

HANSON YOUTH



SOCCER

U14 and Above
Player
Development Curriculum

Welcome Coaches,

Thank you for volunteering your time to coach this soccer season. Without wonderful volunteers like you, Hanson Youth Soccer would not exist. Coaching can be a very rewarding experience for you and it can help build a confident and healthy person. As coaches we not only have the opportunity to teach players the game of soccer, but also to facilitate the continued learning of social skills, sportsmanship, and teamwork. It is our goal to provide all players with a safe, fun, challenging, and educational environment. Whether these players continue to play soccer will have a lot to do with whether they have fun.

Included in this document you will find some information on Practice Considerations, Game Considerations, and the U14 and above practice curriculum. Hopefully this will help you and your players have as much fun as possible and ensure a successful season for all.

Practice Considerations

The practice sessions provided have been structured to provide active, developmentally appropriate, fun activities that will help each player stay motivated and continue to increase their comfort with the ball. Coaches should continue to consolidate the performance of fundamental and advanced individual skills. Players should receive more in-depth tactical instructions, particularly in understanding playing positions. Make sure that you have a clear set of expectations for yourself as the coach, for the players and also for the parents.

We want our coaches to use games or activities rather than drills. Drills often utilize lines and involve the repetition of movements the same way each time which is unrealistic to what happens during a soccer game. These practice activities have been designed to be fun, dynamic and allow for free movement and decision making to keep players active the majority of the time and decrease the chance of them getting bored and losing interest. Practice sessions will focus on a single skill and progress from simple activities to activities a little more complex with some pressure added.

Other considerations to keep in mind include:

- Prepare for your session before arriving at the field. A successful practice session will require good organization and time management. Make sure that you have sufficient equipment. Set up cones for your next activity before players arrive or during water breaks.
- [Dynamic Stretching](#) during the warm-up is even more important with this age group (to minimize the chance of injury) since most players this age continue with rapid skeletal and muscular growth.
- All players should bring a ball to practice. There are activities that require each player to have a ball.
- Incorporate goalkeepers into as many activities as possible.
- Keep your instructions to a minimum (30 sec), these games are simple to understand and should stay that way.
- Make sure demonstrations are slow, simple and correct. Stress key points of the technique being demonstrated and do not be afraid to use a player in the demonstration.
- Playing should take up the majority of your session. Intervene at natural stoppages and correct when it is necessary, freeze play, correct what went wrong or praise what went right, rehearse it again, and restart. This should only be done a couple of times during a game as players need a good amount of uninterrupted play to see and hear the game as well as give themselves a chance to solve problems on their own.
- Reinforce Correct Technique. In all activities and games continually emphasize the use of correct technique.
- Every practice session should end with a scrimmage.
- Make sure to give players plenty of water breaks, especially when it is hot.

Game Considerations

While technical development is still the focus, tactical and positional coaching takes on greater importance. Players are now finding their soccer position, but can still be allowed to play a few different positions on the field, to help their overall soccer development.

Other considerations to keep in mind include:

- Players should still be encouraged to “find” new open space away from teammates to provide support and form a diamond with teammates so that passes can be exchanged.
- Do not provide all the answers to the players. Show players what can be done rather than tell them what to do. Allow them to solve challenges on their own. Use coaching points or ask questions after the fact as needed to help players understand situations they have just encountered.
- Remember, the game is the greatest teacher.

Attacking Shape

Warm Up: Team Cycle Passing (10 min)

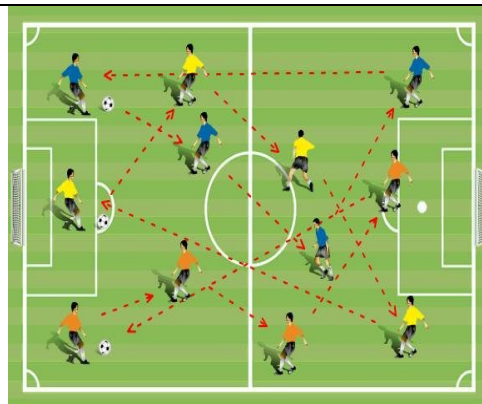
Set-Up:

Use the entire size of the field. Form teams of 4 players per team.

Instructions:

All teams try to pass the ball to a teammate in the same cycle. Player 1 passes to player 2, who passes to player 3, who passes to player 4, who passes back to player 1. Players should be in constant motion, playing through the other groups, never standing. When each player sees they are about to get the ball they should call for the ball. Make this a competition to see which team can pass the ball through the cycle 4-5 times the fastest. Coach can change the type of passes each round. Inside of foot, instep (laces), outside of foot, lofted ball (chip pass), etc. Coach can also limit the number of touches each player can take.

