer or farther back from the line of cone.  
 Round 3: Move one of the goals closer and the other further back.  
 What do I say:  
 "What part of the foot do you use to keep the ball on the ground?" (Inside, outside, or toe poke)  
 "Try to make the ball roll as flat as a board."  
 "What do you do if you can't pass the ball forward into one of the two small goals?" (Try to go to the other side of the field.)



Activity: Small-Sided Game  
 The "End Game"  
 Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).  
 Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.  
 Consider the following variations:  
 1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.  
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 3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



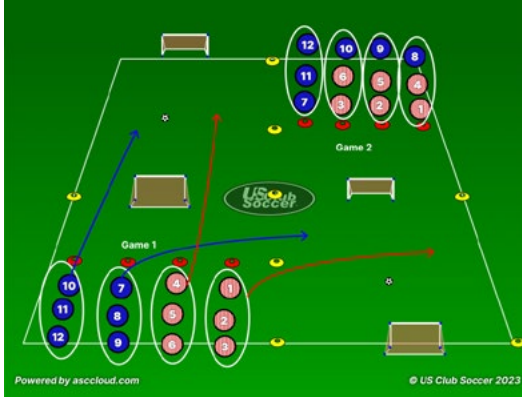
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W2-P4: 9 & 10: Winning the ball back (Individual defending)

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game

"Street Soccer"

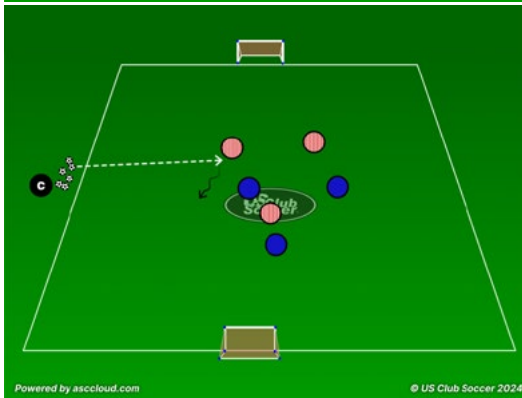
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Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.

Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.

Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.

To set the the tone that they will be working on winning the ball back/defending, then play with no goal kicks. Only corner kicks. This will force them to win the ball back during play.



New Ball  
"Three Touch"

Play a game to two small goals.

Every time the ball goes out of bounds the players leave it and the coach rolls in a new ball.

The only rule is that when they receive a ball they must take at least 3 touches. This rule will encourage them to keep the ball and dribble to take someone on. You can also focus on individual defending. Play until all of the balls have been used. Then asked the players to run and gather all the balls back to the coach.

Good looks like:

Attacking:

1. A player with the ball is looking to take players on and change their speed.
2. A player with the ball is looking to take players on and dribble around an opponent using the farthest foot.
3. A player with the ball sees open space and pushes the ball forward.

Defending:

1. Players are stopping the dribbler from going forward.
2. Players are poking the ball away from the dribbler without fouling.

What I say:

1. Try to go fast-slow-fast when dribbling around an opponent.
2. "Why should we use our farthest foot when we are dribbling around a defender?" (To keep our body between the ball and the defender. (When you go right, use your right foot. When you go left, use your left foot.)

Defending:

1. Why is it important to slow down when approaching an attacker? (To make the attacker stand up and slow down)
2. What part of the foot do you use to poke the ball away from the attacker? (The toes)
3. When should you try to poke the ball away from the attacker? (When the ball is away from their foot)



Activity: Small-sided game

"Match-up"

This game can be played with 4 goals (as shown), 2 small goals, or large goals. Before play starts, players assign a number to themselves. A normal game is played except that players are assigned to mark/defend someone that has their same number. No one else is allowed to defend that player. If a player scores then the team that scores retrieves a ball from their own end and attacks again. The player that was defending who allowed the attacker to score has to go out and juggle the ball 5 times (bounces are ok) before going back in. The team that scored tries to score again before the player goes back in.

Attacking:

1. Encourage the players to take players on but focus on the location of the field. Players should try to take players or dribble past their opponent when they are in their attacking half of the field.
2. If the emphasis is on receiving a pass while being marked, then focus on how they receive the pass to keep possession.

Defending:

1. Encourage the individual defender to be patient and to make sure they run-get low and slow to avoid being beat by the dribbler.
2. Encourage the individual defender to stay with their attacker.



Activity: Small-Sided Game

The "End Game"

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

Consider the following variations:

1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.
2. If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.
3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



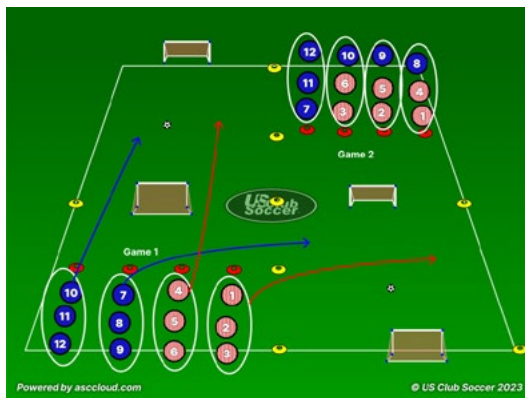
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W3:P5: 9 &10: Receiving short and medium range passes (on ground)

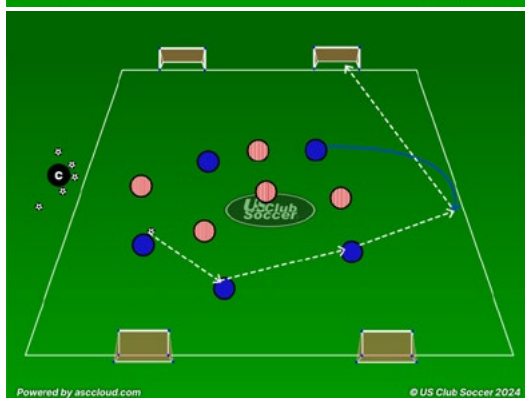
Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game  
 "Street Soccer"  
 Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.  
 Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.  
 Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.  
 Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.  
 Make a rule that if someone scores they have to play for the other team until the game ends. One team plays numbers up for the rest of the game. This rule would put them into situations when they are numbers up and/or down



Activity: Small-sided game  
 "Match-up"  
 This game can be played with 4 goals (as shown), 2 small goals, or large goals. Before play starts, players assign a number to themselves. A normal game is played except that players are assigned to mark/defend someone that has their same number. No one else is allowed to defend that player. If a player scores then the team that scores retrieves a ball from their own end and attacks again. The player that was defending who allowed the attacker to score has to go out and juggle the ball 5 times (bounces are ok) before going back in. The team that scored tries to score again before the player goes back in.  
 Attacking:  
 1. Encourage the players to take players on but focus on the location of the field. Players should try to take players or dribble past their opponent when they are in their attacking half of the field.  
 2. If the emphasis is on receiving a pass while being marked, then focus on how they receive the pass to keep possession.  
 Defending:  
 1. Encourage the individual defender to be patient and to make sure they run-get low and slow to avoid being beat by the dribbler.  
 2. Encourage the individual defender to stay with their attacker.



Activity: 4-Goal Game  
 "11"  
 This game can be played as a 4-goal game (shown), game with 2 small goals, or large goals.  
 Play a normal game to goals to 11 points. Points are scored when players pass and then they score. The points only count if a goal is scored. For example: If the team in blue passes 4x and scores then they receive 4 points. If they don't score then they receive 0 points. The first team to 11 total (not in a row) win the game. When the ball goes out of bounds on the side, the rules of the game before the year 1882 applies. In 1882 the throw-in was allowed. Before then, players had to kick the ball back in. The offside law is in effect.  
 Play for time or whoever gets to 11 points.  
 Because of the method of scoring, players will hopefully be passing the ball more. This will allow you to focus on how they are either receiving or passing the ball.



Activity: Small-Sided Game  
 The "End Game"  
 Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).  
 Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.  
 Consider the following variations:  
 1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.  
 2. If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.  
 3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.





