



## **NEW COACHES MANUAL**

### **Under 8 – Under 16**

For more tips and drills, or for more information on the rules specific to your age group, please visit our website:

**[www.WAXAHACHIESOCCER.org](http://www.WAXAHACHIESOCCER.org)**



**YELLOW CARD:** Presented to a player by the referee for a violation of the playing rules when a player has repeated the same offense multiple times, or for dangerous behavior. Also known as a caution. Two yellow cards equal a red card.

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# About WSA

The Waxahachie Soccer Association (WSA) welcomes you to the world of coaching youth soccer.

WSA is a place where every child plays in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship and positive coaching. The emphasis in WSA is on having fun while learning the game. Developing soccer skills, physical attributes, tactical awareness and knowledge of the game are critical to promoting self-efficacy and increasing self-esteem in players. Thus, they perform at a higher level, avoid injury, see the results of their hard work and achievement and most importantly, have fun.

As a volunteer coach, your participation in the program should be fun, as well. For this reason, we have created this manual to help build your confidence level as a coach and therefore allow you to be comfortable enough to have fun.

The content of this manual is drawn from the knowledge and experience of WSA's Director of Coach and Player Development and our Board Members; people with vast soccer knowledge, yet volunteers of WSA—just like you. The soccer skills and coaching techniques included in this manual have been carefully selected as appropriate for the level of your players. We encourage you to use the techniques in this manual to train young players in the skills most needed at their level of development and play. With these guidelines and recommendations, your coaching experience will be satisfying for both you and your players.

We encourage you to also visit our website for videos on how to perform a few common soccer skills and to also utilize our Director of Coach and Player Development as well as your Commissioner for any questions or help.

Thank you for volunteering to coach this season!

-WSA Board

**OFFSIDE:** When an attacking player has less than two players of the opposing team (a field player and the goalie) between them and the goal *when the ball is struck*. If a player is found to be offside, the referee will award the opposing team a free kick. A player can never be offside for a goal-kick, corner-kick or throw-in.

**OPPOSING (DEFENDING) PLAYER/TEAM:** The player/team who does not have possession of the ball.

**PASSING:** Passing is playing the ball to a teammate or to a space where a teammate can run to the ball. A player may lightly tap the ball to a teammate several feet away or kick it strongly to move it down the field. The ball may scoot along the ground or may be kicked into the air.

Most players use two types of kicks to pass to a teammate. One is the instep drive which is a powerful kick. The other kick is called a push pass. Performed using the inside of the foot, the push pass is much more accurate than the instep drive, but is less powerful.

**PENALTY:** If a foul is called on an opposing player within the penalty box of the opposing team, a penalty kick will be awarded to the attacking team.

**PENALTY KICK:** One player from the team awarded the penalty will stand with the ball on the penalty spot (a mark on the forward most line of the penalty box). The goalie of the opposing team will stand on their goal line within the goal box anywhere they wish. All other players will stand behind the half field line. On the referee's whistle, the attacking player will be allowed to take one kick on the ball. **NO ONE** other than the attacking player may move off of their line until the ball has been struck. Once the ball has been struck, all players may attempt to retrieve the ball.

**RED CARD:** Presented to a player by the referee for dangerous behavior or severe unsportsmanlike behavior. Also, two yellow cards equal a red card. A player receiving a red card must immediately leave the playing area and the team must play short a player for the remainder of the game. The player receiving the red card must also sit out an additional game.

**SIDE LINE/TOUCH LINE:** The line which runs the full length of the sides of the field.

**SLIDE TACKLE:** When a player slides in to kick the ball away from a player. The player must slide in with the studs of their cleats pointed down, away from the player or the sliding player will receive a foul. This play is reserved for teams U10 and older due to the dangerous nature of the play.

**SUBSTITUTION:** Trading one on-field player for one off-field player. May only be done at the restart of a play when your team has possession of the ball, or when the other team has possession of the ball while they are also using a substitution. You may substitute as many players at a time as you wish. The on-field player must completely leave the field before the off-field player may enter.

**THROW IN:** A type of restart where a player throws the ball from behind his head with two hands while standing with both feet on the ground behind a sideline; taken by a player opposite the team that last touched the ball before it went out of bounds across a sideline.

The player/coach must sit out for at least one more game following the incident.

**FORWARD:** The forward most players on the team. Usually there are two forwards, a left and a right. The forward is considered to be a part of the offense for a team.

**FOUL:** A violation of the playing rules which a referee will award a free kick for. A foul may be accompanied by a card if the offense was serious or has happened multiple times by the same player.

**FREE KICK:** A free kick will be awarded to the opposing team when a foul has been committed by any player. The free kick will take place from the spot where the offense occurred. All players may participate in a free kick from anywhere on the field. These can be direct or indirect kicks.

**GOALKEEPER:** The only player on the team who is allowed to use their hands, in order to do so- the “keeper” must stay within the penalty box, if they travel outside of the penalty box, they are then held to the same rules as the rest of the team. The “goalie” is the most protected player on the field, a player can be red-carded and ejected from the game if they commit a foul upon the goalkeeper.

**GOAL LINE/ END LINE:** The line which touches either goal at the ends of the field.

**HALF FIELD LINE:** The line which runs directly across the center of the field and thru the middle of the center circle.

**HANDBALL:** When the ball strikes a player between the armpit and the fingers on their arm- even if the player did not mean to hit the ball. If a handball is called, the opposing team will receive a free kick from the point of occurrence.

**HEADER:** To play the ball using your head. Coaches should be careful while teaching this method of play as concussions are prevalent.

**INDIRECT KICK:** Any kick where the ball must touch at least one other player before entering the goal for a score.

**KICK-OFF:** How the game is started or restarted after a goal is scored. The starting of the game at the beginning or after halftime/quarters will be determined by the referee. The restart of the game after a goal will be by the team who did not score the goal. For the game to be considered as “started” the ball must pass across the half field line, if it is not, the other team may be awarded the start.

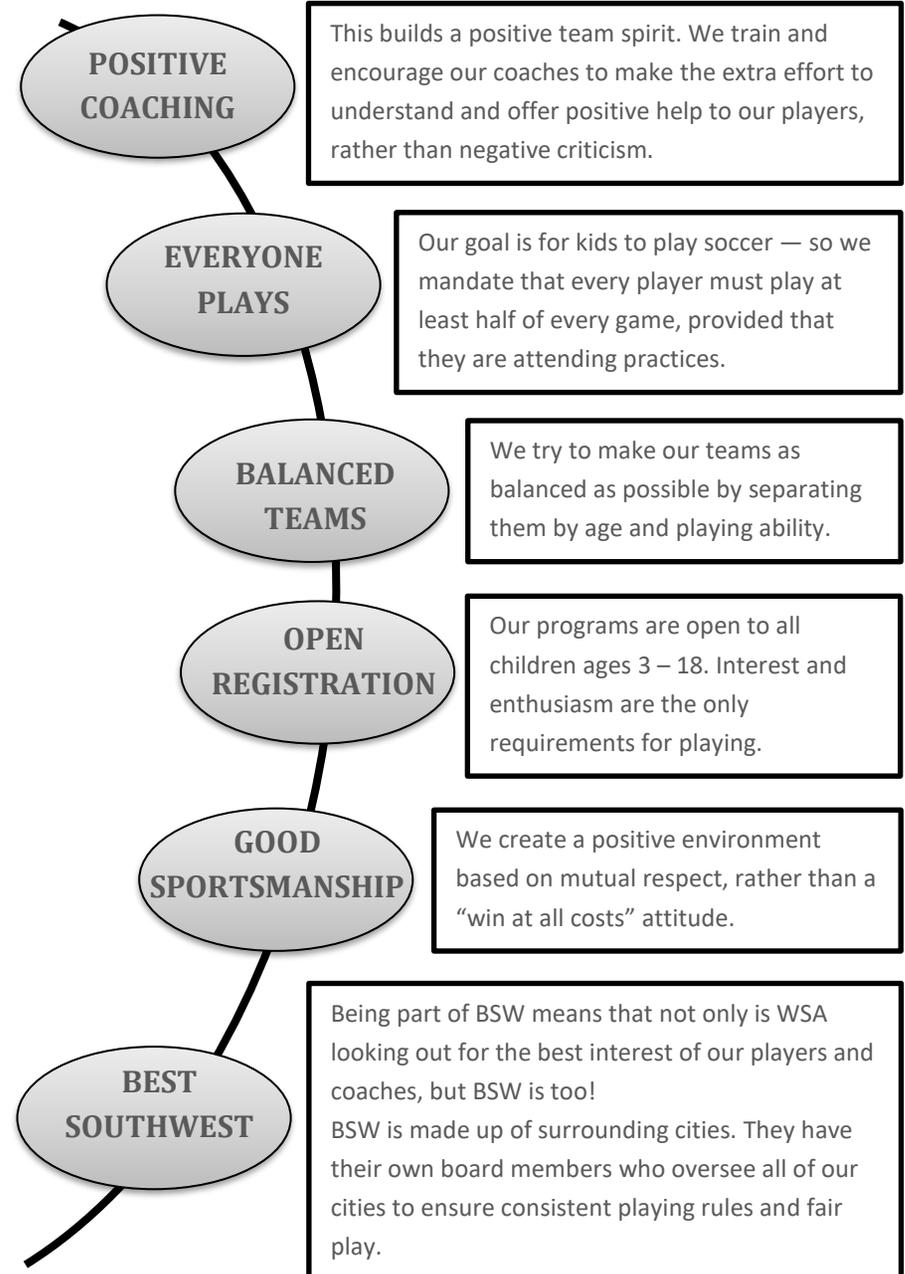
**MARK:** In man-to-man coverage the defender is said to mark (rather than guard) the attacker.

**MIDFIELDER:** A player who links the offense with the defense and helps to play both roles. This player is generally involved in all goal scoring plays because they retrieve the ball from the defense and dribble it thru the middle to pass up to the offense where a goal can be scored.

**OFFENDER:** The attacking players on a team. These are the players who generally score the goals.

## Why Are We So Different?

Maybe you have tried team sports before and found it to be disorganized and frustrating- but we strive to be different and better by implementing the following policies:





## Soccer 101

Soccer is played by two teams on a rectangular field approximately the size of a football field. Smaller fields are used for younger players. The game is played in either two halves of equal time (for U8 and older) or four quarters of equal time (for U6 and younger). The length of each half/quarter is determined by the age of the children playing.

Physical size is not an important factor in becoming a skilled and successful soccer player. Because of the game's pace, every child participates in the action while on the field.

### The Team

- U8 teams have 6 players on the field plus 1 goalie and must have at least 3 players and 1 goalie in order to start the game.
- U10 teams have 8 players on the field plus 1 goalie and must have at least 6 players and 1 goalie in order to start the game.
- U12 and older teams have 10 players on the field plus 1 goalie and must have at least 6 players and 1 goalie in order to start the game.

Each team offers the following positions:

- **Defender:** primary duty is to prevent the opponent from having a good shot at the goal. This player also works to gain possession of the ball and pass it to a teammate for an attack.
- **Midfielder** (or halfback): plays a "transitional" game from defense to offense and vice versa. Usually the midfielder is the most active player on the field and key to maintaining team continuity.
- **Forward:** primary responsibility is to score, and assist the midfield in shifting play from defense to offense.

It's important to keep in mind that any player on a team may score a goal, regardless of position.

- **Goalkeeper:** is responsible for guarding his or her team's goal and preventing the other team from scoring.

U8 is when you will need to start working on positions, this is still not the age where you need to stress too much and you should also not have permanent positions for each player. In U8, players should be moved around so that every player can play each field position at least once- this will help you and the player decide which position will suit them best as they get older.

## Definitions

**ATTACKING PLAYER/TEAM:** The player/team who has possession of the ball.

**ASSIST:** When a goal is scored directly from a pass from one player to another, the player who passed the ball to the goal scorer made an "assist".

**BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY:** For the ball to pass out of play, all of it must be outside all of the sideline or goal line (the lines can be up to five inches wide). Thus, a ball on the line is in play. Even a ball resting on the ground just outside the line is in play if any part of it is projecting over the line. Similarly, a goal is not scored until all the ball has passed over all the goal line. The position of the player controlling or dribbling the ball does not matter -- he can be standing or running with both feet outside the touchline, but as long as the ball is in play the game goes on.

**CENTER CIRCLE:** A circular marking in the center of the field where kick-offs are taken to start or restart a game.

**COACHES BOX:** The area where a coach is to remain during the game.

**CONTROLLING:** Controlling (or trapping) is receiving the ball in flight or on the ground, and then controlling it by either dribbling or passing the ball to teammates. There are many ways to trap a ball:

- allowing it to hit the chest at an angle that deflects the ball to the ground where it can be controlled;
- allowing it to hit the thigh or bent knee to deflect the ball to the ground where it can be controlled; or
- using the foot to receive/control the ball.

**CORNER ARCS:** The mark in each corner of the field where corner kicks are taken.

**CORNER KICK:** If the ball crosses the goal line due to a touch by the defending team (even if it was bounced off of the player), the attacking team is awarded a corner kick. One player from the attacking team will kick the ball from the nearest corner arc where the offense occurred. All players may participate in a corner kick from anywhere on the field.