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



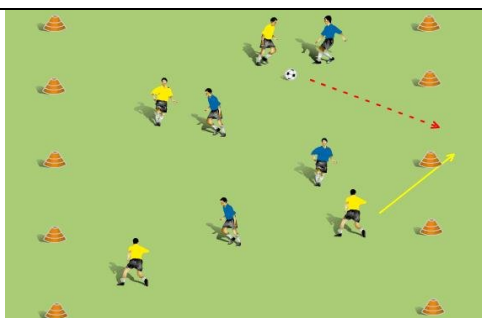
Technical Activity #1: 4v4 End Zone Game (15 min)

Set-Up:

Make a grid roughly 40x30 yards. Place cones to mark end zones at each end of the field. Make teams of 4.

Instructions:

To score the team with the ball must make a well timed pass to a teammate into the end zone. Offensive players cannot enter the end zone until after the ball has been passed. Defensive players are not allowed in the offensive teams end zone. When offense scores the defensive team gets the ball from the end zone to attack the other end. First team to 5 points wins. **Note: Play with offside.**



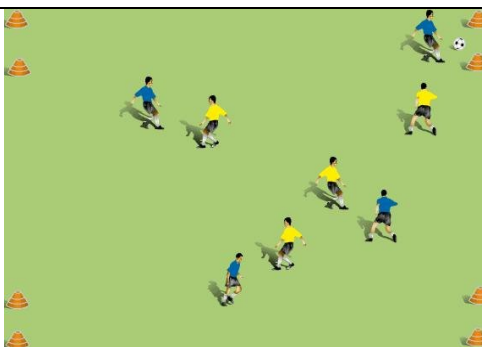
Technical Activity #2: 4v4 to 4 Goals (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a few fields that are roughly 40x20 yards with two goals at each end. Split all of the players in to teams of 4.

Instructions:

Two teams will play on each field with each team attacking the 2 goals opposite them and defending the 2 goals behind them. Scoring will be normal: 1 point for a goal. Have the players call out when they are the first defender (defending player with the ball) as they close down the ball. *Version 2:* If the players are scoring very quickly, make the attacking team score by dribbling through one of the goals. **Note: Play with offside.**



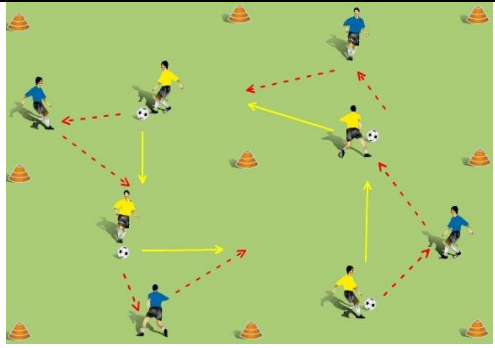
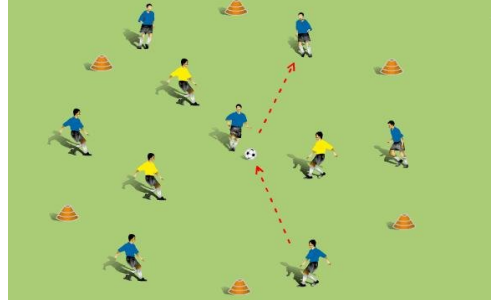

Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- Constantly survey the playing area at all times so that you can anticipate what to do next with and without the ball.
- Develop and keep individual and group shape.
- Keep body open to as much of the field as possible based on where you and the ball are on the field.
- Take first touch toward a passing option.
- Maintain width and depth at all times.
- Strike ball with proper weight and proper surface of the foot.
- Communicate

Combination Play

<p>Warm Up: Combination Passing Square (10 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Create 1 or 2 grids (depending on # of players) roughly 30x30 yards and break each into quarters. Half the players will have pinnies and the other half do not.</p> <p>Instructions: Players with pinnies each have a soccer ball and dribble around the grid and try to connect with a non-pinny player to perform a wall-pass, overlap, or takeover and then look for another player without a pinny to combine with. The players without pinnies must show themselves to pinny players constantly in order to give support.</p> <p>Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.</p>	
<p>Technical Activity #1: Milan Passing Game (15 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Create a circle and place 6 players on the edge of the circle. These players are restricted to moving on the line and in between their cones. Place one receiver and three defenders inside the circle.</p> <p>Instructions: The goal is for the seven players to retain possession of the ball and achieve 10 consecutive passes. If the defenders win the ball they must try and keep the ball away from the 1 center player. When defenders complete 8 passes, they earn a point. Alternate defenders. Progression: 2 touch, 1 touch only, add defenders.</p>	
<p>Technical Activity #2: 4v4 with GKs + 2 Bumper Players (15 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Use the entire size of the field.</p> <p>Instructions: Play 4v4 to goals, with goalkeepers, and position 2 Bumper players (neutral players) on each sideline (neutral players have to stay on the sideline but must move up and down the sidelines with the pace of play). Play a regular game...the 2 neutral players always play with the attacking team (team in possession of the ball). This activity will stimulate combination play. Note: Play with offside.</p>	
<p>Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)</p> <p>Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.</p>	
<p>Coaching Points:</p> <p>Wall pass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st attacker passes the ball behind the defender to the 2nd attacker. • The 2nd attacker plays the ball with one touch back into the running path of the 1st attacker. • The 1st attacker must sprint to receive the ball back from the 2nd attacker preferably in the natural flow of their run. <p>Overlap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1st attacker plays the ball to the 2nd attacker who dribbles in a direction away from the overlapping space. • The 2nd attacker dribbles to create overlapping space and the 1st attacker runs into the space created by the 2nd attacker. The ball is played by the 2nd attacker into the running path of the 1st attacker. <p>Takeover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2nd attacker runs directly at the 1st attacker from the opposite direction. • The 1st attacker protects the ball from the defender by keeping it on the foot furthest from the defender. • If the takeover is on (if the defender does not step into the path of 2nd attacker), the 1st attacker leaves the ball for the 2nd attacker who takes the ball using the same foot as the first attacker (right foot to right foot, left to left!), otherwise the 1st attacker keeps the ball. The 1st attacker should dictate this exchange with simple communication. 	