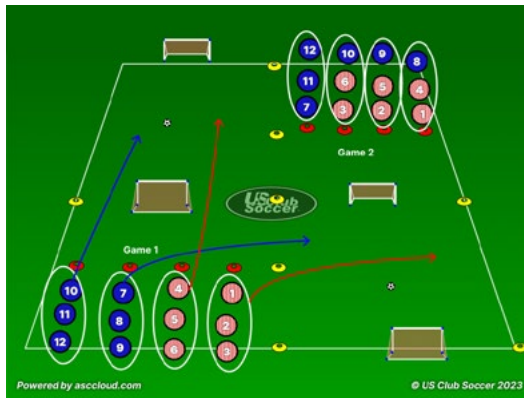
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

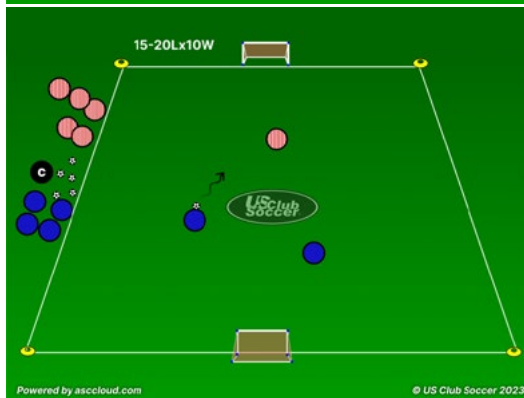
Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W3-P6: 9 & 10 YO: 2v1/3v1 attacking

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game  
 "Street Soccer"  
 Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.  
 Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.  
 Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.  
 Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.  
 Make a rule that if someone scores they have to play for the other team until the game ends. One team plays numbers up for the rest of the game. This rule would put them into situations when they are numbers up and/or down



Activity: SSG  
 Get Out of Here! (numbers up version)  
 Make a field with a small goal on each end. The coach has all of the balls. Create two teams. One team is designated as the attacking team and other the defending team. Players line up in pairs on both sides of where the coach is standing.  
 A pair from the attacking team runs on the field. One player from the defending team runs on the field. The game is now 2v1. They play 2v1 until a goal is scored or the ball goes off the field on either end. When this happens, the coach says "Get out of here!" and two players from one team run off and the one player from the other team runs off. When they are all off a new pair from the attacking team now runs onto the field. A new player from the defending team runs on. The coach then passes in a new ball and the game continues.  
 Note: If the ball goes out on the side (touchline) then it's a pass or dribble-in for the team that has possession.  
 Play so that the every player from the attacking team has gone 3 times. Then switch the attacking and defending teams.  
 Round 1: Players run on the field as shown.  
 Round 2: Players have to sit down when they are next to the coach. When the ball goes out on the end, they then pop up and run on the field.  
 Round 3: Have three players run on for the attacking team and two for the defending team.  
 What do I say: Numbers up (attacking) "When we have the ball and outnumber the opponent what should we try to do?" (advance the ball forward and make the one defender decide how to defend).  
 Numbers down (defending) "What should you do when you see you are outnumbered?" (drop back and try to make a 2v1 into a 1v1).



Activity: Small-sided game  
 Score & Go  
 Set up 3 fields. Each field has 2-3 players per team. Play 2-3 minute games.  
 Play a normal small-sided game. When a player scores, they must leave that field and run to one that needs their help. This should create numbers up and down situations to coach either attacking or defending themes.  
 Game 1: Score & Go. The player that scores runs to a different field. (The emphasis of this game is to have a goal-scoring mindset)  
 Game 2: Assist & Go. The player that provides the assist runs to a different field. (The emphasis of this game is to help develop the passion to pass and set up teammates)



Activity: Small-sided game  
 Score & Go  
 Set up 3 fields. Each field has 2-3 players per team. Play 2-3 minute games.  
 Play a normal small-sided game. When a player scores, they must leave that field and run to one that needs their help. This should create numbers up and down situations to coach either attacking or defending themes.  
 Game 1: Score & Go. The player that scores runs to a different field. (The emphasis of this game is to have a goal-scoring mindset)  
 Game 2: Assist & Go. The player that provides the assist runs to a different field. (The emphasis of this game is to help develop the passion to pass and set up teammates)



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W4-P7: 9 & 10: Finishing (inside the box or short range)

Time: 75



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

**"Pick-up" Game**

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

To create a street soccer atmosphere, make a rule or two. Examples:

- A. Whoever scores the first goal, their team takes a penalty kick as a bonus.
- B. No goal kicks, only short-corner kicks
- C. Pre-1871-No goalkeepers. The goalkeeper was put in place in 1871.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



**Activity: 4-goal game "Shootout"**

Field space: 20x20

Place two small goals in the corners of the field at an angle. Note: If small goals are not available, cones, poles, sticks, can be used. Each team has two players on the field. The other players are off by the coach. The coach has a collection of soccer balls next to them. Inside the area they play 2v2. Each team has two goals to score in and 2 to defend. When a goal is scored, or the ball goes out of bounds, all players inside leave and the resting players go in.

What I say: When they get the ball try to score. If they can't then get to a teammate so they can try. Encourage the will, praise the skill.



**Activity (Small-Sided Game)**

Half-court soccer (9 & 10 year-old field size)

Emphasis: Attacking in defending half

In this game, there is one goal (no larger than 6.5 ft high by 18.5 wide). Three small goals are placed approximately 5 yards past the top of the penalty box which is 12 yards away from the goal.

The game is similar to half-court basketball. There are two teams plus a goalkeeper. One team attacks the large goal while the other team defends it. There is a "take-back" line. If a team that is attacking the large goal scores they get to go again (make-it, take-it) If the team that is defending the goal wins the ball they have to attempt to score into one of the 3 small goals that are approximately 5 yards past the take-back line. The offside rule is in effect. If the goalkeeper saves a shot, they try to throw the ball into one of the two outside small goals. If there is a shot and it goes wide or over the bar the GK now rolls a ball to the defenders who attempt to score on one of the 3 small goals. The small goals on the outsides are worth 3 points while the goal in the middle is worth only 1. Regardless if they score or not, once they try they now turn around and attack the large goal. The team that was attacking now defends the large goal. Play for time or number of points.

Round 1: Play a 3-4 minute game

Round 2: Play a 3-4 minute game but goals scored outside the box are worth 3 points and goals that are scored inside the box are worth 2 points.

What do I say: When the goalkeeper has the ball in their hands what should we try to do?" (Spread out). Follow-up: "What if we can't score in one of the 3 small goals?" (Keep the ball outside or away from the goal.)



**Activity: Small-Sided Game**

**The "End Game" "Death Lead Version"**

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.

If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W4-P7: 9 & 10: Finishing (inside the box or short range)

Time: 75



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

**"Pick-up" Game**

Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

To create a street soccer atmosphere, make a rule or two. Examples:

- A. Whoever scores the first goal, their team takes a penalty kick as a bonus.
- B. No goal kicks, only short-corner kicks
- C. Pre-1871-No goalkeepers. The goalkeeper was put in place in 1871.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



**Activity: 4-goal game "Shootout"**

Field space: 20x20

Place two small goals in the corners of the field at an angle. Note: If small goals are not available, cones, poles, sticks, can be used. Each team has two players on the field. The other players are off by the coach. The coach has a collection of soccer balls next to them. Inside the area they play 2v2. Each team has two goals to score in and 2 to defend. When a goal is scored, or the ball goes out of bounds, all players inside leave and the resting players go in.

What I say: When they get the ball try to score. If they can't then get to a teammate so they can try. Encourage the will, praise the skill.



**Activity (Small-Sided Game)**

Half-court soccer (9 & 10 year-old field size)

Emphasis: Attacking in defending half

In this game, there is one goal (no larger than 6.5 ft high by 18.5 wide). Three small goals are placed approximately 5 yards past the top of the penalty box which is 12 yards away from the goal.