**DRIBBLING:** Dribbling is transporting the ball under control from one area to another. Soccer players cannot use their hands. Players dribble the ball with their feet, using light taps on the ball to move it along the ground.

**DEFENDER:** The player/s who job is solely to protect the goal. They are to defend the goal from the opposing team.

**DIRECT KICK:** Any kick where the ball may pass directly into the goal for a score.

**EJECTION:** A player or coach may be ejected from the game due to unsportsmanlike behavior or receiving a red card. The player or coach must leave the playing area immediately. If a coach is ejected, only a registered assistant coach may continue to coach the game- if there is no registered assistant coach, the team must forfeit. If a player is ejected from the game, the team must play short a player for the remainder for the game. In either case,

Now a good question you may ask is – How do I know if there is an opponent putting pressure on me when I have my back turned towards the goal to receive a pass?

The answer to this question is to ALWAYS KEEP LOOKING AROUND YOU, whether you have the ball or not. Even when you are receiving the ball, you should give a quick look over your shoulder to check what's happening behind you. This will make you aware of the situation around you and hence, improve your decision making skill.

- Opposed (an opponent is near) –

The technique used to receive the ball when an opponent is putting pressure on you is to use a single touch to divert the incoming ball in a direction which will take you away from the opponent and create space. If you just receive the ball standing still and don't move away from the defender, it will be easy for the defender to dispossess you. Hence, just like with unopposed, checking over your shoulder to see where exactly the opponent who is pressing you is, is a must.

Make sure that once you touch the ball away from the defender, you use your body as a shield between the ball and the defender.

U10 is the age where positioning becomes more important. Players will most likely play stronger in one position over another. It is still in everyone's best interest to not have them play only one position, they should be comfortable playing in at least two areas on the field.

U12 and older is when players will most likely have one position which is their main role, they will still need to be able to play n at least one other position on the field.

### 🏀 **Equipment: What Players Need**

Soccer is played with a minimal amount of required equipment. All players will be required to wear shinguards at every practice and game; this is for insurance purposes. If a player is injured during practice or a game- they will not be covered if they were not wearing shinguards.

Each team will also have a uniform (jersey and shorts) and socks which will need to be worn at all games. No club uniforms will be allowed. Additionally, player will need to have soccer socks which come up to at least their knee and cover their shinguards. These socks can either match their uniform, or be a different color or pattern. Every player should also have a ball of appropriate size for their age. U8 and under will use a size 3 ball. Players should bring their ball to every practice and game.



### 🏀 **Equipment: What Coaches Need**

A coach must always come to the field prepared. Below is a basic list of recommended equipment you should have with you on activity day:

- a basic first-aid kit
- water container (filled with water)
- soccer balls
- an extra pair of shinguards
- whistle
- cones

The WSA has some equipment that you may *borrow*. Please contact the Director of Coach and Player Development to obtain this equipment. You will generally receive a ball bag, cones and pinnies.

## The Officials

The Referee is the ultimate authority during the game. The referee's chief responsibilities are to make the game as fun, fair and safe for the players as possible.

The referee enforces the rules — which, in soccer, are called “Laws” — by calling fouls (offenses) and determining if goals have been scored.

Assistant referees provide vital assistance to the referee by signaling when the ball has gone out of play and which team gets possession. Assistant referees also assist with substitutions and the general control of the game.

Your team's age will determine how many referees you will have for each game. U8 and under will have one center referee. It is your responsibility to ensure that the referees receive their game fee. At the coaches meeting you will receive a check for game fees, you need to get the check cashed and be ready to pay the referees the fee at each of your HOME games.

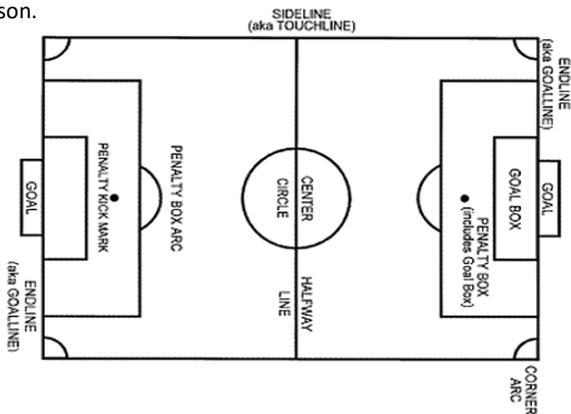
The WSA, Best Southwest and North Texas have a zero tolerance policy for referee abuse. Even if you feel that a referee has made a bad call, it is never appropriate to scream at or berate a referee. Not only is this behavior forbidden and can cause you to be thrown from the game (along with other serious consequences), you must also remember that as the coach, you are setting an example for the players watching you. All of our referees are hired by North Texas and professionally trained, but they are human and they do make mistakes.

## The Field

The field is divided in two halves. The center circle in the middle of the field is used to start the game, to start the second half and to restart after a goal has been scored. There is a large rectangular area and a smaller rectangular area found at each end of the field. These are vital areas for both teams, and are where penalty kicks are taken.

The four corners of the field are inscribed with three-foot arcs where corner kicks are taken.

In U8 and older, coaches are to remain on the touchline and can only enter the field if the referee requests for them to. No one may be behind the goal line at any time, for any reason.



## The Proper Way To Receive

Receiving or trapping the ball is a skill that separates good players from mediocre ones. Unfortunately, most beginners overlook this skill as it is not too obvious to notice in games. However, the fact is that this is the skill which comes into play the most during the game, because to do virtually anything with a soccer ball, you first have to receive it. And unless you know how to receive a soccer ball properly, everything else will go in vain. So focus on learning the art of receiving a soccer ball very carefully.

The way you receive a ball will depend heavily on two factors:

1. Is the ball on the ground, or flying thru the air?
2. Is there an opponent near you?

- Ball on Ground -

- Keep your eye on the ball
- Choose which foot to receive the ball with (this may depend on the location of the defender).
- Receive the ball with one foot with the toe pointed up (ankle locked).
- Don't stop the ball. Instead, prepare it for the next action: shot, dribble, pass or to play away from pressure.

- Ball in Air -

- Keep your eye on the ball
- Reading the flight, speed and direction of the ball.
- Deciding which body part will control the ball (foot, thigh, chest or head).
- Getting the body in line with the direction of the ball.
- Preparing to receive the ball by presenting the body part to the ball.
- Cushioning the ball with the body part to slow it down and preparing for the next touch

- Unopposed (no opponent is near) -

The technique used in receiving the ball when there is not much pressure around you is to receive the ball in such a way that with ONE TOUCH you are FACING TOWARDS THE OPPONENT'S GOAL. The biggest mistake made by beginners is that they take two or more touches to receive the ball and face goal side, i.e., one touch to receive the ball and the other to turn around with the ball and face the goal. This is NOT CORRECT as it uses up too much time, and by the time you turn and put your head up, your opponents would close you down and dispossess you.

The CORRECT way is to make the motion of receiving the ball and turning into one. You receive the ball while turning. In this way, in one touch of the ball, you are facing towards your opponent's goal and can immediately gauge the field to make a pass or take a shot.

1. As you draw back the kicking leg, extend and firmly position the kicking foot.
2. Keep your head steady and focus on the ball.
3. Use a complete follow-through motion as you drive your instep through the point of contact with the ball.
4. The kicking mechanics are very similar to those used when shooting

#### Preparation

- Approach ball from behind at slight angle
- Plant balance foot beside ball
- Point balance foot toward target
- Flex balance leg at knee
- Square shoulders and hips to target
- Draw back kicking leg
- Kicking foot extended and firm
- Knee of kicking leg over ball
- Arms out to sides for balance
- Head steady
- Focus on the ball

#### Execution

- Transfer weight forward
- Powerful snap-like motion of kicking leg
- Kicking foot firm
- Contact the center of the ball with instep

#### Follow-Through

- Generate momentum through the ball
- Weight centered over ball of balance foot
- Follow-through to chest level

## The Laws (Rules)

There are 17 rules in soccer, called “The Laws of the Game,” and they are easy to understand. Their purpose is to make the game fun, safe and fair.

The object of the game is for the players to get the ball into their opponent’s goal using any part of their body except hands and arms. Only goalkeepers may use their hands while inside their own penalty area.

Generally, the Laws require that referees stop the game only when something has happened which they decide is unfair or unsafe. Important elements of the Laws to be familiar with include Ball In and Out of Play, Fouls, Misconduct and Offside.

### **Kick-Off**

To start the game or the second half, and after each goal, a kick-off is taken from the center circle.

### **Throw-In**

After the ball has completely crossed the side boundary lines — called touch lines — a throw-in is awarded against the team that last touched the ball. The throw-in is taken from where the ball left the field and must be thrown with two hands from behind and over the head, while both feet are on the ground on or behind the touch line.

### **Goal Kick**

The goal kick is taken by the defending team each time the ball crosses the goal line without a goal being scored and was last touched by an attacking player. The ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area and is not considered back in play until it has been kicked out of the penalty area.

### **Corner Kick**

This kick is taken by the attacking team each time the ball is kicked by the defense over its own goal line without a goal being scored. The ball is placed within the three-foot arc in the corner of the field (nearest to where the ball went out of play) and kicked into play by the attacking team.

### **Penalty Kick**

A penalty kick is awarded when a defending player commits one of the 10 penal (major) fouls within his or her own penalty area while the ball is still in play. The penalty kick is taken by a player from the offended team from a spot 12 yards from the goal. All players must remain outside the penalty area, 10 yards from the ball, and behind the penalty kick mark until the kick is taken, except for the kicker and the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line until the ball is kicked. Once kicked, the goalkeeper may try to stop the ball from entering the goal. The kicker, after waiting for the referee’s signal, may score by kicking the ball directly into the opponent’s goal.

### **Offside (U10 and older)**

It is not an offense itself for a player to be in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if he is nearer to his opponents’ goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent when the ball is struck.

A player is not in an offside position if:

- he is in his own half of the field of play or;
- he is level with the second-last opponent or;
- he is level with the last two opponents

## The Fouls

### Penal (Major) Fouls

There are 10 major fouls that result in a direct free kick (DFK), and from which a goal may be directly scored against the opponents.

The 10 penal fouls are divided into two groups. Six within the first group require that the foul be committed carelessly, recklessly, or with disproportionate force:

- **Kicking** or attempting to kick an opponent.
- **Striking** or attempting to strike an opponent.
- **Pushing** an opponent.
- **Charging** an opponent.
- **Tripping** or attempting to trip an opponent.
- **Jumping at** an opponent.

The other four require only that they be committed:

- When **tackling** an opponent, making contact with the opponent before the ball.
- **Spitting at** an opponent
- **Holding** an opponent
- **Handling** the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeepers within their own penalty areas).

### Non-Penal (Minor) Fouls

There are eight minor fouls that result in an indirect free kick (IFK). At least one additional player of either team must touch the ball before a goal can be scored from an IFK.

- **Playing in a Dangerous Manner** Including high kicking near another player's head or trying to play a ball held by a goalkeeper.
- **Impeding the Progress of an Opponent** Getting between an opponent and the ball when not playing the ball.
- **Preventing the Goalkeeper** from releasing the ball from his/her hands.

**Goalkeeper Offenses** An IFK is also awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, within his/her own penalty area, commits any of the following five offenses.

- While controlling the ball with the hands, takes more than six seconds before putting the ball back into play.
- Touches the ball again with the hands after it has been released from the keeper's possession and has not touched another player.
- Touches the ball with the hands when ball is deliberately kicked to the keeper by a teammate.
- Touches the ball with the hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.

- Swing kicking leg back behind balance leg
- Extend kicking foot downward and rotate inward
- Arms out to sides for balance
- Head steady
- Focus on the ball

### Execution

- Head down and body over ball
- Snap kicking leg forward
- Keep kicking foot firmly positioned
- Contact ball on outside surface of instep
- Contact inside half of ball

### Follow-Through

- Transfer weight forward
- Use an inside-out kicking motion
- Complete follow-through of the kicking leg

ISSUE	CORRECTION
Ball leaves the ground	--Plant your balance foot slightly behind and to the side of the ball. --Your kicking foot should be pointed down and rotated inward with your knee over the ball at the moment of contact. --Do not lean back. --Keep your head steady and focus on the ball.
Pass lacks velocity or pace	--Keep the kicking foot firm and use a short, powerful snap-like motion of the kicking leg. --Contact the ball with as much foot surface area as possible --For longer passes use a complete follow-through motion of the kicking leg.
Too much spin on the ball	Contact the ball just left or right of its vertical midline, not along its outer edge.

### Instep Pass

Use the instep pass to play the ball when the distance is 25 yards or greater. The instep is the portion of your foot covered by the shoe laces. It provides a hard, flat surface with which to contact the ball.

To execute the instep pass, approach the ball from a slight angle. Plant your balance foot beside the ball with the leg slightly flexed. Square your hips and shoulders to the intended target.