Attacking Wide

<p>Warm Up: Keep Away 4v4+2 (10 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Create a grid roughly 40x40 yards. Set up 2 teams of 4 players each plus 2 extra players.</p> <p>Instructions: The teams of 4 players attempt to combine for five consecutive passes. The team in possession always has the two extra players. If the defending team wins the ball they become the attacking team and are able to use the 2 extra players to help maintain possession.</p> <p>Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.</p>	
<p>Technical Activity #1: No Go Zone (15 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Create a grid roughly 50x80 yards. Set up teams of 3 to 5 players each. Create an oval in the center of the grid with cones roughly 10x10 yards (No Go Zone). Place 4 goals in each corner with cones or movable goals. Start the game without goalkeepers.</p> <p>Instructions: Players play a normal scrimmage, however, they (or the ball) cannot enter the No-Go Zone. If a player or ball enters the area, the player must do a lap around the field before re-entering the game. Play to 5. Progression: Add Goalkeepers. The goalkeepers must serve the ball wide using their feet or hands.</p>	
<p>Technical Activity #2: Wide Area Play (15 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Use the entire size of the field.</p> <p>Instructions: Play 6 v 6 + goalkeepers for each team. To score, the attacking team must play the ball wide and an attacking player must dribble through the gates. Place a coned line at the edge of the penalty area (offside line) - players are not allowed to attack the goal until ball is played beyond line. To start, only attacking players allowed beyond line until players become more comfortable with the flow of the exercise. Then allow defenders to defend in all areas.</p>	
<p>Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)</p> <p>Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.</p>	
<p>Coaching Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement to create space. • Movement to support. • Movement of the unit as a whole. Players move together. • Get wide when in possession. • Switch play and attack down weak side. • Wide players need to check back to the ball and provide a good angle. • Utilize Wall pass, Overlap, and Takeover. 	

Pressure/Cover Defending

Warm Up: Pressure-Cover Defending in Groups Warm Up (10 min)

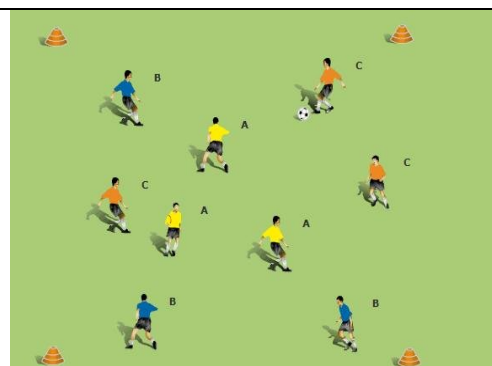
Set-Up:

Create multiple grids (if needed) roughly 40x40 yards. Set up multiple teams of 3 players each. 3 teams play in each grid at a time.

Instructions:

Team A start as the defenders. Team B & C have to combine passes and keep the ball away from team A. Team A needs to apply pressure and cover to win possession of the ball. Defending team must not be split by a pass between the other 2 teams. Work on defensive body position, location of support, and communication.

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



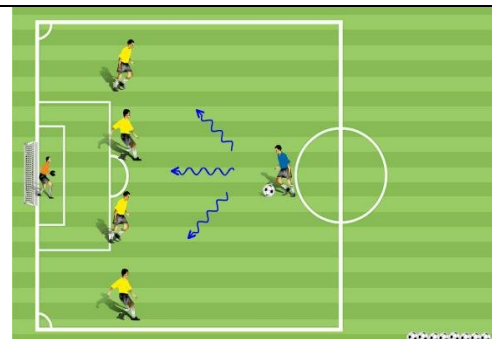
Technical Activity #1: Moving As A Defensive Unit (15 min)

Set-Up:

Use half the field.