The game is similar to half-court basketball. There are two teams plus a goalkeeper. One team attacks the large goal while the other team defends it. There is a "take-back" line. If a team that is attacking the large goal scores they get to go again (make-it, take-it) If the team that is defending the goal wins the ball they have to attempt to score into one of the 3 small goals that are approximately 5 yards past the take-back line. The offside rule is in effect. If the goalkeeper saves a shot, they try to throw the ball into one of the two outside small goals. If there is a shot and it goes wide or over the bar the GK now rolls a ball to the defenders who attempt to score on one of the 3 small goals. The small goals on the outsides are worth 3 points while the goal in the middle is worth only 1. Regardless if they score or not, once they try they now turn around and attack the large goal. The team that was attacking now defends the large goal. Play for time or number of points.

- Round 1: Play a 3-4 minute game
- Round 2: Play a 3-4 minute game but goals scored outside the box are worth 3 points and goals that are scored inside the box are worth 2 points.

What do I say: When the goalkeeper has the ball in their hands what should we try to do?" (Spread out). Follow-up: "What if we can't score in one of the 3 small goals?" (Keep the ball outside or away from the goal.)



**Activity: Small-Sided Game**

**The "End Game" "Death Lead Version"**

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.

If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



**US Club Soccer**



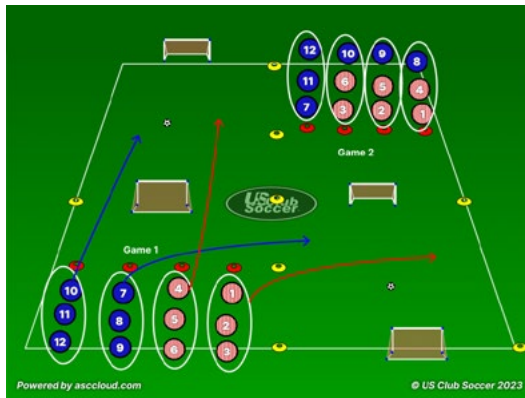
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W4-P7: 9 & 10: Finishing (inside the box or short range)

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game

"Street Soccer"

Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.

Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.

Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.

Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.

The rule for this round of street soccer games is that whichever team scores first gets a penalty kick. So, they can go up 2-0. Both teams will be put in a learning environment of how to play with the lead and how to play when they are down 0-2. A 2-0 lead is also known as the "Death Lead". If the team that is down can score a goal that can lead to the other team to not play regularly, panic, etc.



Activity: 4-goal game "Shootout"

Field space: 20x20

Place two small goals in the corners of the field at an angle. Note: If small goals are not available, cones, poles, sticks, can be used. Each team has two players on the field. The other players are off by the coach. The coach has a collection of soccer balls next to them. Inside the area they play 2v2. Each team has two goals to score in and 2 to defend. When a goal is scored, or the ball goes out of bounds, all players inside leave and the resting players go in.

What I say: When they get the ball try to score. If they can't then get to a teammate so they can try. Encourage the will, praise the skill.



Activity (Small-Sided Game)

Half-court soccer (9 & 10 year-old field size)

Emphasis: Attacking in defending half

In this game, there is one goal (no larger than 6.5 ft high by 18.5 wide). Three small goals are placed approximately 5 yards past the top of the penalty box which is 12 yards away from the goal.

The game is similar to half-court basketball. There are two teams plus a goalkeeper. One team attacks the large goal while the other team defends it. There is a "take-back" line. If a team that is attacking the large goal scores they get to go again (make-it, take-it) If the team that is defending the goal wins the ball they have to attempt to score into one of the 3 small goals that are approximately 5 yards past the take-back line. The offside rule is in effect. If the goalkeeper saves a shot, they try to throw the ball into one of the two outside small goals. If there is a shot and it goes wide or over the bar the GK now rolls a ball to the defenders who attempt to score on one of the 3 small goals. The small goals on the outside are worth 3 points while the goal in the middle is worth only 1. Regardless if they score or not, once they try they now turn around and attack the large goal. The team that was attacking now defends the large goal. Play for time or number of points.

Round 1: Play a 3-4 minute game  
Round 2: Play a 3-4 minute game but goals scored outside the box are worth 3 points and goals that are scored inside the box are worth 2 points.

What do I say: When the goalkeeper has the ball in their hands what should we try to do?" (Spread out).  
Follow-up: "What if we can't score in one of the 3 small goals?" (Keep the ball outside or away from the goal.)



Activity: Small-Sided Game

The "End Game"  
"Death Lead Version"

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.

If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



**US Club Soccer**



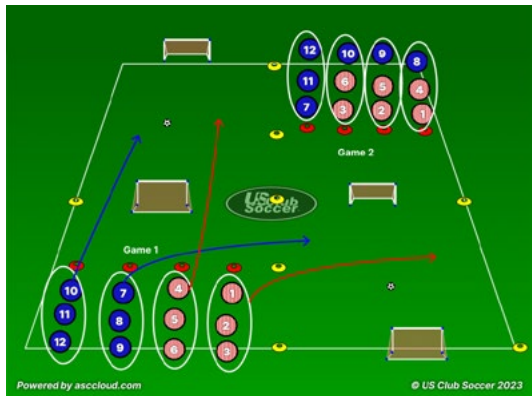
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W4-P8: 9 & 10 Winning the ball back (pairs)

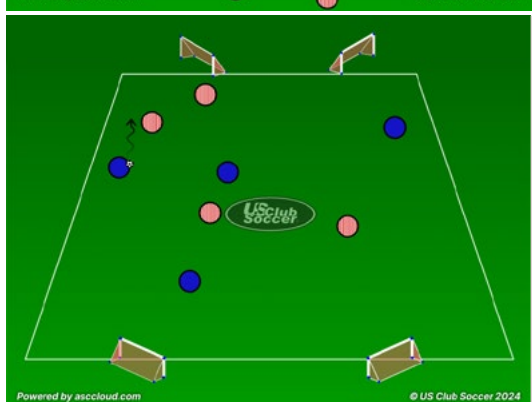
Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game  
 "Street Soccer"  
 Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.  
 Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.  
 Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.  
 Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.  
 To set the the tone that they will be working on winning the ball back/defending, then play with no goal kicks. Only corner kicks. This will force them to win the ball back during play.



Activity-(Small-Sided Game)  
 2v2 to 4 goals.  
 Place two goals on each end. Each team has 2 goals to attack and defend. Play 2v2 for 45-75 seconds. If a goal is scored or the ball goes off on one end, the pair that was defending that end goes off and a new pair brings a new ball on.  
 Defending emphasis: "How should you and your teammate work together to protect the goal?" (One player pressures, the other helps or covers.)



Activity: 4-Goal Game  
 Goals Angled "out" and "in"  
 Space: 35-45Lx25-35W  
 Two teams of 4-6 players. On one end the two small goals are angled out at 45 degrees. At the other end, the goals are angled in at 45 degrees.  
 Play 3-4 minute games. After two games, teams switch ends.  
 Attacking emphasis: When attacking the goals that are angled "out" the players need to spread out and have an option in the middle. When the goals that are angled "in" the attacking team, again, needs to spread out to open up space in the middle through quick passing.  
 Defending emphasis: Whether defending the goals angled outside or inside, one defender shouldn't be isolated but have at least one teammate to provide help or cover.



Activity: Small-Sided Game  
 The "End Game"  
 "Death Lead Version"  
 Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).  
 Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.  
 Because of the incentive to score first, they should be trying very hard to get that goal. This will improve both attacking, defending, and transition.  
 If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.  
 If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



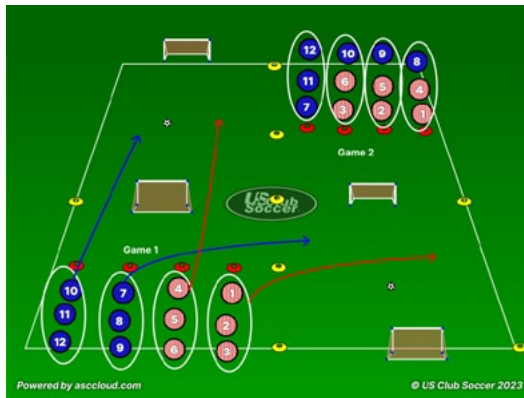
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W5:P9: 9 & 10: Outnumbering the opponent-Attacking

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game

"Street Soccer"

Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.

Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.

Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.

Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.

Make a rule that if someone scores they have to play for the other team until the game ends. One team plays numbers up for the rest of the game. This rule would put them into situations when they are numbers up and/or down



Activity: Small-sided game

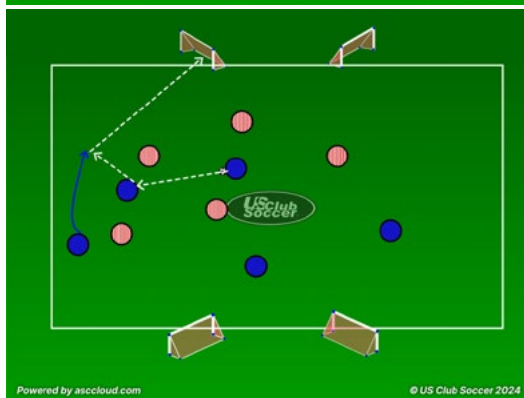
Score & Go

Set up 3 fields. Each field has 2-3 players per team. Play 2-3 minute games.

Play a normal small-sided game. When a player scores, they must leave that field and run to one that needs their help. This should create numbers up and down situations to coach either attacking or defending themes.

Game 1: Score & Go. The player that scores runs to a different field. (The emphasis of this game is to have a goal-scoring mindset)

Game 2: Assist & Go. The player that provides the assist runs to a different field. (The emphasis of this game is to help develop the passion to pass and set up teammates)



Activity: 4-Goal Game

Angled Goals "out" (Wide field)

Two teams of 4-6 players. Make the field wider than it is longer. Example: 30Lx40X. Place two small goals on each end. They are angled "out" at a 45-degree angle.

Each team attacks two goals and defends two goals.

Due to the field being wider than it is long, there should be opportunities to outnumber the opposition for either the attack or defense.

Attacking emphasis:

Encourage getting more numbers on the outside than the opponent. Example: See if they can get 3 attackers vs. 2 defenders. From there how can they penetrate to score a goal?



Activity: Small-Sided Game

The "End Game"

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

Consider the following variations:

1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.

2. If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.

3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



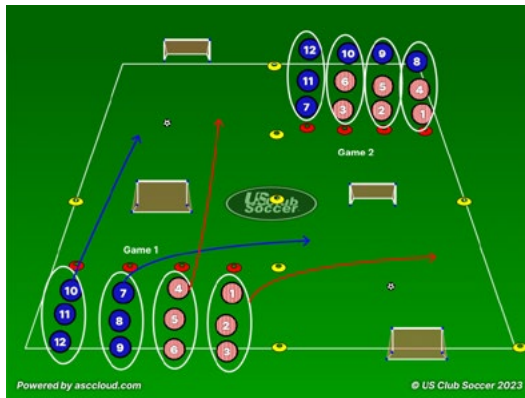
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W5:P10: 9 & 10: Attacking from the defending half

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game

"Street Soccer"

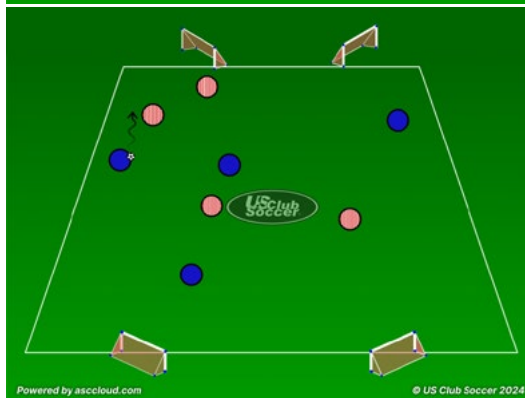
Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.

Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.

Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.

Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.

Make a rule that if someone scores they have to play for the other team until the game ends. One team plays numbers up for the rest of the game. This rule would put them into situations when they are numbers up and/or down



Activity: 4-Goal Game

Goals Angled "out" and "in"

Space: 35-45Lx25-35W

Two teams of 4-6 players. On one end the two small goals are angled out at 45 degrees. At the other end, the goals are angled in at 45 degrees.

Because one set of goals are "in" and one set is "out" this an opportunity to work on how the team attacking the goals angled "out" can do so safely.

Play 3-4 minute games. After two games, teams switch ends.

Attacking emphasis: When attacking the goals that are angled "out" the players need to spread out and have an option in the middle so they can switch fields. When the goals are angled "in" the attacking team, again, needs to spread out to open up space in the middle through quick passing.

Defending emphasis: Whether defending the goals angled outside or inside, one defender shouldn't be isolated but have at least one teammate to provide help or cover.



Activity: Small-sided game

Angled goals "out" applied

In the half field, have two teams play against each other. One team is attacking the large goal and the other is attacking the two small goals. Note: the goals are angled out at a 45-degree angle.

Play a normal game. When the team that is attacking the two small goals scores 3x they then get to score on the large goal.

If working on attacking from the defending half, focus on how they spread out, provide support to each other, and play safe, simple, and smart. Avoid square passes.

If working on defending in the attacking half, focus on how they can win the ball higher up the field.

Variations:

1. Add a small goal in the center of the field.
2. Instead of the goals angled out, have them angled in. This will be challenge but will bring out the role of the holding midfielder more.



Activity: Small-Sided Game

The "End Game"

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

Consider the following variations:

1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.
2. If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.
3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



**US Club Soccer**



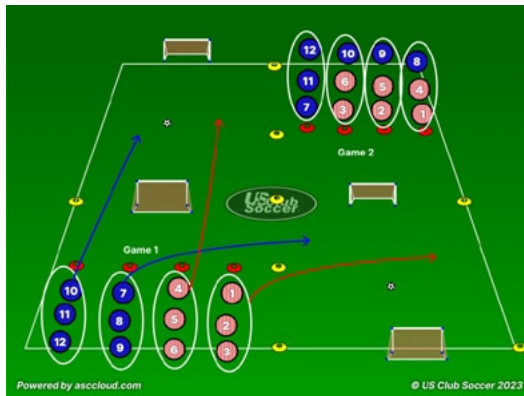
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

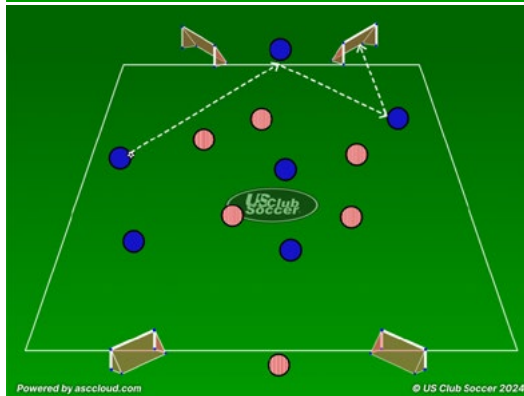
Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W6-P11: 9 & 10 Attacking in the attacking half

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game  
 "Street Soccer"  
 Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.  
 Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.  
 Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.  
 Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.  
 The rule for this round of street soccer games is that whichever team scores first gets a penalty kick. So, they can go up 2-0. Both teams will be put in a learning environment of how to play with the lead and how to play when they are down 0-2. A 2-0 lead is also known as the "Death Lead". If the team that is down can score a goal that can lead to the other team to not play regularly, panic, etc.



Activity: 4-Goal Game  
 Goals angled "out" with bumpers  
 Two teams. Place two small goals on each end and face them outside at a 45-degree angle. Teams attack two goals and defend two goals. Each team has a "bumper"/striker that stands in between the two small goals as shown. The "bumper" could be someone who plays the center forward role. Play a normal game. Both teams have the option of passing the ball to their "bumper". The "bumper" has a 1 or 2-touch limit depending on their ability.  
 Play 3-4 minute games x 4-6. Change the bumpers if needed.  
 Round 1: Play the game with the goals faced out.  
 Round 2: Play the games with the goals faced in.  
 Round 3: Play the game with one side the goals are faced in and the other they are faced out.  
 If the focus is on attacking, get them to think about passing the ball into their bumper. "What is should your first thought be when you have the ball?" (To get the ball forward or score). "If you can't get the ball forward, then what?" (Get the ball to someone who can get the ball forward.)