- Transfer weight forward
- Generate momentum through ball
- Smooth follow-through and point your toes up and away from the midline of your body. Contact the center of the ball with the inside surface of your kicking foot. Make sure that your foot is firmly positioned as you follow through with the kicking motion

ISSUE	CORRECTION
Poor accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Plant your balance foot beside the ball and pointed toward the target.</li> <li>-- Square hips and shoulders</li> <li>-- Keep head steady as you contact the ball</li> </ul>
Pass lacks velocity or pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Keep kicking foot firm.</li> <li>-- Transfer your weight forward as the kicking foot contacts the ball</li> <li>-- Use a smooth follow-through motion.</li> </ul>
Approaching the ball from a severe angle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Approach from directly behind the ball and attempt to kick across your body.</li> <li>-- Square shoulders and hips to target as your foot contacts the ball</li> <li>-- Pass in the direction you are facing.</li> </ul>

#### - Outside of Foot –

At times you will have to release a pass while dribbling at speed; at other times you may want to pass the ball diagonally to the right or left. For these situations the outside-of-the-foot pass is your best choice.

This technique involves an element of deception and is less predictable to opponents than the inside-of-the-foot pass. Use the outside-of-the foot technique for short- and medium-distance passes.

1. Plant your balance foot slightly behind and to the side of the ball. Extend the kicking foot down and rotate it slightly inward.
2. Use an inside-out kicking motion as you contact the inside half of the ball with the outside surface of your instep.
3. Keep your foot firmly positioned.
4. For passing distances of 5 to 10 yards, use a short, snap-like kicking motion of the lower leg. For longer passes use a more complete follow-through to generate greater distance and velocity

#### Preparation

- Plant balance foot slightly behind and to side of ball
- Point balance foot forward
- Flex balance leg at knee

## Coaching 101

Now that you have familiarized yourself with the game of soccer and read through all of the rules- you are probably thinking “well that’s all great information to have, but how do I use it? How do I coach?” Let us give you some direction.

### 🌐 Register to be a Coach

First things first- you need to register through GotSoccer to be a coach. This process will include a background check and once completed, will allow us to assign you to a team.

Step 1- Visit our website at [www.waxahachiesoccer.org](http://www.waxahachiesoccer.org)

- (1) Select the “Registration” tab
- (2) Scroll to the bottom of the page and select “Coaches Registration”. This will take you to the appropriate GotSoccer page to create your coaches account.
- (3) Follow the onscreen instructions for “Individual Users-New Account”

Step 2- Visit the GotSoccer website by following the link at the bottom of our website, or by visiting [www.gotsoccer.com](http://www.gotsoccer.com)

- (1) Select “User Login” from the top right corner
- (2) From “Member Account” select “Teams & Team Officials”
- (3) Using the ID and password that you created in Step 1, sign in to “Individual Coach”
- (4) Select “Background Checks” from the black navigation bar
- (5) Select “Submit New Report” and follow the onscreen instructions.

Please email your commissioner once you have submitted the report so that they know to look for your approval.

This process must be completed for every coach and assistant coach on your team. If you or your assistant coaches have volunteered with us before, you can skip Step 1.

Reports are good for one soccer year (August thru July), so even if you submitted a report for the Spring season- a new report must be submitted every Fall.

### 🌐 Determine Teams’ Identity

There are two things used to determine a teams’ identity- team color and team name. It is up to you to decide the team name and team color, some coaches think it’s best to ask the team for their opinion- that will only cause stress in the long run because you can’t please everyone. Most parents/players are content with being told their team name and color.

- Team Color
  - U8 and Older – You will be ordering your own uniforms for your team. You can order from any company that you wish, we recommend using Embroid Me

which is located here in Waxahachie or Score Sports which is an online company.

When deciding on your color- keep in mind that if you choose an extremely popular color, you will most likely have a color conflict for several games. Remember to also purchase a pinnie per player in case this does occur. If you build the cost of the pinnie into the cost of the uniform, you will have a full team set of pinnies that you can use for games and practices.

Also, keep in mind that no club or replica uniforms should be worn- and if you have any sponsor logos, they cannot be offensive or be alcohol/smoking related.

- Team Name
  - Try not to make your name contingent on your color (i.e. “Orange Tigers” or “Black Bears”) or based on your age (i.e. “Butterflies” and “Little Monsters”) Choosing a name which can grow with the team ensures continuity for the players even as they gain new teammates or a new coach.

### Determine Teams' Schedule

Deciding when and where you would like to hold practices is entirely up to you.

- When Your Team Will Practice
  - Keep in mind that most parents work so anything before 5pm is not a good idea. Most teams hold practice two times a week. You should also keep in mind your team's age:
    - U8-U10: 1 hour 30 minutes
    - U12 and older: 2 hours

Where Your Team Will Practice

- Any public park or school
- NO PRIVATE PROPERTY
- Keep in mind that places like Lions Park will be very busy on peak practice days (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) and it might be difficult to find a spot.
- If there are defined field areas (either lined or with goals), only use the field size appropriate for your teams age.
- NO ONE can practice at the Sports Complex.

### Team Meeting

Decide where and when you'd like to hold your team meeting. Some coaches choose a neutral location (like Chick-fil-A or a park) where the kids can go play while the parents talk – others like to hold it 30 minutes before their first practice. There are several things that you'll want to accomplish at this meeting:

1. Introduce yourself. Tell them why you chose to coach.
2. Define expectations. Tell them how WSA expects them to behave (have them sign the Parent Code of Conduct). This is also the time to tell them what you expect from them.
3. Get Volunteers. Have someone volunteer to be the team parent to plan parties, make snack schedules and do reminder calls. Also, get an assistant coach. If you can't make a game, the team will have to forfeit if you do not have a registered

## The Proper Way To Pass A Ball

The two most common types of passes in soccer are the Push Pass (short distance, stays on the ground) and the Instep Pass (Lofted Pass; long distance, usually goes up into the air)

### Push Pass

- Inside of Foot –

For this pass, you use the inside of the foot (along the arch) to push the ball forward. As a result, the hip and leg/knee must rotate outwards to allow contact with the ball.

Taking these elements in sequence, you will:

1. Turn the pass foot outward, locking the ankle so that the foot will not wobble. The knee of the passing leg will be slightly bent to allow the foot to come into contact with the middle of the ball.
2. As you are turning the pass foot outward, you will be stepping up to the ball with your plant foot, so that it is about hip-width away from the ball. If you stand too close, your hip will not swing smoothly. If you stand too far to the side, your angle will be awkward and the ball will not be struck smoothly. Your plant leg should be slightly bent, and the toe of the plant foot should be pointed at the target.
3. The ball is struck in the middle. If struck towards the bottom, it will go airborne. As the ball is struck, the plant leg should continue thru a natural swing of the hip, which will transfer additional power to the pass and also help to make it more accurate.
4. The arms will be held somewhat out from the body, especially on the follow-thru, so improve balance.

Preparation

- Face target
- Plant balance (non-kicking) foot beside ball
- Point balance foot toward target
- Square shoulders and hips to target
- Flex balance leg slightly at knee
- Swing kicking leg backward
- Position kicking foot sideways
- Arms out to sides for balance
- Head steady
- Focus on the ball

Execution

- Body over the ball
- Swing kicking leg forward
- Keep kicking foot firm
- Contact center of ball with inside surface of foot

Follow-Through

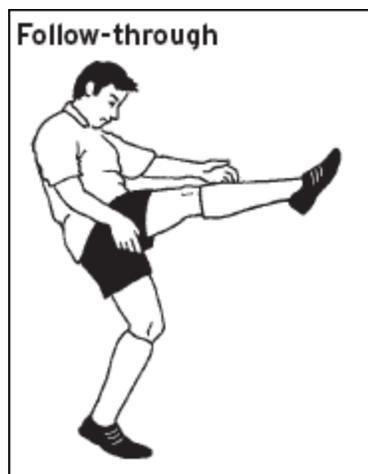
### The Goalkeeper

Where the goalkeeper is standing is a very important aspect you should look at when determining where to shoot. Here are some rules you should follow when dealing with goalies:

- Most of the time, shoot across the goalie
- Catch the goalie wandering. If he/she favors one side or is too far out of the goal, make sure you utilize that.
- Always know where the goalie is, but look at the ball.

### Your Foot

When striking the ball for a shot your non-striking foot should be next to and slightly in front of the ball. Your striking foot should hit the ball with your shoe laces and follow thru the ball as if kicking up into the air.



4. assistant coach who has completed their background check and been assigned to your team.
5. Tell them your team information. This includes name, color and practice information.
6. Tell them what equipment they will need to purchase- shinguards, cleats and a ball. Also, tell them about their team uniform and collect any fees.

### Contact Your Team

Call each player on your team to let them know when/where your team meeting will be.

### Hold Practices

The next thing that you will do is start holding practices. There are a few drills included in this book to help get you started.

If you would like additional assistance with practices or drills, please contact our Director of Coach and Player Development.

### Keep Your Team Updated

It is your responsibility to ensure that your team is up to date with the latest WSA news and information. Some of the information you will need to distribute to your team:

- Team Schedule
- Picture Day Schedule
- Game Reschedules
- Special Offers from our Sponsors
- Our Tournament Information
- Camps and Clinics Sponsored by WSA

You are not responsible for calling each parent to let them know that a game has been cancelled due to the weather. You should distribute the rainouts numbers for each city that you will be playing in so that the parents can call before they leave for the game. Even if it's not severe weather here, they should still call just to check.

### Additional Details

- Practice Equipment: The WSA has practice equipment that you can borrow for the season, you will be required to return it before you will receive your teams trophies. The equipment includes a ball bag, cones and pinnies. We do not have balls or nets for teams to borrow. Please contact our Director of Coach and Player Development for more information.
- After-Game Snacks: Most kids in U10 and under depend on those after game snacks. Assign a different player to bring a nutritious snack and drink to be handed out after each game.
- Dates Every Coach Needs to Know: There are several dates throughout the season that you need to be sure to remember;
  - Beginning of Season Coaches Meeting
  - Coaching 101 Class
  - Team Picture Day

- WSA Tournament
- End of Season Coaches Meeting

All of these dates will be available via our website or through your commissioner.

## The Proper Way To Shoot

Every soccer player wants to hear the rippling of the net and see the ball fly past the keeper's outstretched grasp. This is why soccer shooting skill is not only as important as dribbling and passing, but also a favorite skill to learn.

Shooting is complex because it involves so many movements that need to come together perfectly. No other skill requires such constant training and tweaking. Additionally, players need to know where to shoot the ball in specific situations, and how to get a shot off, among other things. It is no wonder that shooting is one of the hardest skills in soccer.

### The Parts of a Soccer Ball

Learning what the different parts of the ball do is simple, and yet very vital. In this article you will learn how to choose where the ball goes and how to keep it low and high.

The parts of a ball direction wise are:

#### **Middle**

Kicking the ball in the middle will direct it straight.

#### **Right**

Kicking the right side of the ball will send it left.

#### **Left**

Kicking the left side of the ball will direct it right.

### Where to Shoot

The basic rule of scoring is to shoot away from the goalkeeper into the corner. When you are closer to the goalkeeper, less power becomes necessary and you should focus on accuracy.

Finishers often naturally display initiative: If the goalie is far off his line, chip him. If you are far away from the goal, more power is necessary. All of these basics are learned through play.

### Height

Most players feel the need to hit the ball in the upper ninety (the top corner of the goal), but this often leads to shooting the ball over the goal.

You may be surprised to hear that more goals are scored on the ground than in the air. A well placed shot in the corner is very hard for keepers to block (even from a distance), and there is *no* chance of the ball going over the goal. Striking the ball on the ground will reduce the chance of missing (because the ball can't go over the net), and will make you a goalies worst nightmare. Goalies hate shots on the ground because they are hard to block.

### Distance

Basically, the farther away you are from the goal, the more power you need to put on your shots.

This works the opposite way too, meaning, the closer you get to the goal, the less power is important. Remember that there are many variables when it comes to shooting, so distance should not be your primary concern when deciding how to shoot.

## The Proper Way To Dribble

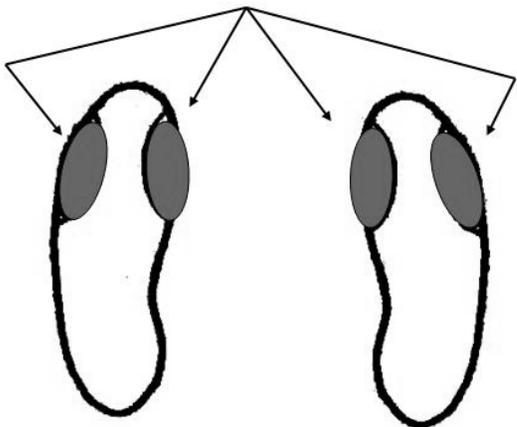
Dribbling the ball is an essential part of playing soccer. The best dribblers can move the soccer ball swiftly without looking down, and they have a few tricks up their sleeves.

The key to dribbling is to use both feet to kick the ball ever so lightly without losing control at a comfortable speed for you. You should touch the ball with the inside of your shoes, for the most part, for better control. But you can touch it with the outside of your shoe as well. The very best players in the world can dribble the ball adeptly with both feet. Most people usually favor one of their feet as the superior skilled foot to dribble the ball in close quarters, although both feet also are used.