Instructions:

Start off with shadow play. The attacking player(s) dribble the ball in various directions (left, right, forward, backward) and the back four defenders must adjust their position. Make sure the defenders do not drop beyond their defending 3rd. If attacker attacks down the middle with the ball, center backs pick him/her up and wing backs tuck in. **Progression:** Add attackers. Add a line of cones which will represent the line of confrontation. If attackers cross the line defenders try to win the ball.



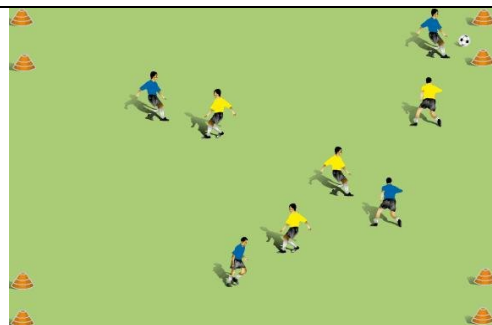
Technical Activity #2: 4v4 to 4 Goals (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a few fields that are roughly 40x20 yards with two goals at each end. Split all of the players in to teams of 3.

Instructions:

Two teams will play on each field with each team attacking the 2 goals opposite them and defending the 2 goals behind them. Scoring will be normal: 1 point for a goal. Have the players call out when they are the first defender (defending player with the ball) as they close down the ball. *Version 2:* If the players are scoring very quickly, make the attacking team score by dribbling through one of the goals.



Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- Establish a good defensive position – staggered stance and lower center of gravity.
- Primary objective to prevent opponent scoring – secondary to win possession – Patience.
- Communicate who is going to pressure the ball, who is going to provide support and cover.
- Pressure the ball into the cover.
- Keep the ball on periphery and don't allow penetrative passes.
- Shift defense as attack moves across field.

Passing to Keep Possession

Warm Up: 2 Touch (10 min)

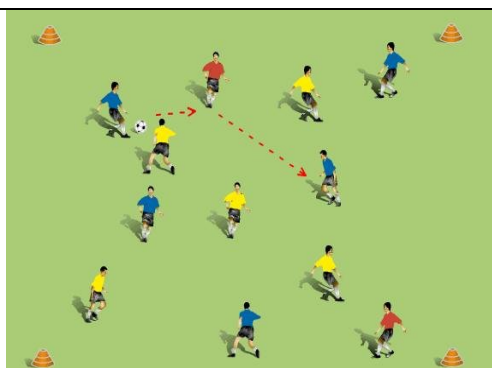
Set-Up:

Create a grid roughly 40x50. Create 2 teams of 5 (# can vary depending on attendance). Utilize 2 players as neutral players.

Instructions:

This is a non-directional possession game (there are no goals or targets to aim for). Play 5v5 within the grid. The 2 neutral players always play for the team in possession of the ball. The first team to 15 total passes wins the game. The only rule of the game is players are only allowed 2 touches each time they get the ball - the first touch has to be good!

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



Technical Activity #1: 3v3 or 4v4 Gate Game (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a grid that is roughly 45x40 yards. Organize players into 2 teams of 3 or 4 players each team. In an open area set up 6-8 gates (2 cones about 3 yards apart) at many different angles all over the field.

Instructions:

Play keep away in the field space. Points are awarded each time a team can pass the ball through any gate to a teammate and keep possession. The game is continuous constantly looking for another gate to attack. When the defending team wins possession of the ball they are on the attack. Play games to 5 points or for a certain time period. **Variation 1:** Add more players to each team and increase the playing space, add more gates and position the gates farther apart.



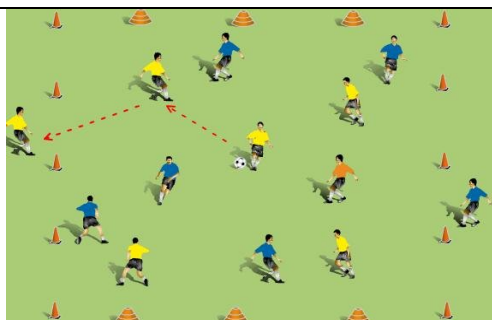
Technical Activity #2: 6v6+1 to Target Player (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a few fields that are roughly 40x50 yards. Split all of the players in to teams of 6. Will also need 1 neutral player per field. Create end zones at each end of the field.

Instructions:

Two teams will play 6v6 to pass the ball to target players in their end zone. The neutral player will play with the team who has possession of the ball. 1pt for a successful pass to player in the end zone. **Progress:** Players cannot pass to a player in the end zone until they complete 3 passes.



Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- Proper receiving technique: good body balance, eyes on ball, body in-line with the path of the ball, movement to ball, appropriate touch on ball (cushion or propel). 1st touch must create space and time.
- Proper passing technique: good body balance, placement of non-kicking foot, foot surface, ball surface, eyes on ball when striking, appropriate pace (weight) on the pass.
- Survey the playing area, intelligent movement, looking for targets early, anticipation, keeping good body shape, head up, preparing to receive the ball, preparing to pass the ball.
- Reinforce the roles & responsibilities of the 1st attacker (ball), 2nd attacker (support) and 3rd attacker (length or width) within the game. Especially reinforce their responsibilities in keeping possession for their team (combination play) and penetrating into dangerous space behind the defense. Supporting players must provide good angles.

