

8U COACH



Complete "How-To" for Coaching Young Children
Includes a Complete Season of Training Plans



AMERICAN YOUTH
SOCCER ORGANIZATION

COACHING SERIES

8U COACH



everyone plays®

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Accredited By:



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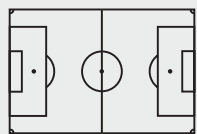
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WELCOME TO THE FIRST TEAM!

FROM THE FIELD



"Our National Coaching Program is expertly designed, tested and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education. We have a proven method for player development and I am proud of our contribution to the game in the USA."

John Ouellette, AYSO Hall of Fame and Former National Coach

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!

The American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) welcomes you to the colorful world of youth soccer coaching.

AYSO is a place where **every child plays** in an atmosphere of **good sportsmanship** and **positive coaching**. In addition to the game's technical, tactical and physical components, we fully recognize and prioritize the psychosocial needs of our children and work toward the fulfillment of those needs in all our programs. Staying **truly** child-centered makes AYSO a model for other youth sports groups and is a key to our position as a **player development** leader.

The content of this manual is drawn from the knowledge and experience of AYSO's Player Development Team and our National Coaching Advisory Commission—people with vast soccer knowledge, yet volunteers of AYSO—just like you. The coaching methodology and soccer skills included in this manual have been carefully researched and have **natural** alignment with U.S. Soccer's Zone One (6-12 years) objectives for player development: Development over Winning, Age Appropriate, Quality Training, and Having Fun/Inspiring Players.

We encourage you to attend your local Region's Annual Coach Orientation, as well as other AYSO coaching courses available in your area or online. Your Regional Commissioner or Coach Administrator can provide you with information about what's required for your specific age group.

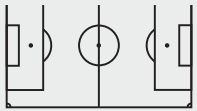
On behalf of the entire organization, thank you for joining the team!

NATIONAL COACHING ADVISORY COMMISSION

AYSO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT TEAM

AYSO

FROM THE FIELD



"We strive to galvanize the player development pathways of our youth soccer organizations. The common objective is to develop the next wave of youth players. In this collective effort, it is critical to promote a single message and common coaching methodology with respect to player development. AYSO's National Coaching Program is in line and coherent with these efforts."

*Dave Chesler, Former U.S. Soccer Director of Coach Education
Current WNT Performance Analysis Coach*

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SOCCER CLUB

Founded in Torrance, CA in 1964, AYSO is a distinguished cornerstone of US Soccer and with approximately 60,000 teams across *all* age groups; AYSO is the world's biggest soccer club!

Success can be measured in many ways, from the careers of professional players who got their start playing AYSO to the thousands of coaches (youth, high school, collegiate and professional) who developed their passion and understanding of the game in AYSO. Regardless of perspective, our contribution to the US game's success is founded upon our unique **Vision**, **Mission** and **Philosophies**.

KEEP IN MIND



Any player development or instruction should always include a comprehensive understanding and practical application of our core values.

AYSO VISION

To provide world-class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

AYSO MISSION

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs in a fun, family environment based on the AYSO philosophies:

AYSO SIX PHILOSOPHIES

EVERYONE PLAYS®

Our goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.

BALANCED TEAMS

Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible—because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.

OPEN REGISTRATION

Our program is open to all children who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.

POSITIVE COACHING

Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

We strive to create a safe, fair, fun and positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

We believe that all players should be able to develop their soccer skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities, both individually and as members of a team, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game.

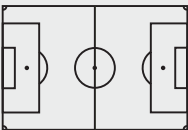
KEEP IN
MIND



AYSO Six Philosophies:

- Everyone Plays®
- Balanced Teams
- Open Registration
- Positive Coaching
- Good Sportsmanship
- Player Development

FROM THE FIELD

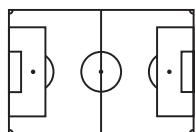


“It is better to win ten times 1-0 than to win once 10-0.”

Vahid Halilhodžić, Bosnian Coach and Former Professional Player

STEWARDS OF THE GAME

FROM THE FIELD



“We must all work together; coaches, officials and parents to create the optimal performance environments for our players’ development.

Players need to play with freedom, confidence and enjoyment in a developmentally rich environment to truly reach their potential.”

Scott Snyder
AYSO Player Development Specialist

Stewardship: “The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care” (2017 Merriam-Webster).

APPLICATION ON THE FIELD

Referees and coaches are to be Stewards of the Game and work together to ensure that player safety, at the physical and emotional level, is the number one priority on the field. All 7 members of the team (3 referees and 4 coaches) are equal participants and are there for the sole purpose of discussing how to ensure a safe and protective environment for the players to play. The Center Referee shall initiate a brief meeting between referees and coaches before the AYSO match to collectively:

- Identify any potential issues that may impact the ability of players to safely have fun; such as the field, sideline areas, field equipment, players’ equipment, the physical and emotional states of participants, and other game related concerns.
- Review and follow a simple process that encourages communication and collaboration when there is a concern or issue with players/participants.

REFEREES

Referees, as Stewards of the Game, are responsible for keeping the game safe, fair, and fun. Referees should support and work with coaches to manage the behavior of players and spectators.

COACHES

Coaches must keep their sideline participation to being: Positive, Instructive and Encouraging at all times. Coaches must ensure respect and support for referees by players, parents, and all other spectators.

PARENTS

Parents are expected to respect coaches and referees, and model positive sporting behavior; and at the same time, maintain realistic expectations.

KIDS ZONE®

KEEP IT FRIENDLY

KEEP IN MIND



Sideline critics who scream instructions at players or criticize referees or coaches slow down the learning process and make it less fun for everyone. Consider every time you prepare to kick the ball you receive numerous screams of direction? Scary, confusing and annoying!

In AYSO, fans (yes, including parents) are asked to be cheerleaders, **not critics or sideline coaches**! Kids Zone® is a unique program that includes a Parent Pledge that moms and dads sign to commit to *positive, encouraging* behavior when they're watching the matches. It also includes signs, buttons and other match-day reminders.

Soccer is a *player's* game! Players learn the game by trying new things, making mistakes and trying again.

Negative, even violent, behavior of players, coaches and parents involved in youth sports has become almost epidemic in this country. Kids Zone® is a proactive effort to counteract this trend and involves the following elements:

To help execute this program, four basic elements are involved (and available from the AYSO Store):

1. **Kids Zone® Button.** Worn by program supporters at matches and serves as a reminder of the importance of positive sideline behavior.
2. **The Sign.** A large sideline poster lists positive behavior standards and can be posted at the entrance of participating fields. Parents and spectators who will abide by these standards are welcome-- all others are not.
3. **The Pledge.** AYSO requests all parents to sign a pledge that holds them to the Kids Zone® standards.
4. **The Video.** A 12-minute documentary introduces AYSO's principles and its Kids Zone® action plan to new participants. Viewers will also watch a parent intervene to change another parent's negative behavior. In order to make this program work, everyone must help!

KEEP IN MIND



Help create a safe and encouraging environment for you and your team by implementing Kids Zone®.

To learn more or visit:
ayso.org/kidszone



THE VIBRANT WORLD OF 8U

STILL KIDS!

8U is a time for **DISCOVERY**! New and exciting findings are revealed to the 8U player as their coordination improves and their size and strength increase.

From a coaching perspective, we now have a training session to plan for so our focus should be on **Quality Training** and establishing good habits and foundations for development (theirs and ours), but at the same time prioritizing **Age Appropriate** application...THEY ARE STILL KIDS!

KEEP IN
MIND

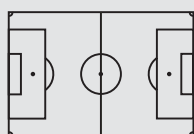


At this age (in fact most ages), the game itself is the best teacher.



COACHING METHODOLOGY

FROM THE FIELD



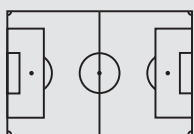
“One of my biggest pet peeves is youth team coaches who take winning too seriously. This has always bothered me, and I always tell coaches to forget about winning with young players. They need to create an environment where the kids enjoy playing and are developing their soccer skills. Winning should never be a priority.”

Landon Donovan, AYSO Alumni and Professional Player

The AYSO Player Development Team and NCAC have researched current coaching methodologies and approaches to quality training from all across the soccer globe and are proud to present our findings for your consideration and implementation.

DEVELOPMENT OVER WINNING

FROM THE FIELD



“Development over winning. Being faithful to it, being really faithful to it every single day. Are the players, are the kids the most important thing? That’s what I worry about. That’s what I talk about. That’s my only goal: making the players and of course, the coaches who teach them, all of us, better!”

Claudio Reyna, Former U.S. Soccer Youth Technical Director

Prioritizing **Development Over Winning** does **NOT** reduce competition, which is instrumental to a player’s development. However, a competitive environment does not necessarily need to be all about wins, draws and losses.

Consider the emotional roller coaster of equating success *only* when you win the game or score a goal (aspects that are *not* 100% within your control). How would we like to be judged as adults in that type of scenario?

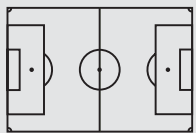
As coaches, it is our responsibility to determine if the competitive environment is healthy or not. Please consider this on your coaching journey.

KEEP IN MIND



Children should be competitive, not the adults! And a competitive environment for our youth players should focus on **performance** rather than **outcome** (favoring ball skills, effort, creativity, etc., as means to find success, not the score).

FROM THE FIELD

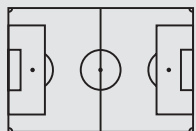


"In matches the coaches should keep out of the way. He/she is an important figure, of course, but is more likely to lose a match than win it. Matches are won by players."

Romario, Brazilian Legend

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCCER (VS. OTHER U.S. SPORTS)

FROM THE FIELD



"AYSO emphasizes all the positives of soccer: the enjoyment that kids get from the sport, understanding how to play on a team and be a good teammate, and developing skills in a fun environment."

Julie Foudy, AYSO Hall of Fame, 1991 & 1999 World Cup Champion, 1996 & 2004 Olympic Gold Medalist

It is important to recognize some key differences between soccer and other American sports, as this impacts how the game should be played, viewed and coached. In comparison, soccer is:

- Free-flowing (fewer stoppages).
- Low-scoring (more often).
- Requires eye-foot coordination (versus eye-hand, as in baseball, basketball and football).
- Has no physical size requirement.
- Equal opportunity sport (girls are equally as talented and have comparable opportunities to boys).
- **PLAYER-based** (as game flows, *players* make the decisions and **PLAY** the game, less coach involvement).

STYLE AND ATTITUDE

Mourinho, Ferguson, Klinsmann, Guardiola? Coaching styles differ based on personality and beliefs on how the game should be played. Effective coaches; however, all possess similar qualities:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| • Leader | • Knowledgeable | • Observant |
| • Teacher & Motivator | • Quality Demonstrator | • Humorous |
| • Conscientiousness | • Enthusiastic & Energetic | • Personable |
| • Fair & Honest | • Patient & Understanding | • Confident |
| • Smart Appearance | • Communicator | |

The general qualities of any coach combine into four fundamental attributes that all successful coaches share:

1. Soccer knowledge.
2. Prioritize athlete's well being.
3. Ability to communicate knowledge to the player.
4. Ability to observe and evaluate (coaching eye) to correct any apparent faults (in a positive manner).

KEEP IN MIND



Whatever coaching persona you may adopt, avoid being the center of attention! Create an environment where the players are the focus and priority, and they can gain success on their own.

PREPARATION AND ORGANIZATION

PREPARATION

Always prepare a written Training Plan! Consider what you wish to work on and what activities you can use to achieve your goal. A written plan ensures smooth transitions, less down time and a more economical use of precious time. A blank AYSO Training Plan and numerous completed plans can be located in the back of this manual.

Take a few minutes just before your training session to review your plan and the coaching points you want to make. (Consider saving your plans as a coaching library for future seasons/sessions or to share with other coaches in your Region.)

APPEARANCE

Appropriate attire is expected when conducting your coaching session. Wearing soccer apparel and footwear go a long way to comforting your players that you know what you are doing related to your role as their "soccer coach."

Sunglasses are discouraged (unless you require a medical prescription), as the players cannot see your eyes. Even with a prescription, remove your sunglasses when in direct communication with your players.

ORGANIZATION

Ideally, set up your area in advance of players and parents arriving. **Upon their arrival, they should see a planned and organized environment, which will immediately set the tone for the session as well as provide confidence for the parents.** In organizing your coaching area:

- Make sure the area is safe (playing surface, physical considerations, sprinklers, etc.).
- Plan for a smooth transition from one exercise to another.
- Minimize the number of cones that you have to pick up or reset.
- Have a place for equipment and breaks.



EQUIPMENT

Below is a basic list of the minimum equipment you should have as part of your coaching kit:


- AYSO Player Registration Forms – which include the Emergency Authorization.
- Basic first-aid kit*.
- **(Players should bring water to every session).**
- 12 cones (preferably multi-colored).
- 7 scrimmage vests (preferably 2 sets of different colors).
- Extra soccer balls (players should bring a ball to *every* session).
- Pump.
- Extra pair of shin guards (players must wear shin guards at *every* session).
- Pop-up goals (preferred).
- Whistle.
- Charged cell phone (in case of emergency).
- Training plan.

*Be familiar with your first-aid kit contents so that you know what you have **and where it is** if needed.

AGE APPROPRIATE UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

The following chart generalizes age characteristics of children ages 5 through 8 years of age. (Note: *All* children are unique and often chronological age can conflict with developmental age; therefore, individual application should always be considered.)

KEEP IN MIND

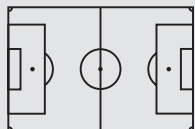


Our players are *not* mini-adults; therefore, our training sessions must be adapted to life through *their* eyes, *their* interests and most important, *their* capabilities.

AGE APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENTS	
6U	<p>6U is a time for freedom and EXPLORATION! Let them Play!</p> <p>Training should be based on fun games, adventures, story telling and colorful landscapes. Talk in their terms and language.</p> <p>Animate! Paint vivid pictures! Demonstrate! Keep sessions moving or boredom will quickly creep in.</p>
7U	<p>Fundamental motor skills (balance, walking, running, jumping, etc.) should be highlighted and combined with ball control.</p> <p>Players must maximize their contact with the ball and most activities should be individual (ball per player). Players need to develop ball familiarity and PLAY!</p> <p>Players at this age are egocentric and for the first time have to build relationships with other players. Give different responsibilities to players in order to develop a sense of team (cone helpers, break captains, time keepers, etc.).</p>
8U	<p>Let any tactical insight be developed through small-sided matches and activities.</p> <p>8U is a time for DISCOVERY! Let them Play!</p> <p>Prioritize FUN and INSPIRE your players!</p>

COACHING MOMENTS (SECONDS)

FROM THE FIELD



"Football is simple; trainers (coaches) shouldn't make it so complicated."

Johan Cruyff, Dutch Soccer Legend

At the end of the day, it is the coach's job to coach! But having the content is one thing (and we are providing this for you), but knowing *how* to effectively communicate, motivate and develop your individual players is another talent.

KEEP IN MIND



Positive Coaching! Regardless of your personal approach or delivery, **Positive Instruction and Encouragement (P.I.E.)** should *always* be used to instruct and motivate your players. They will respond better to you and it will help keep AYSO a developmentally rich and positive environment.

MANAGING THE COACHING MOMENT...LESS IS MORE!

Occupy a central but sideline position during training to allow a clear, panoramic view of the activity.

The coaching environment you create must be safe and conducive to learning. Players must be stimulated to learn and educational opportunities must be well thought out if you want to maximize player development. Players must be given freedom to be creative, find solutions without constant coaching, and ultimately learn from their mistakes. Remember, mistakes are guidelines for improvement!

It is a fine line managing the flow of your session and finding the appropriate time to step in. Methods:

- Forced Stoppage (freeze, get in, make your point, get out).
- Natural Stoppage (be careful that the coaching opportunity hasn't passed and the situation forgotten).
- Flow (talking as the game is playing...but avoid constant commentary).
- Individual Reference (pulling a player aside to make an observation).

LET THEM PLAY AND THE GAME TEACH!

PRESENTING INSTRUCTION OR POINTS

Avoid lengthy speeches! Keep instructions for activities as simple and quick as possible and limited to one point at a time. Where possible, explain in images and provide visual analogies (much easier for kids to grasp). Coaching points or instructions should be:

- Concise (broken down, simple, small pieces of information).
- Accurate.
- Relevant (to a coaching principle or objective).
- **Demonstrated** (whenever possible)!

When addressing your players, make sure *they* are not directly facing the sun.

KEEP IN MIND



Avoid lengthy speeches!

Keep instructions for activities as simple and quick as possible.

I HEAR...

I SEE...

I DO...



I FORGET



I REMEMBER



I UNDERSTAND

VOICE

- Do consider the volume and tone of your voice.
- Avoid being monotone.
- Modulating the intensity of your voice can help emphasize your coaching points and gain the required attention.
- Always maintain control and **never** raise your voice in anger or frustration.

INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS OF DELIVERY

Questions

Children respond enthusiastically to questions and are stimulated to find the answer. Questions can be:

- Factual Definitive, simple answers (what).
- Conceptual Requires a higher level of processing and thought (how).
- Stimulating Requires complex reasoning (why).

Commanding

Definitive, controlled, lecture (less player-centered).

Guided Discovery

Guides the player through process by posing a series of questions whose responses lead to the understanding of a concept (like detectives).

Experimentation

Cause and effect comparison (try it and see, compare).

COMPLETE SYSTEM OF DELIVERY

Say, Show, Do and Review

An effective complete teaching method for any age group:

1. **SAY:** Explain skill or technique (keep it brief especially with younger players).
2. **SHOW:** Effectively demonstrate skill or technique.
3. **DO:** Have players perform skill or technique.
4. **REVIEW:** *Observe*, *Correct* and *Confirm* proper technique.
 - Observe** (silently). Instead of trying to correct immediately, let them play uninterrupted for a time (they will learn from mistakes) and take notes (preferably written), focusing on *one* effort they can improve.
 - Correct** what you saw in terms of the player's execution, and then provide the player with attainable modifications to correct one or two deficits by once again demonstrating.
 - Confirm** accomplishments once success is achieved! Say it out loud, so everyone can hear.

Post Session

Discussion with the players: Do not underestimate the value and impact of a positive comment or constructive feedback to a player after the training session (but keep it concise).

Review your training plan: Note what worked well and what needs to improve.

Evaluate yourself: Encourage constructive feedback from others in relation to your coaching management and session structure.

COACHING YOUR OWN CHILD

A large percentage of you will be lacing up sneakers to coach your own children and this section outlines some perspective and tips to maximize the opportunity...for you, and more importantly for your child (and the rest of the family).

KEEP IN MIND



In the blink of an eye, they are grown up and beyond our daily reach. Therefore, what an incredible opportunity to spend time in “their” world as “their” coach!

But I’ve Never Coached Or Played Soccer Before!

- It’s okay if you never played soccer or don’t know much about it! However, by reading this manual and progressing through the AYSO National Coaching Program, you **will** gather valuable tools to succeed.
- No pressure! Do not misinterpret the role you’re supposed to play. Go out to enjoy!
- Change your adult perspective and **view the game through your child’s eyes.**
- If you can create a safe, fun and developmental environment for your child and team, **encourage self-expression and mistakes (learning)**, you are already in the running for Coach of the Year.
- Fun, exercise and the chance to play soccer is what it’s all about, particularly at the younger ages.

What’s My Role As Coach?

- Maintain realistic expectations! It’s a game, a sport, a pastime. As you are likely aware, the odds are against your child making the pros; therefore, make sure your own adult expectations do not stray too far from those of your child.
- Soccer, perhaps more than any other sport, requires little teaching at the early ages. **The game itself is genuinely the best teacher.** In fact, the role of the coach in the first stages is simply to give children the opportunity to discover the game’s joys in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Generally speaking, through 10U let them play. At 12U we can expand their technical development and reading of the game.
- What you’re really doing is very similar to taking your child and his or her friends to the playground. You’re supervising soccer playtime while allowing the children to explore the fun on their own terms.
- Once you comprehend the expectations, you’ll find all aspects of the role less daunting, including the dynamics of coaching your own child.



Coach or Parent?

- When you first start coaching you may be introducing your child to a new experience other than the game: sharing the attention of mom or dad with a larger number of *other* children (while at the same time, you are trying not to show favoritism).
- The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) recommends you explain to your child, “I always love you and you are special to me. But when I’m coaching you, I need to be fair and treat you like all the other players. And you need to respond to me as your coach, not your dad. Do you think you can do that?”

Am I Doing Okay?

- **Avoid being harder on your own child than the other players because you’re worried about perceptions of favoritism.**
No matter what you say or how you say it, your comments can often register as a personal attack because they come from dad or mom.
- Don’t be afraid to praise your child and acknowledge her strengths and accomplishments at every opportunity. As well as your child they are also a player on the team!
- A good test on how to treat your child on the soccer team is to constantly ask yourself if your reactions to his play or behavior are the same as they are to his teammates.
- Another peril of coaching your own children is to leave your coaching hat on when the session/match is over. Limit your post-session soccer discussions once the whistle blows. Once the topic of food is raised, it is probably time to get back to your *full-time* role.

KEEP IN
MIND

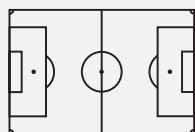


SAVOR EVERY MOMENT!

It will pass all too quickly!