Activity (Small-Sided Game)  
 Half-court soccer (9 & 10 year-old field size)  
 Emphasis: Attacking in attacking half  
 In this game, there is one goal (no larger than 6.5 ft high by 18.5 wide). Three small goals are placed approximately 5 yards past the top of the penalty box which is 12 yards away from the goal.  
 The game is similar to half-court basketball. There are two teams plus a goalkeeper. One team attacks the large goal while the other team defends it. There is a "take-back" line. If a team that is attacking the large goal scores they get to go again (make-it, take-it) If the team that is defending the goal wins the ball they have to attempt to score into one of the 3 small goals that are approximately 5 yards past the take-back line. If they score in one of the small goals that is worth 1 point. Regardless if they score or not, once they try they now turn around and attack the large goal. The team that was attacking now defends the large goal. Play for time or number of points. The offside rule is in effect. If the goalkeeper saves a shot, they try to throw the ball into one of the two outside small goals.  
 Round 1: Play a 3-4 minute game  
 Round 2: Play a 3-4 minute game but goals scored outside the box are worth 3 points and goals that are scored inside the box are worth 2 points.  
 Round 3: Play a 3-4 minute game but the two outside small goals are worth more points than the one central goal.  
 What do I say: "When we are close to the goal, what should we try to do?" (Score!). Follow-up: "If we can't shoot then what do we do?" (Pass to someone who can shoot or take the ball back behind the take-back line and try again.)



Activity: Small-Sided Game  
 The "End Game"  
 Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).  
 Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.  
 Consider the following variations:  
 1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.  
 2. If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.  
 3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.





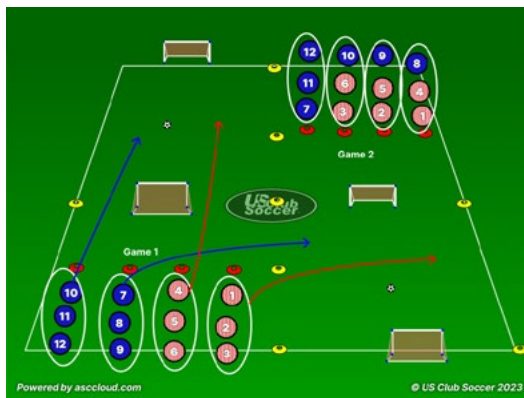
Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

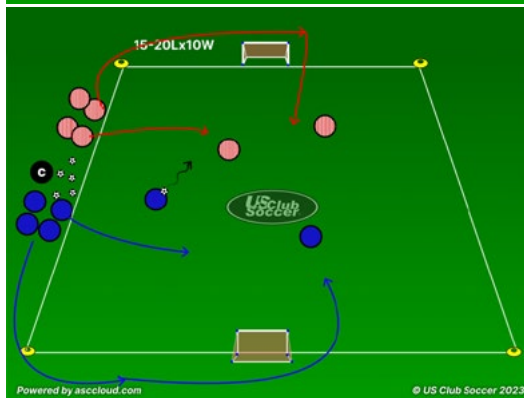
Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W7-P13: 9 & 10: Attacking after winning the ball back (counter attack)

Time: 75



Welcome Activity/Small-sided game  
 "Street Soccer"  
 Set up 1, 2, or 3 fields. Place 4-6 cones depending on the number of players you have off to the side of the fields.  
 Before each game players select a cone to stand behind. Put the players into teams. Note: After they play the first game, tell them that they have to stand behind a different cone and have a different player(s) in front, behind, or beside them. (see game 2). Create new teams based on how they line up. They may need to change bibs/pinnies.  
 Variations: 1. Instead of grouping them by the cones they line up behind, go across. 2. You can also give each player a number and group them that way. After each game, name the players outloud. Example: team 1 is player 1, 4, and 7. Team 2 is 2, 5, and 8.  
 Play 2-3 minute games and then have them get behind cones after each game.  
 Make a rule that if someone scores they have to play for the other team until the game ends. One team plays numbers up for the rest of the game. This rule would put them into situations when they are numbers up and/or down



Activity: SSG  
 Get Out of Here! (counter-attack version)  
 Make a field with a small goal at each end. The coach has all of the balls. Create two teams. Players line up in pairs on both sides of where the coach is standing.  
 A pair from the both runs on the field. The game is 2v2. They play 2v2 until a goal is scored or the ball goes off the field on either end. When this happens, the coach says "Get out of here!" and two players from both teams run off. When they are all off a new pair from the both teams runs onto the field. One player has to run around the goal, the other does not. The coach then passes in a new ball and the game continues.  
 Note: If the ball goes out on the side (touchline) then it's a pass or dribble-in for the team that has possession.  
 Play so that the every player from both teams has run around the small goal 3 times.  
 Round 1: Players run on the field as shown.  
 Round 2: Players have to sit down when they are next to the coach. When the ball goes out on the end, they then pop up and run on the field.  
 Round 3: Have three players run on for the attacking team and two for the defending team. (3 players from one team runs out, one defender runs out and one defender runs around the small goal.)  
 What do I say: Counter-Attacking: "When we win the ball let's go fast to goal if we can!"  
 Counter-attacking (defending) "When we lose the ball, try to win it back as soon as possible, however, if you can't then run back to protect your goal."



Activity: Small-Sided Game  
 The "End Game"  
 "All Up" version  
 Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).  
 Make a midfield line with cones/markers if you don't have one.  
 Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.  
 All Up version rules:  
 1. For a goal to count everyone except the GK must be at least to midfield. If a goal is scored and a player isn't at least to midfield then no goal.  
 2. If a goal is scored with everyone at least at midfield for the attacking team and the defending team doesn't have everyone back in their defending half then award the attacking team with a penalty kick.  
 3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



Activity: Small-Sided Game  
 The "End Game"  
 "Death Lead Version"  
 Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).  
 Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.  
 Because of the incentive to score first, they should be trying very hard to get that goal. This will improve both attacking, defending, and transition.  
 If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.  
 If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W7-P14: 9 & 10: Switching The Field

Time: 75



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

**"Pick-up" Game**

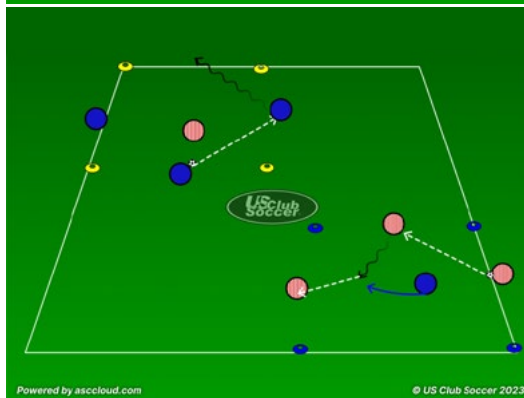
Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

To create a street soccer atmosphere, make a rule or two. Examples:

- A. Whoever scores the first goal, their team takes a penalty kick as a bonus.
- B. No goal kicks, only short-corner kicks
- C. Pre-1871-No goalkeepers. The goalkeeper was put in place in 1871.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



**3v1 Dribble to score**

Make two grids 10x10, 12x12, or 15x15. Two teams. Each team sends 3 players to one grid and 1 player to the other grid. The team of 3 plays keep-away against the 1 defender. The only way to score is if one of the 3 players can dribble to an open side. The player attempting to dribble across can opt to pass it to another attacker. Each time they are successful in dribbling and stopping the ball to an open end they get a point. If the 1 defender wins the ball then they get a point for their team.

Play 30-second rounds x4. Switch the defender each time.

Challenge them to dribble across the grid to get 2 points.



Activity: Small-Sided Game (4-goal)

**"Oasis"**

Make a small field approximately 35Lx25-30W. Place two goals on each end. Place a line of cones (as shown) approximately 5-10 yards in front of the goals. Play a normal small-sided game but the rule is that a goal must be scored in between the line of cones. The space between cones and the goal is a no entry zone. Note: extra players can be placed in between the two small goals.