Switching Play

Warm Up: Dutch Circle (10 min)

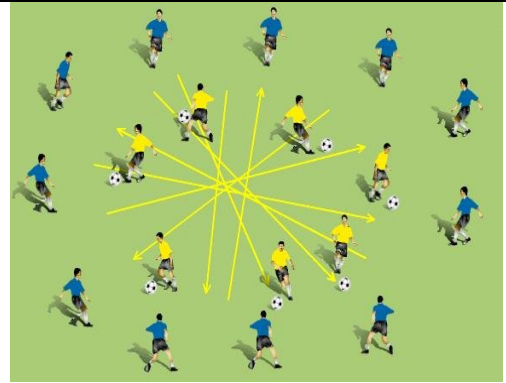
Set-Up:

1/2 the players create a 30 yard circle without soccer balls. The other 1/2 are inside the circle with soccer balls.

Instructions:

The outside players must always be alert, ready to pass and receive the ball. The inner players must dribble to a player on the outside and pass the soccer ball. The outside player will return the pass where the inside player will then turn and dribble to play the ball to any other player on the outside who does not have a ball (except the person who just passed to them). All players must call for the ball prior to receiving a pass. Change groups every 2-3 min.

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



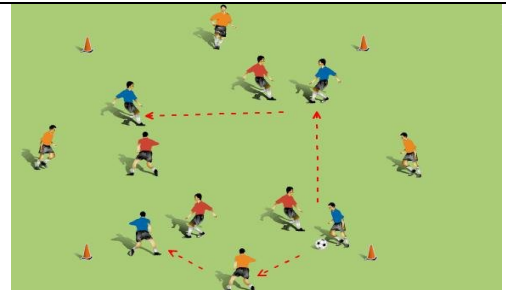
Technical Activity #1 4v4 plus 4 Supporting Players (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a grid roughly 30x30 yards. Group players into 3 teams of 4.

Instructions:

Two teams start in the middle of the grid playing 4v4. The 3rd team of 4 will play on the outside of the grid acting as supporting players. The team in possession of the ball tries to play to a different supporting player each time. Every time the attacking team passes to a supporting player on the outside of the grid they score a point. Play games of first to 5 points or rotate players every 3 minutes.



Technical Activity #2: 4 v 4 to Six Goals (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a grid roughly 30x45 yards. Group players into teams of 4. One ball needed for this game.

Instructions:

Each team attempts to score in one of the 3 goals opposite them. Work with both teams to help them recognize when to switch play to the opposite side of the field (when defense is overplaying 1 side of the field). **Progression:** Play with offside or limit the number of touches players can take before passing the ball.



Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4 or 6v6, depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- Move the ball away from defending pressure.
- Move to support teammates and create open space.
- Maintain your shape including length, width and depth.
- Attack spaces that may open up.
- Receive the ball across your body and with your body open to the field in order to see the whole field.
- Keep your head up and always look for the best passing option.
- Timing and correct weight on your passes.
- Communicate with and without the ball.

Shooting with Combination Play

Warm Up: Shooting Warm Up (10 min)

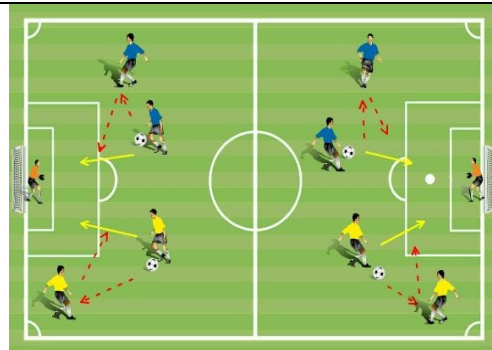
Set-Up:

Set up two goals roughly 40 yards apart roughly 30 yards wide. Place goalkeepers in each goal. Pair up players with 1 ball.

Instructions:

In their pairs, field players pass and move throughout the area experimenting with different passes and combinations (overlap, wall pass, takeover, etc.), after a few passes players should finishing with a reasonable shot to the keeper (to warm the keeper up). Make sure players have the goalkeepers attention before they take a shot on goal and are not shooting at the same time as another field player.

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



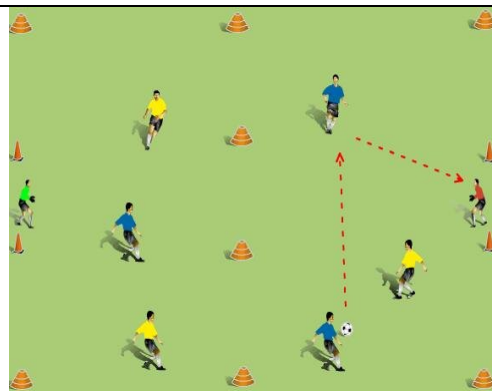
Technical Activity #1: Zone 1v2 Competition (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a 30x40 yard rectangular grid. Goals at each end with goalkeepers. Midfield line marked off with cones.