AGE APPROPRIATE (PLAYER) DEVELOPMENT

FROM THE FIELD



“Learning to be a soccer athlete, there are progressive stages and if you don’t get the early stages right, *in sequence*, then you are fighting an uphill battle in developing an athlete.”

Dave Chesler, U.S. Soccer Director of Coach Education

THE SCIENCE OF AGE APPROPRIATE TRAINING

“To provide youth soccer programs *that enrich children’s lives.*”

This vision can *only* be achieved if we continually ask ourselves if the activity, method or decision will truly enrich the player’s life. To achieve this goal, our training sessions *must* be adapted to the player’s specific age and stage of development.

Technical, tactical, physical and psychosocial training components should be woven throughout each session; however, *at all-times* with deep respect to the player’s specific age *and* stage of development. At AYSO, we prioritize these important aspects as follows:

Psychosocial

Respect, motivation, confidence, cooperation, competitiveness, etc., and how these emotions and feelings impact a player’s development. Also, includes a player’s ability to reason, learn and solve problems. **At AYSO, we develop the *whole* person!**

Physical

A player’s physical attributes: speed, agility, endurance, strength and power, etc. **At AYSO, we promote a healthy lifestyle through soccer!**

Technical

A player’s ability to master ball skills, i.e., ball control, shooting, passing, etc. **At AYSO, we prioritize skill development and ball mastery.**

Tactical (NOT a priority at this age!)

A player’s capacity to use their skill and ability *within* a game environment, i.e., creating space in midfield, possession and transition, creating width, etc. **At AYSO, we educate our players on playing as part of (and within) a team dynamic.**

KEY DEVELOPMENTAL COMPONENTS IN AYSO 8U TRAINING

A TIME FOR DISCOVERY...

PSYCHOSOCIAL

- Have definite likes and dislikes (begin to rank importance of things based on real criteria).
- Friendship is important (become more outgoing, but can be overwhelmed by unfamiliar situations).
- Enjoy purposeful play.
- Afraid of failure.
- Beginning to compare themselves to others (actions can be influenced by peers).
- Self-esteem and self-concept are big issues (need concrete reinforcement and positivity).
- Cooperate with adults.
- Like to feel they belong to a group.
- Begin to grasp moral rules of the game (apply rigid understanding of fair play – even a small infraction can be a BIG deal. Quick to tattle when others aren't obeying).
- Problem solving skills are improving.
- Understand that parts make up a whole (i.e., individual players make up a team).
- Often set unrealistically high standards for themselves.
- Improved cognitive development enables them to see that underlying rules are often useful for understanding everyday events.



PHYSICAL

- Work and play hard.
- Exhibit significant improvement in agility, balance, endurance, timing and hand-eye coordination.

TECHNICAL

- Instep kick
- Dribbling
- Inside of the foot–push pass
- Inside of the foot–ball control
- Throw-ins (For 8U, each region shall have the discretion to use either throw-ins, dribble-ins or pass-ins to restart play.)

TACTICAL

Attacking Objectives

Score
Maintain Possession

Defending Objectives

Prevent Scoring
Regain Possession

Attacking Principles

Penetration
Support
Mobility

Defending Principles

Pressure
Cover
Balance

ELEMENTS OF SOCCER

OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

ATTACKING OBJECTIVES			DEFENDING OBJECTIVES		
SCORE	Maintain Possession	Advance Ball	Prevent Scoring	Regain Possession	Delay Opponents
BASED ON A PLAYER'S RELATIVE POSITION TO:					
The Ball	Teammates	Opponents	Location on Field	Time in Game	

However, like most aspects of the game, **objectives vary depending on player age and stage of development:**

ATTACKING OBJECTIVES (BY AGE)

	6U	8U	10U	12U
Score	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keep Possession		✓	✓	✓
Advance Ball			✓	✓

DEFENDING OBJECTIVES (BY AGE)

	6U	8U	10U	12U
Prevent Scoring	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regain Possession		✓	✓	✓
Delay Opponents			✓	✓

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

The Principles of Play are used to **achieve** the Objectives of the Game.

There are ten **Principles of Play** utilized in soccer — five **attacking** and five **defending** principles, each introduced at a specific age and stage of development. **8U Principles of Play** are highlighted in the chart below:

For each attacking principle, there is a defending principle to counter it.		
ATTACKING	countered by	DEFENDING
Penetration 8U v Advancing the ball past opposing players by dribbling, passing and shooting.		Pressure (delay) 8U v Pressuring opponents in possession by giving immediate chase, denying their options, i.e., dribbling, passing, shooting, etc., or delaying the opponents in order to regain possession.
Support 8U v Supporting teammates by creating safe options for the player with the ball.		Cover 8U v Supporting the player(s) challenging the ball in case they are beaten. Limits options for 1st attacker.
Mobility 8U v Players interchanging positions (filling in for one another as needed) and moving off the ball. Unbalancing defense, creating numerical advantages and thereby attacking/scoring opportunities.		Balance 8U v Reading the attack and providing an equal or greater number of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.
Width Kin of mobility. Attacking on a broad front (players spread out) stretches and isolates the defense and creates space for players to advance.		Compactness Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area making it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball.
Creativity Creating opportunities for advancement, possession and scoring by utilizing individual skills such as feints and fakes.		Control/restraint (composure) Staying calm, disciplined and organized in the face of an attack by maintaining proper defensive techniques and positioning.


Remember, due to the fluid nature of soccer, players’ roles are in constant rotation, and supporting players can be behind, to the side, or in advance of the ball.

The only players with definitive roles are the 1st attacker and 1st defender.

Additional roles (support, mobility, width, creativity **and** cover, balance, compactness, control/restraint) can be provided by numerous players.

Ultimately, you must UNDERSTAND the Objectives and Principles of Play if you want to be successful.

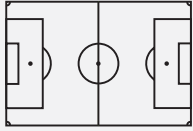
KEEP IN MIND



In soccer there are no *absolutely* correct decisions. You cannot always judge how well your team is playing by the results of the game. You need to have a standard method of assessing your team form moment to moment. The **Principles of Play** can be your measuring stick.

POSITIONS

FROM THE FIELD



“The Dutch change positions quicker than you can make a cup of coffee.”

Paolo Rossi, Italian Soccer Legend

At AYSO we do not formally introduce position-specific coaching until **12U**. There is no harm *familiarizing* your players with the basic responsibility of each position at 8U, but this does NOT mean you have players rooted to one spot covering their positions, while the game develops...without them! How many times have you seen young defenders be contained in their “own” half because they are not permitted to cross the half-way line? **Frankly, this needs to stop as it is *not* conducive to player development and impacts the player’s overall experience!**

Regardless of age, ***all* outfield players should be encouraged to defend AND attack. Players should be given the freedom to be involved in the flow of the game, but empowered with the responsibility to cover their position (or have someone else cover it) if they choose to explore.** Your center-half should be encouraged to score goals, your striker encouraged to chase back and stop goal scoring chances.

Throughout the season, try to let all players experience all field positions (not in the same game). Allow players to play one, or at most, two positions in a single game giving them some time to familiarize themselves and get comfortable with the position. This also applies to the 10U-18U goalkeeper position so that ***all*** children get a chance to develop their field skills .

Everyone Plays! Remember, every child in AYSO must play 1/2 of every game; however, we recommend strongly that each player play 3/4 of every game ***before*** any player plays a full game. Children of all abilities improve when they play and the more they play, the better they get.

Soccer has four basic positions: **goalkeepers (not introduced until 10U), defenders, midfielders, and strikers.** There are numerous specialized names for each: sweeper, forward, wing, outside back, center back, stopper, etc. We will concentrate only on the four ***basic*** positions whose ***general*** responsibilities are outlined below:

Position	Own Team with Ball	Other Team with Ball
Goalkeepers (Not Introduced Until 10U)	Begin the Attack	Stop Scoring Attempt
Defenders	Maintain Possession Advance the Ball	Stop Scoring Attempt Regain Possession
Midfielders	Advance the Ball Maintain Possession	Delay Attack Regain Possession
Strikers	Score Advance the Ball Maintain Possession	Regain Possession Delay Attack

KEEP IN MIND



All players should be encouraged to defend and attack, and given the freedom and responsibility to be involved in the flow of the game.



SYSTEMS OF PLAY (FORMATIONS)

Refers to the formation of positions that a team engages during a game, i.e., 1-3-3-2 = 1 goalkeeper, 3 defenders, 3 midfielders and 2 strikers). Age and stage of development should influence what and when to introduce shape and organization of play.

Do NOT be discouraged if your team plays as a herd at times with little or no organization (especially at the younger ages). Player maturity, skill and an understanding of the objectives, principles and systems will slowly but surely alleviate this problem. Guaranteed!

KEEP IN MIND

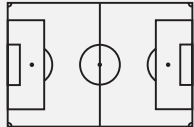


No system of play will overcome a lack of basic technique or skill. Systems of play must be appropriate for the players on your team. Therefore, find a system of play that fits the ability of your players instead of trying to fit **your players** into a particular system.

Soccer is a free-flowing and dynamic game (not static). Players must be encouraged and given the freedom to move relative to the ball, their teammates, their opponents, time in the game and the goal.

QUALITY TRAINING

FROM THE FIELD



“The coach has to establish a playing environment where everyone is eager to train and perform at their best. Each player should understand what they should bring to each session, i.e., set of standards or expectations. Once everyone on the team understands their role, learning (and fun) develop naturally.”

John Kerr, Head Men’s Coach, Duke University

THE COACHING CYCLE

- Coaching involves **OBSERVING** and **EVALUATING** player and team performance to determine what needs to be worked on (**ORGANIZING** and **COACHING**) during training in order to maximize **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**.
- Training components (psychosocial, physical, technical, tactical) are then incorporated into a training session (plan) to develop and improve the player’s competence within a match environment.
- **ORGANIZE/COACH:** Training sessions are comprised of: (free play); warm-up; activities I & II; small-sided matches & cool-down.
- **Principles of Play** should be considered and applied throughout the session.
- Adjusting **Speed, Space, Opposition** controls the intensity of an activity.
- Coach using sound methodology (P.I.E., Say, Show, Do, Review, etc.) to challenge, increase success and develop players.
- **DEVELOPMENT:** Player’s improved competence within match environment (finishing; short/long play; short combined with long play; ability to keep possession; risk; transition).
- **Observe and evaluate** performance and select elements for the next training session.



KEEP IN MIND



Coaching involves **OBSERVING** and **EVALUATING** player and team performance to determine what needs to be worked on (**ORGANIZING** and **COACHING**) during training in order to maximize **(player) DEVELOPMENT**.

DURATION AND FREQUENCY OF TRAINING SESSIONS

KEEP IN MIND



It is widely accepted that it takes 10,000 hours of *deep* practice to learn a new skill. However, the real lesson of the 10,000 hours rule is *not* about the quantity; it's about the *quality* of the practice and the environment in which it takes place.

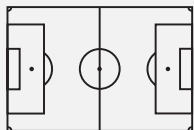
It is important to maximize the learning opportunity without *overdoing* duration or frequency. Exhaustion and fatigue can be detrimental to learning (slows brain, lessens focus, increases errors) so it is wise to consider you training in terms of the number of quality repetitions or touches as opposed to time.

AYSO National Coaching Program Training Duration & Frequency Recommendations

Age Group	Frequency	Duration
6U	One Activity Session/ Jamboree per Week (<i>includes</i> 25 min. game)	1 Hour
8U	Once Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	1 Hour
10U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	1 Hour
12U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	1 Hour

SMALL-SIDED MATCHES

FROM THE FIELD



"The need for parents to see their children play in 11-on-11 tournaments from a young age instead of insisting on more small-sided [matches] and practices to develop technical skills produces great athletes but limited soccer players. Parents need to become a little less shortsighted."

Carli Lloyd, U.S. Women's National Team referencing the youth soccer culture for her team's technical shortcomings

Youth players need to practice in a match-like environment, which provides *numerous* opportunities to practice and **repeat a skill**; not one *possible* chance every few minutes (like full-sided play can often present). Therefore, the concentrated ebb and flow of small-sided matches create the optimal learning environment for young players to develop.

There are unlimited benefits of small-sided matches:

- Children learn more when the ratio of coach to player is reduced.
- Maximize ball contact, involvement, and mistakes (markers for improvement).
- Increase scoring opportunities.
- Maximize attacking and defending play.
- Maximize transitions and decision-making situations.
- Present more coaching opportunities (observation and analysis).
- Excitement and fun!

To cultivate the numerous benefits of small-sided matches and maximize Player Development, AYSO has carefully balanced the number of players on the field and the number of players on the roster by age group.

AYSO National Coaching Program
In-Season Play Recommendations

Age	Players Per Team	Max on Roster	Goalkeepers
6U	4	6	No
8U	4	6	No
10U	7	10	Yes
12U	9	12	Yes

PROGRESSIVE (BUILD UP) TRAINING

It is essential to technical and tactical development to scaffold player challenges by adding different factors into our training sessions. In general, sessions should progress from:

SIMPLE TO COMPLEX and from **UNOPPOSED TO OPPOSED**

Progression of Technical Build-Up

- Technique demonstrated with *no pressure*.
- Technique demonstrated while *under pressure* (passive to full, integrating decision making).
- Technique demonstrated in match-like situation.

Match Pressure

Training should simulate match conditions as much as possible (most effectively accomplished through small-sided matches). Control methods used to manipulate the playing environment:

- Changing the physical **SPACE** available to players (increasing/decreasing size of playing area).
- Varying the **SPEED** of the play (adding time constraints or number of touches).
- Introducing and varying the amount of **OPPOSITION** (numbers up or down, opposition/defenders are bunnies and can only hop, etc.).

KEEP IN MIND



Players must **FIRST** be successful with a technique to build success and confidence *before* you progress the activity (progression or build up should be paced with your player's success rate). Alternatively, manipulating **SPEED, SPACE** or **OPPOSITION** can help *enable* your players to succeed (i.e., increasing space, touches or numbers).

TOPIC BASED TRAINING

Repetition is a key component to skill development; therefore, just like school, rather than bombard players with multiple topics per lesson, focusing on one topic, i.e., dribbling, provides the maximum opportunity to achieve mastery and success.

UNEVEN TRAINING NUMBERS

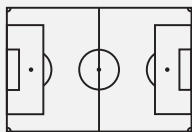
Whether it is due to your age group or attendance at training, a few suggestions on how to accommodate the possible discrepancy, **minimize isolation** and increase functionality:

- Rotate players in and out (players rest, watch, cheer, stretch).
- Pair up (players participate in activity but take turns with a partner).
- Play as a neutral (can play for either team).
- Play as two players (in numbered activities, i.e., Steven is 1 and 3).
- Help serve or retrieve balls.
- Help you demonstrate or help make small observations, etc. (Children can gain a deeper understanding of the skill if they have to explain it to others.)
- Emphasize number up number down practices (5 v 2, etc.).
- Weight the challenge (lower number team has different goal, i.e., less touches, etc.).



BUILDING YOUR 8U SESSION

FROM THE FIELD



“We (the U.S.) are producing players who are over-coached and predictable as opposed to players who can caress the ball and make you sit up and take notice. Coaches need to be secure with themselves and not allow winning games to validate their importance in the lives of their players.”

*Sonny Askew, former professional player and
current youth coach, Baltimore, MD*

FREE PLAY

In our current climate of over-organizing and over-coaching, Free Play is a useful method for players to develop in a natural and safe environment (like playing in the park with your buddies).

Free Play can be used as a pre-warm up upon arrival to prepare players for the technical warm up that will lead to the session's tactical work. For younger players, Free Play can be used to evaluate their technical level so you have a logical starting point when the actual session begins.

Free Play can also be used in an activity or scrimmage to simply encourage player's creativity, freedom and expression, not to mention learning through mistakes. In general, Free Play has simple limitations:

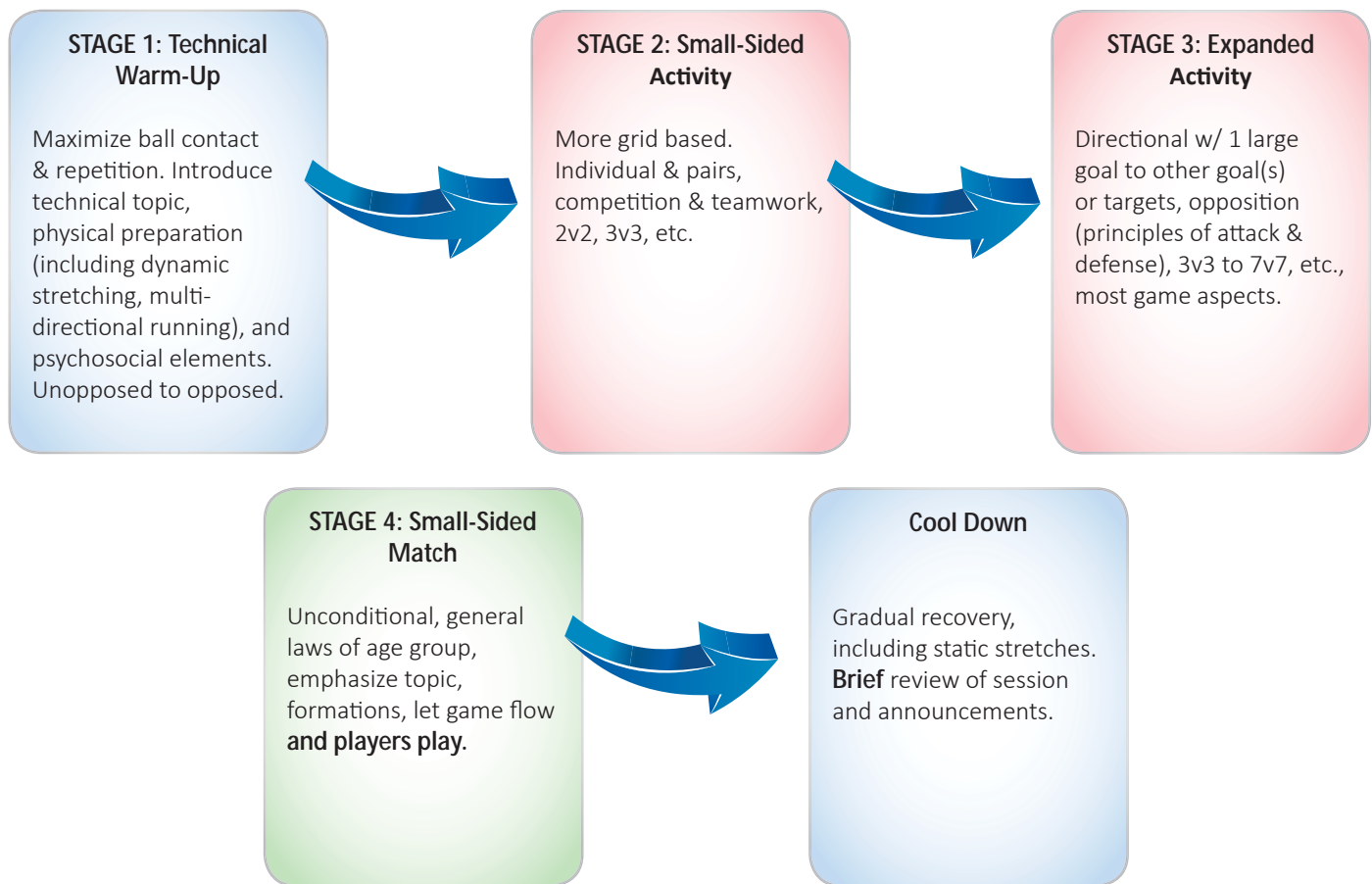
- A situation where individuals play *without* restrictions on time or space, or coaching.
- Players are given *general* directions on what they should attempt to accomplish and then left on their own.
- Free play allows players to *develop natural abilities* in a relaxed, coach-free environment.

KEEP IN MIND



Ultimately the use of Free Play in our sessions will remind the players of the fun and intrinsic benefit of practicing freely on their own (i.e., juggling or passing against a wall) or pick-up games with buddies at the park...simply playing!

Generally speaking, training sessions should progress as follows:



STAGE 1: WARM-UP

Your warm-up should be dynamic in nature, energize players, maximize ball contact/repetition and introduce the technical objective of your session. As well as physical and technical components, the warm-up also provides opportunity to introduce psychosocial elements such as leadership (having a player lead the warm-up), focus, communication and teamwork. Warm-ups should primarily be unopposed.

Warming up prepares the body for physical activity and should involve jogging as well as short sprints and multi-directional running (sideways and backwards). The intensity of the warm-up (especially sprinting) should be increased gradually to prevent a rapid increase in blood pressure. The warm-up improves blood flow to the heart and increases muscle temperature and pliability (and ultimately, reduces the risk of injury). Warming up should be done prior to any stretching. There are two methods of stretching:

- **Dynamic stretching:** moving limbs through the full range of motion that will be used during the game or training. Dynamic stretching is good for 'waking muscles up' and getting them ready to work hard, i.e., during warm-up.
- **Static stretching:** placing a muscle in its most lengthened position and holding for approximately 30 seconds. Cooling down is a good time for static stretching (helps the body recover and gradually return to its normal temperature).

At younger ages, player's muscles are not developed to a point where injuries will occur often, especially due to a lack of warming up and stretching. However, players should be taught proper form (TPF) and *introduced* to the concepts in order to prepare them for the years to come. Priority should increase with age.

STAGE 2: SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

Your **first** ACTIVITY should be more grid-based and integrate:

- Individual and pair work.
- Competition and teamwork.
- 2v2 and 3v3.

