WESTON SOCCER CLUB

Warm Up Exercises
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The warm up is a vital part of any youth soccer session. It should provide a fun energetic start to the session and get the players engaged in the session from the get go. It should involve plenty of touches on the ball and include key fundamental movements that are used within a soccer game (running, jumping, hopping, balancing, turning). You can also include key elements of other sports like throwing and catching, bouncing the ball, rolling the ball to get your players moving in a variety of ways.

For 6-10 year olds:
Warm up should be fun – light activities like tag or knockout. Get a ball to each player as soon as possible. Stretching is not important at this age in the traditional sense. It can establish a health habit by introducing something for the future, it can increase the development of balance and coordination “for some body parts”, but no formal stretching. Above listed format works well for youth players.
Cooling down is important – this brings kids down from their ‘heightened state’ and gives everyone a chance to help collect gear, review and talk – parents are more likely to listen now. A good time for a little ‘parent education’ by the coach. The cooling down period is also a time to give homework.

For 10-12 Year olds
With slightly older kids the warm up sets the tone and pace of training; mental challenges can be introduced too. Starting in pairs is a good idea for kids at this age – for balance, teamwork and communication. The players ‘start as a team’. Coaches can bring brief, simple coaching points into warm up; the implicit message is that this is a learning environment, an instructional activity – as well as pure fun. Playing various forms of fun games and keep away in the beginning of practice is a good, consistent way to begin. It puts together the four elements of soccer right away.

For 13 year olds and up:
Warm up is very important now to set tone, rhythm and climate at training sessions. Coaches should pay close attention to body language, attitude, alertness, posture, getting the heads up.
Fun is still really important, but coaches can adopt an instructional approach from the beginning: Simple technical practices, easy tactical ideas (like body shape, footwork, changes of direction), isolated technical activities or keep away. As an example of a way to put together the technical and tactical early on, here in the warm up – play keep away with the constant reminder: don’t stop the ball.
This is now physical and mental preparation. These are adolescents, growing fast, with changing bodies, so stretching is important. During the warm up include dynamic stretching (stretching while moving) replicating movements they will perform during the game.
Cooling down is also important at the end of a session/game to aid recovery, reduce the risk of injury and reduce soreness the next day. Some very light jogging and static stretching will aid this.
**Body Parts**

**Set Up/Rules**

15x15 yard area. (larger area if large numbers) Each player has a ball and dribbles inside the area. Coach will call out a part of the body and the players must stop the ball and put that body part on the ball. Call a different body part each time.

**Coaching Points**
Keep ball close to feet
Head up to see space and other players

**Progression**
Call 2-3 body parts to make the player react and move differently.
Player must perform a balance for 10 seconds if last person to have body part on the ball.

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**Freeze Tag**

**Set Up/Rules**

15x15 yard area. (larger area if large numbers) Each player has a ball and dribbles inside the area. One player is a tagger (white) and dribbles around trying to tag any player on the back. If tagged player must pick up ball and stand with feet apart. To get back in the game a player must pass their ball between frozen players legs.

**Coaching Points**
Keep ball close to feet
Head up to see space and other players
Dribble at speed away from tagger

**Progression**
2 taggers
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Warm Up Exercises

Musical Soccer Balls
Set Up/Rules
15x15 yard area. (larger area if large numbers) Each player has a ball and leaves it somewhere inside the area. Players move about the area without touching the balls. Coach calls “STOP” and players must sit on the nearest ball. Now take away one ball. Player left without a ball once coach calls stop must perform a balance until after the next go.

Coaching Points
Lots of different movement techniques.
Keep ball close when dribbling.

Progression
Replace the balls with cones and now each player dribbles a ball and must stop by a cone.

2 Headed Monster
Set Up/Rules
15x15 yard area. (larger area if large numbers) Each player has a ball and dribbles inside the area. One player is a tagger and tries to tag any player. If tagged, that player must leave ball and link arms with tagger to create a ‘2 headed monster’ and work as a pair to tag others. Once 4 players are linked they split to become two ‘2 headed monsters’. Last player with a ball is the winner.

Coaching Points
Keep ball close to feet
Head up to see space and other players
Dribble at speed away from tagger

Progression

Coaching Points
Warm Up Exercises

Lots of different movement techniques.
Keep ball close when dribbling.
Dribbling Gates
Set Up/Rules
15x15 yard area. (larger area if large numbers) Place some gates (2 cones) randomly inside the space. Players dribble through as many of the gates as possible in 1 minute.

Coaching Points
Keep ball close to feet
Head up to see space and other players.
Use different surfaces to move the ball.

Progression
Players now turn back through the gate each time. Players perform a move before going through a game. Make gates larger and add a defender in 2 of them for players to get past. Defenders can’t leave the gate and can only tag players as they try and pass through.

Foxes & Hunters
Set Up/Rules
15x15 yard area. (larger area if large numbers) Each player has a pinny tucked into the back of their shirt. One player is the hunter and tries to steal pinnies from the players shirt. If your pinny is taken player becomes a hunter. Last player with a pinny wins.

Coaching Points
Keep ball close to feet
Head up to see space and other players
Dribble at speed away from tagger

Progression
Each player now has a ball
### Throw & Catch

**Set Up/Rules**
15x15 yard area. One player has a ball. Player with the ball must throw the ball to another player. How quickly can they get each player to catch and throw the ball until each player has touched the ball. Must be a chest pass.

**Coaching Points**
- Keep eyes on the ball
- Make a friendly pass so it's easy for your team mate to catch.

**Progression**
- Bounce pass
- Ball now on the ground and players now use their feet to pass the ball.

### Huddle Races

**Set Up/Rules**
20x20 yard area. Split players into two teams. Each team has one ball and must make a tight huddle. Players must throw the ball around the huddle while moving as a team to the opposite side of the area and back to the start. If the team drops the ball they start again. First team to the top and back win.