Instructions:

Two teams. One goalkeeper, one pinny defender and two shirt attackers positioned in 1 half of the field (1v2); one goalkeeper, one shirt defender and two pinny attackers in the other half of the field (1v2). Players must remain in their own half of the field. Multiple balls placed at each goal. Goalkeeper puts a ball in play by throwing it or kicking it off the ground. (no punting allowed by the goalkeeper). The goalkeeper and defender in defensive half attempt to combine with their attackers in the attacking half and score. Shots can be taken from anywhere on the field.



Technical Activity #2: 3v3 or 4v4 with a Team on Deck (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a small field roughly 25x40 yards, place two full size goals, with goalkeepers, at each end.

Instructions:

Teams of three or four play games. If a team is scored against they must leave the field immediately and are replaced by the team that is on deck. This teaches teams to transition quickly and go to goal with pace and to take chances quickly. Coaches can elect to make 1 player stay in the attacking zone for each team when on defense so teams play 3v2 or 4v3.






Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce proper shooting technique. Strike the ball with laces, ankle of kicking foot must remain locked and toes pointed down, (before, during and after contact).
- Keep ankle locked and toe pointed out to shoot with inside of foot.
- Coach non-verbal cues, angle and timing of runs with and without the ball.
- Work on technical speed.
- Recognize verbal and visual cues.
- Develop rhythm of play based on what the game presents...increase speed of play at the right time.
- Be alert and ready to tap in any ball or rebound, follow up on all shots.
- In certain situations placement of shot is more important than power of shot.

Penetration - Dribbling & Passing

<p>Warm Up: 1v1 Challenge (10 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Create multiple fields that are roughly 20x15 yards with cones at the end (enough fields so all players are playing), pair the players together with 1 ball.</p> <p>Instructions: One of the players starts with the ball at their feet. On the coach's command, the player with the ball passes it to their opponent and the 1v1 competition begins. Each group will play for approximately 30 seconds or until someone scores by dribbling the ball through the cones. Encourage players to use take on moves (scissors, lunge step, step over, etc.) Partners will then change roles and play again. Repeat.</p> <p>Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.</p>	
<p>Technical Activity #1: 2v2v2 (4v2) (15 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Create 2 grids roughly 30x30 yards next to each other. Break up players into pairs.</p> <p>Instructions: 3 teams play 2 v 2 v 2 possession game. Two teams combine to play 4 v 2 (team that loses possession becomes defenders). Game of 4 v 2 possession takes place in one of the 30 x 30 yard grids. On coaches command, attacking team has to break out and get the ball to a teammate in the other grid. Defending team has to win the ball and stop them breaking out to the other grid.</p>	
<p>Technical Activity #2: 4v4 End Zone Game (15 min)</p> <p>Set-Up: Create a grid roughly 30x40 yards with end-zones behind the 40 yd lines. Make teams of 4.</p> <p>Instructions: The attacking team may dribble into the end zone or combine with a wall pass, take-over or over-lap to get into the end zone. Version 2: Add a "plus" player who always plays for the attacking team if they can't keep possession long enough to create a combination or opportunity to score on the dribble. Also, coach can give more points to encourage more dribbling if necessary or more points for passing if necessary. Variation 3: Coach can limit touches-3 touch, 2 touches, and 1 touch.</p>	
<p>Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)</p> <p>Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.</p>	
<p>Coaching Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual cues should determine how the attacking players penetrate into the space behind the opponent...dribble, pass or shoot • To combine, make defender commit to person with the ball; selection of appropriate combination (wall-pass, take-over, run-around or double pass) is based on the visual cues. • Keep your head up and use peripheral vision. • Explode into space on the dribble if defender doesn't commit • Encourage finding the goal as quickly as possible (whether attacking on the dribble, combining with teammate, or getting a quick shot off) • Stress that the first look is always to penetrate • Should the player with the ball penetrate on the dribble, with a pass or a shot • Positively reinforce decisions to penetrate...especially to shoot! 	

Finishing

Warm Up: Team Cycle Passing (10 min)

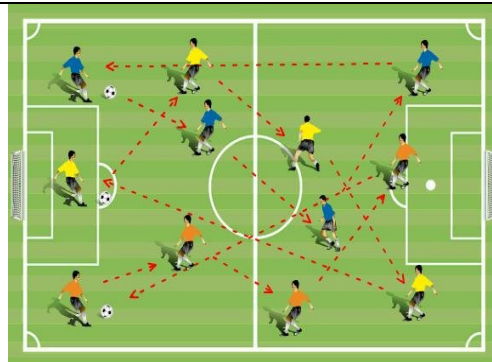
Set-Up:

Use the entire size of the field. Form teams of 4 players per team.