Stage 3: Expanded activity

- Opposition (attack & defense).
- Directional play (with goals or targets).
- Expanded numbers (3v3 to 6v6).
- Most game aspects.



STAGE 4: SMALL-SIDED MATCH

Conclude your session with a match-like activity/small-sided match, which should emphasize the training topic and other components of the game.

The match should be (for the most part) unconditional, have general rules and some formation guidelines, but **most importantly, it is time to let the game flow...and the player's play!**

COOL DOWN AND DEBRIEF

Gradually slowing down the level of activity after training is just as important in reducing the risk of injury as the warming up process before exercise, especially for older players.

The major purpose of cooling down is to bring the body back to a pre-training state and to assist in recovery. Static stretches are more appropriate to the cool down as they help muscles to relax, realign muscle fibers and re-establish their normal range of movement.

During the cool-down process you can review the lessons within your session or discuss announcements but keep it concise and always end on a positive!

LAPS, LINES AND LECTURES

Communicated often, but still a prominent factor in most training sessions, the 3L's are commonly regarded as detrimental to player development:

Laps: You **don't run laps** of the field during a soccer match and you can easily obtain the same cardiovascular benefit by running *with* the ball in a dynamic activity.

Lines: Do your best to **eliminate activities that involve players standing in long lines waiting** on their turn to play. We need to maximize time players have *with* the ball to avoid boredom and keep them engaged (two or three *active* groups are always better than one long inactive group). Remember circles are also lines.

Lectures: Children come to soccer to participate and be active not to sit and be lectured for long periods of time (either positively or negatively). **Keep your communication positive, brief and to the point.**

Eliminating **Laps, Lines, and Lectures** from your sessions will provide a healthier learning and developmental environment for your players.

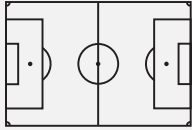
WATER BREAKS

Proper hydration is vital to all children, but especially vital to young athletes; therefore, we need to make sure our training sessions provide adequate opportunity for rehydration. Some **general** guidelines:

- Players should hydrate themselves **throughout the day** not just prior to or at training (to allow for proper absorption into their system).
- Two to three hours prior to participation, players should drink approx. 16 fl. oz. (2 cups) to 20 fl. oz. (2.5 cups).
- Ten to 20 minutes prior to activity the players should drink approx. 7 fl. oz. (0.875 cups) to 10 fl. oz. (1.25 cups) of fluids.
- Break approximately every 10-15 minutes (**or as often as needed pending weather and age of players**).
- Fluids can be water or sports drinks.
- Rehydration should occur after the activity and ideally be completed within 2 hours.
- Rehydration should contain water to restore hydration status, carbohydrates to replenish glycogen stores and electrolytes to speed hydration.

8U TECHNIQUES

FROM THE FIELD



“Teach skill every day! Create training environments where players are challenged and can use those skills in making quick decisions of how, why, and where to use them. Ask players to work on their own self improvement.”

*George Kuntz, AYSO Technical Director,
Head Coach, Men’s Soccer, UC Irvine, CA*

DRIBBLING

Dribbling is using the feet to maintain possession of the ball, on the ground, under control, while moving to achieve **Penetration**. The two primary reasons to use dribbling skill are:

- Move the ball into a better position on the field.
- Retain possession of the ball.

The most important element of dribbling is developing a “feel” or “touch” for the ball with the feet...BOTH OF THEM. The key is then to **keep the ball close** by touching it softly.



General Coaching Points:

- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Arms relaxed and used for balance and protection.
- Touch the ball softly using all major surfaces of the foot.
- Keep the ball close and under control.
- Touch the ball every step or so (ball should never be more than one step away).
- Head up as much as possible (to see the field as well as ball by utilizing peripheral vision).

Scan with your smartphone to see this in action or visit:
aysou.video/tech1

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Ball is played too far ahead & player loses control of the ball.	Move slower and touch ball slower.
Player dribbles the ball into trouble or out of play.	Move slower, touch ball softer, look up.
Player re-positions entire body behind ball before touching.	Use motion of foot to direct ball instead of re-positioning.

Stopping the Ball:

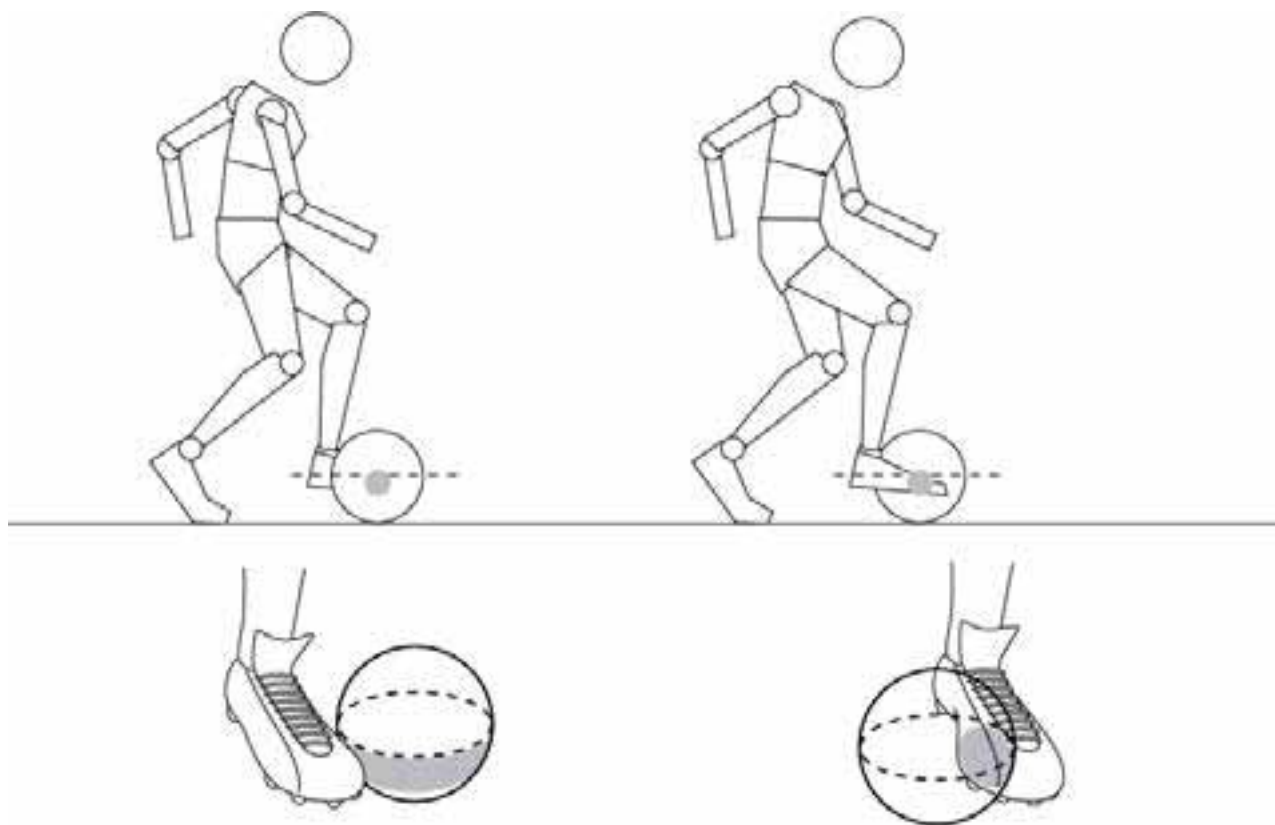
8U players should be able to stop the ball by putting their foot on top of it.

- Balance on planted foot (foot on ground), while keeping playing foot (foot on the ball) firmly on top of the ball.
- Step past the ball with plant foot before stepping on it, keeping in mind the speed at which the ball is rolling.

Turning with the Ball:

Learning to change direction while dribbling is critical in soccer and should also be introduced at this level.

- Use motion of foot to direct the ball.
- Accelerate after changing direction.



INSTEP KICK (LACES)

The instep kick is used to kick the ball and, as players get older, for long passes and shots on goal (as seen on right).

Instructions:

Prepare Plant Leg (Supporting, Non-Kicking Foot)

- Place support foot next to the ball pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms out to sides for balance.

Prepare Striking (Kicking) Leg

- Bend knee (cock lower leg).
- Withdraw leg straight back at hip.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.

Striking Movement

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Set plant knee over ball (eye-knee-ball in line).
- Move thigh of striking leg forward (whip action).
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep (“laces” of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target:
- Pull leg straight through while maintaining balance.
- Lower body as leg rises.
- Keep ankle locked, follow through and lift knee.
- Step out of the kick.

General Coaching Points:

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep (“laces” of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

Practice:

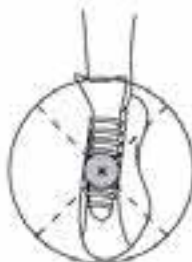
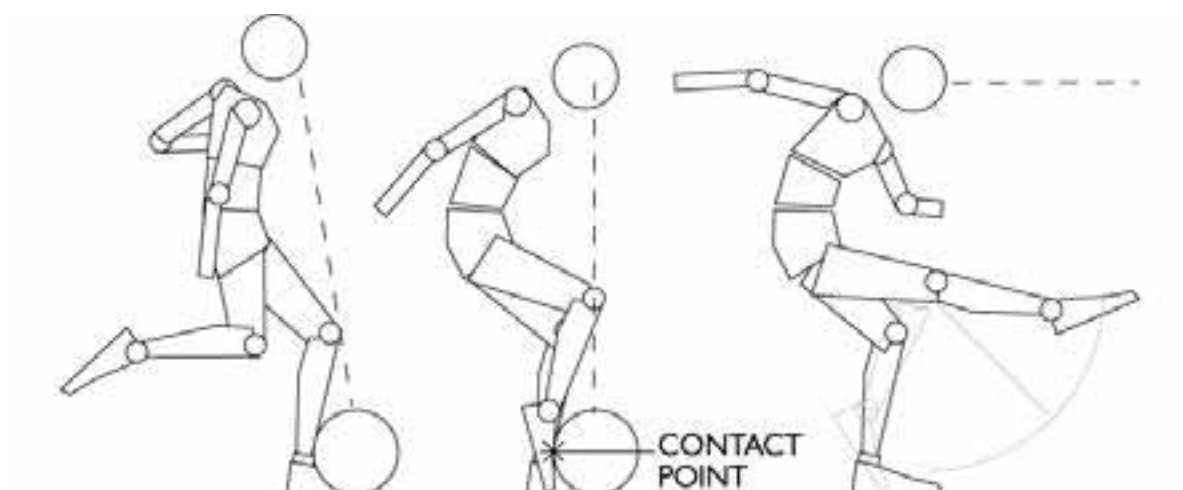
- Planting their foot in the proper place.
- Swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.
- Have each player stand with plant foot in proper position and strike lightly until they begin to hit the ball solidly (properly).



To see this in action visit: [aysou.video/tech2](https://www.aysou.video/tech2)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Planted foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.	Review proper technique with player(s).
Knee(s) are locked, not bent.	Review proper technique with player(s).
Ankle is not locked and toes are not pointed.	Lock ankle, point toes.
Ball is stabbed or jabbed.	Encourage player to follow through.
Leg is swung across the body instead of toward the target.	Encourage player to withdraw leg straight back and follow through straight toward target.



INSIDE OF THE FOOT - PUSH PASS

Used to advance the ball or to maintain possession by passing to a teammate. A consistent and safe technique once mastered.

Instructions:

Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to the ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms for balance.

Prepare Action Leg

- Draw leg back from hip.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 90 degrees outward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target.

Striking Movement

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Use arms for balance.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Follow through:
 - Pull leg straight through in general direction of target while maintaining balance.
 - Lower body as leg rises.
 - Keep ankle locked and follow through and lift knee.
 - Step out of the kick.

General Coaching Points:

- Place support foot next to ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Strike through center of ball and follow through in direction of pass.

Practice:

Before having players strike the ball:

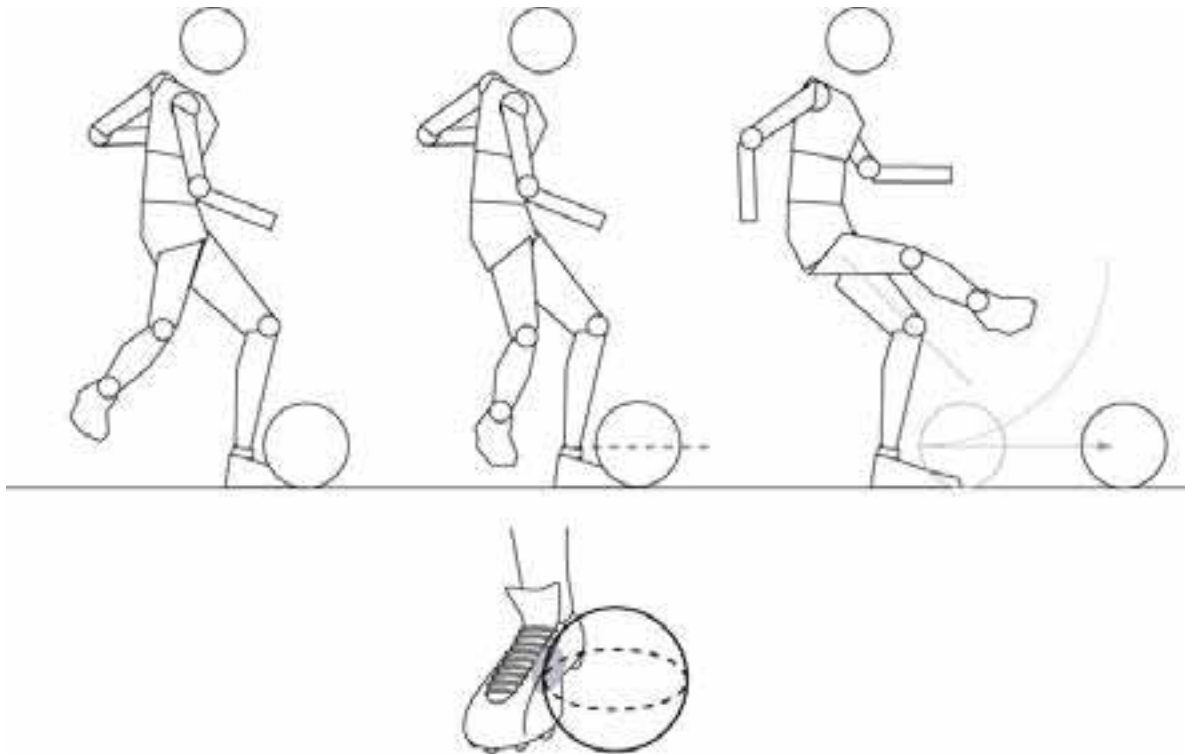
- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.



To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech3](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech3)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Planted foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.	Move planted foot closer to the ball and point in direction of target.
Knee(s) are locked, not bent.	Bend knees slightly.
Ankle is not locked and sole of foot is not parallel to ground and/or facing general direction of target.	Lock ankle and square body to the desired target.



INSIDE OF THE FOOT - BALL CONTROL

This technique is used to control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

Instructions:

- Get in line with flight of ball.

Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to path of the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Put weight on plant leg.

Prepare Control Leg

- Move leg toward the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg outward at hip, 90 degrees.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed up to ensure solid contact point.
- Raise foot off the ground and perpendicular to ball (form an “L” with feet).

Controlling Movement

- Keep eyes on the ball.
- Extend the arms to the sides for balance and protection.
- Contact center of the ball with center of inside of the foot (in curve/arch).
- Withdraw action leg straight back as contact is made in order to cushion the ball.
- Prepare ball for your next move—pass, dribble, or shoot.

General Coaching Points:

- On toes (ready to react).
- Get in line with flight of ball.
- Present inside of foot.
- Cushion the ball (by withdrawing the foot).
- Take touch into the best position for next move.

Practice (before having players contact the ball):

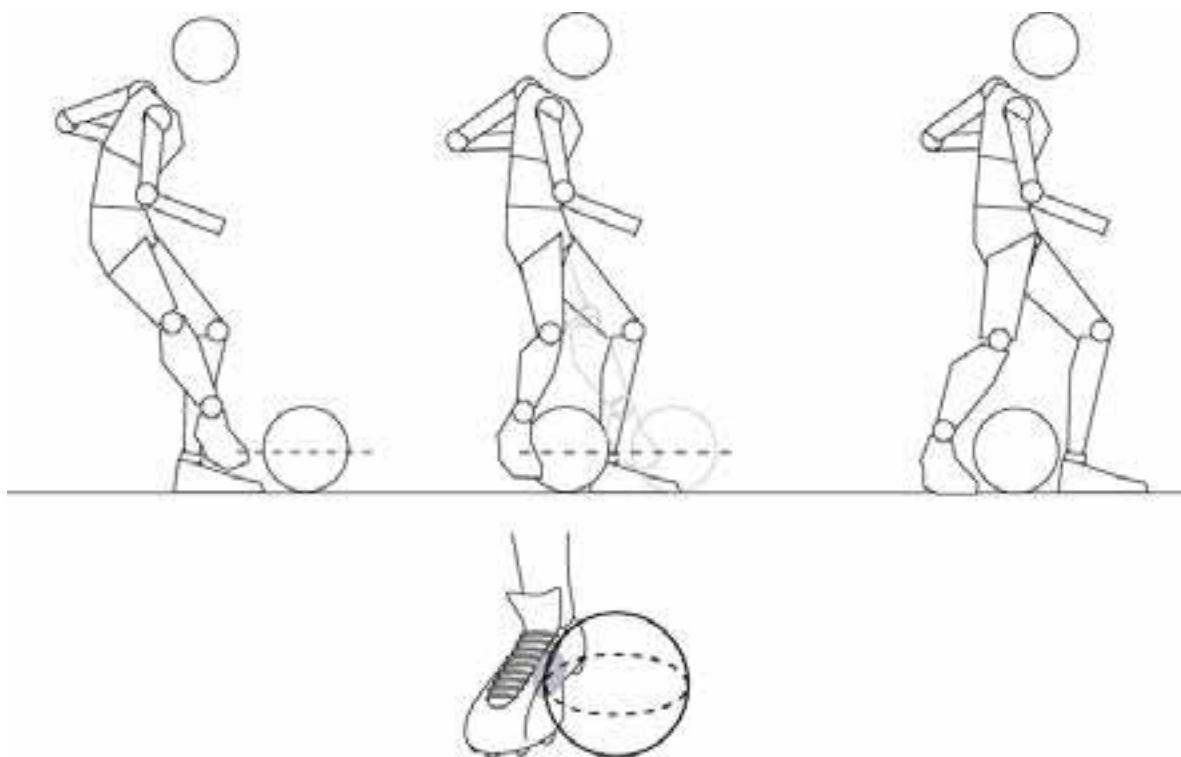
- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice moving their leg and foot straight back and forth in a controlled motion ensuring proper body and leg movement.



To see this in action visit: [aysou.video/tech4](https://www.aysou.video/tech4)

Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Player misses the ball.	Keep eyes on the ball.
Ball rolls over the controlling foot.	Lock the ankle, point toe slightly up.
Ball bounces off the controlling foot.	Draw the controlling leg back as the ball arrives.



THROW-IN

For 8U, each region shall have the discretion to use either throw-ins, dribble-ins or pass-ins to restart play.

Used to restart the game after the *entire* ball has crossed the touchline (whether on the ground or in the air).

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech5](https://www.aysou.video/tech5)

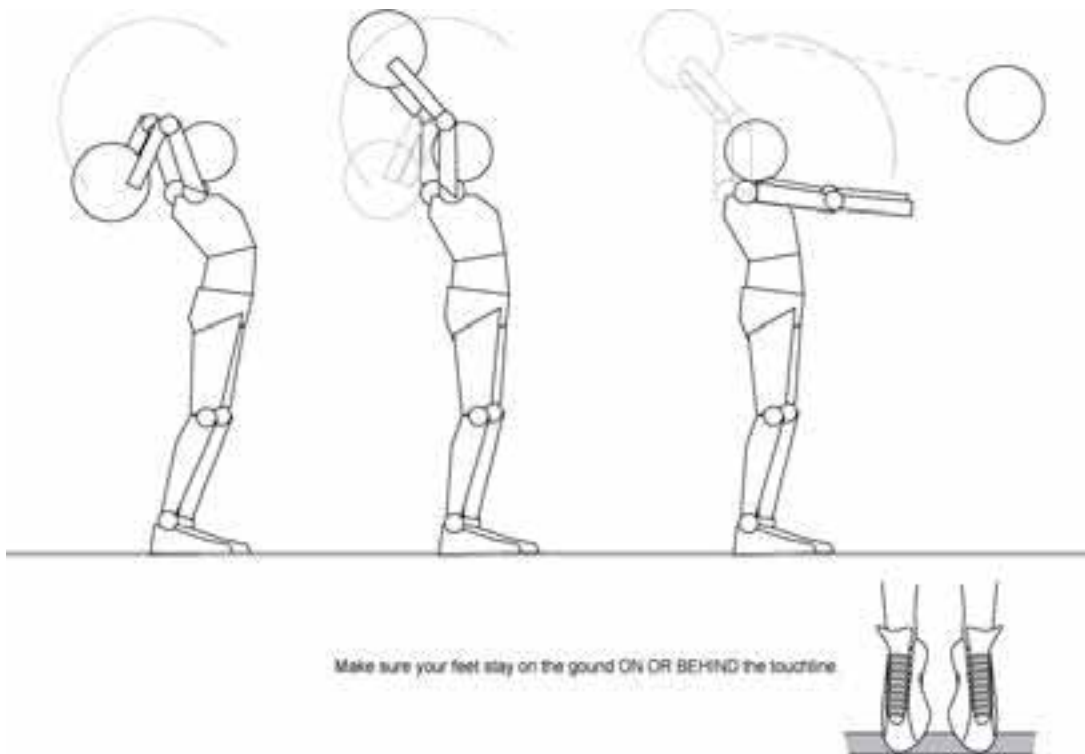
General Coaching Points:

- Face the field of play.
- Have part of each foot on the ground, either on or behind the touchline when the ball is released.
- Use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion.
- Use the “W”/Butterfly method of holding the ball (touch thumbs together and grasp ball in hands).
- Feet must be kept on the ground until ball is released.