- Round 1: Play a normal game
- Round 2: Move the goals either closer or farther back from the line of cone.
- Round 3: Move one of the goals closer and the other further back.

What do I say:

"What part of the foot do you use to keep the ball on the ground?" (Inside, outside, or toe poke)

"Try to make the ball roll as flat as a board."

"What do you do if you can't pass the ball forward into one of the two small goals?" (Try to go to the other side of the field.)



Activity: Small-Sided Game

**The "End Game"**

Use two normal 9 & 10-year-old goals (6.5 height x 18.5 wide). Each team has two goalkeepers and 5-6 field players. Before starting play, put two teams in a shape (ex: 2 defenders, 1 midfielder, 2 forwards).

Play 5-7 minute games x 3-4. The offside rule is in effect.

Consider the following variations:

1. To work on defending, then play with no goal kicks, only short corner kicks. This way the team that doesn't have the ball has to win the ball on the field during the run of play.
2. If a team scores first then they are rewarded with a penalty kick (10 yards from the goal). This can give the team that scores first a 2-goal lead. Now they have to learn how to play with this lead (also known as the death lead) and the team that is down 0-2 has to learn how to play down.
3. If needed, make the field wider to allow the ball to stay in bounds more. This can help with both attacking and defending.



**US Club Soccer**



Youth

Coach: "Coach Ed"

Affiliation: US Club Soccer

Theme: W8-P15: 9 & 10: 4v4 or SSG festival

Time: 75



Welcome/Belong Activity: SSG

**"Pick-up" Game**

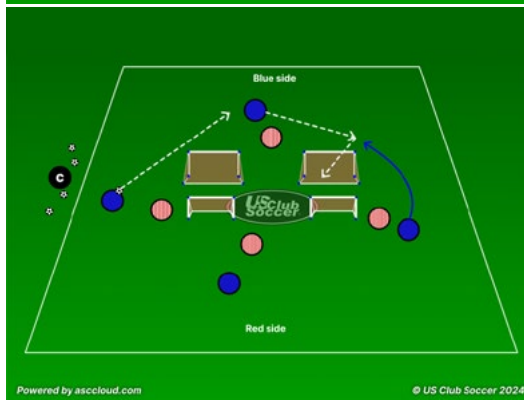
Have goals and small field set-up. As players arrive to practice, add them into the game. If needed the coach(es) can fill in and also participate.

As more players arrive, pause and make the field bigger, wider, or both. Continue to play until all, or most of the players have arrived.

To create a street soccer atmosphere, make a rule or two. Examples:

- A. Whoever scores the first goal, their team takes a penalty kick as a bonus.
- B. No goal kicks, only short-corner kicks
- C. Pre-1871-No goalkeepers. The goalkeeper was put in place in 1871.

Once players have arrived, then start practice with a group greeting. In the group greeting, you can preview the session, ask them how their day went, etc. Make them feel like they belong.



Activity: 4-Goal Game

**Inner Goals**

Two teams of 4-6 players. There are 2 goals for each team to score in and 2 to defend. The goals are placed in the middle of the field as shown with a 2-3 yard buffer in between. Each team has a designated side to score. They can play around the goals. There are no restrictions where they can run. Play 3-4 minutes x 3 or 4.

Attacking: This game can also be good to work on switching the field. An example of this is shown in the diagram.

Defending: This game can also be good to teach how to defend individually, in pairs, or a small group.

Variations:

- 1. Turn the small goals "out" at a 45-degree angle
- 2. Turn the small goals "in" at a 45-degree angle



Activity: Small-Sided Game (4-goal)

**"Oasis" with bumpers**

Make a small field approximately 35Lx25-30W. Place two goals on each end. Place a line of cones (as shown) approximately 5-10 yards in front of the goals. Each team has one player that will serve as a bumper for their team. They are the only player allowed in that zone. Play a normal small-sided game but the rule is that a goal must be scored before the line of cones.

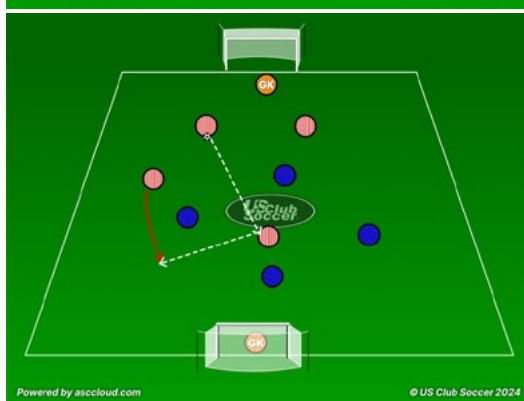
- Round 1: Play a normal game
- Round 2: Move the goals either closer or farther back from the line of cone.
- Round 3: Move one of the goals closer and the other further back.

What do I say:

"What part of the foot do you use to keep the ball on the ground?" (Inside, outside, or toe poke)

"Try to make the ball roll as flat as a board."

"What do you do if you can't pass the ball forward into one of the two small goals?" (Try to go to the other side of the field.)



Activity: Small-sided game

**"Instant Replay"**

Two teams of 4-5 players. If possible use larger goals for this game. Before the teams play they get together and they come up with a "realistic" way to score a goal. They can try and recreate a goal that have seen on tv, youtube, etc. They don't tell the other team. As the coach, you may opt to know how they have chosen to try and score. Let them come up with different ways. If they can't come up with a goal they have seen or tv, youtube, etc. from a world cup, pro game, college game, etc. give them some ideas. Play until one team successfully achieves their goal or time.

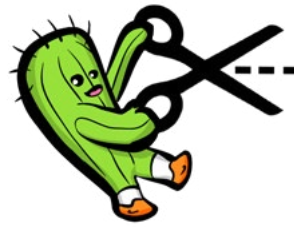
# Greatest hits practice

*Let players pick their favorite activities.*



# Core activities

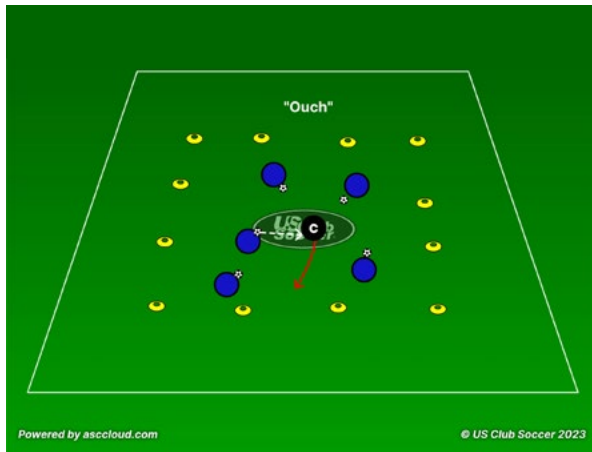
5- & 6-year-olds



Cut out and laminate the activities below and scan the QR Code below.



Pick-up soccer



Ouch!