Instructions:

All teams try to pass the ball to a teammate in the same cycle. Players should be in constant motion, playing through the other groups, never standing. When each player sees they are about to get the ball they should call for the ball. Make this a competition to see which team can pass the ball through the cycle 4-5 times the fastest. Coach can change the type of passes each round. Inside of foot, instep (laces), outside of foot, lofted ball), etc. Coach can also limit the # of touches.

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



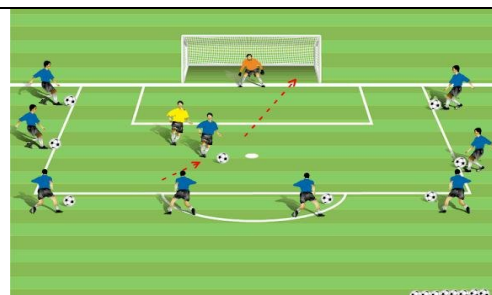
Technical Activity #1: Finishing Arch (15 min)

Set-Up:

Evenly space out all players in an arch around the penalty area, except for 2. The 2 will be inside the penalty area.

Instructions:

The defender and attacker within the penalty area, play 1v1. Attackers try to create space from their defender to receive the ball from an outside player and create scoring opportunities and finish. The outside players pass the ball to the inside attacker only when the attacker calls for the ball. Rotate players in as attackers.



Technical Activity #2: 3v2 + 3v2 with Free Flank Players (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a grid roughly 50x50 yards with goals on opposite end lines. Use some cones to mark a midfield line creating 2 halves. Create outside lanes the length of the field on both sides (5 yards wide). Position 3 attackers & 2 defenders in each half of the field.

Instructions:

Players are restricted to their half of the field. Each team will have a designated wide player in each lane (who cannot be defended), all players can play the ball out wide to their free flank player to get a cross off in the attacking half of the field or one of the three forwards can look to get a shot off.



Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- Take every goal scoring opportunity.
- Select different shots to beat keeper - bent, chip, driven (low and away from keeper) etc.
- Follow up for rebound scoring opportunities.
- Stress that the crosser should choose a target (6 yard box to penalty spot) to play the ball to versus just hitting the ball in front of the goal.
- Encourage players to find other options to get the ball out wide and to get a cross off; combination play on the flank, etc.

Zone Defending

Warm Up: Keep Away (10 min)

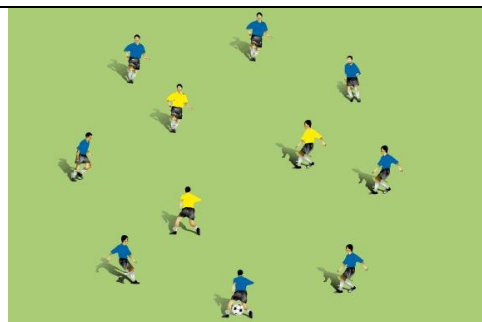
Set-Up:

Create a circle (or use center circle) with 6-8 players creating the edge of the circle and three defenders inside the circle.

Instructions:

The players on the outside are restricted to moving on the circle line. The goal is for the defenders to win the ball. The defender who wins the ball switches places with the player who gave the ball away.

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



Technical Activity #1 4 v 4 to Six Goals (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a grid roughly 30x45 yards. The midfield line will serve as the offside line. Group players into teams of 4.

Instructions:

Each team attempts to score in one of the 3 goals opposite them. Work with both teams to help them maintain their defensive shape (flat, diamond, etc.), during the defending action.



Technical Activity #2: 5 v 4 + Goalkeeper (15 min)

Set-Up:

Use 1/2 a soccer field with one regular size goal and 2 counter-goals or targets at the midfield line.

Instructions:

4 Defenders defend the regular goal with a keeper in goal and have the purpose to counter attack to 2 counter goals. Keeper takes on sweeper role behind the flat back four. Attackers try to score on regular goal.



Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4, 6v6, or 8v8 depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- The 1st defender needs to “approach fast, arrive slow”, bend run, have correct stance: be on their toes, with knees bent, one foot forward, one back. The 1st defender must get the head of the 1st attacker down by getting close to the 1st attacker, approximately arm’s length.
- The 2nd defender needs to be at approximately a 30 degree backward angle to the 1st defender on the side that the first defender is showing the ball towards; cannot be too far back or too close to 1st defender.
- The 2nd defender tells 1st defender which way to push attacker.
- Immediate chase/pressure – The moment possession is lost the nearest player(s) try to regain possession or apply pressure on the ball.
- **Delay** – The pressuring defender(s) forcing the attacking team to take time organizing its attack so defenders have time to form a collective defending action behind the ball.
- **Cover** – While the ball is being pressured all other players should be recovering into defensive positions. The positions taken should support the pressuring defender in the event he is beaten.
- **Balance** – As the team concentrates their defense in the area of the ball, defenders on the opposite side of field must position themselves to cover central areas in order to prevent attackers from making penetrating runs into these spaces in which to receive the ball.
- Defenders need to communicate their intentions and responsibilities as well as slide together or move as a block.