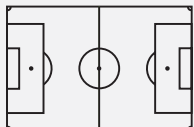
Common Errors & Correction

Error	Correction
Foot/feet come off the ground during throw.	Have players keep their feet <i>together</i> with knees bent and hold their feet down until they develop feeling of throwing without lifting feet.
Ball slips out of grasp.	Reinforce use of “W”/Butterfly method of holding ball. If player’s hands are small, instruct them to spread hand out until they have a solid grasp.



8U TRAINING ACTIVITIES

FROM THE FIELD



“Players should have the freedom to express themselves, be creative, take risks and make mistakes! Learning from trial and error is a key to *all* development and it is crucial that the environment we create (as coaches) promotes this freedom.”

AYSO Player Development Team

KEEP YOUR TEAM ENGAGED

This section will provide you with Age Appropriate training activities (*options*) recommended to help your 8U players practice their skills. The activities are grouped according to the skill that they will most effectively help to teach (and *generally* progress from fundamental to more challenging). Despite all of the coaching techniques that can be utilized, nothing will ever teach 8U players more effectively than just letting them play.

Be creative with the names of the games and modify them to suit *your* players. Use your own creativity and personality; paint in vivid images to effectively communicate with your players in a language *they* can relate to. If an activity is *not* working as intended, modify (increase/decrease) the Speed, Space, and Opposition to maximize success. Let the players work through the adaptations to find success. Remember, all players are different (often regardless of age), so **adapt accordingly to the needs of *your* specific group.**

Have fun!

KEEP IN MIND



The game itself
is the best
teacher!

END ZONE DRIBBLERS

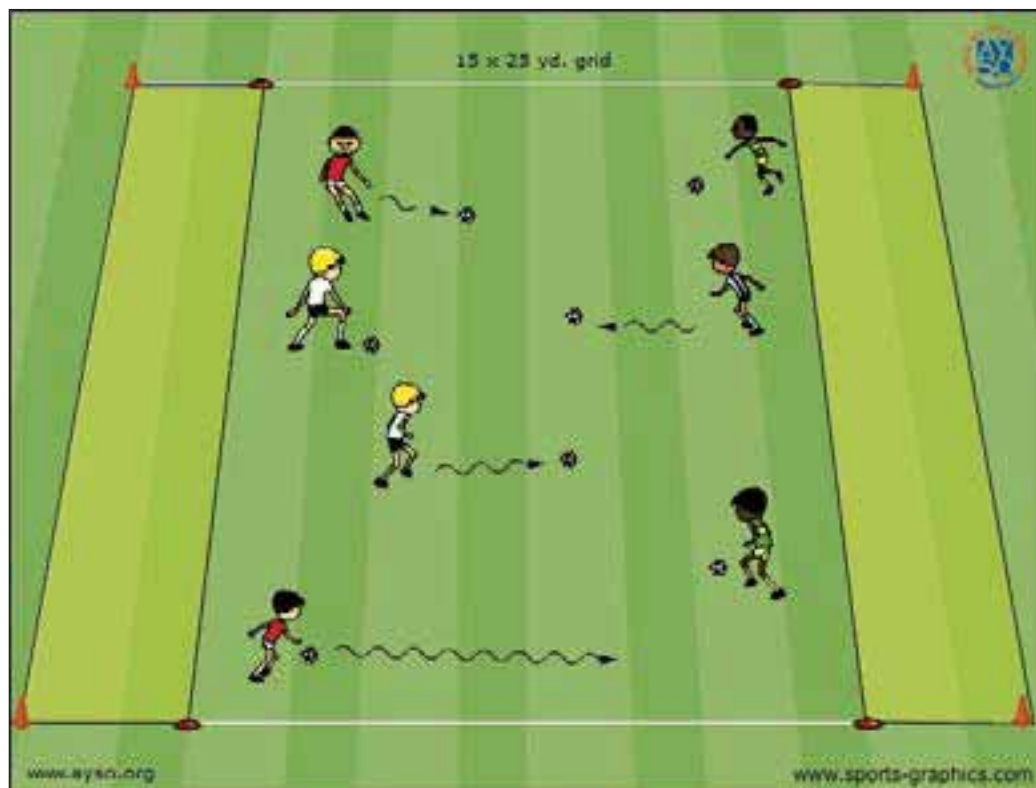
TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling

Equipment/

Organization: Mark 15 x 25 grid with a five yard “End Zone” at each end. Ball per player. Half of players in one end zone, half in the other.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.org/video/endzone](https://www.aysou.org/video/endzone)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players dribble end zone to end zone, controlling ball and stopping it in the other zone. Turn, repeat.
- Change speed: slow, half-pace, full-pace.
- Change direction: players dribble diagonally across grid.
- Turns: players must perform a fake or feint in central area before reaching end zone.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Players in pairs, one ball per pair. Players must perform four passes in end zone before the other player dribbles to other end.
- Add time challenge.

COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches (never more than a step or two away).
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).

AROUND THE COMPASS

TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling

Equipment/

Organization: Cones are placed north, south, east and west approximately eight yards away from a central spot marked with four cones (one for each player). Four players, one on each point, each with a ball.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/compass](https://www.aysou.org/video/compass)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players travel around the world.
- Players dribble towards the middle cone and then out to their immediate right.
- They turn and head back to the middle and repeat until they have visited all the coordinates on the compass.
- Rotate players as needed or have secondary grid.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Players dribble around the cones.
- Left foot, right foot; outside of foot, inside of foot dribbling.
- At center mark, use drag back turn.
- At outer point, use a different turn or fake.
- Time challenge.
- Change direction and pace.

COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

BODY BRAKES

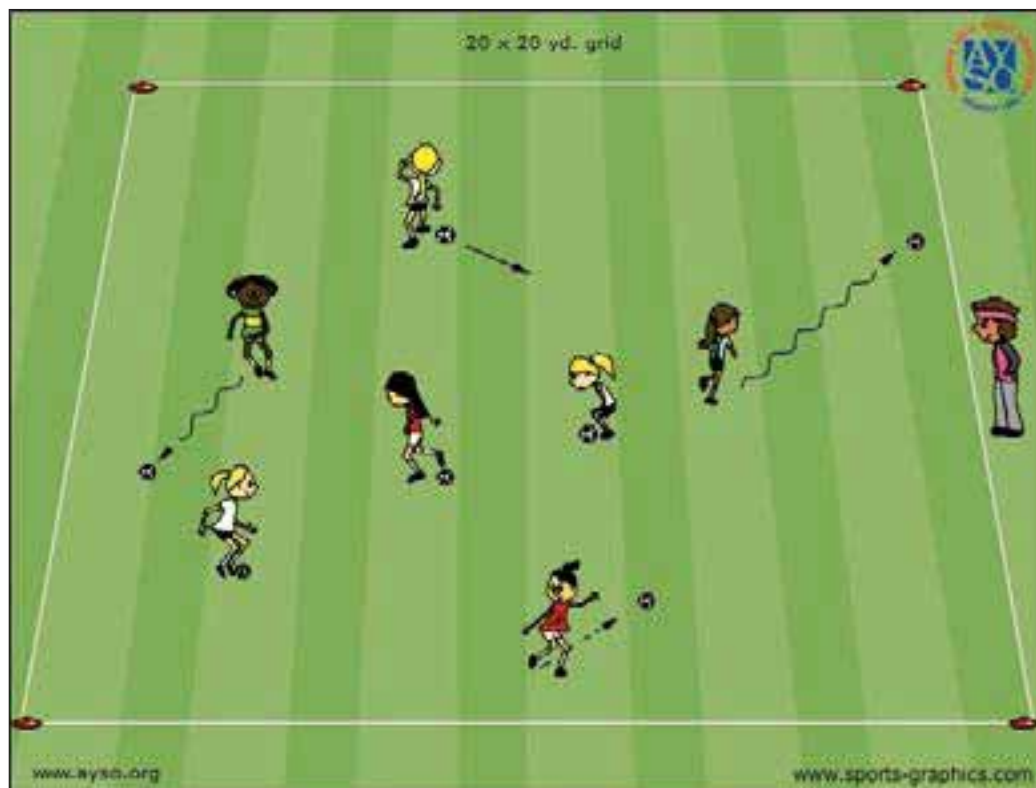
TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling

Equipment/

Organization: Mark 20 x 20 grid. Ball per player.

To see this activity in action visit:
aysou.video/brakes



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players dribble ball around and through the area, changing pace and directions.
- Coach calls a part of the body, i.e., right knee.
- Players must first stop ball with their foot, then place that part of the body on the ball.
- First player to stop ball gets 10 points.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Graduate the pace.
- Set high standards of technique.
- Vary body parts, i.e., elbow, nose, ear, etc. Vary left and right foot to stop ball.
- Add competition (who can execute first).

COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

GALAXY BATTLES

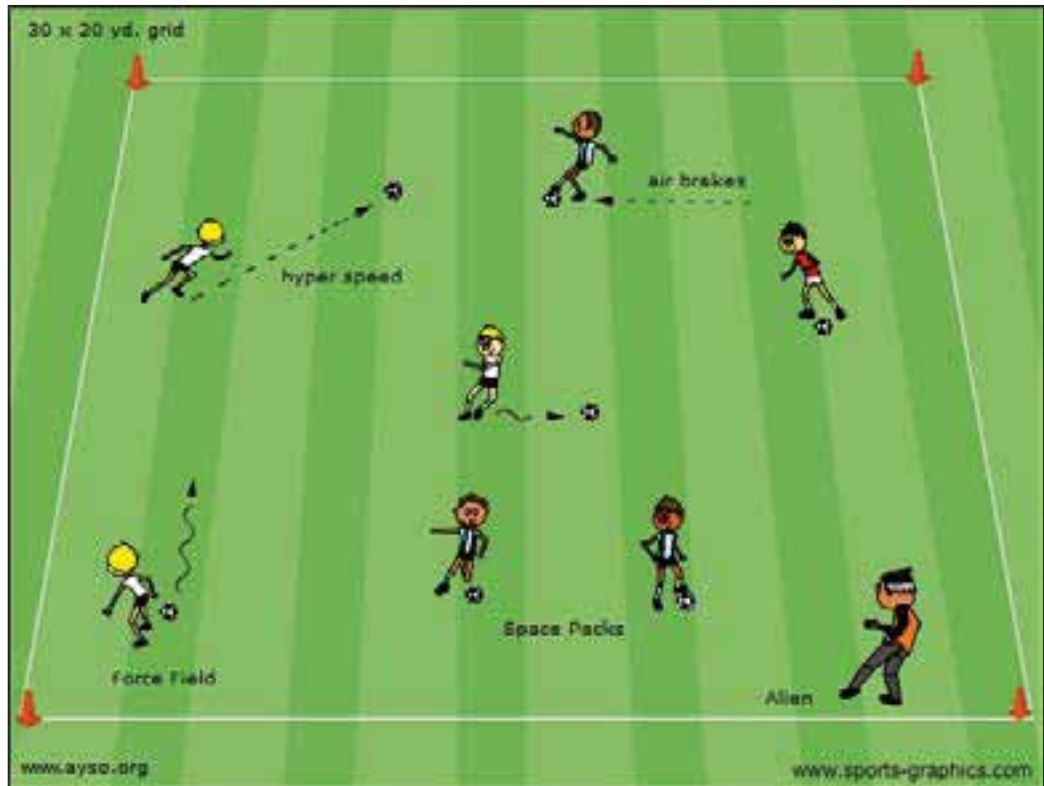
TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling

Equipment/

Organization: Mark a 30 x 30 grid, one ball per player.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysso.org/video/galaxy](https://www.aysso.org/video/galaxy)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- The grid is the Space Ship and each player must keep their ball on the ship or risk being lost in space. Various commands related to outer-space (or similar theme) are given to the players to dribble their ball in this galactic adventure.
- Cruise: Dribble at light pace around space ship with both feet.
- Hyper Speed: Dribble ball as fast as possible.
- Alien: (Coach) can enter the space ship at any given time and knock the player's ball into space.
- Air Brakes: Each player must stop and place foot on top of ball. (If a player does not stop the ball quickly enough, the Alien can kick ball into space.)
- Force Field: Each player must find a space away from others. (If a player does not find a space beyond arm length of another player, the Alien can kick ball into space.)
- Fighter Pilots: Each player must find a partner and sit down behind each other. (If a player does not find another Fighter Pilot, the Alien can kick ball into space.)
- Space Packs: Players find a partner and jump on each other's back.
- Whenever a player has to go out of the Space Ship to retrieve their ball, they must cover their ears with their hands to prevent internal body explosion.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot; outside of foot, inside of foot dribbling.

COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.
- Change direction and move into space.

ROB THE NEST

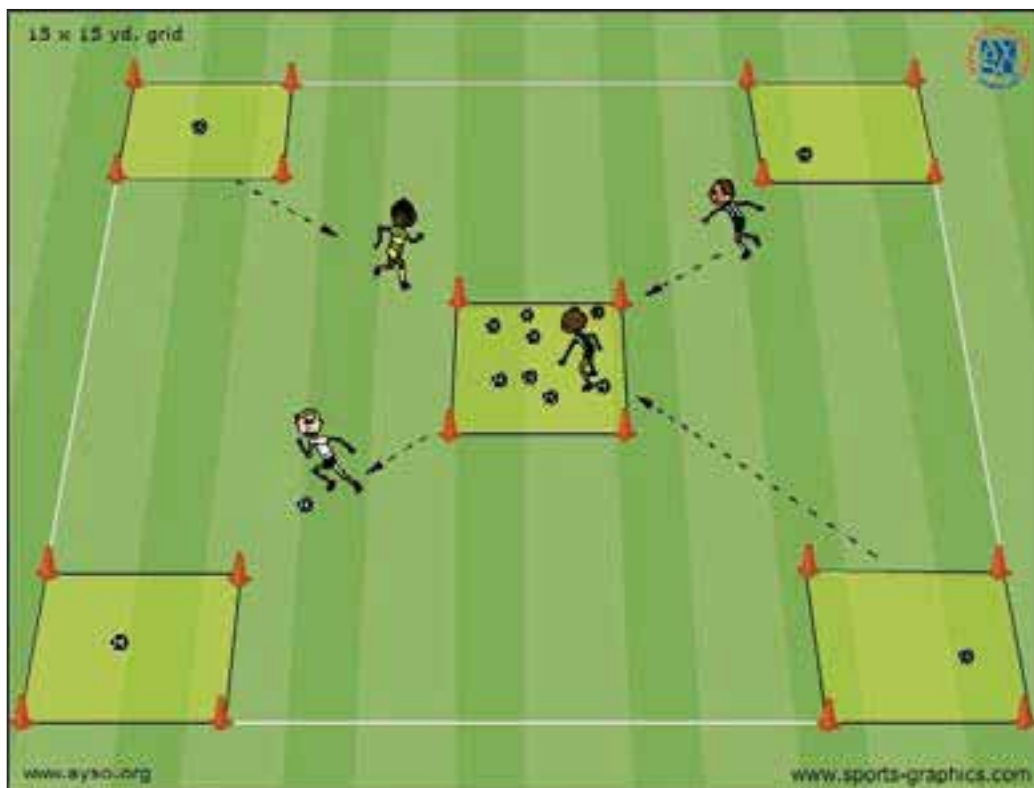
TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling

Equipment/

Organization: Mark a 15 x 15 grid with a square in each corner and a square in the center. Divide team into each of the four corners. Put all the balls in the middle square.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/robnest](https://www.aysou.org/video/robnest)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players are foxes trying to steal eggs from the nest.
- Players organize themselves into first, second, third, etc., or one player per square (pending numbers).
- On whistle, one player from each team runs into middle square (nest) and using a drag back turn takes a ball (egg) and then dribbles under control to their corner, stopping the ball with sole of foot inside their square.
- The winning team/player is the one that has the most eggs in their own nest.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot; outside of foot, inside of foot dribble.
- Drag back turn using left then right foot.
- Time challenge.
- Players must first run anti-clockwise around their square before entering through their own square to start play.
- Add some gates for the players to dribble back through.
- When the center nest is empty, players continue for an additional 60 seconds and can steal from each other's nests (nests cannot be protected).
- Rotate players often as needed as this activity can be physically demanding.

COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

STEAL OR SHIELD

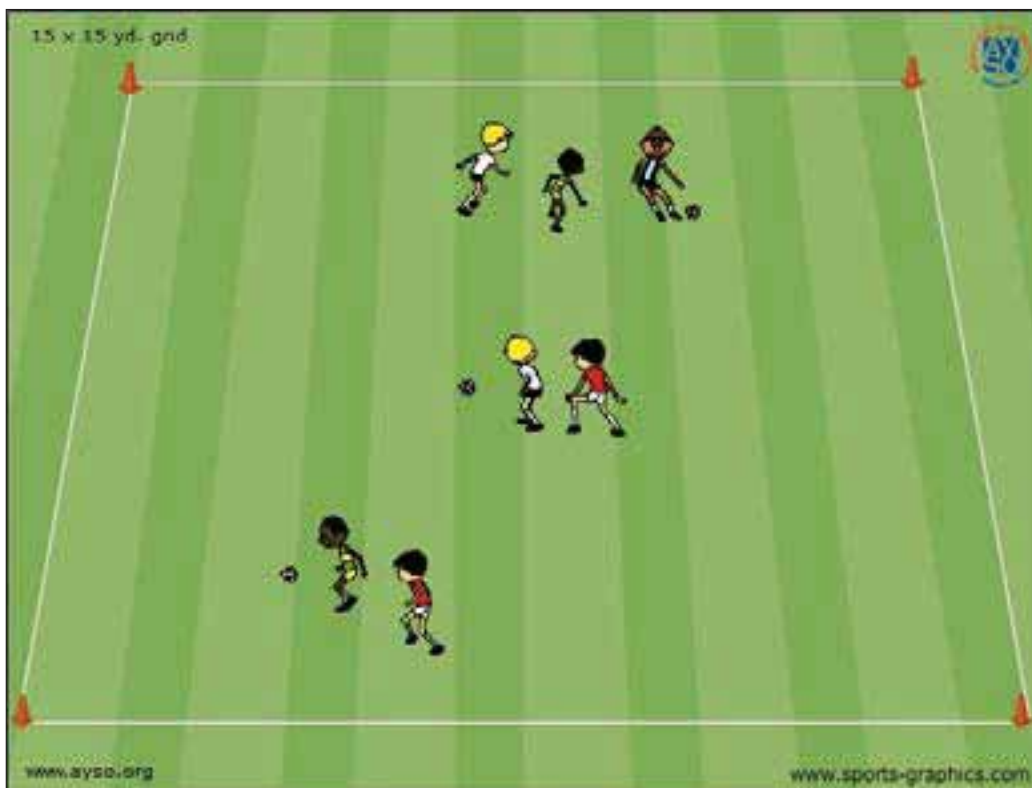
TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling and Shielding

Equipment/

Organization: Mark 15 x 15 grid. Players in pairs with one ball.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.org/video/steal](https://www.aysou.org/video/steal)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- One player starts dribbling the ball and at coach's command, their partner tries to steal the ball away.
- The player that ends up with the ball gets a point.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Change the size of the grid as needed.
- Set time before defender can challenge for ball.

COACHING POINTS

Dribbling Coaching Points:

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

Shielding Coaching Points:

- Knees bent, body is sideways to opponent (increasing distance between opponent and ball).
- Use arm to protect, balance and feel where defender is going.
- Rotate/turn as defender attacks or reaches for the ball.
- Use sole of foot to keep ball under control (touch/roll away from defender).