The most common mistake you may make as a beginner is constantly looking down and not knowing which direction you're going. Keeping your head up as you're dribbling is critical. If you don't, you'll literally run into trouble, whether it's the opposition or a teammate. You won't know where you are on the field, and you won't have the ability to make quick decisions to help your team.

As you become more comfortable with the ball, you'll pick up speed and become more confident. Unless you're gifted, dribbling speed comes only with time.

Touch the ball here



## Getting Started

### Plan Your Practice

All practices should be planned in advance and should focus on a specific technique or tactic, which in turn guide the activity for that session. The practices you select in your coaching plan should: teach; practice; improve; and refine the particular skill. Write your drills down and take them with you to the field.

### Coaching Grids

Most coaches use coaching grids to organize their practice sessions. Grids are marked areas that define the space being used for a practice or game. Grids help provide boundaries, supply pressure and organize layers. The size of your grid will depend on the age, ability and number of players that you have. As a coach, you should select a grid size that allows for successful repetitions of the technique or tactic being practiced. Individual grids are traditionally set up 10 yds wide by 10-15 yds long. Multiple small grids can quickly be adapted to create larger playing areas for small sided games.

### Get Them Going

Players should be encouraged to be there early to allow you to always start your practice on time. Having explained the theme of the practice to your players, get the drills started as quickly as possible. Do not stand there talking for long periods of time, your practice time is short as is the attention span of your players.

### Stop

When you want to stop the practice to make a coaching point or change the activity, it is helpful to use short sharp commands such as "Freeze" or a catch command like "Stop, Stand Still". Try to avoid stopping the activity every time you see a mistake. Players will become frustrated and will no longer be motivated to learn if they are repeatedly stopped.

## Start

When you are ready to resume activity, you can prepare them with a cue such as, "Ready to play, Play!" or "3-2-1 Live". This additional cue draws their attention and prepares them to be ready to start the activity together.

## Come In

When you need the players to run over to you, you can make the activity of running fun by issuing a challenge, "you have 5 seconds to get to me, 5-4-3-2-1" or "who can get to me first".

## Coaching

Give the players a clear picture of the technique you are coaching and a limited number of coaching points. Allow them to get used to the activity and to get plenty of repetitions- resist the urge to jump in and make immediate corrections, the players should be allowed some time to feel their way into new skills and learn the correct body mechanics through discovery.

## Communication

Do not continually talk throughout the practice or the players will eventually tune you out. Be prepared to make both general coaching points to the group and to step in and make corrections to specific players' techniques. Make sure that every player is looking at you when you address the group.

## Position

Do not stand in one spot, you should move continually throughout the practice and be seen to be watching all players equally. When you make a coaching point, ensure that you are facing into the sun so that the players can clearly see what you are saying and doing.

## Questioning

Try to avoid talking *at* the players in your practice, involve them in the process of guided discovery. Ask those questions like "Can you do it this way and how many ways can you do this". The player discovers the solution through experimentation and reinforcement occurs with successful repetitions.



# Extras

## Playing Rules

	U8	U10	U12	U14	U16
# of Players on Field	7v7 (6 plus goalie)	9v9 (8 plus goalie)	11v11 (10 plus goalie)	11v11 (10 plus goalie)	11v11 (10 plus goalie)
Min # of Players to Start	4	7	7	7	7
Game Time	20 min Halves 5 min Halftime	25 min Halves 5 min Halftime	30 min Halves 5 min Halftime	35 min Halves 5 min Halftime	40 min Halves 5 min Halftime
Player Substitution	Halftime Team Throw-In Any Goal Kick Any Goal				
Field Size (approx. yds)	40x60	40x70	60x100	60x100	60x100
Out of Bounds Restart	Throw-In	Throw-In	Throw-In	Throw-In	Throw-In
Penalty Kicks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Offside Rule	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Goalie	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Goal Size	6ft x 12 ft	7ft x 21ft	Full Size	Full Size	Full Size
Direct or Indirect Kicks	Indirect	Both	Both	Both	Both
Slide Tackles	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Referee	Center	Center 2 Linesmen	Center 2 Linesmen	Center 2 Linesmen	Center 2 Linesmen
Ball Size	3	4	4	5	5
Max Weekly Practice	3 hrs	3 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs

at keeper who makes the save. While the keeper is making the save, the player behind them is moving their ball to a new position. After keeper makes the save, they must turn, find the ball and the other shooter, get in good position and save the shot from the second shooter. The keeper immediately turns and find the other ball and shooter, who has also moved to a varied position, and save the next shot. Each keeper makes 5 saves in succession, then rotate positions. Encourage shooters to serve balls from all angles. The keeper's arc for this 6-yard "goal" is smaller, but keepers need to quickly check the posts and find good position, along the center line and far enough out to cover the posts. Make sure the keepers, after turning, move through and out in front of the cones, off the goal line, to make the save.

**Color-Coded Shots (20 min)**

Place four differently-colored cones, bibs or other objects in an arc around the goal, about 16-18 yards away from the goal. At least one should be at an acute angle close to the goal line. At each cone, there is a shooter and several balls. Keeper starts at one goalpost. The coach calls a color. The keeper must quickly find that color object, get in good position along the arc, and make the save. Coach calls next color, and so on until the keeper has faced four shots. Then rotate keepers. First time through, have the shooters evaluate the keeper's position and help adjust them if they are not properly positioned. The second time through, the color call and the shot come immediately after the previous save. If the shooter thinks the keeper is out of position, they should try to take advantage of it.

Make sure the keepers check the posts as they move to be sure of their positioning. Keepers need to be off the goal line and outside the near post, along their arc. Footwork comes into play here too; the keeper should try to be in proper position before the shot is taken, if possible. Don't hesitate to "freeze" the keeper after a shot and correct their position if necessary.

**Follow the Bouncing Ball (15 min)**

This is similar to Color-Coded Shots, except now the keeper must track a moving ball. Put 3-4 players in a similar arc around the penalty area, and one keeper in the net. There is one ball. Players pass the ball around the arc; the keeper must use footwork and positioning to track the ball. At any point after 3-4 passes, a player may elect to take a shot, particularly if they feel the keeper is out of position. Each keeper saves three or four shots, then rotates out.

Similar coaching points to the previous exercise. The field players should try to quickly move the ball side-to-side to try to get the goalkeeper out of position.

**Moving Ball plus Defenders (15 min)**

Take the "Follow the Bouncing Ball" exercise, and now add one or two players as defenders who can pressure the ball but not tackle it away or intercept it. This adds a match-related condition to the exercise.

This exercise is a good one to use in a team training environment, and make it a more match-condition exercise, by adding more players in a larger area. The offence should always be numbers up (e.g. 5v2+K or 6v3+K) and encouraged to quickly switch the point of attack.

**Progressive Coaching  
U8 and Older**

The Progressive Coaching Method allows coaches of older players to introduce techniques in their most fundamental form and then provides a framework by which the technique can be practiced, refined and executed in a controlled environment to allow for maximum success.

The progression begins with a warm-up and is followed by a series of practices that allow players to repeat the activity over and over again so that they develop the correct timing, coordination and strength and also build up the muscle memory needed for permanent learning of the skill. Once the base skill has been learnt, the coach should gradually increase the level of pressure that each player is put under when performing the skill and by the end of the session the coach should have elevated the practice intensity to that of a full game.



### **Warm-up (10-15 minutes)**

Ideally the warm-up should relate to the main theme of the session. The goal of the warm-up is to get the players physically and mentally prepared for the session ahead. Create activities centered around the specific theme of the practice session that provide opportunities for players to use the same muscle groups that are to be worked in the session. Begin slowly and gradually increase the level of activity and physical exertion. Players need to be taught how to stretch correctly and should be encouraged to do this by habit before and after games, however do not spend valuable practice time on stretching routines which can be done by players on their own before the warm-up begins.

### **Unopposed Practice (10-15 minutes)**

In this stage, repetition is the key to skill development so set up your practices to enable players to work as individuals, pairs or small groups. The practices should repeatedly use the skill that you are focusing on and the organization of the group should provide the maximum opportunity for each player to be involved. Once the players have a good understanding of the basic technique you can begin adding pressure by restricting space or adding time limitations. The key here is to add pressure only by when you are confident that the majority of your players can execute the basic technique with confidence and consistency. Adding pressure too early will destroy any confidence they have and will lead to a lack of motivation and achievement.

### **Opposed Practice (15-20 minutes)**

The degree of pressure in the practice should be appropriate to the age and ability of the group and also to where they are in the learning process of the particular skill. Pressure may be introduced by adding opponents, or restricting space, time or touches. When adding opponents the coach may begin with limited opposition by restricting the movement of the opponents. Throughout the session the coach should remember what the goal of the practice is and should reduce the level of opposition if the players are not repeatedly executing the desired skill under pressure.

### **Game Related Stage (15-20 minutes)**

Having performed the skill under pressure, the players should then be required to do the same in competitive game like conditions. The game related practice should have specific direction towards goals or targets, should involve two teams (not necessarily equal) and should place the players in situations where they are forced to make game like decisions and react both offensively and defensively. The coach should place restrictions on the practice that continue to allow successful repetition of the skill.

shooter, come to the ready position, and make the save. Keeper gets three shots, then rotate positions. You can make this a competition to see who gets the most saves. Shooter should serve the ball within "footwork" distance of the keeper; do not allow dives. Similar coaching points to previous exercise.

### **Shots on Goal (15 min)**

Take shots on goal from 14-16 yards out and have keepers make saves using good footwork (no diving). For young keepers, you can stipulate that shots must be below waist level, or even on the ground. Give each keeper one or two shots, then rotate keepers/shooters. Challenge the keepers as a group to see how many saves they can make.

Encourage quick feet, and insist the keepers get all the way behind the ball -- no reaching out, and if they must, they should finish the motion by ending with the body behind the ball. Make sure keepers start on their toes before the shot comes; small "training bounces" will help.

### **POSITIONING**

Simply being in the right place at the right time is critical for successful goalkeeping. The positioning demo can be dropped (or briefly reviewed) for more experienced keepers; use the time for more of the game-like exercises at the end.

### **Warm Up (10 min)**

Jog and stretch, light footwork mirroring exercise, simple catch in pairs to warm up the hands.

### **Positioning Demo (15 min)**

Have three ropes set up beforehand; one tied to a stake at the center of the goal line, one tied to each post. Place a ball out near the edge of the penalty area, off center, and explain the center line and covering the posts. You can move the ball and ropes around the edge of the penalty area to demonstrate the goalkeeper's arc. Don't forget to point out they need to be "outside" the near post on shots from an angle.

Make it clear that this positioning is a general starting position for facing shots; crosses and breakaways are handled a bit differently. It is helpful, but not absolutely necessary, to have the field markings on the grass for this demo.

### **Two-Sided Saves (15min)**

Keepers in groups of three, with two cones 6 yards apart. One keeper stands between the cones, the other two players are about 8 yards away, one on each side of the cone "goal", with balls. Keeper faces one player, who shoots a ball

Players face each other across an imaginary line between the two cones; one player is the leader, the other is the follower. Leader uses good footwork and attempts to touch just outside either of the cones before the follower can touch just inside; if they are successful, they get a point. After a set length of time (30 sec for younger players, 60 sec for older), rest, and then switch leader and follower. Winner has the most points after the two rounds. Rotate winners so players get different match-ups. Keep shoulders square. Do not stretch for the cones -- keepers should use quick footwork to get all the way behind the cone. Use the crossover step to accelerate away from the follower. This is an exhausting drill, so allow a good amount of time between rounds for rest.

#### **Warm Up Hands (5 min)**

Now we get the goalkeeper's hands involved. Again in pairs, with a ball, players simply shuffle back and forth over about 10-15 yards tossing the ball back and forth. Simple throws for the first couple of minutes, then have the players intentionally throw the ball just off to the side of the other keeper.

Don't allow poor hand position on catches. Adjust shuffle steps so the body is behind the ball; even if the keeper has to reach for the ball, they should quickly use the feet to get the body behind it.

#### **Footwork Through Cones with Catch (20 min)**

Set up a line of 6-8 cones (use multiple lines if you have more than three or four keepers). Coach or server is 5 yards from end of the line; players at other end. Each player quickly shuffles side to side through cones, finishing by saving a ball hand-served slightly off target. Next, move the cones into a zigzag with 2-3 yards in between. Now keepers must use a crossover step between cones, with a quick shuffle around them, finishing with a save. Progress to finishing with a save off a out-of-hand volley or shot off the ground.

Footwork should be quick, and keepers should come ready for the shot as they round the last cone. Once ready, keeper should be light on their feet and able to still quickly get their body behind the ball for the save. Balls should be served within "footwork" distance; do not allow dives.

#### **Mirroring with Saves (15 min)**

Players in groups of three (each group in front of a net, if possible). One keeper stands in front of net, or cones marking an 8-yard long line. Shooter stands 10 yards away with ball on the ground, third player stands behind shooter. Third player begins side-to-side footwork with the keeper mirroring. At a random point, shooter strikes ball at the keeper. Keeper, while moving, must time the

#### **🏀 Game or Scrimmage (15-20 minutes)**

Where possible use the appropriate number of players per team, assign goalkeepers and set players in positions as they would be in normal league game. Players now should be encouraged to make decisions about how, where and when they execute the specific skill on the field. Try not to break the flow of the game by repeatedly stopping it to correct bad technique or incorrect decision making.