**Coaching Points**
- Keep eyes on the ball
- Make a friendly pass so it's easy for your team mate to catch.

**Progression**
- Ball is now on the ground and players use their feet to pass the ball.
Domes & Dishes
Set Up/Rules
15x15 yard area. Split players into two teams. Place a large number cones inside the area. Half the cones are upside down the other half the correct way up. One team are domes and must try and get all the cones the correct way, one team are dishes and must try and flip all cones upside down. Team with most after 1 min win.

Coaching Points
Keep ball close when dribbling.

Progression
Same game but now each player now has a ball and dribbles to each cone.

Ultimate Tag
Set Up/Rules
Mark out a circle and have all players stand around the outside. All players will try and tag the person to their left. Players need to be aware of who they are tagging and who is trying to tag them. Once coach shouts GO all players enter the circle and try and tag their opponent while trying not to be tagged themselves

Coaching Points
Variety of movements to chase partner but escape other player. Head up to find space

Progression
Same game but now each player now has a ball
Relay Race
Set Up/Rules
Set out area as shown. Use cones if you don’t have hurdles. Split players into teams. Players race through the circuit on coach command. Players jump over hurdles/cones, sprint to ball, dribble up and around cone, leave ball at cone, sprint, jump over cones and high 5 next players.

Coaching Points
- Keep your ball close
- Use body to protect ball
- Dribble into space

Progression
- Split players into teams.

King of the Ring
Set Up/Rules
20x20 yard area. Each player has a ball and dribbles inside the area. When coach calls ‘go’ players try and keep their ball inside the area and kick everybody else’s ball out from the area. Last player in the area wins.

Coaching Points
- Keep your ball close
- Use body to protect ball
- Dribble into space

Progression
- Split players into teams.
- Which team can win.
Batman
Set Up/Rules
20x20 yard area. Each player has a ball and dribbles inside the area. One player has a pinny and holds it like a cape. Batman tries to sweep the cape round and cover any ball. If batman gets his cape on a ball he gets a point. If ball is hit by the bat cape player must perform 5 toe taps before re-joining the game.

Coaching Points
Keep ball close when dribbling.

Progression
Same game but now each player now has a ball and dribbles to each cone.

Ultimate Tag
Set Up/Rules
20x20 yard area. Each player has a ball and dribbles inside the area. Have one player be a tagger who has a pinny crumpled up into a ball. Tagger must run around and throw the pinny ball at any player. If they are hit they become new tagger. Tagger after 1 min loses the game

Coaching Points
Variety of movements to chase partner but escape other player.
Head up to find space
Keep ball close

Progression
Same game but now each player now has a ball but the tagger. Tagger takes the ball of any player they catch with that player becoming the tagger.
Alligator Ally  
**Set Up/Rules**  
Set out a 10x15 yard channel with 3-4 players inside. All other players on the outside. Players get one point for getting through the channel without being tagged. If tagged, they join taggers in the middle. Last player not tagged wins.

**Coaching Points**  
- Can you sneak thorough when defenders lose concentration  
- Quick foot work to find gaps.

**Progression**  
Now each player has a ball. Players must touch ball inside area when trying to get through channel so not just kick it through.

Capture the flag  
**Set Up/Rules**  
Split into two teams. Each team is given a base with a team Flag (cone) in to protect. The idea of the game is to get the other team’s flag back to your home base. To start with don’t use any footballs and play as a tagging game. If you are tagged by an opposing player you are stuck until tagged by a team mate. Only one defending player can stand in their home base but is not allowed to touch their own flag. The more opposing players you tag the more chance your team has of capturing the flag.

**Coaching Points**  
- Keep your ball close  
- Use body to protect ball  
- Dribble into space

**Progression**  
Each player now has a ball.
**Box Tag**

**Set Up/Rules**
Set out a 8x8 yard box. Players work in pairs starting on opposite corners of the box. Player 1 is the tagger and tries to tag player 2. Players are not allowed to go inside the box. Can player 1 tag player 2 within 30 seconds. Switch roles. Run other way around square.

**Coaching Points**
Change direction quickly to catch runner of guard.
Keep ball close
Quick turn to catch player out.
Use different surfaces to move ball.

**Progression**
Play the same game with each player dribbling a ball.

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**4 Box Tag Game**

**Set Up/Rules**
Set up a 25x25 yard area with a box in each corner. Each player has a ball and dribbles through the corner boxes as many times as possible.

**Coaching Points**
Keep your ball close
Use body to protect ball
Dribble into space

**Progression**
Change the way you move after going through each box.
5 Toe taps in the red boxes
5 Foundations in Yellow boxes
Add a tagger in middle zone.
Boxes are safe zones. Tagger 1 point for each player tagged.
Players 1 point each time they get to a new box.
4v1 Rondo
Set Up/Rules
Set out a 10x10 box with 1 player on each side and 1 defender in the middle. The defender tries to clear the ball out of the area. Attacking team try and make 5 passes without the defender winning the ball for a goal. Player who loses possession becomes new defender.

Coaching Points
Take a touch to make defender come close then pass to team mate. Play one touch if under pressure.

Progression
One touch only
Add another defender.

4 Box Tag Game
Set Up/Rules
15x15 yard area with 2 defenders and one attacker inside. One attacker on each side of the area. Attacking team try and make 8 passes for a goal. Defenders try and clear the ball out of the area.

Coaching Points
Take a touch to make defender come close then pass to team mate. Play one touch if under pressure.

Progression
If defenders win the ball they play 2v1 in the middle