SIDELINE SOCCER

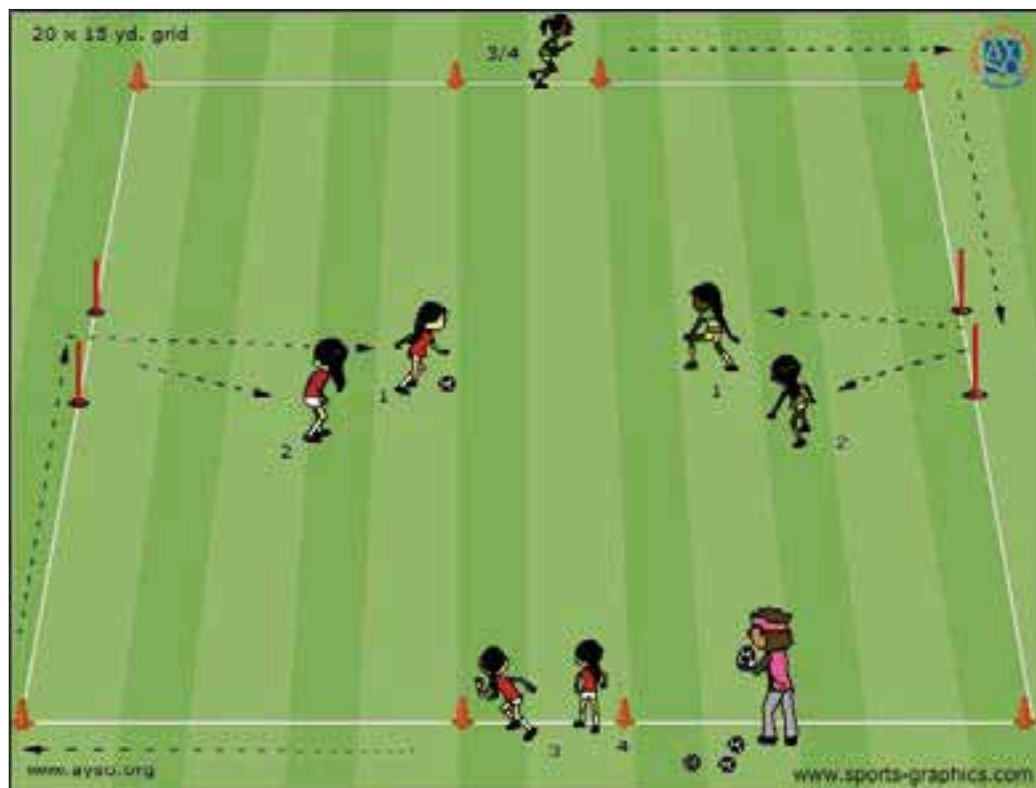
TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling

Equipment/

Organization: Mark approximately 20 x 15 field with two small goals. Two small gates centered on each sideline with teams lined up in between facing each other. Coach has all the balls and positioned centrally to serve onto field.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/sideline](https://www.aysou.org/sideline)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players are assigned numbers (same on each side). (Player can play 2 numbers pending attendance, i.e., 3 and 4).
- Coach calls a number(s). That number(s) sprint to their left hand side, around the corner cone, cuts into the goal area and enters the field through the small goal to compete.
- Coach serves (favors) to one of the two players to create offense/defense (and to prevent collision).
- Players play 1 v 1. To score, ball must be dribbled over the goal line.
- Keep score.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- 2 v 2, 3 v 3.
- Players must pass before they can score.
- Players competing can use their sidelined teammate(s) for support passes.

COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.
- Encourage fakes, feints and creativity.
- Sharp turns around the corners into the field.

CLEAN YOUR YARD

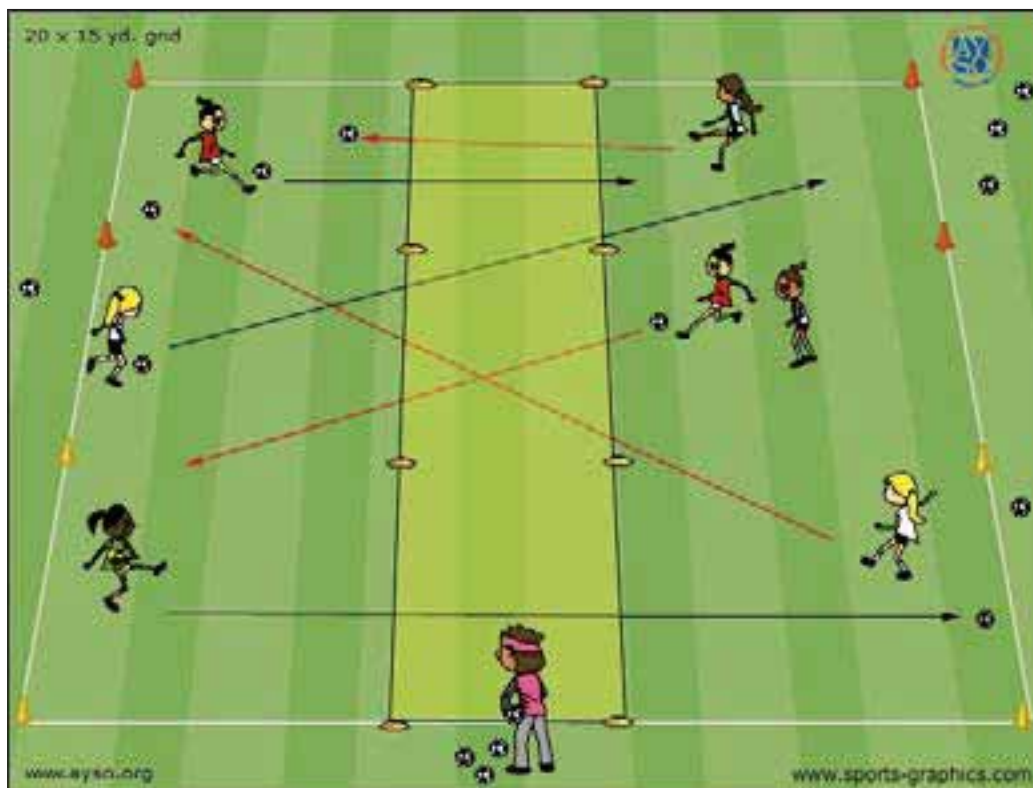
TECHNIQUE:

Instep Kicking

Equipment/

Organization: Mark a 20 x 15 yard playing area with two big goals on each end line and a 4 yard neutral zone in the center. Divide players into two teams and put one team on either side of neutral zone (coach can clear balls from neutral zone). Ball per player.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/yard](https://www.aysou.video/yard)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Both teams try to score on *either* of the other team's goals (directly opposite or diagonally) using instep kick.
- After a player shoots, they can get any other soccer ball in their side of the field and try to score again.
- Players are not allowed into the neutral zone or block their goals.
- After a set period, the team with the most goals wins the game (also the team with the *fewest* number of balls in their yard (side), gets an extra point/goal.
- Coach has plenty of spare balls to help flow. Use rotating players as retrievers if available or create a pair (pending attendance).

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot.
- Vary size of grid.
- Prior to shooting back a ball, players must dribble around a cone that has been set up behind their goal area.

COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.
- Simple decision making by looking for the open goal.
- Encourage quick shooting repetition. Shoot every time they find a ball!

FOUR CORNER SHOOTING

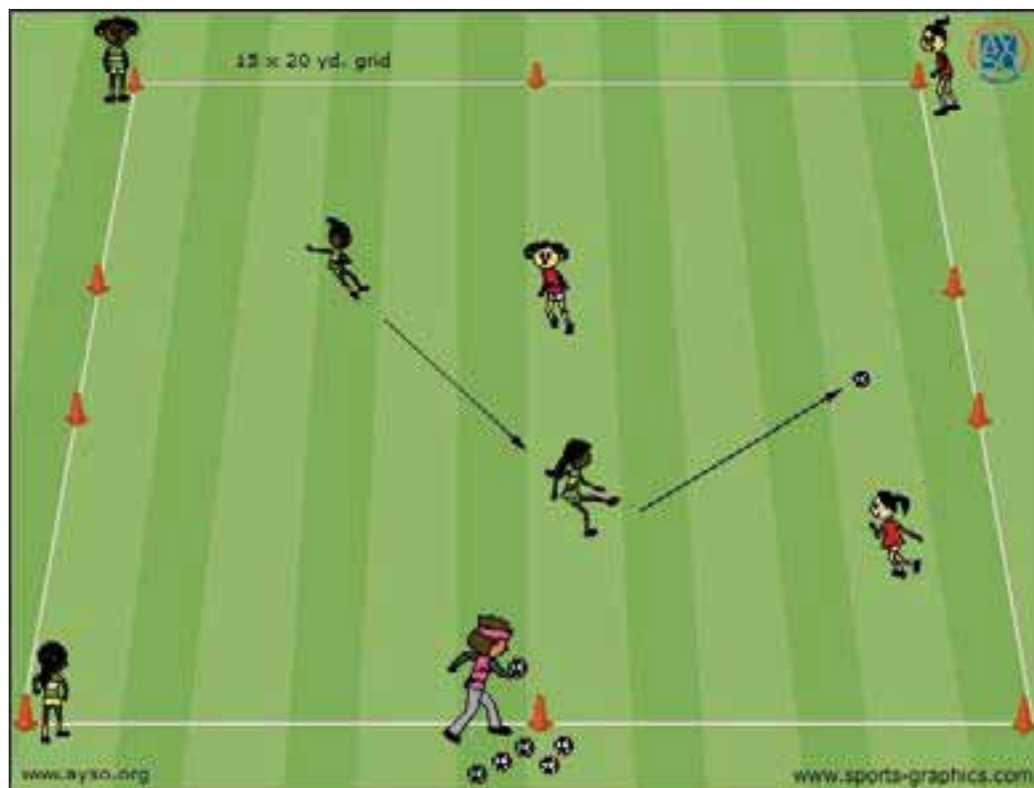
TECHNIQUE:

Instep Shooting
(inside of foot control,
dribbling)

Equipment/

Organization: Mark 15 x 20 grid with a goal at either end. Two teams. Half the players from each team split into two lines on each corner. Coach is on sideline with all the balls.

To see this activity in action visit:
aysou.video/fourcorner



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- As coach serves ball into play, the first player from each of the four corners comes out to play 2 v 2.
- Play continues until a goal is scored using an instep kick or ball goes out of play. When this happens, all players go off and the next four players enter the field for a 2 v 2. (One corner may only have one player pending attendance. If so, players rotate returning to that corner.)
- Game continues until coach has used all the balls. When this happens, players retrieve balls and dribble them back to coach (team with most gets an extra goal).

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot shots.
- Players must pass before shot.
- Player must beat an opponent before shooting.
- Add additional goals on sidelines.

COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

PIN BALL WIZARDS

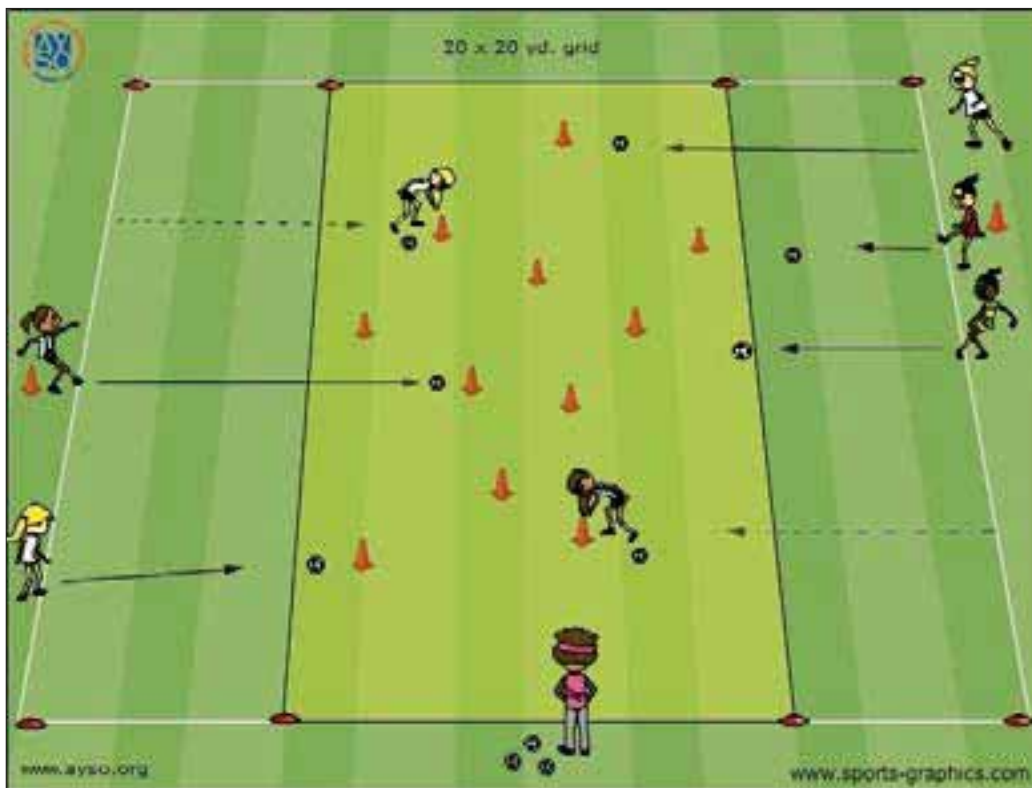
TECHNIQUE:

Inside of the Foot Push Pass

Equipment/

Organization: Mark 20 x 20 grid, two teams opposite each other on the end lines, each player has a ball. Approx. 20 tall cones are scattered randomly along the middle of the grid (you can mark this channel with sideline cones).

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/wizards](https://www.aysou.org/video/wizards)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players must pass the ball and try and knock down as many cones as possible by using an inside of foot push pass.
- When they knock down a cone they must run, pick it up and place it on a pile beside them outside the grid.
- Winning player / team is those with most pins.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot passes.
- Vary distance.
- Add time challenge.

COACHING POINTS

- Place support foot next to ball (*toe should not be past ball*) pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Strike through center of ball and follow through in direction of pass.

BORDER WARS

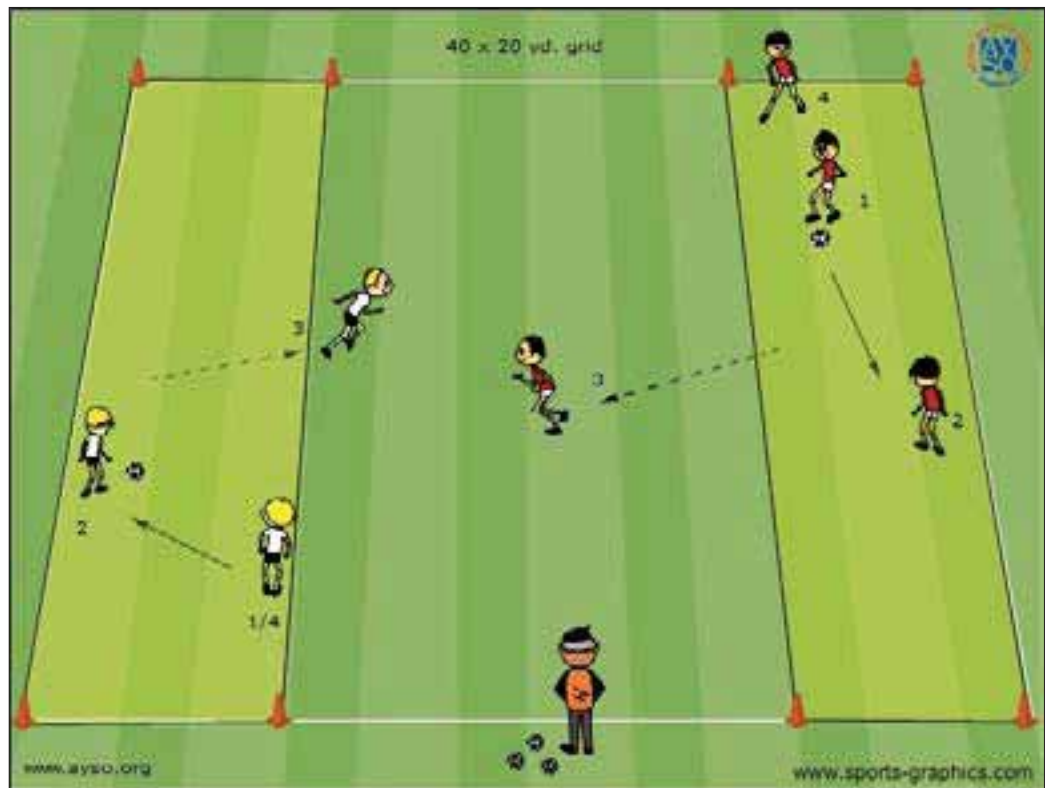
TECHNIQUE:

Inside of Foot Push
Pass, Inside of Foot Ball
Control

Equipment/

Organization: Mark
40 x 20 grid with 10-yard
wide zones at each end.
Two teams. Each team has
a ball and occupies an end
zone (border). Players are
numbered or given names of
teams or characters (player
can play 2 numbers pending
attendance, i.e., 1 and 4).

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/wars](https://www.aysou.org/video/wars)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Both teams pass a ball to each other in sequence: 1 to 2 to 3, etc., using an inside of foot pass and controlling using inside of foot control.
- Encourage the players to move to a new patch of grass immediately after passing.
- Call out a number. The players with that number run across to the opposite border (end zone) and try to steal the ball or knock it out of the playing area. The first player to succeed wins a point for their team.
- The first team to 10 points wins.
- Once a number is called, the rest of the team do not have to pass in sequence any more.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Call out two numbers and/or restrict the number of touches the players in possession are allowed.

COACHING POINTS

Coaching Points Inside of Foot Push Pass:

- Place support foot next to ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Strike through center of ball and follow through in direction of pass.

Coaching Points Inside of Foot Control:

- On toes (ready to react).
- Get in line with flight of ball.
- Present inside of foot.
- Cushion the ball (by withdrawing the foot).
- Take touch into the best position for next move.

GATE BALL

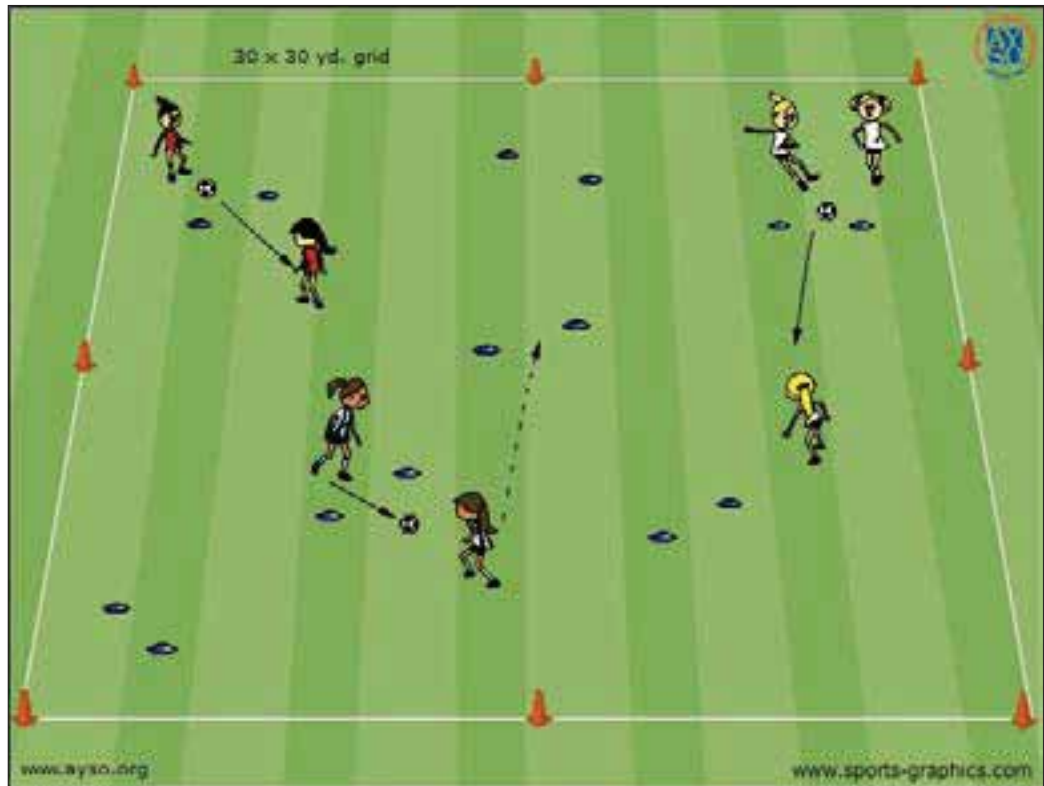
TECHNIQUE:

Inside of Foot Ball
Control

Equipment/

Organization: Mark 30 x 30 grid, players in pairs, one ball per pair (combine three pending attendance). Make 6-10 small gates with cones (have more gates than pairs) placed randomly in grid.

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/gate](https://www.aysou.org/video/gate)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Players move through the grid from gate to gate.
- One player passes to the other who then controls the ball using the inside of foot.
- After each goal, the pair move onto another set of empty gates to score.
- Each pair counts how many goals they score in a set period of time.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Left foot, right foot control and passing.
- Add time challenge.
- Increase number of times pair must pass ball through gates before moving on.

COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing technique.
- Quality inside of foot control:
 - On toes (ready to react).
 - Get in line with flight of ball.
 - Present inside of foot.
 - Cushion the ball (by withdrawing the foot).
 - Take touch into the best position for next move.

BE RIGHT BACK!