Passing and Receiving Lofted Balls

Warm Up: Receiving Lofted Balls in Pairs (10 min)

Set-Up:

Have players pair up in groups of 2 and find open space. Groups will need 1 ball and 1 cone. There will be 1 player serving the ball and 1 player receiving the ball. Players stand about 5 yards away from each other with the cone placed 5 yards behind the receiver.

Instructions:

The server throws (serves) the ball (two-hand underhand) at different heights to the other player (the receiver). The receiver will use their instep (laces), chest, or thigh to receive the ball before it touches the ground. The receiver then passes the ball back to the server and jogs around the cone behind them and back. Switch roles after 10 tosses, then move on to receiving with the next body part. Coaches control body part used to control the ball.

Work on foot skills between games and do Dynamic Stretches between games.



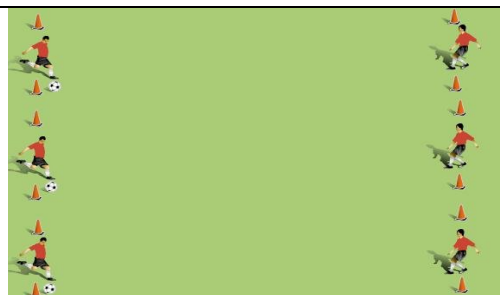
Technical Activity #1: Lofted Long Ball Passing (15 min)

Set-Up:

Have players pair up in groups of 2 and find open space about 20 yards apart with 1 ball per pair. Each player sets up cones they stand in as the goal.

Instructions:

Players try to score a point by striking a lofted ball to their partner and land it with the coned goal area without it rolling or bouncing before entering the goal. The receiving player can score a point by receiving the ball out of the air and controlling it inside the coned goal area.



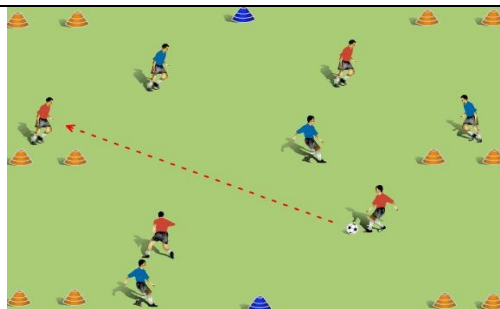
Technical Activity #2: 3v3 to 2 Target Players (15 min)

Set-Up:

Create a 20x40 yard grid. Set up teams for 3v3 plus 2 target players at the long end of the grid. Mark the middle of the grid with cones, and end zones for the target players.

Instructions:

2 teams play 3v3 inside the grid. The teams try to score a point by striking a long lofted pass to their target player from behind the midfield cones. The target players must receive the ball with their feet without it bouncing before it enters the end zone to score a point. Play first to 5 points.



Activity # 3: Scrimmage (20-30 min)

Small Sided Scrimmage (4v4 or 6v6, depending on #'s) Unrestricted play.

Coaching Points:

- Use proper receiving technique and determine if you need to cushion the ball or propel it forward.
- Good body balance.
- Eyes on ball at the moment of contact (passing and receiving).
- Keep body in-line with the path of the ball.
- Move to the ball.
- Lean the body back when striking a lofted ball.
- Strike the lower part of the ball, keep your ankle locked, follow through towards your target, and land on your kicking foot.

Roles and Responsibilities of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Attacker

- The 1st attacker (the player with the ball) should attempt to attack the space behind the defender with the dribble or look for passing options to other attackers.
- The 2nd attacker(s) are the players in the immediate vicinity of the 1st attacker. The role of the 2nd attacker(s) is to try and achieve depth and width by providing a supporting role that gives the 1st attacker options.
- The 3rd attackers are other attackers that are away from the immediate playing area. 3rd attackers provide a supporting role to the 1st and 2nd attackers by making runs that create open space.

Roles and Responsibilities of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Defender

- The 1st defender is the defender closest to the attacker with the ball and usually goal side. The player with the ball is the most dangerous opponent and should always be the focus of the 1st defender. The 1st defender must focus on and put **pressure** on the ball to either win the ball back or delay penetration by the attacker until other defenders can recover.
- The 2nd defender(s) are the players in the immediate vicinity of the 1st defender. The 2nd defender provides support to the 1st defender, this is called providing **cover**. The 2nd defender must tell the 1st defender which way to direct the 1st attacker while marking (guarding) the 2nd attacker.
- The 3rd defender(s) are other defenders that are away from the immediate playing area. 3rd defender(s) provide **balance** in a supporting role by balancing the field to the 1st and 2nd defenders by covering vital open space in order to prevent attackers from making penetrating runs.

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This document was created with the assistance of content, philosophies and ideas from the following:

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