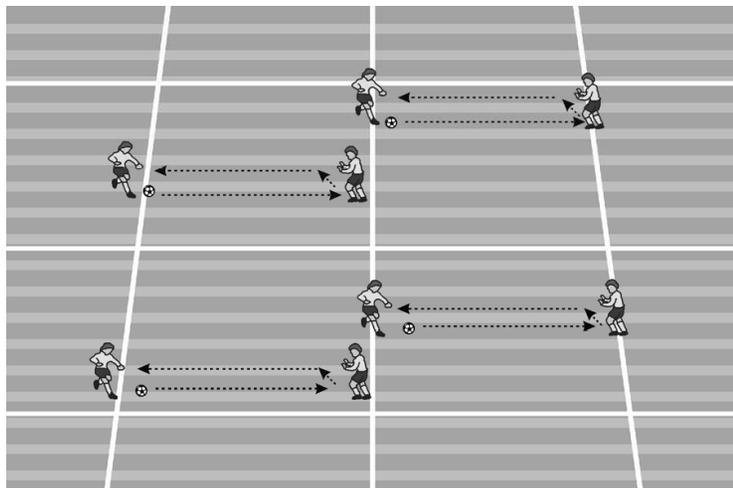
#### **🏀 Cool Down and Recap (5-10 minutes)**

Following your session, use question and answer techniques to determine if the players have retained any of the coaching points that you gave them during the session. Finish by reinforcing the key points of the skill once again.

**\*\*You should have a water break between each activity\*\***

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Passing

### Warm-Up: Pairs Passing



#### Organization:

Pair up the players and practice passing the ball across a 10 x 10 grid. Each player must be on their toes throughout the practice. The receiving player must first cushion the ball and then pass back with the inside of the foot.

#### Progression:

1. Upon receiving a pass, the players should use the inside or outside of their foot to control the ball to one side, and then return the pass to their partner.
2. Now when passing the ball, the players should aim a few yards to the side of their partners, forcing them to first move into the line of the ball before controlling and returning the pass.

#### Coaching Points:

Move towards each pass; do not pass from a standing position. Lock the ankle and turn the toes outward.

Plant the non-kicking foot alongside the ball and bend the standing knee slightly. Push through the ball and finish with your foot in the air – ankle locked.

Cushion the ball so that it rests in front of you, not directly at your feet.

## Basic Goalkeeping Drills

### U8 and Older

The most fundamental things that a goalie needs to learn is their footwork and positioning. In youth soccer, most goals are scored because a goalie is out of position or they trip over their own feet. The following drill plan is something that your goalie/s should be doing once a week.

#### FOOTWORK

Footwork training starts off every season. Basic footwork drills and warm-ups are used throughout the rest of the season for warm-ups and repetition. Even when training other topics, don't let them forget good footwork.

#### Warm Up (10 min)

After jog & stretch, and introduction of basic steps (shuffle and crossover) if necessary, do footwork mirroring. Coach or leader move back and forth with good footwork, varying speed and with quick changes of direction, players mirror the leader. Using a speed ladder can also be a great warm-up for this or any other session.

Make sure players stay light on their toes, knees bent, and keep their shoulders square to the leader.

For beginners, here's a great demonstration of why keepers need to be on their toes. First, have the players stand lightly on their toes and tell them to jump as high as they can. They should easily be able to get off the ground. Then, tell them to put their weight on their heels and jump again. This time they won't go anywhere!

#### Ready Position (5 min)

Do footwork mirroring again, but now the coach or leader will call "Shot!" every so often. When he does, keepers must instantly come to the ready position. Then keep moving. Then, the leader gets a ball and dribbles back and forth with the players tracking the ball; occasionally the leader fakes a shot and the keepers must come ready. Make sure keepers are still light on their toes when in the ready position, not on their heels.

Ready position means hips facing the ball, knees slightly bent and up on their toes. Arms at a 90 with palms facing out towards the ball near their head.

#### Footwork to cones (20 min)

Players in pairs. Each pair with two flat cones. Place cones 6 paces apart.

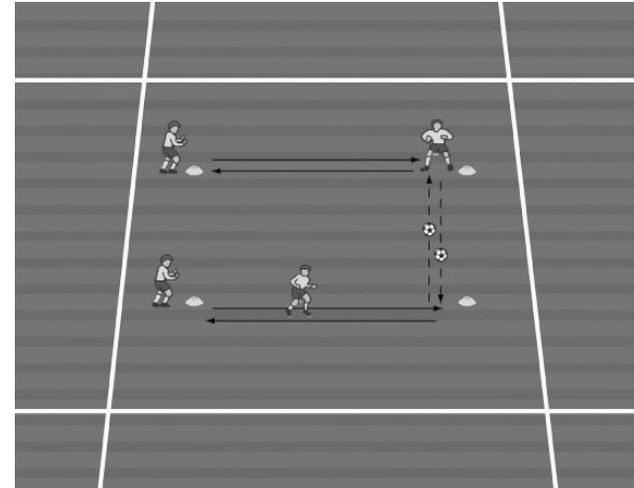
- Bring the ball to the ground first to cushion the landing, then land as softly as possible on the side (hip and shoulder)

### Communication

You must constantly provide instruction and feedback to your defenders. When defenders are under pressure, you must give them clear instructions to either pass the ball to you, or clear it. When your team is on the attack, come to the top of your penalty area or beyond and talk to your teammates and offer support to the defenders. Be mentally involved in the entire match, no matter where the ball is.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Passing

### Unopposed Practice: Pass and Move



### Organization

Three to four players are positioned at the bottom corners of a 10-15 yard grid. The first player in line will make a square pass across the other end of the grid. As the pass is traveling across the grid a player from the other line runs to meet the ball, control it, and then return the pass back across the grid to the next oncoming player. This practice can be reversed to allow players to pass with their other foot.

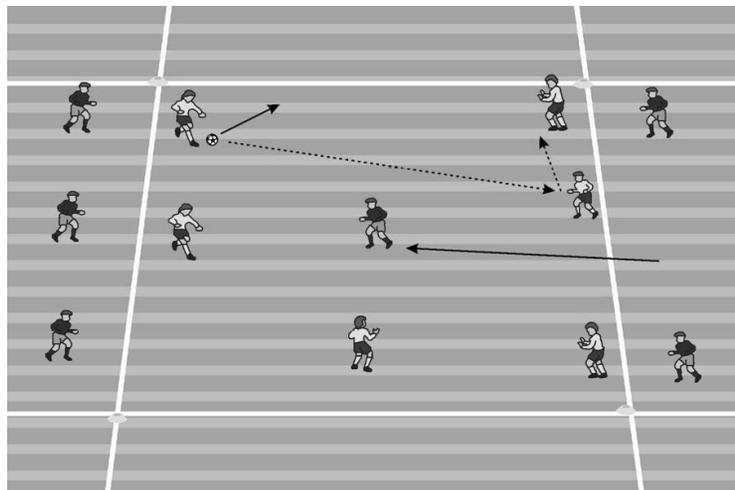
### Coaching Points

Encourage good technique in the passing:

- Chest over the ball
- Ankle locked
- Toe down
- Strike through the center of the ball

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Passing

### Opposed Practice: 6 vs 1 Keep Away



#### Organization:

Players are divided into two groups, with one half inside the 15 x 25 grid, and the other half around the perimeter. The inside players pass and move around the grid. Each perimeter player takes a turn defending the inside players for 15 seconds. Points are scored if the defender touches the ball or if the passers complete five passes.

#### Progression:

1. Make the drill more challenging by limiting the offensive players to two touches. More than two touches results in a loss of possession and a point for the defense.
2. Introduce a second defender.

#### Coaching Points:

Continually move and communicate so that the player on the ball has at least two wide passing angles. Be aware of where the defender is positioned and use your first touch to control the ball away from their pressure.

Move the ball quickly to avoid being caught in possession.

feet in line with the ball. The ball is caught with the fingers, rolled up into the hands and then brought up to the chest.

#### The Long Barrier

This is used when the ball is bouncing or rolling unevenly towards the keeper. It is important to get your body behind your hands to act as a barrier between the ball and the goal. To collect a ground ball with this technique, turn sideways and bend your knees. The knee of the back leg should rest on the ground and should be up against the heel of the front foot. Turn your upper body towards the ball and use your legs and chest as a barrier behind your hands. Scoop the ball upwards into your chest.

#### Safe position

Immediately after catching a ball at any height, the keeper should bring the ball into their chest with both arms wrapped around it and should immediately be scanning the field for open teammates.

#### The "Collapse" Dive

The collapse dive is used on balls that are shot just to the side of the keeper. The sequence of events on a collapsed dive goes like this:

- Use quick footwork to get into proper diving position
- Step to the side the ball is on, forward at an angle
- Use the near leg push to drive to the ball
- Get both hands to the ball to make the catch, using a good "W" catch
- Collapse softly to the ground, putting the ball down first to cushion the fall and landing on the side (hip and shoulder)

#### Aerial Dives

For balls further away, the keeper must extend and get into the air at the same level as the ball. The technique is similar to a collapsed dive, except that now the keeper must generate extra power to drive the body both horizontally and vertically to get into catching position. In addition, the landing will be a bit more difficult since the keeper will be "falling" from higher up.

The technique for aerial or extension dives is this:

- Use quick footwork to get into proper diving position
- Step to the side the ball is on, forward at an angle
- Drive outwards, and upwards if necessary, with the near foot, starting low and exploding for maximum height and distance - the goal is to get the body at the same height as the ball. For low balls, no height is needed so don't waste energy going up to make "rainbow", just drive horizontally.
- Bring the knee of the other leg across the body for additional boost
- Get both hands to the ball to make the catch, using a good "W" catch

## Basic Goalkeeping Techniques

### Footwork

The feet of a good goalkeeper are constantly in motion, and they move lightly on the balls of the feet. Do not cross your feet when moving sideways, skip quickly bringing your feet together in a lateral plane.

### Body Position

The goalkeepers hips and shoulders should always be square to the ball; that is, perpendicular to a line between the shooter/ball and the keeper. A common mistake is for young keepers to turn sideways when collecting balls to their side. The keeper should move quickly into line and try to keep their upper body facing forwards where possible.

### Field Position

The goalkeeper must always try to position themselves on an imaginary line that runs from the center of the goal to the ball. This puts them in the best possible position to cover either side of the goal.

### Ready Position

The ready position is an important starting point for every goalkeeper. The Keeper should take up a position directly between the ball and the center of the goal. They should be balanced on the balls (or front) of the feet, which should be shoulder width apart. They should bend comfortably at the knees while keeping as tall as possible. Their hands and arms should be relaxed at their sides, bent at the elbows so that the palms are facing inwards and forwards.

### Hand positioning for high balls

The hands should form a supple web that surrounds the back side (closest to the goal) of the ball. This is often described as the "W" grip due to the shape that the index fingers and thumb make in this position. Fingertips should be pointed up, palms facing forward & the thumbs of both hands are almost touching.

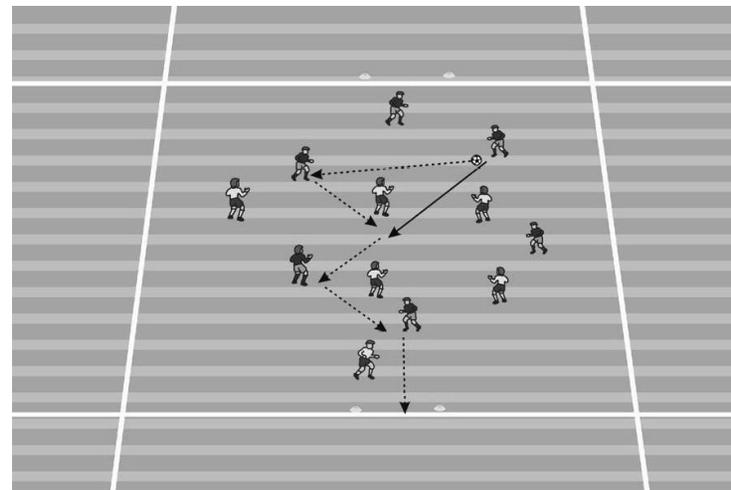
### Hand positioning for low balls

The hands should form a supple web that surrounds the back side (closest to the goal) of the ball. Fingers should be pointed down and palms facing forward. The little fingers of both hands are almost touching.

### Straight-leg pickup

This technique is used to pick up a ball rolling smoothly towards an unpressured keeper. The keeper should bend slightly at the waist, with their

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Passing Game Related Practice: Combination Game



### Organization:

Divide the group into two equal teams in a 30 x 40 yard grid. The two teams compete against each other in a small sided game with small goals but no goalkeeper. The team must first perform a specific passing combination before they are allowed to attempt to score. Goals may only be passed into the goal with the inside of the foot or by using a flick pass.

### Progression:

1. Players must first make four consecutive passes before they can score.
2. Players must perform a give & go, overlap or double pass before they can score.

### Coaching Points:

Keep scanning the field to see where your team mates are in relation to the defenders. Move the ball as quickly as possible forwards to the best positioned player.