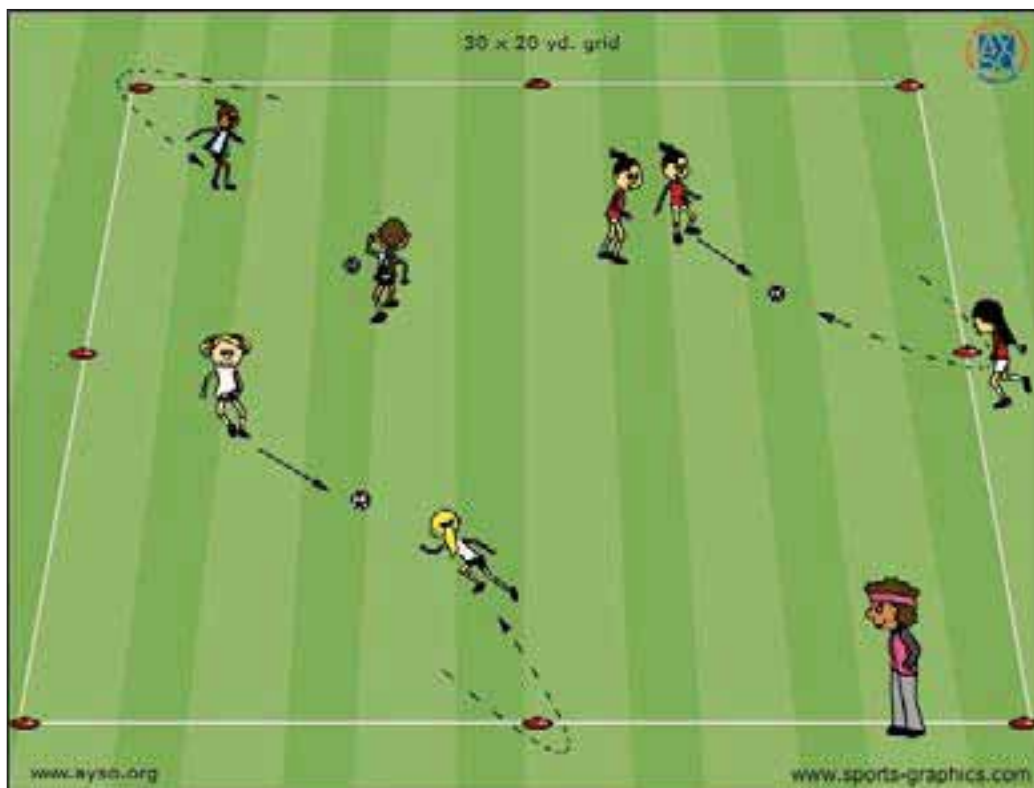
TECHNIQUE:

Inside of Foot Push
Pass, Inside of Foot Ball
Control

Equipment/

Organization: Mark an area 30 x 20 with 8 cones evenly placed around the edges of the grid. Players in pairs, one ball per pair (combine three if needed pending attendance).

To see this activity in action visit:
[aysou.video/beback](https://www.aysou.video/beback)



HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- One player passes to their teammate, pivots, shouts "Be right back!" and runs around one of the cones lining the grid.
- Once they round the cone, they check back in to receive the ball back from their teammate who is waiting in the grid with the ball.
- The player who remained in the grid then passes to their teammate and they run around a different cone to receive the ball.

VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- To begin with the player remaining in the grid is stationary and then progresses to dribbling around the grid.
- Increase grid size.
- Condition passing (left foot, right foot).
- Condition ball control (left foot, right foot).
- Condition number of touches to control and pass (3, 2).

COACHING POINTS

- Inside of foot push pass techniques.
- Inside of foot ball control techniques.
- As the player comes back to receive the pass, their teammate should pass it as soon as eye contact has been made.
- When receiving the ball, players should touch the ball into the area they want to move into.

8U TRAINING PLANS

RUN YOUR SESSION LIKE A PRO

It is a great pleasure to present a collection of 8U Training Plans from all across the soccer globe, including AYSO, Division 1 Universities, U.S. Soccer, and the NSCAA. This broad perspective from top level youth coaches is representative of today's game and will give you a solid base to use for your in-season training sessions **or a solid framework to help design your own plans.**

Plans are grouped by topic and (and *generally* progress from fundamental to more challenging).

KEEP IN MIND



As with all sessions, you will need to **customize and adapt each session** and activity to your **own** players' stages of development and levels of ability (grid size, numbers, equipment, etc.). Some activities will work more effectively than others, pending numerous variables, so try them out and have fun with it (*they are only suggestions*).



TRAINING PLAN 8U DRIBBLING

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit: [aysou.video/8u1](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u1)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Players dribble through grid changing pace and direction.
- Coach calls body part, i.e., right knee. Players must first stop ball with foot, then place that part of body on ball.
- First player to execute gets 10 points.
- > Control tempo.
- > Add competition. Who can execute first?

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Introduce dribbling technique.
- Movement, touch on ball.
- Preparation.
- Freedom.
- Fun!

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit: [aysou.video/8u2](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u2)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x30 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Grid is Space Ship & each player must keep ball on ship or be lost in space.
- Add numerous commands: Cruise, Hyper Speed, Alien, Air Brakes, Force Field, Fighter Pilots, Space Packs.
- When players leave ship to retrieve ball, they must cover their ears to avoid internal explosion. Create atmosphere, tell the story, animate.
- > Left, right, different parts of foot.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Spatial awareness.
- Fun!

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

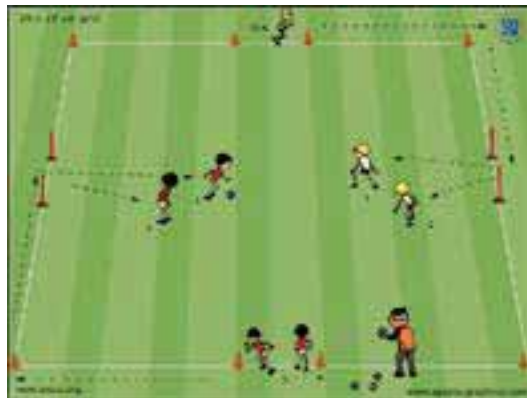
(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit: [aysou.video/8u3](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u3)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 grid w/ small goals.
- Two small gates centered on each sideline w/ teams lined up in between facing each other.
- Players are numbered (same each side).
- Coach calls number(s). That number(s) sprint to their left, around corner cone, cuts into goal area and enters field through small goal to compete.
- Serve to favor one player (attack/ defense, avoid collisions).
- 1v1, to score player must dribble through gates. Give team names, keep score!
- >2v2, 3v3.
- >Players must pass before scoring.
- >Sideline players support.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Change of pace and direction to explode past opponent.
- Creativity.
- Individual effort and competitiveness.
- Sharp turns around corners.
- Fun!

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

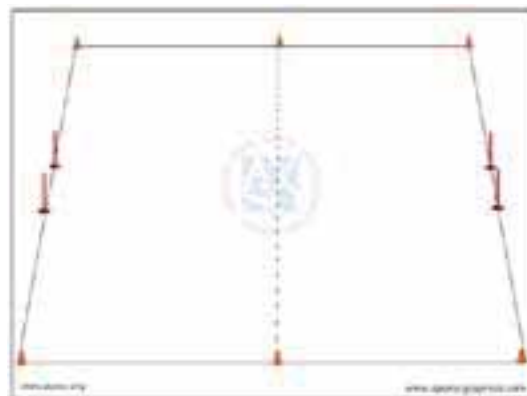
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- To score, players must dribble the ball through goal and stop ball with foot.
- > Add additional goals on either sideline.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality dribbling technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

TRAINING PLAN 8U DRIBBLING

CREATED BY
Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit: [aysou.com/video/8u4](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u4)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Player takes name of their favorite dog, i.e., Fido (pet or favorite animal). Holds ball in hands and 1 at a time, hand their ball to coach, who tosses the ball away from the group in any direction within grid (dog park).
- Coach instructs players to retrieve ball in a variety of ways, i.e., dribbling, skipping, using a knee and elbow.
- Players bring their ball back to the coach as instructed as quickly as possible.
- > Coach moves positions.
- > Players work in pairs.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Introduce dribbling technique.
- Movement, touch on ball.
- Physical coordination.
- Simple decision making.
- Follow directions and movement education.
- Creativity.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

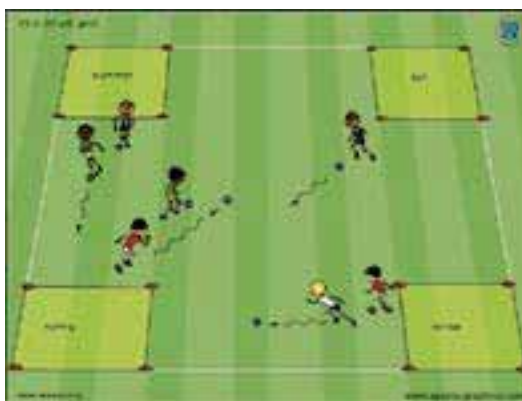
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit: [aysou.com/video/8u5](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u5)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x30 grid w/ a 5x5 square in each corner. Split players into each square w/ ball each.
- Label each of the small grids spring, summer, fall and winter (or a similar picture for the kids to visualize).
- Each square will have at least 1 player dribbling within.
- Coach shouts a "season" and all players dribble fast to that grid.
- Player who was playing in the grid that was called must dribble to any one of the 3 grids that are now empty. First player to the new grid wins.
- > Left, right, different parts of foot.



COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees should be slightly bent and body leaning slightly over ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit: [aysou.com/video/8u6](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u6)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15x20 grid w/ small goal at either end. Two teams. Half players from each team split into two lines on each corner. Coach on sideline with all the balls.
- As coach serves ball into play, 1st player from each of the 4 corners comes out to play 2v2. Play continues until a goal is scored using an instep kick or ball goes out of play. When this happens, all players go off and the next four players enter the field for a 2v2.
- Game continues until coach has used all the balls. When this happens, players retrieve balls and dribble them back to coach (team with most gets an extra goal).



COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Change of pace and direction to explode past opponent.
- Creativity.
- Individual effort and competitiveness.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

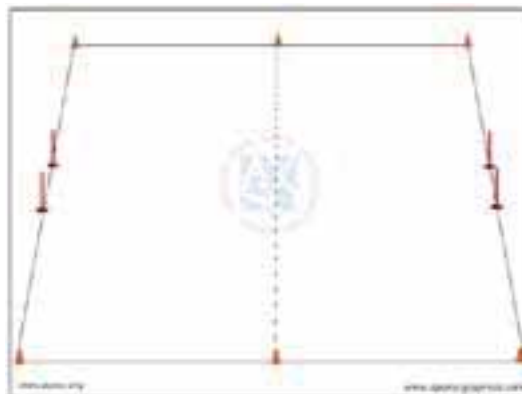
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- To score, players must dribble the ball *through* goal and stop ball with foot.
- > Add additional goals on either sideline.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality dribbling technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

TRAINING PLAN 8U DRIBBLING

CREATED BY
Alsop
AYSO Soccer Camps

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u7](https://www.aysocamps.com/aysou-video/8u7)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15x15 grid w/ square in each corner and a square in the center (w/ all balls).
- Divide team into each of 4 corners. Players/foxes try to steal eggs from nest. Players organize into 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc., or 1 player per square (pending numbers).
- On whistle, 1 player from each team runs into middle **nest** and using a drag back turn takes an **egg** & dribbles under control to their corner, stopping the ball with sole of foot inside their nest.
- Winning team/player is one with most eggs in their own nest.
- > Foxes can steal from each other's nests.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up.
- Keep ball close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u8](https://www.aysocamps.com/aysou-video/8u8)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Numerous small cone gates are set up.
- Players dribble through grid changing pace and direction.
- On coach's command the players dribble through as many different gates as they can until the coach calls them to slow down. (5-10 second bursts of action).
- > Left foot, right foot.



COACHING POINTS

- Players should move ball w/ both feet and both inside and outside of each foot.
- Ball should be in front of the player a distance of one stride.
- On coach call, the player must get their head up to observe other players and vacant gates.
- As players speed up their stride lengthens & ball remains in front of them.
- A turn is made using sole of the foot.
- Despite time pressure, ball should always be under control. should attempt to touch ball every other step (or so). * Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u9](https://www.aysocamps.com/aysou-video/8u9)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid w/ 2 small goals. 2 teams. All players w/ ball.
- 1 team has only taggers & stands outside grid; other team finds a space within grid.
- On command, taggers try to tag all players inside grid (but keep control of their own ball). When a player is tagged they pick up ball and shout for help (can be freed by teammate if a ball is passed between their legs). Once freed, players can shoot for goal!
- Winning team is the team with taggers who can freeze everyone the quickest in set period.
- Each goal by freed dribblers adds on 5 seconds to tagging team time.
- Rotate inside players every 2-3 minutes.



COACHING POINTS

- Close control & ball familiarity.
- Head up as often to know where the defenders are & where goals are.
- Avoid and beat defenders with quick turns or skills.
- Keep body in between defender and ball to protect it (shield).
- Encourage players to try specific turns and skills for themselves (drag-back or scissors).

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

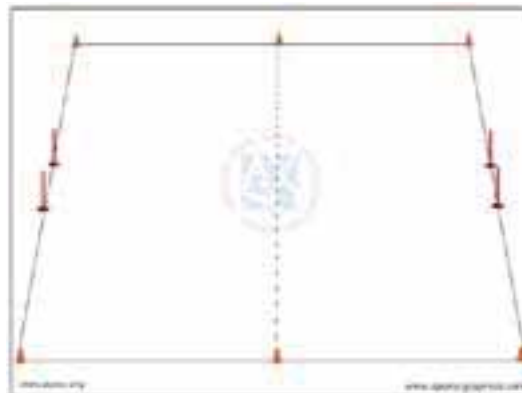
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- 2 balanced teams of 3 plus a floating player who plays for whichever team has the ball.
- To score, players must dribble the ball through goal and stop ball with foot.
- > Add additional goals on either sideline.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality dribbling technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

TRAINING PLAN 8U DRIBBLING

CREATED BY

Barker

NSCAA

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u10](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u10)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Numerous cone gates are set up.
- Players dribble through grid changing pace and direction.
- On coach's command the players dribble through as many of the different gates as they can until the coach calls them to slow down. (5-10 second bursts of action).
- > Coach may introduce a turn back through the gate as a progression.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Players should move ball w/ both feet and both inside and outside of each foot.
- Ball should be in front of the player a distance of one stride.
- On coach call, the player must get their head up to observe other players and vacant gates.
- As players speed up their stride lengthens and the ball remains in front of them.
- A turn is made using sole of the foot.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u11](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u11)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid.
- Half the players try to dribble through as many gates as are open.
- Open is when a player is not in the middle of the gate.
- Coach calls switch and "gatekeepers" either open or close their gate.
- Activity is 30-45 seconds and the players switch roles.
- The more switches the coach calls the more dynamic the game becomes.
- > Coach may introduce a turn back through the gate as a progression.



COACHING POINTS

- Players should keep their heads up to identify open gates and other players moving in the area.
- Controlling surface is the outside (little toe) or inside (big toe) of both feet.
- Each stride should touch the ball.
- Players should try to react quickly to gates opening and closing by keeping the ball close and being able to change direction cutting the ball to a side or turning completely using the sole of their foot.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☐
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u12](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u12)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 field with gates at one end.
- Coach plays the ball to one team and that player must try to dribble through one of the two gates.
- The opponent gives chase and if they can win the ball they play it back to the coach.
- Coach alternates which team begins with the ball.



COACHING POINTS

- Dribble at speed to gate opposite if the defender can be beaten with speed.
- Dribble the ball across the defender to the other gate keeping the body between the defender and the ball.
- If the defender gets between the ball and the goal decide which gate to attack with speed and/or a move.
- Try to keep moving the ball to off balance the defender and in order to accelerate.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

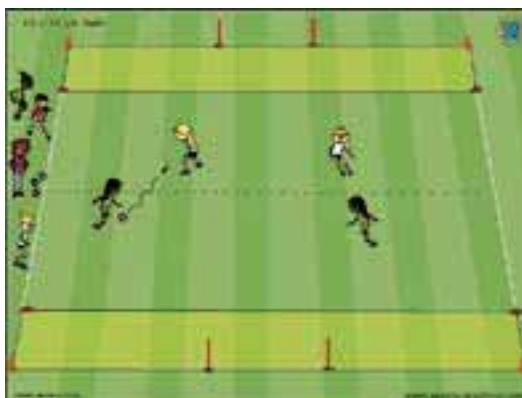
Cool Down/Debrief

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u13](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u13)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 field w/ two small goals.
- Mark line 3-5 yards in front of each goal.
- 2v2 play. Each out of bounds, the coach introduces a new ball.
- Play is continuous. Upon the coach's command the players tag out of the game and tag in two teammates.
- No player can be in the area of the goal until the ball has been dribbled.
- A goal can be scored once the ball has been dribbled beyond the 3-5 yard line.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Players have the option to dribble or pass to support.
- They must decide if they can dribble into the scoring zone and shoot.
- When players see they have space to dribble into the zone they should take it.
- Touch the ball with each stride of the dribble and keep the ball in front.
- Last touch before the shot should put the ball out to the side for the shot. * Before receiving the ball look for the space to attack on the dribble.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 8U PASSING

CREATED BY
Kuntz
Cal State Fullerton

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u14)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid. 2 players play against each other and share a ball.
- They place 2 cones anywhere from 2-8 yards apart. They choose! Players pass back & forth to each other (inside of foot).
- Ball must never stop, must always stay on ground, & must go thru the 2 cones w/out touching them.
- Whenever an error occurs, other person receives a point. Keep score.
- Because the ball must never stop, players have to play 1-2 touch. The closer the 2 cones are the closer the pairs are probably going to be. The farther apart they are, the more they will have to move laterally.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Quality push pass technique (placement of plant foot, preparing to strike ball, swing of leg and pace of pass).
- Quality of receiving/controlling the pass (preparing body, cushion ball on contact, move in path of pass).
- Movement off ball.
- Suitable weight, timing and accuracy of pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

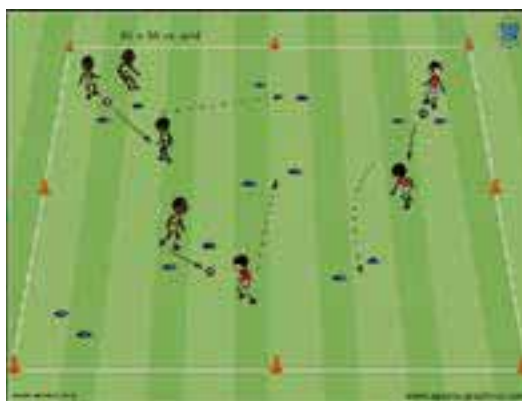
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u15](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u15)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 grid, players in pairs, 1 ball per pair. Place 6-10 small cones/ gates (have more gates than pairs) randomly in grid.
- Players pass ball through gate using inside of foot passing and receiving technique and move onto spare gate.
- Pair w/ most gates in 1 minute win.
- > L foot, R foot control & passing.
- > Increase number of times pair must pass ball through gates before moving on.
- > Change speed/time, number and size of gates.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality push pass technique (placement of plant foot, preparing to strike ball, swing of leg and pace of pass).
- Quality of receiving/controlling the pass (preparing body, cushion ball on contact, move in path of pass).
- Movement off ball.
- Suitable weight, timing and accuracy of pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u16](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u16)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x30 playing area. mark four small goals (1 yard wide), 5 yards in front of each corner.
- 2 teams 3v3 score in any of the four goals (only from the front).
- Score by passing through (retaining possession).
- When ball goes out of play, restart with kick-in.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality push pass technique (placement of plant foot, preparing to strike ball, swing of leg and pace of pass).
- Quality of receiving/controlling the pass (preparing body, cushion ball on contact, move in path of pass).
- Movement off ball.
- Suitable weight, timing and accuracy of pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

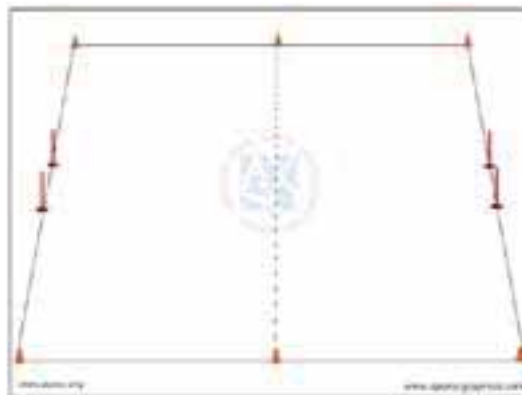
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality passing & receiving techniques but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 8U PASSING/RECEIVING

CREATED BY
Benavidez
Region 677

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u17](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u17)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 grid w/ 8 cones around edges of grid.
- Players in pairs, one ball per pair.
- 1 player passes to teammate, pivots & runs around 1 of the cones lining the grid.
- Once round cone, they check back in to get ball back from teammate waiting in grid w/ ball.
- The player who remained in grid then passes to their teammate & they run around a different cone to receive ball.
- Player remaining in grid is stationary & then progresses to dribbling around the grid.
- > L foot, R foot passing & control.
- > Condition touches to control and pass (3, 2).