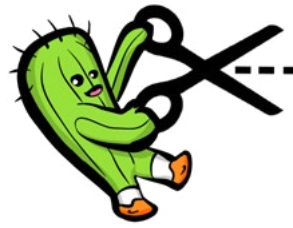


The "gate" escape

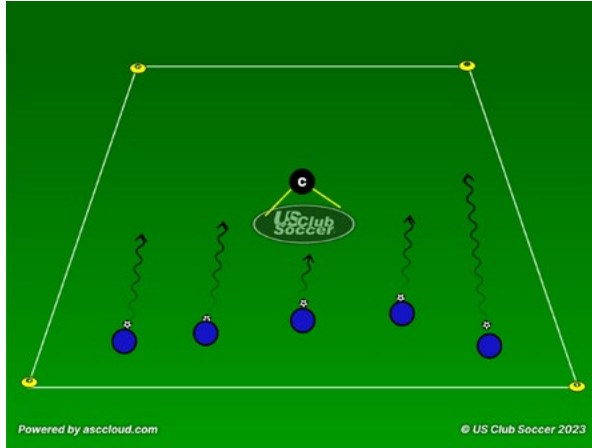


# Core activities

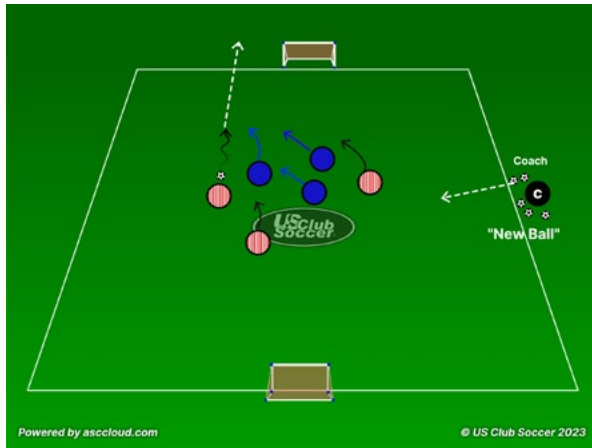
5- & 6-year-olds



Cut out and laminate the activities below and scan the QR Code below.



The Octopus



New ball

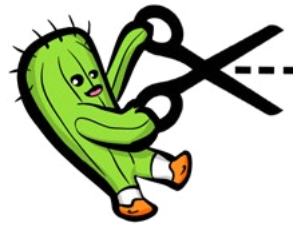


This QR Code is a cute little commercial that sums up 5- & 6-year-olds playing soccer.



# Core activities

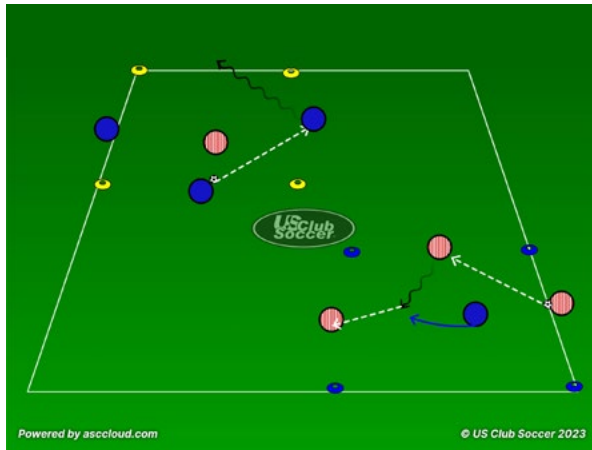
7- & 8-year-olds



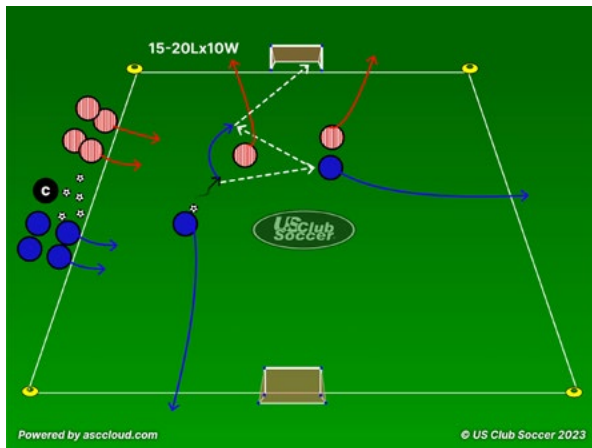
Cut out and laminate the activities below and scan the QR Code below.



Pick-up soccer



3v1

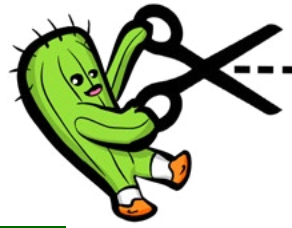


Get out of here!

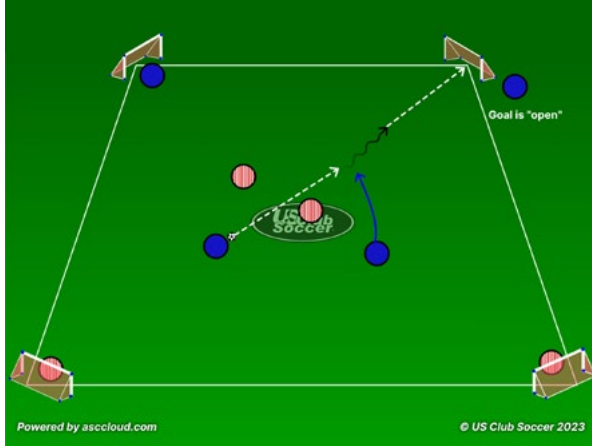


# Core activities

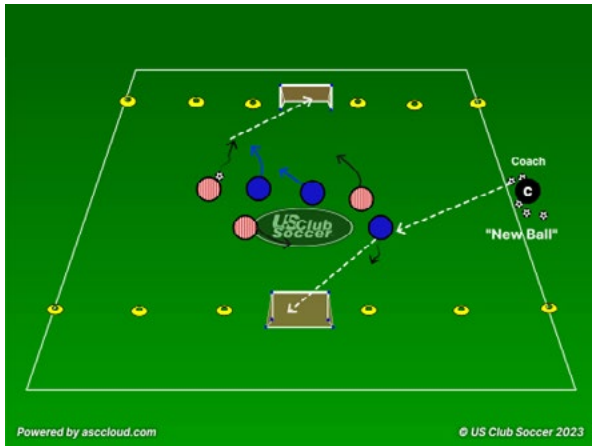
7- & 8-year-olds



Cut out and laminate the activities below and scan the QR Code below.



4-goal game



New ball



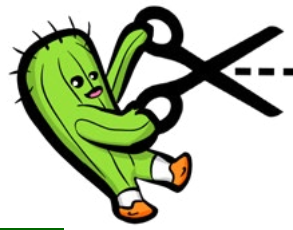
Did you know that a 4v4 game has 56 possible lines of interaction & communication on the field? No wonder they don't listen to me!



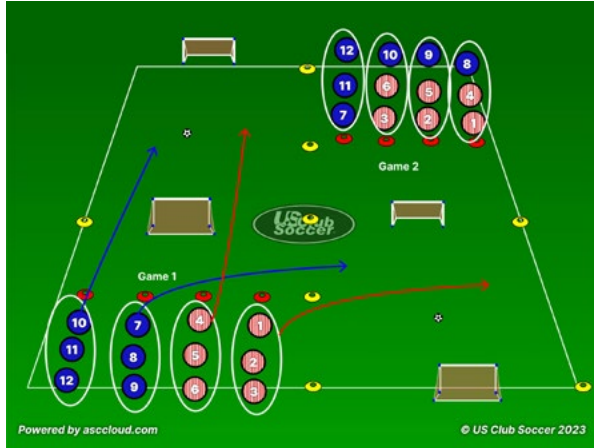


# Core activities

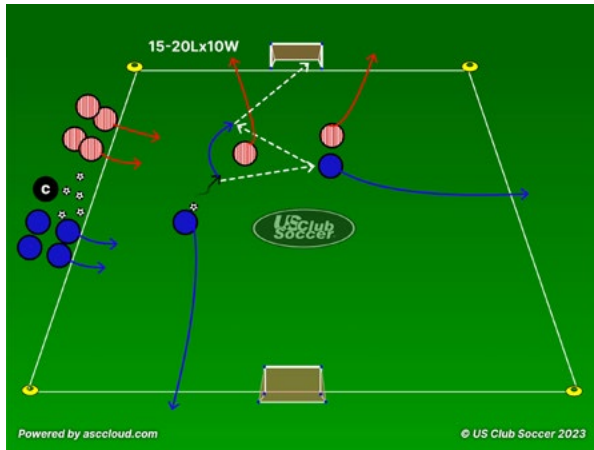
9- & 10-year-olds



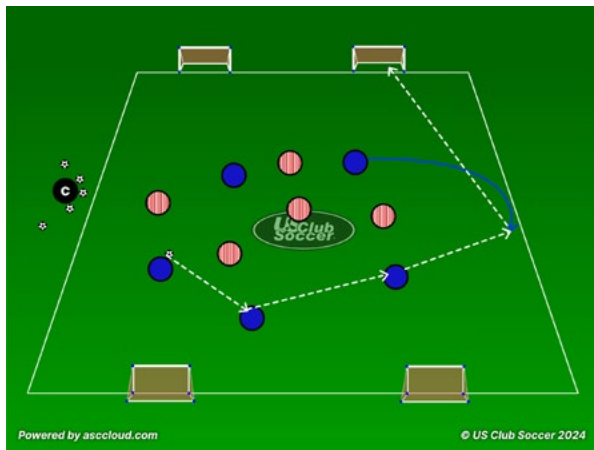
Cut out and laminate the activities below and scan the QR Code below.