Trail and switch the ball when trapped by a defender against the side line.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Passing Coached Scrimmage

Using a grid which is roughly half the size of your regulation playing field, split your team into two groups. The groups for this scrimmage should be an even distribution of offense and defense per team. One team needs to wear pinnies to clearly define who is on whose team.

Define two goal areas at each end of the field. Do not use goalies for this scrimmage.

The focus of this scrimmage needs to be on passing so if you find that the players are not making very many passes, try incorporating rules such as:

- At least 3 passes before a goal can be scored, or
- Only assisted goals count

Remember to not coach too much during the scrimmage. Allow the players the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Also, do not start and stop the play over and over, once or twice for the entire scrimmage is enough.

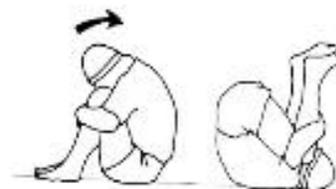
Reinforce the main idea of today's practice:

1. Pass using the inside or outside of your foot for shorter passes. Your shoelaces are used for long passes. Ankle locked for both.
2. Receive the ball using the inside or outside of your foot to control the ball.
3. Strike through the ball so that your foot continues past the ball once kicked.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Defense Cool Down and Recap

Ask your team the following questions while they are sitting down and drinking water. Then have them complete the stretches below.

1. How should your body be positioned when defending?
  - a. Sideways
2. When defending, do you stab at the ball or shuffle backwards until they make a mistake?
  - a. Shuffle backwards until they make a mistake.
3. Once you gain possession of the ball, what's the next step?
  - a. Get the ball out of the goal area by dribbling or passing.
4. What happens if you leave your player to chase the ball when defending?
  - a. You give the attacker someone to pass to.



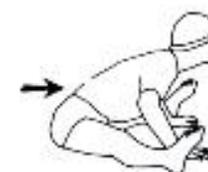
8-10 Times



30 Seconds Each Leg



30 Seconds Each Leg



30 Seconds



20 Seconds Each



10 Seconds Each Arm

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Defense Coached Scrimmage

Using a grid which is roughly half the size of your regulation playing field, split your team into two groups. The groups for this scrimmage should be an even distribution of offense and defense per team. One team needs to wear pinnies to clearly define who is on whose team.

Define two goal areas at each end of the field. Do not use goalies for this scrimmage.

The focus of this scrimmage needs to be on passing so if you find that the players are not making very many passes, try incorporating rules such as:

- At least 3 passes before a goal can be scored, or
- Only assisted goals count

Remember to not coach too much during the scrimmage. Allow the players the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Also, do not start and stop the play over and over, once or twice for the entire scrimmage is enough.

Reinforce the main idea of today's practice:

1. Close the space down quickly.
2. Turn your hips sideways to allow more agility in your movement.
3. Shuffle back with the attacker to maintain your space.
4. Wait for them to make a mistake and then tackle the ball.
5. Once you touch the ball away from them, quickly dribble it out of the goal scoring area, or clear the ball with a big lofted pass.
6. ALWAYS cover your player. Defenders are not ball chasers. If you are always covering a player, the attacker has no one to pass ball to creating more opportunity for them to make a mistake and their defender to gain control of the ball.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Passing Cool Down and Recap

Ask your team the following questions while they are sitting down and drinking water. Then have them complete the stretches below.

1. How should your foot be positioned when making a proper short pass?
  - a. In an L shape
2. What should your ankle do when making a proper pass?
  - a. Ankle should be locked
3. If you strike the ball with your shoe laces, what type of pass is that?
  - a. A long pass
4. When receiving a pass, is it with a hard foot or a soft foot? Why?
  - a. Soft foot. So that the ball doesn't bounce off of your foot and become uncontrollable.



15 Seconds



10 Seconds Each Side



15 Seconds



20 Seconds



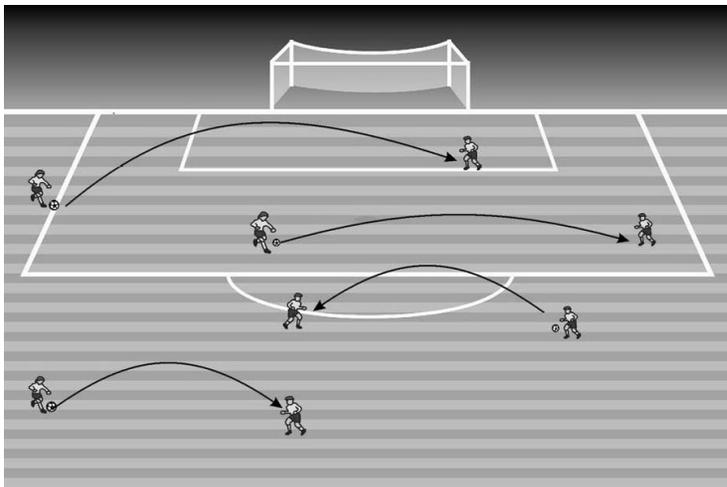
20 Seconds Each Leg



30 Seconds

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Lofted Passing

### Warm-Up: Long Passing



#### Organization:

The players divide into pairs with one ball between them and spread out throughout a half field. They move around the field and make long passes to each other. Have the players start 10-15 yards from each other and gradually build up the distance as they warm up their muscles.

#### Progressions:

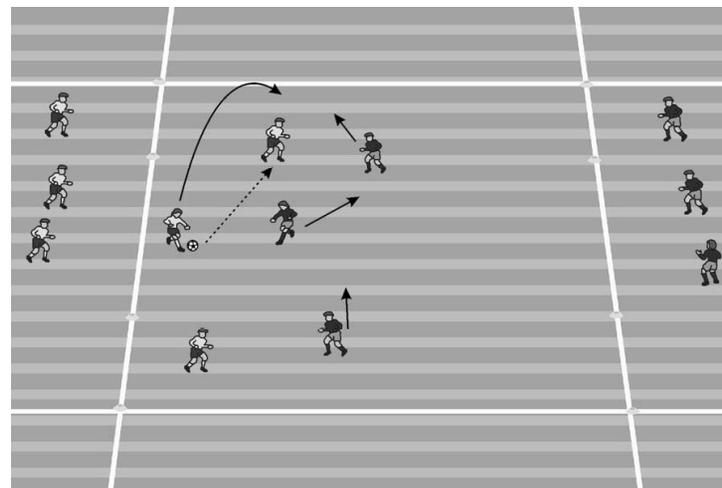
1. Have the players try to control the ball with one touch on the chest, thigh or foot and pass with the second touch.
2. Have them practice with their weaker foot over a shorter distance & to pass to whoever they wish within the group.

#### Coaching Points:

Stay relaxed swing your leg through on a full arc.  
Push the ball to one side and hit it while it is rolling to help get underneath it.  
Experiment with different types of passes.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Defense

### Game Related Practice: 3 vs 3



#### Organization:

Two teams of three compete to try and score a goal in either of the two gates positioned on either side of the end line. The defenders should adjust their individual position and team shape according to the location of the ball and the opponents.

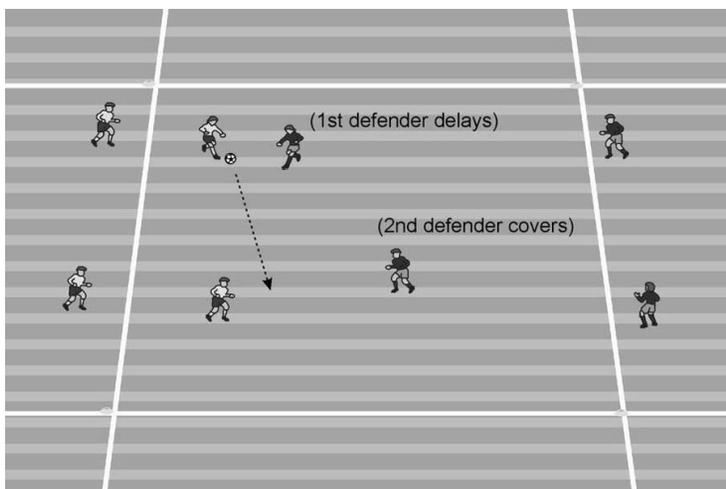
#### Progression:

1. Freeze the game and show how defenders should switch roles when the ball is played from one attacker to another.
2. Show how players can use the side line as a covering defender when an attacker overlaps.

#### Coaching Points:

When the ball is on one side of the field, the other defenders should form a curve, with the central player being the deepest.

**U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Defense**  
**Opposed Practice: 2 vs 2**



**Organization:**

Repeat the previous practice now with two attackers and two defenders. The first defender should delay the attacker and the second defender should drop back slightly to both provide cover for the first defender and to defend against the second attacker. The players will shuffle backwards initially and make no challenge on the ball.

**Progression:**

1. The attackers now attempt to combine to dribble the ball over the opposing end line, the defenders attempt to clear the ball back over the start line.
2. Both groups now attempt to score over each other's end line.

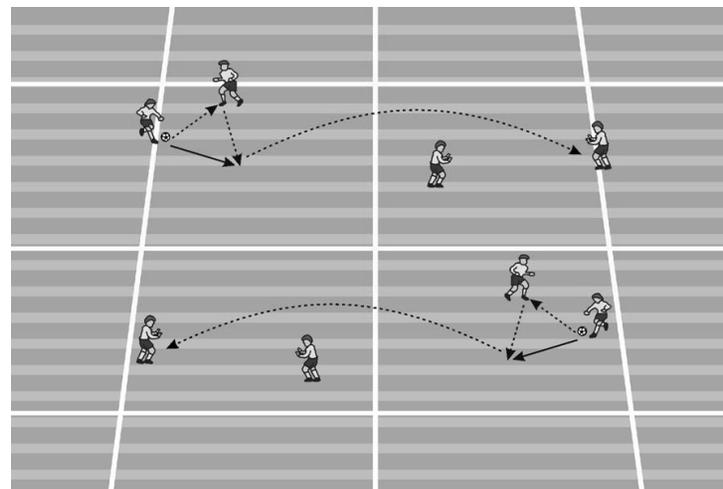
**Coaching Points:**

The first defender takes up a slightly sideways position in front of the player with the ball.

The second defender drops behind and to the side to create cover but close enough to defend against a pass to the second attacker.

If the ball is passed from one attacker to the other, the second defender moves forward and the first defender moves back to cover. Communication between the players is essential.

**U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Lofted Passing**  
**Unopposed Practice: Short-Short-Long**



**Organization:**

The players divide into groups of four with one ball between them. Two players play as passers at either end of the 10 x 30 yard grid, and the other two as supporting players. The passer makes a long aerial pass to the other end of the grid where the ball is controlled by the opposite end player. They then play a give & go with the support player and then return the lofted pass. The passer and support player change position after every pass

**Progression:**

1. The receiver must now try to lay the ball off to the supporting player with their first touch.

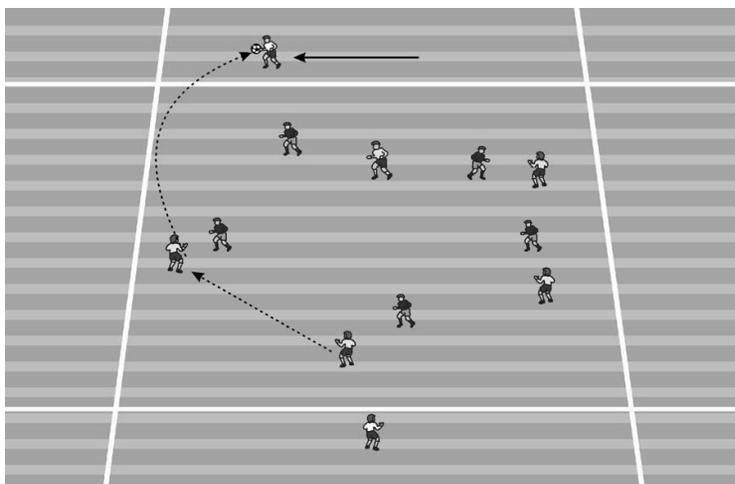
**Coaching Points:**

The supporting player should lay the ball off to the side of the passer.

Make your last stride longer than normal and plant your non kicking foot alongside the ball. Slice your foot under the ball and make contact with your laces.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Lofted Passing

### Opposed Practice: End to End



#### Organization:

Set up a 30 x 40 yard grid. Each team has a goalkeeper beyond their opposing end line. The keepers are allowed to move laterally along the end line only. The teams earn points for making long passes to their keeper's hands. If the keeper receives a pass, they get to restart the practice with an uncontested long pass to a teammate.