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Inside of foot push pass techniques.
- Inside of foot ball control techniques.
- As the player comes back to receive the pass, their teammate should pass it as soon as eye contact has been made.
- When receiving the ball, players should touch the ball into the area they want to move into.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

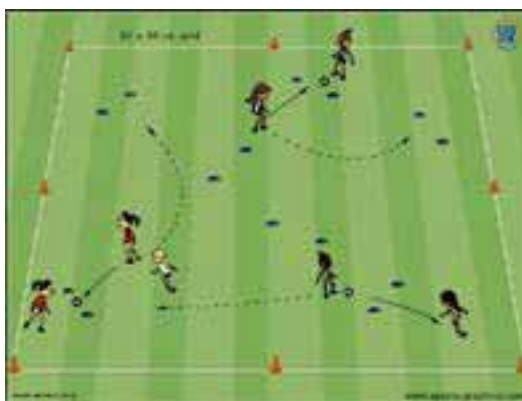
(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u18](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u18)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 grid, players in pairs, 1 ball per pair. Place 6-10 small cones/gates (have more gates than pairs) randomly in grid.
- Players pass ball through gate using inside of foot passing and receiving technique and move onto spare gate.
- Pair w/ most gates in 1 minute win.
- > L foot, R foot control & passing.
- > Increase number of times pair must pass ball through gates before moving on.
- > Change speed/time, number and size of gates.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality push pass technique (placement of plant foot, preparing to strike ball, swing of leg and pace of pass).
- Quality of receiving/controlling the pass (preparing body, cushion ball on contact, move in path of pass).
- Both feet to receive and pass.
- Movement: players need to take controlling touch, look up to find teammate and deliver good instep pass.
- Spatial awareness.
- Competition.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u19](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u19)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 grid w/ zone at either end.
- Two small gates/goals per end.
- Divide players into 3v3, 4v4, etc, with one ball.
- Each team needs to connect a pass through each of the 4 gates to win.
- > Use both feet.
- > Change locations of gates within grid.
- > Once a team has successfully connected a pass at each goal, they must do 3 toe taps (or similar skill).
- > Reduce size of gates (once successful with larger size).
- Stipulate that each team member must connect and receive a pass through a gate.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality push pass technique (placement of plant foot, preparing to strike ball, swing of leg and pace of pass).
- Quality of receiving/controlling the pass (preparing body, cushion ball on contact, move in path of pass).
- Both feet to receive and pass.
- Movement: players need to take controlling touch, look up to find teammate and deliver good instep pass.
- Spatial awareness.
- Competition.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u20)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- Place a goal/gate at each end of the grid.
- To score, players must connect a pass to a teammate who has run through the goal/gate to receive the ball.
- > Add goals/gates on either sideline.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality passing and receiving technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 8U PASSING

CREATED BY
Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u21](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u21)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 40x30 grid w/ 3 10x10 squares as shown. Each square represents a famous soccer team w/ a group of 3 players, 1 ball.
- Each team of 2 or 3 makes short passes while moving around in their area.
- On coach command:
- **Barcelona**-each group passes ball clockwise to next area & continues passing & moving w/ the ball they receive.
- **Liverpool**-Teams dribble ball clockwise to the next area and continue passing and moving.
- **Juventus**-Each group passes ball counter clockwise to next area and continues passing & moving w/ ball they receive.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing technique.
- Quality first touch efficiency.
- Movement off ball.
- Suitable weight, timing and accuracy of pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u22](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u22)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid w/ small goal on each side with cones.
- 5 attackers & 2 defenders (two headed monster).
- Defenders (two headed monster) must link by holding a scrimmage vest while chasing the attackers.
- Attackers must make 5 consecutive inside of foot push passes inside the area before they can dribble through a goal to score.
- > If the 2 defenders win the ball they may break their link and attempt to score in any of the four goals.
- Keep score.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing technique.
- Quality first touch efficiency.
- Emphasize receiving at angle, w/ open body shape so player can see where the ball is coming from and where it can potentially go to, as well as a shoulder check to know whether pressure is close or not.
- Communicate with team mates to prevent misplaced passes (verbal communication, eye contact and body language).

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u23](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u23)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15. 2v1, w/ 2 target players for either team on sides in designated areas.
- 2 attackers play across length of grid, while 1 defender adds pressure (& tries to regain possession and find their target/outlet).
- Object is to pass ball from 1 target across to opposite target keeping possession. If so, 1 point is awarded.
- If defender wins ball, they get 1 point; if defender can clear to either of their target players, 2 points.
- Both target players have to touch ball without opposition winning it before any point is awarded to attackers.
- Both attackers must make at least 1 pass before it can be played to opposite target.
- >Defender's target can join in (2v2).
- > Rotate players often (esp. def.) and adjust numbers based on attendance.



COACHING POINTS

- Game gets easier w/ quality passing & control.
- Spatial awareness.
- Encourage good movement off ball.
- Encourage good communication (important in keeping possession).
- Encourage effort by defender.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

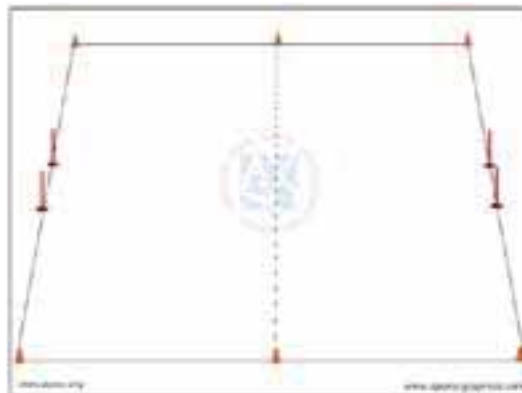
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality passing & receiving techniques but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 8U FINISHING/SHOOTING

CREATED BY
Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

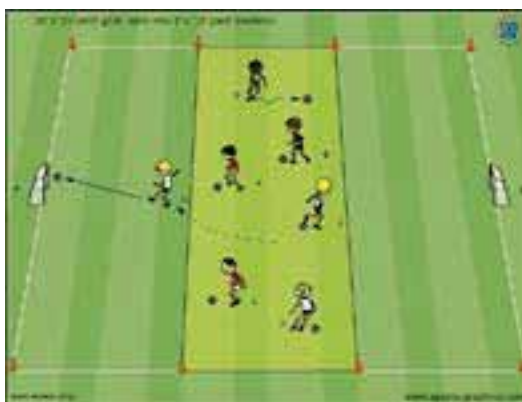
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u24](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u24)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 area w/ two small goals on each end labeled A & B. Grid is split into 3x10 yard sections. 1 ball each.
- Players are numbered 1-7 and dribble ball in central grid, performing turns, moves, changing pace, and direction.
- Coach calls number 1-7 and A or B goal. Player whose number is called, performs a drag back turn and dribbles their ball at pace to the specific goal and simply strikes the ball using instep kick into the empty goal, collects ball and rejoins group.
- > Left foot, right foot.
- > Player must strike at goal within 2, 3, 4 yards from central grid (mark line(s) w/ cones).

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.
- Keep quick flow, lots of shots. 3 seconds to get shot off.
- Quality dribbling and turning technique.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u25](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u25)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 area w/ 2 small goals on each end labeled A & B. Grid is split into 3x10 yard sections. Players in pairs. Central grid has a gate for each pair (gates are numbered).
- Players pass ball back & forth using inside of foot passing and receiving (2 touch).
- When coach calls gate number and goal (A or B), pair at that gate go 1v1 to goal.
- Player in possession of ball at time of call, becomes attacker and dribbles to goal and shoots using instep kick. Player not in possession becomes defender and gives chase (passive to start).
- Keep score.
- > L foot, R foot passes, control & shots.
- > Passive to full pressure defending.
- > Have 2 pairs per gate, 1 ball, creating 2v2.
- > Add cone(s) in goal to hit.



COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.
- Quality passing & receiving.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/8u26](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aysou.video/8u26)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 area w/ 2 small goals. Two small gates centered on each sideline with teams lined up in between facing each other. Coach has all the balls and positioned centrally to serve onto field.
- Players are assigned numbers (same each side).
- Coach calls a number(s). That number(s) sprint to their left hand side, around the corner cone, cuts into the goal area & enters field through small goal to compete & shoot on goal.
- Coach serves (favors) to one of the two players to create offense/defense (& to prevent collision).
- > 2v2, 3v3.
- > Players must pass before they can score.
- > Players competing can use their sidelined teammate(s) for support passes.



COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.
- Take the shot!
- Sharp turns around the corners into the field.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

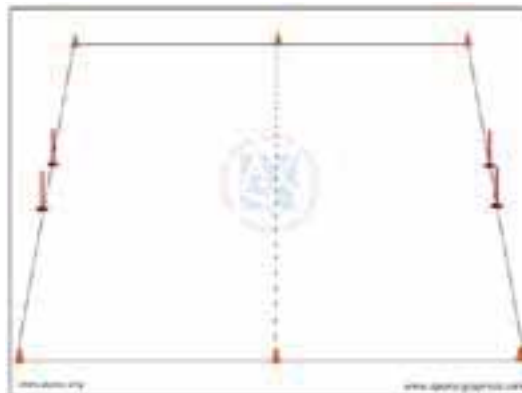
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- Place a goal/gate at each end of the grid.
- > Place additional goals/gates on either sideline.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality shooting technique but let them play.
- Establish a confident and free learning environment; where players are **encouraged** to take the shot without fear of missing.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 8U FINISHING/SHOOTING

CREATED BY

Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

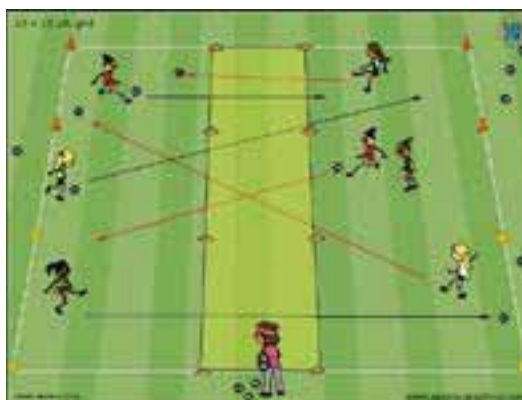
- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.com/video/8u27](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u27)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 area w/ two big goals on each end line and a 4 yard neutral zone in center.
- 2 teams. 1 on either side of neutral zone (coach clears balls from neutral zone). Ball per player.
- Teams try to score through either of opponents goals (opposite or diagonally) using instep kick.
- After shots, player can get any other soccer ball in their side of the field and try to score again.
- No goal blocking or entering neutral zone.
- After set period, team w/ most goals wins (also team with fewest balls in their yard (side), gets extra point/goal).
- Coach has plenty of spare balls to help flow.
- > L foot, R foot. Vary size of grid.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back & down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.
- Simple decision making (look for open goal).
- Encourage quick shooting repetition. Shoot every time they find a ball!

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒PHYSICAL ☒TECHNICAL ☒TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.com/video/8u28](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u28)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid, 2 teams on opposite end lines, each with ball. Approx. 20 tall cones are scattered randomly along the middle of the grid.
- Players must try and knock down as many cones as possible by using an instep kick.
- When they knock down a cone they must run, pick it up and place it on a pile beside them outside the grid.
- Winning player / team is those with most pins.
- > Left foot, right foot passes.
- > Vary distance.
- > Add time challenge.



COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back & down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒PHYSICAL ☒TECHNICAL ☒TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.com/video/8u29](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u29)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 grid w/ goal either end. 2 teams. Half players from each team split into 2 lines on each corner. Coach on sideline w/ the balls.
- As coach serves ball into play, 1st player from each of the 4 corners comes out to play 2 v 2.
- Play continues until a goal is scored using an instep kick or ball goes out of play. When this happens, all players go off and the next 4 players enter the field for a 2 v 2.
- Game continues until coach has used all balls. When this happens, players retrieve balls and dribble them back to coach (team with most gets an extra goal).
- > Left foot, right foot shots.
- > Players must pass before shot.
- > Player must beat an opponent before shooting.
- > Add additional goals on sidelines.



COACHING POINTS

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back & down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒PHYSICAL ☒TECHNICAL ☒TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

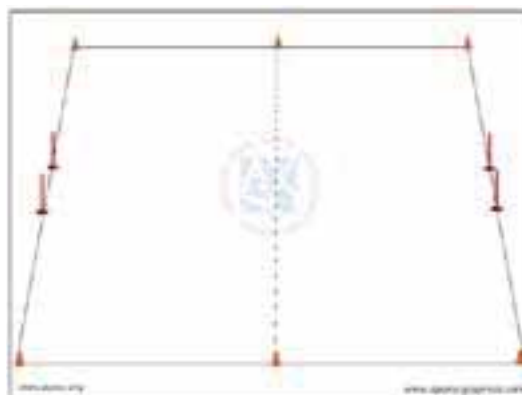
- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- Place a goal/gate at each end of the grid.
- > Place additional goals/gates on either sideline.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality shooting technique but let them play.
- Establish a confident and free learning environment; where players are *encouraged* to take the shot without fear of missing.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒PHYSICAL ☒TECHNICAL ☒TACTICAL ☒

TRAINING PLAN 8U CONTROL

CREATED BY
Region 688

STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- * Max. ball contact, repetition
- * Introduce topic
- * Physical prep. (dynamic)
- * Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.com/video/8u30](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u30)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15x15 playing area. Players into pairs with one ball for each pair.
- Players should be no more than 10 yards away from another group.
- Each pair must pass back and forth to each other within the grid.
- When the coach shouts "change" the players not on the ball switch to another player to begin passing with.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form).



COACHING POINTS

- Quality first touch efficiency: use of inside & outside of the foot.
- Move into line with the ball in time to receive it- soft control out of your body.
- Read speed and movement of ball, be willing to move forward/back to receive it.
- Take first touch into space or towards the player you will be passing to.
- Look to open your body to be able to see the play and make an easier pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- * Individual & pairs
- * Competition & teamwork
- * 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.com/video/8u31](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u31)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x30 grid w/ labeled sidelines (cartoon theme throughout activity, i.e., Flintstones). Pairs pass ball using all area. On coach command players perform move:
- **Barney**: Players pass ball thru partners' legs who spins & collects ball w/ drag back or Cruyff turn.
- **Fred**: Players run towards each other and perform take-over (watch timing).
- **Wilma**: player chips ball softly over crouching partner, leaps them & collects ball w/ drag back turn.
- **Bam-Bam**: Pairs do 10 1-touch passes.
- **Dino**: Player serves ball in air for partner to control and pass ball back.
- Add a location/story/action: Barney & Fred went bowling: Players must do a Barney and Fred & dribble their ball to the Bowling Alley.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing and receiving.
- Quality touch and technique.
- Quality turns.
- Aerial control: Align w/ flight of ball. Bring surface up to meet ball. At moment of impact, withdraw surface to cushion first touch (like catching an egg). Be on toes to react to falling ball.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☐

STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- * Opposition (attack & defense)
- * Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- * Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- * Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.com/video/8u32](https://www.aysou.com/video/8u32)

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15x20 grid. Coach has soccer balls on sideline.
- Divide players into 3 groups: 2 attacking groups and 1 defending.
- Coach serves ball to 1 of the lines (on ground or in air to challenge control).
- 1st player in each of the 3 lines enters field. (2v1)
- The 2 attackers must get ball over the opposite end-line (or to a small goal) under control.
- If attackers score, they get 1 point. If defender steals ball & scores, she gets 2 points.
- If ball goes out of bounds or a goal is scored, coach serves another ball & new players enter the field.



COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing and receiving.
- Combination play.
- Quality touch and technique.
- Aerial control: Align w/ flight of ball. Bring surface up to meet ball. At moment of impact, withdraw surface to cushion first touch (like catching an egg). Be on toes to react to falling ball.
- Defending (intercepting passes).

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

- * Unconditional
- * Emphasize topic
- * Age group laws
- * Formations
- * Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Balanced small-sided match with general rules.

Player leads stretching (v. light at this age, more habit forming and introduce proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality control techniques but let them play.
- Game conditions should validate what was covered in training (quality control, 1st touch efficiency).

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒
PHYSICAL ☒
TECHNICAL ☒
TACTICAL ☒

8U PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PLAYING THE GAME

Field

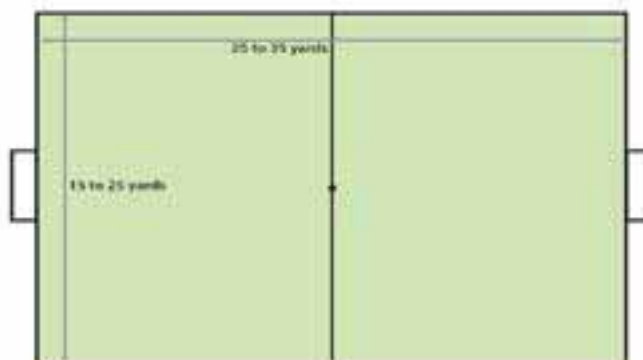
- **Dimensions:** 25-35 yards long, 15-25 yards wide.
- **Markings:** Distinctive lines recommended.
 - Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.
- **Goals:** The maximum size is 4' high x 6' wide.

Ball

- Size 3

Players

- **Numbers:** Four per team on field; no goalkeepers. Six maximum on roster.
- **Substitutions:** Approximately midway through each half, at halftime and for injuries.
- **Playing Time:** All players, unless injured, are required to play at least half of every game.
- **Teams:** Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.



Players' Equipment

- **Footwear:** Soccer shoes are recommended (or similar type athletic shoes). The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.
- **Shinguards:** MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.
- **Jerseys:** Rolled or tied up sleeves are permitted, provided that the referee approves it is done in a safe manner.

Duration of Game

- Matches should have two equal halves not to exceed 20-minutes each.
- Halftime shall be a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes. No added time.

Official

AYSO-certified 8U officials or higher are required for 8U games. The 8U official should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

Assistant Referees/Club Linesmen

If available, qualified assistant referees who have completed Assistant Referee Certification may be used to assist the referee. This is an opportunity for new assistant referees to begin getting experience.

If qualified assistant referees are not available, club linesmen (untrained volunteers who may be affiliated with one of the teams/clubs) may be recruited from the spectators, to assist the referee with calling the ball in and out of play only. This is an opportunity for parents to get involved.

8U MATCH KNOWLEDGE

KNOW THE TERMS

The Start of Play

To start the first and second halves and following each goal in all age group games, play is started or restarted with a kick-off in the center of the field. A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Following a goal, the team scored upon kicks off.

The Kick-off

The kick-off is taken from the center of the field with each team in their own half and the team not kicking off at least 5 yards from the ball. Do not insist the opponent always be 5 yards from the ball, as this is just a guide to give the kicker room to kick the ball without it immediately hitting an opponent. Remember, let them play and do not interfere for technicalities.

The Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is out of play in all age group games when it completely crosses the touchline (side line) or goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air.

Method of Scoring

A goal, in all age group games, is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal.

Fouls

The opposing team must be at least 5 yards from the ball when free kicks are taken in 8U games. The following are the fouls most likely to occur in 8U games: kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, handling the ball and dangerous play (the most frequent call in 8U games). Officials must remember that there is no need to stop play for technical violations that do not interrupt the flow of the game. It's a player's game and not a game of how many infractions can be identified, so keep the fun going and let them play.

Misconduct

Misconduct should be rare in 8U games. There is no need for the public cautioning and sending off of young players. Officials should work cooperatively with the coach when an 8U player may need a "time out."

Free Kicks

All free kicks in 8U games are indirect free kicks. Opponents must be at least 5 yards from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks.

Offside

No offside.

The Throw-in

For 8U, each region shall have the discretion to use either throw-ins, pass-ins or dribble-ins to restart play. Opponents should be 5 yards from ball.

The Goal Kick

A goal kick is awarded to the opposing team, in 8U and older, when the attacking team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The goal kick may be taken from the general vicinity of the goal. The opposing team must be at least 5 yards from the ball when the goal kick is taken in 8U games.

The Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded to the opposing team, in 8U and older, when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least 5 yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in 8U games.

Hand Ball

A hand ball infraction occurs when a player handles the ball. The “hand” includes the entire arm up to the top of the shoulder. Instinctive, self-protective reactions are not penalized at this young age. Accidental contact (ball striking hand or arm with no intent by the player) is not an offense and should not be penalized.

No Heading!

Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division players 11U (12U for programs without single age divisions) and below in both practices and matches. An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team if a player age 10 or younger deliberately touches the ball with his/her head during a match. The indirect free kick will be taken from the place where the player touched the ball with his/her head.

Players 10 years old and younger, approved to play up in a division where heading is allowed, are still prohibited from heading the ball. The player, parents and coaches are responsible for ensuring the player does not head the ball in practice or in matches consistent with the standards set by US Soccer.

APPENDIX A:

SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

SAFE HAVEN INTRODUCTION

Agreeing to a background check is also required for each volunteer. Safe Haven® is both a child AND volunteer protection program.

The child protection aspect is intended to prevent child abuse, promote education and awareness, enforce policies and screen and train volunteers. It includes proactive steps that promote a positive, healthy environment for children. Volunteer protection comes into play as a result of volunteer training, certification and continuing education. The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides certain legal protections for volunteers *who have been trained and certified and act in accordance with a written job description*. Safe Haven includes these three elements, giving volunteers the highest degree of protection available under the law.

To coach in AYSO, you **MUST** complete this course!

KEEP IN MIND



To ensure the safety of both children and volunteers, each volunteer is **required** to take a class or online training session called AYSO's Safe Haven® focusing on safety and appropriate behavior with children as well as other on-field issues.

RISK MANAGEMENT BASICS

Covered in detail within our Safe Haven course, below are some general excerpts regarding risk:

Supervision

- One adult for every 8 or fewer children.
- **At least 2 adults present at ALL times.**
- At least 1 adult of the same gender as players.
- Adults should never be alone with a child except their own (including transporting a child in a car).
- Team Coach is responsible for players on team until they are picked up or otherwise leave the area.
- **No child shall be left unsupervised** after a game or training session.
- When necessary to speak privately with a child, select a spot out of earshot but within sight of others.
- The AYSO "Buddy System" requires a minimum of 3 players whenever children are allowed to enter a restroom alone, etc. Necessary for preventing player-on-player abuse.
- Adult supervisors of children must ensure that players are not allowed to abuse other players during AYSO activities.