Street soccer



Get out of here!

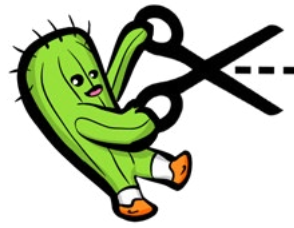


4-goal game

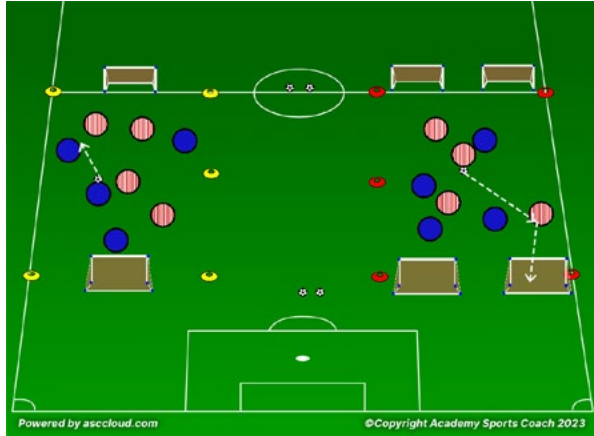


# Core activities

9- & 10-year-olds



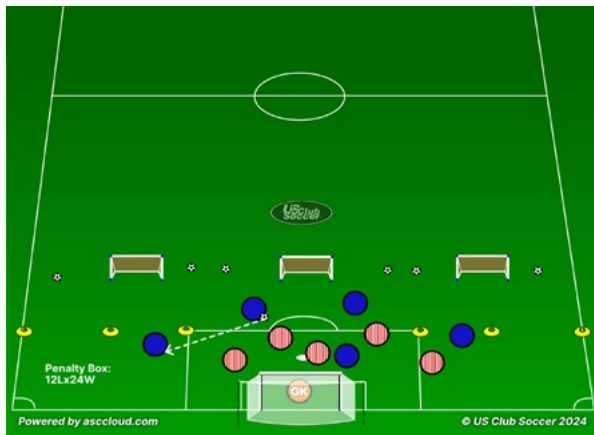
Cut out and laminate the activities below and scan the QR Code below.



Score & go



Angled goals



Half-court soccer



# What is my “why”

*What’s your philosophy?*



Cut out and place your “why” so you can reference it when needed.

***As a youth coach, I will say “yes” to...***

(example: smiles, safety, simple, etc.)

***As a youth coach, my philosophy is...***



# What do I do?

## Game management



Sample playing time charts  
To print and fill out

### Roster size: 5

| Player Name | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1           | X         | O         | X         | X         |
| 2           | X         | X         | X         | X         |
| 3           | X         | X         | X         | O         |
| 4           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 5           | O         | X         | X         | X         |

**O - out**

# What do I do?

## Game management



Sample playing time charts  
To print and fill out

### Roster size: 6

| Player Name | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 2           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 3           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 4           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 5           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |
| 6           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |

**Note: 2-3 players in Quarter 4 may be in the entire quarter.**

**X1 - Play first half of quarter**

**O2 - Play second half of quarter**

### Roster size: 7

| Player Name | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 2           | X         | O         | X         | O2        |
| 3           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 4           | X         | X         | O         | X         |
| 5           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |
| 6           | O         | X         | X         | X1        |
| 7           | O         | X         | X         | O2        |

**Note: One player in Quarter 4 may be in the entire quarter**

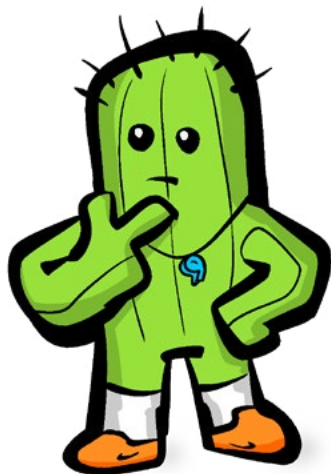


## ***Why don't they (5-8 years) spread out?***

Children under the age of 8 haven't developed spatial awareness. The concept of time and space is still immature. The younger they are, the less capable they are of spreading out and staying in a position. The ball is their toy and they don't like anyone playing with it. They all want to play with it. The dawn of spatial awareness occurs around 9-10 years of age.

## ***Why don't they (5-8 years) stay in their positions?***

In addition to lack of spatial awareness prior to the age of 8, categorizing information is a challenge. When they are 7 or 8, they start to categorize information. This is when they understand the idea of a position. They may not stay in those positions, but they understand what a position is or a role to play.



## ***Why don't children under the age of 9-10 receive aerial balls consistently?***

Visual acuity in a child starts to develop around 9 or 10 years of age. This is the device in their eyes that allow tracking. Prior to the age of 10, introduce players to bouncing balls. Have them toss a ball in the air, let the ball bounce, then receive it with a part of their body.

## ***As a best practice, why shouldn't we have them run laps before practice?***

Lose the laps! Children under the ages of 11 typically are not quite capable of aerobic capacity—the ability to run over a period of time with oxygen. When they enter the pubescent years is when they are capable of aerobic capacity. Until this time, if you have them run laps, they are simply running for running's sake. The notion that you are getting them in shape is not a reality. A coach should avoid activities without the use of a ball. There are plenty of ways to develop physical characteristics required to play soccer with the ball. They do love to run and they should be running while they are playing the game. Running shouldn't be a punishment either. Movement should be "medicine" to the mind.

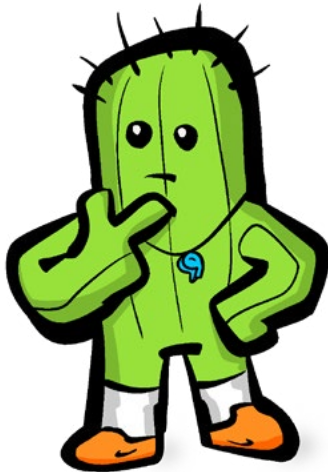
# Ask Coach Ed

## *How do you manage their energy?*

**Children have a lot of energy, especially when they arrive to practice after a full day of school or sitting around at home.**

### **Here are some tips to manage their energy at practice:**

- Limit information to 1 or 2 important points at a time. Minimize downtime. Avoid lines.
- Have them “show you” after you have provided them with instruction.
- Get players to think by asking open-ended questions. Questions are also more engaging. Allow them to problem solve.
- Create challenges or competitions to keep them engaged. Foster a growth mindset.
- Maximize time spent with the ball. The more they are moving, the more they are learning.



## *How can you get their attention?*

**Try using the following attention grabbers:**

### **Eyes on me**

You can follow up by asking them to show you the right way to pay attention!

### **Catch them being good**

When someone is paying attention, acknowledge them and say it out loud so the rest of the players can hear and see.

### **The volume ball**

Toss a ball in the air. When the ball is in the air, they yell. When the ball lands, they stop.

### **Clap it out**

Turn palms up. When palms are up, they clap. Turn palms down. When palms are down, they stop clapping.

### **Match me**

Tell them to match what you are doing with your hands. Ex: Put hands on head, hips, etc.

***If you have more questions related to the development of youth players, don't hesitate to reach out to Vince Ganzberg, Director of Coach Education, at [vganzberg@usclubsoccer.org](mailto:vganzberg@usclubsoccer.org).***