#### Progressions:

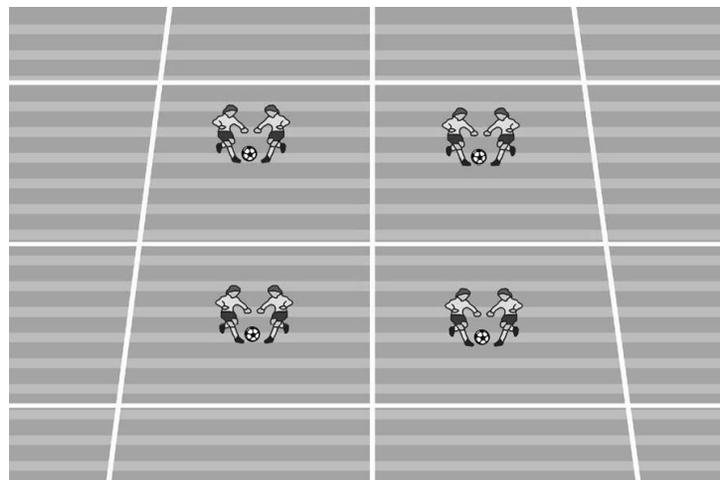
1. If the teams are not making repeated long passes to the goalkeeper, make one of the players neutral and allow them to play with the team in possession.
2. Replace the goal keeper with an outfield player who must control the ball in the air to score a point.

#### Coaching Points:

Keep the game simple by playing the way you are facing. Play the ball long to the target player as soon as possible. Play low risk, shorter passes in order to create an opening.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Defense

### Unopposed Practice: Front Block Tackle



#### Organization:

Players stand opposite a partner with a ball between them. Both players put their left feet next to the ball and place their right foot 1 yard back away from the ball, on the ground. On the coaches command, they both bring the inside of their right foot to make contact with the ball at the same time

#### Progression:

1. Begin by having the players work together to make contact with the ball at the same time/. The players can count 1,2,3 go.
2. Have the players increase the force with which they hit the ball. Repeat with the weaker foot.
3. Let the players compete to see who can win the ball.

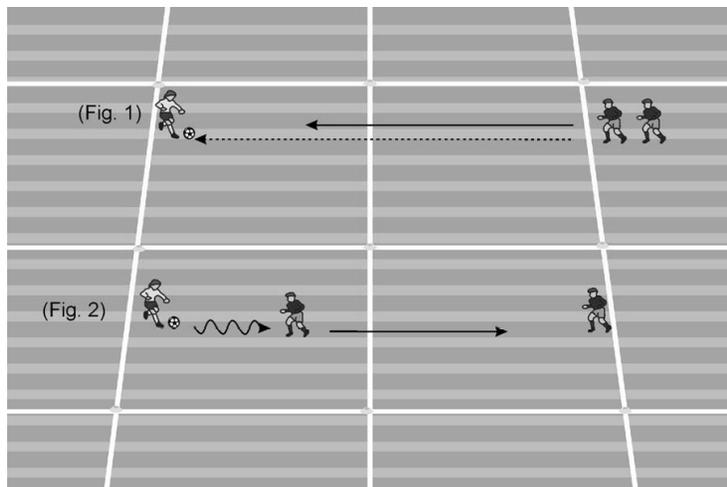
#### Coaching Points:

Keep your ankle locked in the "L" position. Keep your knees slightly bent but firmly locked.

Hold your arms slightly out to the side for balance.

Keep pushing with your foot once you have made contact with the ball.

**U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Defense**  
**Warm-Up: Defending Footwork**



**Organization:**

Begin with two lines of players divided into defenders and attackers across from each other using a 30 x 40 yard grid. The defender passes to the dribbler and follows across the grid to take up a crouched, sideways defensive position in front of the dribbler. The dribbler moves forward, cutting the ball from side to side all the way across the grid. The defender moves backwards maintain a 2 yd gap between them and the dribbler and may not tackle.

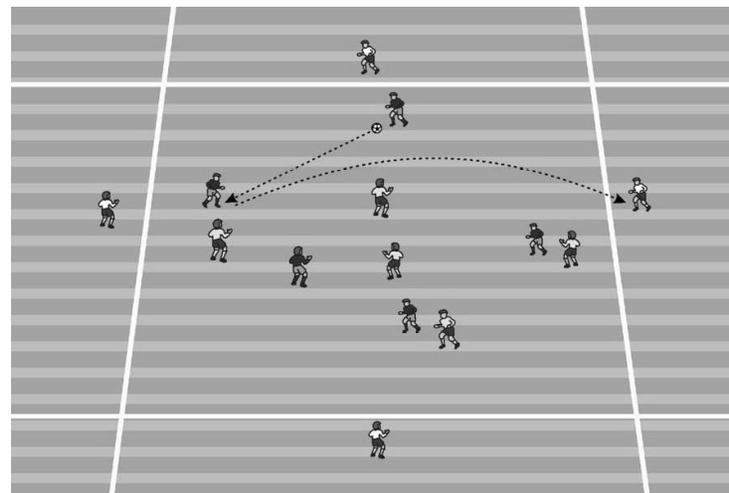
**Progression:**

1. The defender takes up a sideways stance and attempts to keep “Touch Close” as he retreats. No tackling is allowed.
2. The defender can now tackle the attacker in their own half and should look to pass the ball over the end line to win.

**Coaching Points:**

Close the space down quickly and slow down as you near the attacker. Adopt a sideways stance with your knees bent, stay on your toes. Shuffle backwards to maintain the distance between you and the attacker.

**U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Lofted Passing**  
**Game Related Practice: Side to Side**



**Organization:**

Divide the group into two teams, and place four neutral players on the four sides of a 25-35 yard square grid. The team in possession of the ball, tries to make a lofted pass to a neutral player on the outside of the grid. If they succeed they score a point.

**Progressions:**

1. Limit inside players to three touches.
2. Limit the minimum distance of the scoring pass.
3. Allow side players to play cross field passes to other side players.

**Coaching Points:**

If your teammate inside has the ball stay close enough to help them but far away enough so that one defender cannot defend you both. Look to use a give & go, take over and overlap to create space.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Lofted Passing Coached Scrimmage

Using a grid which is roughly half the size of your regulation playing field, split your team into two groups. The groups for this scrimmage should be an even distribution of offense and defense per team. One team needs to wear pinnies to clearly define who is on whose team.

Define two goal areas at each end of the field. Have two goalies for this scrimmage.

The focus of this scrimmage needs to be on lofted passing so if you find that the players are not making very many long, high passes, try incorporating rules such as:

- At least 3 passes before a goal can be scored, or
- Only assisted goals count, or
- The goalie has to catch the ball in the air to count as a point

Remember to not coach too much during the scrimmage. Allow the players the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Also, do not start and stop the play over and over, once or twice for the entire scrimmage is enough.

Reinforce the main idea of today's practice:

1. Pass using your shoelaces, ankle locked, foot under ball.
2. Receive the ball using a soft touch to your chest, inner thigh or top of foot to control the ball. A hard touch to the same areas will bounce the ball out from you and allow you to keep running.
3. Strike through the ball so that your foot continues past the ball once kicked.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Dribbling Cool Down and Recap

Ask your team the following questions while they are sitting down and drinking water. Then have them complete the stretches below.

1. If you are dribbling using small touches on the ball, are you near or far from an opponent? Why?
  - a. Near. To maintain control
2. What's the furthest you should ever be from a ball when dribbling?
  - a. One or two steps.
3. To touch the ball around a player, what part of your foot do you use?
  - a. Either the inside or the outside.
4. Once you touch a ball out around a player, what's the next thing you should do?
  - a. Accelerate



15 Seconds



10 Seconds Each Side



15 Seconds



20 Seconds



20 Seconds Each Leg



30 Seconds

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Dribbling Coached Scrimmage

Using a grid which is roughly half the size of your regulation playing field, split your team into two groups. The groups for this scrimmage should be an even distribution of offense and defense per team. One team needs to wear pinnies to clearly define who is on whose team.

Define two goal areas at each end of the field. It does not matter if you use goalies for this scrimmage or not.

The focus of this scrimmage needs to be on dribbling so if you find that the players on not having room to dribble, try changing the game:

- Make the field size larger so they have more room, or
- Divide them into groups of three. Every time a group makes a goal, they get to stay in and the group who did not make a goal switches with the group who was sitting out.

Remember to not coach too much during the scrimmage. Allow the players the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Also, do not start and stop the play over and over, once or twice for the entire scrimmage is enough.

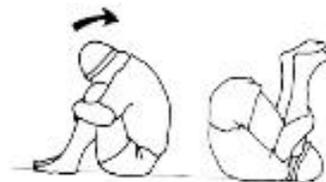
Reinforce the main idea of today's practice:

1. Use soft touches when dribbling close to an opposing player to keep the ball closer to you. Use harder touches when sprinting with the ball. The ball should NEVER be more than a step or two away from you.
2. Get your head up and look around.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Lofted Passing Cool Down and Recap

Ask your team the following questions while they are sitting down and drinking water. Then have them complete the stretches below.

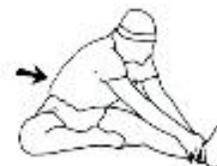
1. What part of your foot should strike the ball when making a proper lofted pass?
  - a. Shoe laces
2. What should your ankle do when making a proper pass?
  - a. Ankle should be locked
3. Where should your foot make contact with the ball?
  - a. On the bottom half
4. When receiving a lofted pass, where should the ball make contact with you? Why?
  - a. Chest, inner thigh or soft top of foot. To make it easier to maintain control of the ball.



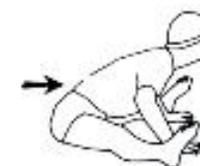
8-10 Times



30 Seconds Each Leg



30 Seconds Each Leg



30 Seconds



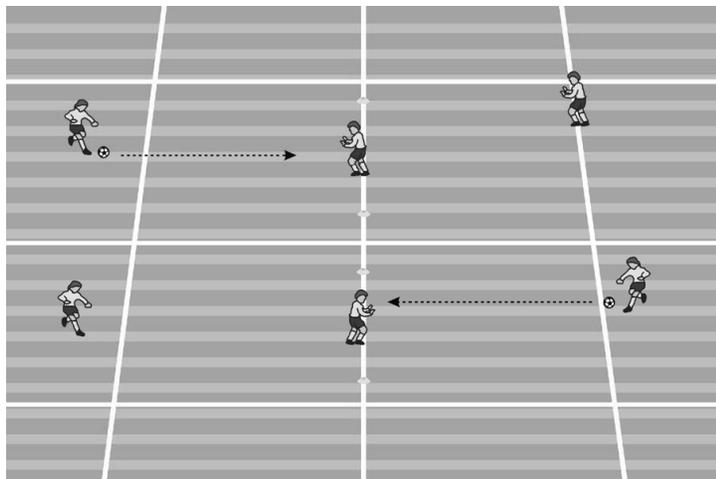
20 Seconds Each



10 Seconds Each Arm

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Shooting

### Warm-Up: Two Way Shooting



#### Organization:

Split the players into four groups of three and have each group work in a 10 x 30 yard grid. Each group should have one player on each end line, and one keeper defending a goal in the middle of the grid. Players take it in turns to shoot at the goal in the middle of the grid. If the keeper saves the ball he turns and feeds the other shooter

#### Progression:

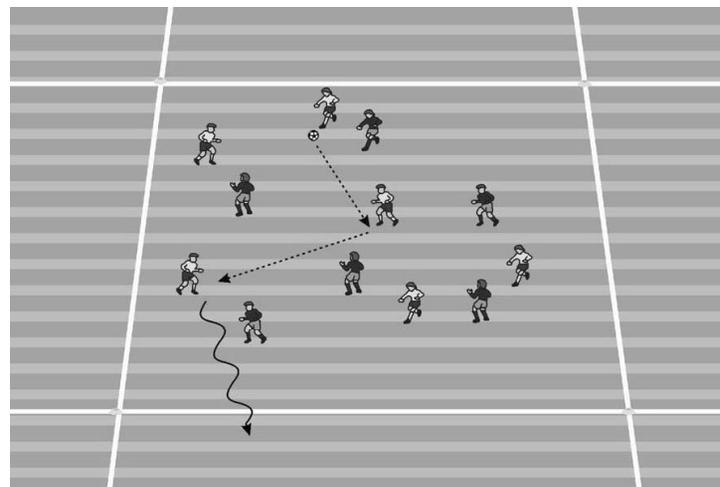
1. Push the ball diagonally forwards before shooting
2. Repeat the drill using the weak foot.
3. Try shooting from 1 yard further back.

#### Coaching Points:

Approach the ball on a curved run from the side.  
 Make the last stride a big one before planting non kicking foot alongside the ball – this will ensure a good backswing.  
 Strike the ball with the laces and keep the toes pointed and locked throughout. Follow through towards the goal.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Dribbling

### Game Related Practice: End Line Dribble



#### Organization:

Two teams compete against each other on a 30 x 40 yard field. The objective of the game is to encourage players to dribble and to take on and beat defenders. A point is scored when a player dribbles the ball across the opponents' end line. The ball must be under control when the player crosses the line and may not be kicked over. Allow the players to experiment with different fakes and moves and encourage them to attack the space behind the defender.

#### Progression:

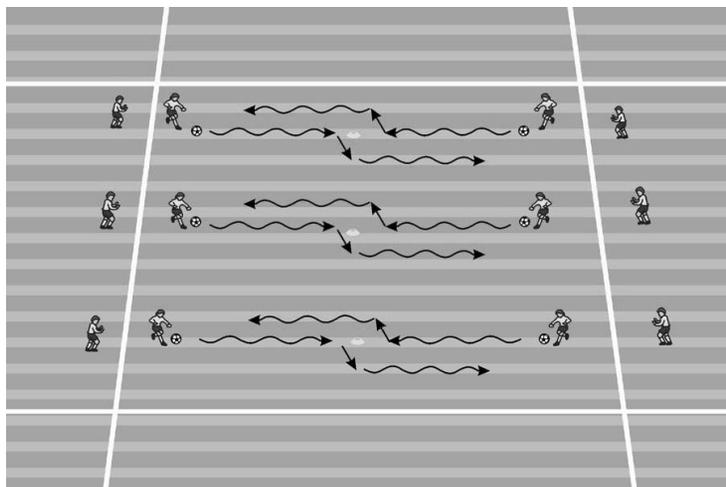
1. Add the rule that a player must dribble and take on a defender each time they receive the ball. Defenders may not double team the player in possession.

#### Coaching Points:

Have a positive attitude when you dribble at an opponent.  
 Attack the space behind the defender, not the space immediately to their side.  
 Watch the movement of the defender's feet – if they make a move towards the ball, dribble past them.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Dribbling

### Opposed Practice: 1 vs 1 Dribble



#### Organization:

Divide the group up into three lines and divide them equally across both sides of a 20 x 30 grid. The front player in each line begins by dribbling across the grid, when they reach half way they both perform a fake to the left and take the ball to the right. They then dribble and lay the ball off for the next player in line.

#### Progression:

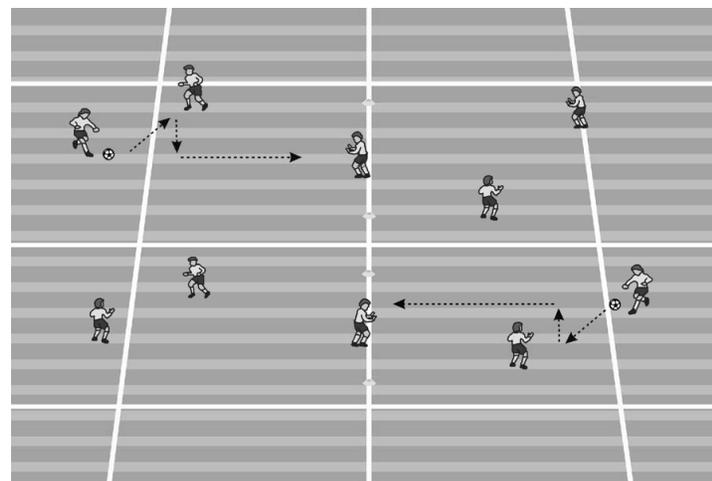
1. Step left, cut the ball right with the outside of the right foot.
2. Tap the ball left with the inside of the right foot at the same time hopping to the left, Cut the ball back to the right with the outside of the right foot.
3. Scissors – step over and out with the left foot, cut the ball back to the right with the outside of the right foot.

#### Coaching Points:

Make the move left convincing by moving the upper body in that direction. Push the ball beyond the defender as you cut back the opposite way. Accelerate away.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Shooting

### Unopposed Practice: Give and Go Shooting



#### Organization:

Two players are at each end of a 20 x 30 yd grid and there is one goalkeeper in the middle. The shooter passes to the supporting player who returns the ball a few yards ahead of them (A Give & Go). The Shooter immediately shoots at the goal. The keeper throws the ball to the group at the other end and the routine is repeated.

#### Progressions:

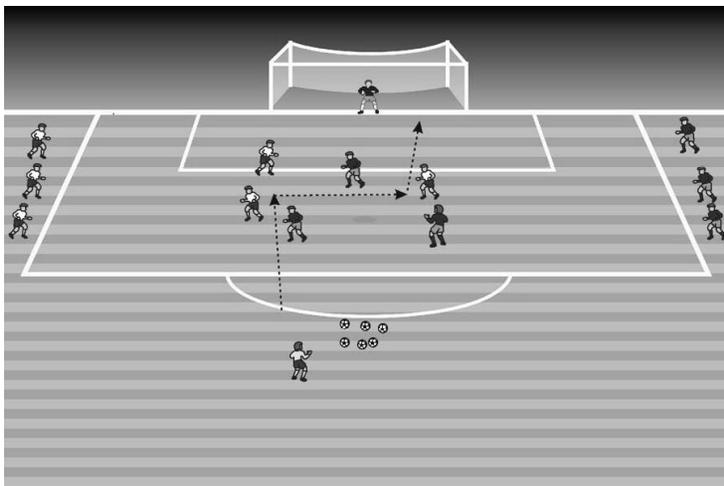
1. The Shooter must now use their weaker foot.
2. Vary the distance of the shot and the angle of the passer.
3. The shooter must now try and Chip the ball over the head of the goalkeeper. (This is an Advanced technique for more experienced players)

#### Coaching Points:

Adjust your last few step so that you can take the ball in your stride. Strike the middle of the ball with your laces. Keep your knee directly above the ball at impact.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Shooting

### Opposed Practice: 3 vs 3 Shooting



#### Organization:

Players are divided into groups of three players. Two groups are placed inside the penalty area; the remaining groups are positioned outside the perimeter of the box. A goalkeeper is placed in goal. The coach starts the practice by serving the ball into the penalty area. Players play 3 V 3. First team to score stays on. Losers leave the grid and position themselves on the outside of the grid. New team comes into the box. The team in possession can use the outside players as well. Players on the outside are limited to “one touch”.

#### Progression:

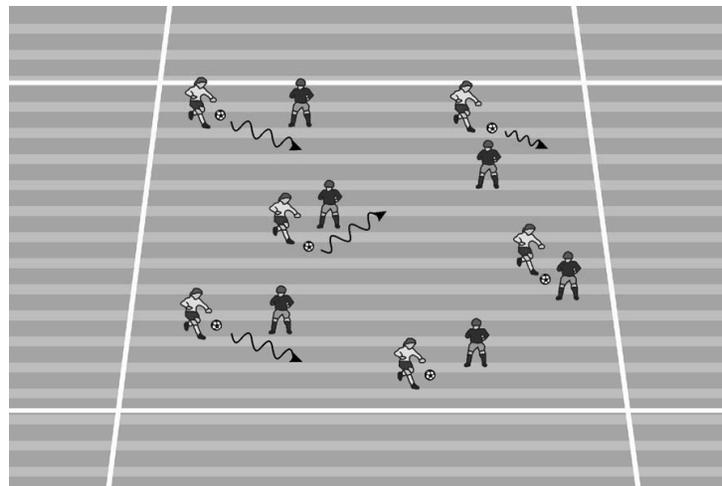
1. It must be a “one time” finish.
2. Outside players can score as well
3. A finish using the head is worth two.

#### Coaching Points:

Check at angles to receive the ball to allow a better shooting angle. Your preparing touch should take you towards the goal.  
Play the way you face if the defender is on you.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Dribbling

### Unopposed Practice: Statues



#### Organization:

Using a 30 yard square, break the group into two groups dribblers and statues. The dribblers attempt to go around as many of the statues as possible during a set time period. Use inside and outside hooks to go around the statues. The dribblers may not touch each other, their balls may not collide and they must stay in the grid at all times.

#### Progression:

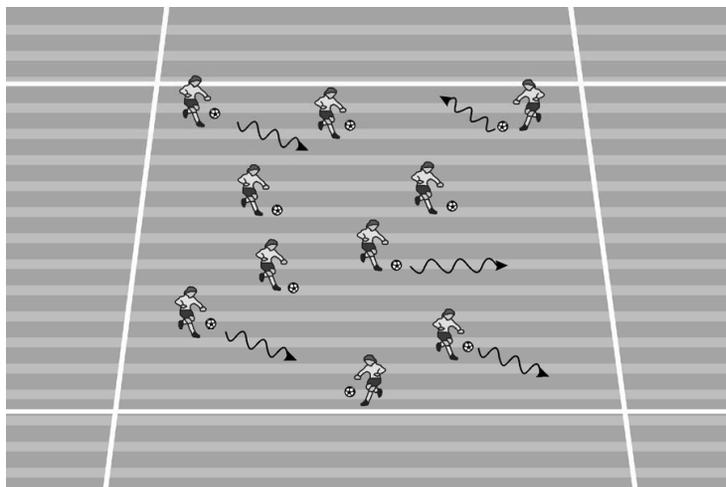
1. Restrict the dribblers to use only one foot.
2. Restrict the dribblers to use only outside of both feet; the insides of both feet.

#### Coaching Points:

Get your head up and look around in between touches. Keep low to the ground when changing direction.  
Maintain a flexible ankle and hook your toes around the ball when using the inside and outside of the foot.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Dribbling

### Warm-Up: Free Dribble



#### Organization:

Each player dribbles a ball around a 20 yard square large grid taking care to keep away from each other by turning, cutting, and dragging the ball. Allow the players to experiment with their own methods of maneuvering the ball. Freeze the players every 20 seconds and point out players who are too close to each other.

#### Progression:

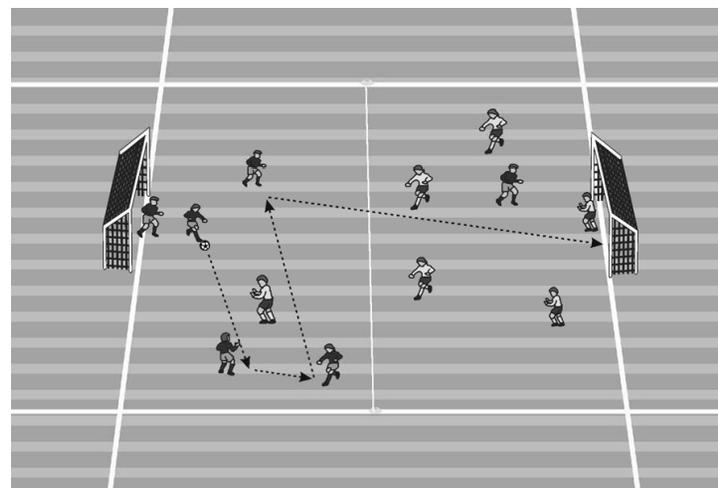
1. Vary the speed that the players dribble by calling out “slow” and “fast”.
2. On the command “turn” have the players turn quickly using the outside of the foot.
3. Repeat using the inside of the foot and then the sole of the foot

#### Coaching Points:

Use soft gentle touches when dribbling in close proximity to other players. Bend the knees slightly and jog lightly throughout the dribble. Reach around the ball and cut sharply when turning.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Shooting

### Game Related Practice: Two Zone Game



#### Organization:

Divide into two equal teams plus a goalkeeper on a short field with full size goals at each end. Each team is restricted to stay in their own defensive half with the exception of one attacking player, who is restricted to the offensive half. The players keep possession from the opponent while working to create a shooting position.

#### Progression:

1. Allow a supporting player to join the attacker if they pass the ball to them.
2. Allow movement anywhere on the field and encourage shooting from all distances.

#### Coaching Points:

Use your first touch to set up a potential shot at goal. Always expect a rebound. Shoot with either foot if you have a clear view of the goal. Begin by shooting at 50% power and hitting the target, gradually increase power.

## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Shooting Coached Scrimmage

Using a grid which is roughly half the size of your regulation playing field, split your team into two groups. The groups for this scrimmage should be an even distribution of offense and defense per team. One team needs to wear pinnies to clearly define who is on whose team.

Define two goal areas at each end of the field. Use two goalies for this scrimmage.

You could also divide the groups up into offense and defense. In this scenario, use only one keeper to play on the team of defenders. Your offenders job is to score on the goalie, your defenders job is to clear the ball past the opposite goal line.

The focus of this scrimmage needs to be on shooting so if you find that the players on not making very many shots, try changing the game:

- Defenders can only shadow the attacking player, they cannot tackle.
- Remove the goalies and place them on the field.
- If using the second scenario: Take a defender and move them to offense.

Remember to not coach too much during the scrimmage. Allow the players the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Also, do not start and stop the play over and over, once or twice for the entire scrimmage is enough.

Reinforce the main idea of today's practice:

1. The last stride before striking the ball should be a long one followed by your non-striking foot planting on the ground next to and a little in front of the ball.
2. Strike ball with laces, toes pointed and ankle locked. Follow thru the ball with your foot so that after the ball is struck, your leg continues straight up into the air.
3. Do not only use your strong foot to shoot, anytime you have a clear view of the goal you should shoot.
4. Do not aim directly at the keeper. Corners (high or low) are usually the best spots.

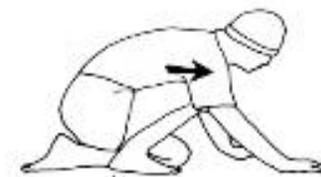
## U8 and Older – Prepared Practices: Shooting Cool Down and Recap

Ask your team the following questions while they are sitting down and drinking water. Then have them complete the stretches below.

1. How should your foot be positioned when making a proper shot?
  - a. Toes pointed, ankle locked
2. Where should your non-striking foot land?
  - a. Next to, and slightly in front of the ball
3. Once you strike the ball, what should your striking foot do?
  - a. Follow thru the ball up into the air
4. What should you always expect after a shot is taken?
  - a. A rebound



20 Seconds



10 Seconds Each Leg



10 Times Each Direction



20 Seconds Each Leg



30 Seconds



5 Times Each Direction