Physical contact with children should be:

- In response to the need of the child only.
- With the child's permission.
- Respectful of any resistance or hesitation.
- Careful to avoid private parts (hug from the side only).
- In the open, never in private.
- Brief in duration.
- Age and developmentally appropriate.

Social Media!

To help address the growing need to protect children from abuse, which includes the invasion of privacy rights and/or volunteers from misunderstandings and false accusations, the following recommendations are suggested for electronic communications and the use of social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter.

- Maintain transparency in communications with children while protecting children's identity and privacy. It is the responsibility of adults to maintain appropriate boundaries!
- All communications regarding AYSO activities and participation in the program must be directed to parents and guardians including voice messages, e-mails and text messages (it is up to the child's parents to communicate necessary information).
- If, for older players or youth volunteers, parents/guardians allow direct communications with a player or youth volunteers, parents must still be copied on any and all messages.
- Adults should refrain from private, personal, on-going electronic conversations with children.
- It is not advised to provide player access to your personal social media site (i.e., Facebook). Settings should be set to 'Private.'

The lines between personal, private and public are becoming very thin in today's tech-dominant world, please be responsible and fully aware of the challenges!

GENERAL GUIDELINES TO INJURY MANAGEMENT

In dealing with injuries, the coach must be competent and in control of the situation and remain calm to prevent panic. When at all unsure, GET professional help!

DO NOT

- Try to diagnose a serious injury.
- Touch the injury, but rather ask the injured player to move the affected area. A serious injury will not allow movement by the injured player and will give the coach a clue to the seriousness of the injury.

DO

- Seek professional help for all but minor injuries.
- Put the child's welfare ahead of the team's needs. AYSO philosophy emphasizes healthy competition in a proper perspective. Playing youngsters with serious injuries is incompatible with our value system.

Is a player ready to return to play?

- Can the player walk without limping?
- Can the player run in a straight line? Or cut from side to side?
- Can the player execute other demands of the game?
- Is the player safe from further injury?
- If the answer is no to any of these, do *not* return player to the game.

General Care and Treatment of Injuries or Conditions

Injury	Treatment
Blisters	Don't pop blister or cut dead skin away. Cover with Vaseline. Apply blister-specific Band-Aids or moleskin (cut piece out to surround blister, do not place directly on blister).
Sprain (Ankle, Knee, Wrist, Elbow)	Pressure wrap, ice for 20 minutes per hour during first 48 hours. Elevate when possible. RICE - Rest Ice Compression Elevation
Muscle Strain (Pull)	RICE
Contusion (Bruise)	RICE
Cramp	Apply light pressure with hand. Stretch muscle with steady pressure. Ensure player is well hydrated.
Nose Bleed	Direct pressure (pinch nostrils.) Sit player up. Don't blow nose.
Bleeding	See Safe Haven
Cut or Abrasions	Stop bleeding with direct pressure. Wash with antiseptic. Close with adhesive strip or butterfly. Cover with dry sterile dressing.
"Wind Knocked Out"	Lie on side or back. Encourage slow, relaxed breathing. Try to reduce anxiety.
Heat Exhaustion - Player Feels Cool, Clammy and Damp. Pale.	Move to shade. Douse with cool water. Loosen restrictive clothes. Give fluids.
Unconsciousness	Check airway, breathing, and pulse. Don't move (risk of spinal injury). Get help!
Concussion (Possible With or Without Consciousness)	Look for loss of memory, confusion, headache, dilated pupils, nausea. Do not send player back into game. Refer to CDC's signs & symptoms. If any doubt, get help.
Choking - Object Blocking Wind Passage	Use Heimlich Maneuver. Get help!
Fracture/Dislocation	Immobilize area. Get help!
Heat Stroke - Player Feels Hot, Dry, Dizzy, Shallow Breathing.	Professional help immediately!
Hypothermia	Shield from wind and cold, wrap in warm blankets and cover head. Get Help!

When at all unsure GET professional help!

In addition to AYSO's Safe Haven, we strongly suggest a first aid class or certification.

APPENDIX B:

TEAM MANAGEMENT

ORGANIZING THE TEAM

1. Develop a Team Goal.

“Development over Winning” or “Players having FUN while learning about soccer” are good bases for a team goal. Develop in conjunction with your players and parents.

2. Develop a Coaching Philosophy.

You can base your personal coaching philosophy on your own perspective or the AYSO Coach Pledge (see *Appendix D*).

3. Conduct a Parents’ Meeting!

- Discuss AYSO’s Vision, Mission and Six Philosophies! Remember, **this is what makes AYSO unique!**
- Explain your Coaching Philosophy, your guidelines and expectations. Share your coaching experience or lack thereof and team policies regarding:
 - Equipment brought to practice by each player: water, ball (properly inflated), shin guards, appropriate clothing, footwear, (sunscreen), etc.
 - Attendance at practices and games.
 - Player and parent behavior. You can discuss expectations of players and parents based on the Player and Parent Pledges as well as introduce Kids Zone.
 - Encourage communication regarding any player injuries
 - Discuss concussion awareness, Safe Haven, etc.
- Discuss the team’s goal(s).
- Introduce the small-sided match and why we play it.
- Educate parents briefly on the *Laws of the Game* specific to this age group. Distributing the ABC’s of AYSO (contact your Regional Commissioner for more info) is a great way to introduce new parents to soccer and AYSO.
- GET HELP – You will need:
 - Assistant Coaches
 - Team Manager for administrative duties such as phone calls, coordinating carpools, etc.
 - Team Parent to develop snack schedule, plan social activities, etc.

MATCH DAY MANAGEMENT

Prior to Match Day

- Remind parents where and what time your team will meet.
- Ask parents to have players arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to kick-off in order to account for late arrivals, warm-up and prepare accordingly.

Match Day

- Check Your Equipment before You Leave Home: make sure you have all the equipment you need.

Before the Match

- Arrive early: at least 10 minutes before the time you expect your players.
- Gather team: begin “free play activity” as players arrive.
- Conduct a warm-up, which should include a ball per player or pair. Avoid long lines. Players need to get moving and familiar with the ball.
- Talk: Excite them about getting ready to play.
- Remind them to have fun and to do their best!
- Review training that was practiced and how it should be integrated into the game.
- A quick reminder of the rules can be most beneficial (pending age).



After the Match

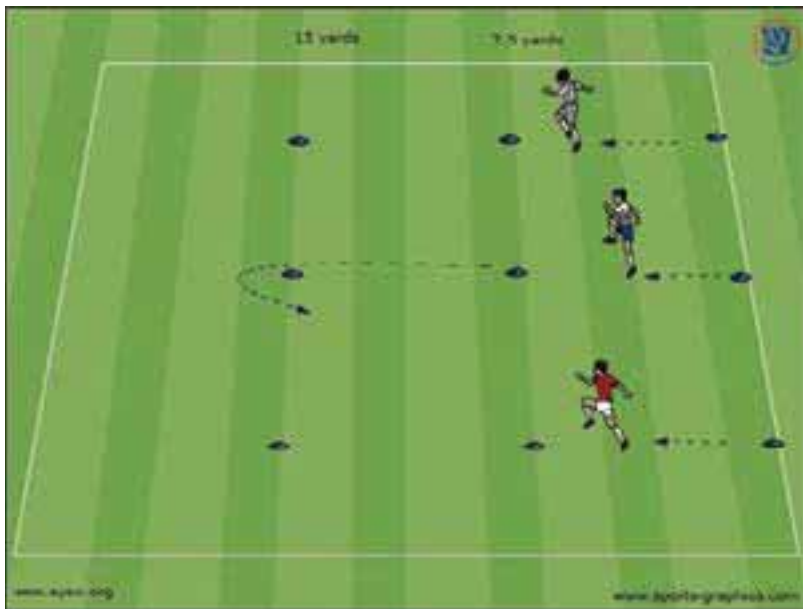
- Limit any post match speeches! At the most a very brief review of what went well.
- Ask if anyone is hurt.
- Thank the players for participating and congratulate players who worked particularly hard.
- Remind players (and parents) of next practice or match.
- Wish them well for the remainder of their weekend!

APPENDIX C:

DYNAMIC STRETCHES

GET READY TO PLAY

Dynamic stretching, in conjunction with static (pending the player's specific need) help prepare the muscles, increase the range of motion and warm up the body. Exercises can either be done freely within an open grid (more suitable for younger players) or organized similar to the option below.



Mark 10 x 15 yards area with a starting cone, a middle cone 7.5 yards from the starting one and an end cone 15 yards from starting one.

Create three sets of cones to have three groups of players working at the same time. Players perform dynamic stretches until the halfway point (cone) and then jog to the end cone, before returning to the starting cone (by jogging forwards or backwards). The process moves continuously until a dynamic stretch has been completed for each main body part.

Suggested dynamic stretches (to see this in action visit: [aysou.video/stretches](https://www.aysou.com/video/stretches))

- Skipping
- Jogging forwards with arms rotating in forwards circles
- Jogging backwards with arms rotating in backwards circles
- Knees into the chest
- Heels to the backside
- Side shuffle
- Opening the leg (up and over motion)
- Closing the leg (up and over motion)
- Cariocca
- Swing leg across body
- Forward lunges

Coaching Points

- TPF (Teach Proper Form).
- Select player to lead the stretches (leadership, responsibility, reward, esteem).

APPENDIX D:

PLEDGES

AYSO COACH PLEDGE

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Enthusiastically support and practice the AYSO vision to “enrich children’s lives” by embracing our Philosophies of: **Everyone Plays®, Open Registration, Balanced Teams, Positive Coaching, Good Sportsmanship and Player Development.**
2. Stay informed about sound principles of coaching and child development.
3. Respect the game and know the Laws.
4. Emphasize to my players that they must abide by the *Laws of the Game* at all times.
5. Develop a true respect for all referees judgments.
6. Develop a team respect for our opponents and each other.
7. Ensure a safe environment for my players.
8. Never yell at or ridicule a player.
9. Always set a good example.
10. Remember that soccer is a game and all games should be fun.
11. Let the players play without constant instructions or commentary from sidelines.
12. Role model good sporting behavior.

AYSO PLAYER PLEDGE

In my words and action, I pledge to:


1. Play for the sake of playing a game, not just to please a parent or coach.
2. Always give my best effort and work as hard for my teammates as I do for myself.
3. Treat all players as I would like to be treated.
4. Be a team player.
5. Be a good sport and support good plays whether they are made by my team or my opponents.
6. Abide by the *Laws of the Game*.
7. Cooperate with my coaches, teammates, opponents and the referee.
8. **Never argue with or complain about referee calls or decisions.**
9. Control my temper when I feel I have been wronged.
10. Not use offensive or abusive language.
11. Remember that the object of the game is to win, but the goal is to enjoy myself and give my best effort.





AYSO PARENT PLEDGE

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Attend and participate in team parent meetings as requested.
2. Be on time or early when dropping off or picking up my child for training or a game.
3. Ensure my child is supported and encouraged by family or loved ones at games.
4. Encourage my child to have fun and keep sport in its proper perspective.
5. **Define winning for my child as doing his/her very best and appreciate Development over Winning.**
6. Endeavor to understand the Laws (rules) of soccer and support the efforts of referees.
7. Honor the game and show respect for all involved including coaches, players, opponents, spectators and referees.
8. **Applaud and encourage players from both teams and not yell out instructions** (as this causes confusion to the players and ultimately hinders development).
9. Refrain from making negative comments about the game, coaches, referees or players, especially from the sidelines.
10. Encourage others to refrain from negative or abusive sideline behavior.
11. As parents, keep the game in perspective for our children (as a pastime, sport, fun, exercise).
12. Abide by the tenets of Kids Zone for appropriate sideline behavior and support AYSO’s vision to “enrich children’s lives.”

APPENDIX E: TRAINING PLAN

Topic: _____		Region: _____				Age: _____		Date: _____	
everyone plays		balanced teams		open registration		good sportsmanship		positive coaching	
player development									

<p>STAGE 1</p> <p>TECHNICAL WARM-UP</p> <p>Topic-related</p> <p>Max ball contact</p> <p>Unopposed to opposed</p> <p>Integrate physical</p>	<p>Organization/Rules</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p>		<p>Coaching Points</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>DURATION: _____</p> <p>INTENSITY: _____</p> <p># OF INTERVALS: _____</p> <p>INTERVAL TIME: _____</p> <p>RECOVERY TIME: _____</p>
<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY</p> <p>Individual & pair work</p> <p>Competition & teamwork</p> <p>2v2 and 3v3, etc.</p>	<p>Organization/Rules</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p>		<p>Coaching Points</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>DURATION: _____</p> <p>INTENSITY: _____</p> <p># OF INTERVALS: _____</p> <p>INTERVAL TIME: _____</p> <p>RECOVERY TIME: _____</p>
<p>STAGE 3</p> <p>EXPANDED SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY</p> <p>Principles of attack & defense</p> <p>Directional play (w/ 1 full goal to targets or goal)</p> <p>Expanded numbers (3v3 to 6v6, etc.)</p> <p>Most game aspects/laws</p>	<p>Organization/Rules</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p>		<p>Coaching Points</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>DURATION: _____</p> <p>INTENSITY: _____</p> <p># OF INTERVALS: _____</p> <p>INTERVAL TIME: _____</p> <p>RECOVERY TIME: _____</p>
<p>STAGE 4</p> <p>SMALL-SIDED MATCH</p> <p>Unconditional Formations Laws</p> <p>PLAY!</p> <p>COOL DOWN / DEBRIEF</p>	<p>Organization/Rules</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p>		<p>Coaching Points</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>* _____</p> <p>DURATION: _____</p> <p>INTENSITY: _____</p> <p># OF INTERVALS: _____</p> <p>INTERVAL TIME: _____</p> <p>RECOVERY TIME: _____</p>

APPENDIX F:

VIP

VIP PROGRAM

Integrating the “VIP” Player into Your Region

A VIP (Very Important Player) is a player whose physical and/or mental challenges make it difficult to successfully participate on a mainstream soccer team.

What is successful participation? It should be defined by the player’s enjoyment and the safety of all team members.

The player who has only a physical disability is likely to have many of the expectations and capabilities of a non-disabled player and should be coached accordingly. Every effort should be made to integrate these players into mainstream teams, as much as safety allows.

VIP is an AYSO program designed to provide a quality soccer experience for VIP players. VIP teams offer many players with disabilities the least-restrictive and safest environment in which to learn and enjoy the game of soccer. Contact your Regional Commissioner, Regional Coach Administrator, Regional VIP Administrator or the AYSO National Office to obtain AYSO’s special VIP training materials and information on how to begin a VIP program.

APPENDIX G:

AYSO COACHES CORNER, Q&A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

My team is very strong and often is many goals ahead early. Understanding a blowout doesn't really help anyone, what can I do to contain it within reason?

This is a delicate topic but a very important one. Although we do not have an official policy on this, from a coaching perspective, the challenge is *not* to penalize the winning or scoring team (the purpose of the game after all), but not humiliate or discourage the opposing team who are being easily beaten. A few pointers for consideration:

- Coaches should be proactive *early* in the game if they see an obvious disparity.
- Winning team should *not* be penalized, i.e., reducing players, stopping scoring or sitting better players.
- Losing team should *not* be patronized, i.e., blatant efforts like playing two players down.
- Rather, we should look at some *proactive and challenging coaching conditions* for coaches potentially *about* to run up a score:
 - Rotate players' positions on winning team (GK plays striker, strikers play GK/defender, etc.)
 - Introduce a specific number of passes to score (again, a reasonable challenge that is less noticeable).
 - Ball needs to be played "wide" before being put into offensive area.
 - Selected players can only shoot using weaker foot.
 - Players must perform a specific turn or move, i.e., step-over before shooting.

In actuality, there is no guaranteed way to lessen a blowout or ensure it doesn't happen; however, a proactive awareness and effort by the winning coach *can* help lessen the impact. It should also be noted that prioritizing "development over winning" from day one could help the player's perspective.

Why do we have to be trained to coach the kids?

Age Appropriate training and certification benefits *all* members of the organization. Most importantly, **our players** receive Age Appropriate and current coaching methods, which ultimately boosts their soccer (and personal) development, as well as their overall AYSO experience.

Our volunteer coaches are given insight to the modern game; learn about our wonderful organization (what makes AYSO unique); and are introduced to the most innovative and current coaching methodologies and activities. This not only provides great education, but also a comfort level to coaching their selected age group (maximizing their volunteer experience). After all, coaches need to have fun as well!

Coach training provides **our parents** with the comfort of knowing that the individual working with *their* child is Age Appropriately trained and qualified. As well as soccer-specific training, the fact each coach has been trained and certified in our child and volunteer protection course, Safe Haven, further promotes a confidence level for our parents when they hand over their precious ones each week.

Locally, we create a strong reputation for quality programming for our **Regions** to stimulate their volunteer and player base. And finally, **nationally**, requiring age-specific coach training separates ourselves from other youth sports groups in our resolute commitment to Player Development.

In conclusion, coach training is a major component in ensuring our players; parents and coaches enjoy their AYSO experience to the max!

Why “no goalkeepers” until 10U?

Soccer games without goalkeepers provide a better experience for young children for several reasons, which is why not only AYSO but U.S. Youth Soccer and the U.S. Soccer Federation discourage the use of goalkeepers at the 8U level and below.

First of all, the goalkeeper is denied a chance to run around and chase the ball. The boy or girl who must guard the goal is being prevented from doing what he or she signed up for- play soccer!

Depending on the game, the young goalkeeper is in danger of being bored (if the action is on the other end) and getting discouraged if the ball keeps flying into the goal.

In the worst-case scenario, players who are forced to play goalkeeper at the early ages lose their enthusiasm for the sport.

Also, we want young players to shoot at goal as much as possible, because striking the ball is such an important skill for players to master. Young kids are more likely to shoot often when they’re aiming a goalkeeper-free net. With a goalkeeper there, they become apprehensive, looking for the perfect shot that they are not physically mature enough to pull off.

Very young kids are not physically prepared to make saves. They may get in front of a tough shot now and again, but they just don’t have the tools for the position’s requirements and are inclined to feel devastated when scored upon.

In fact, not using goalkeepers makes the coach’s job much easier because the coach doesn’t need to cajole players to take turns in goal.

The use of goalkeepers at such young ages also creates a temptation for the coach to make his bigger and more advanced athletes play goalkeeper, because this will greatly increase his team’s chances of winning. In other words, the use of goalkeepers encourages the results-driven approach to coaching that hinders long-term player development and can take the fun out of soccer. The players who are more advanced athletically at the young ages shouldn’t be kept from enjoying field play so that the coach can rack up some wins.

When goalkeepers are used, at the 10U level for example, the goalkeepers should be rotated frequently. Even players who enjoy playing goalkeeper should not be restricted to the position and should get plenty of time playing in the field. Players shouldn’t specialize at any one position until they are well into their teens.

Many of the nation’s best goalkeepers- Hope Solo, Tim Howard, Brad Friedel and AYSO alum Brad Guzan- spent much of their youth as field players. This not only prevented them from burning out on the position, but honed the foot skills goalkeepers need and their ability to read the game, which is crucial to being a good goalkeeper.

Kids don’t juggle in a game, so why is it so important?

Diego Maradona was once asked why he worked so hard in training perfecting tricks and juggling the ball, to which he answered, “Because I can.”

Tapping the ball in the air over and over means players are learning to hit the sweet spot while developing a good touch. Juggling with feet, thighs and all controlling surfaces trains players to be comfortable with the ball and develops striking and controlling skills.

Juggling helps with foot-eye coordination, and is a great way to work on balance. It also develops the weak foot. A key to developing soccer skills is to play with the ball as much as possible, and juggling can be done anytime, anywhere and on your own. If you can encourage your players to juggle, you’re giving them a way to work on their skills outside of organized practice and games (an important element in development).

Ball mastery gives players a competitive edge and makes tactical understanding easier to comprehend.

Why Does AYSO play “small-sided” matches at 6U, 8U, 10U and 12U?

The most influential soccer organizations in the world all agree that small-sided matches are the best way to develop soccer players. Almost every national soccer program from Brazil, Spain, England and the United States as well as the largest professional clubs including Barcelona, Manchester United and the Los Angeles Galaxy promote small-sided matches as the best tool to develop young players. This is formally confirmed in the US Soccer Player Development Initiatives.

Small-sided matches encourage young players to be engaged in the game at all times. They have more touches on the ball, which helps players build confidence on the ball. It also allows for coaches to spend more time on each player helping them develop their individual skills. It allows the younger players to make less complex decisions as they learn the game. Lastly, it allows for more opportunities for goals and success and excitement for the young players.

APPENDIX H:

GLOSSARY

Activity: Drill or exercise.

Balance: Reading the attack and providing an equal or greater number of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.

Center: To pass the ball from a wide position on the field into the penalty area, i.e., crossing.

Clear: A throw or kick by the goalkeeper or a kick by the defender in an attempt to get the ball away (clear) from the goal area.

Control/Restraint (Composure): Staying calm, disciplined and organized in the face of an attack by maintaining proper defensive techniques and positioning.

Combination Play: Passing combinations executed by two or more players, i.e., wall pass.

Compactness: Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area makes it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball.

Corner kick: Awarded to the opposing team when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least ten yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in 12U games. Refer to the *Laws of the Game* for further details.

Cover: A player creates a second defensive line in order to provide defensive support of a teammate or teammates.

Delay: Slowing down the attack by closing the gap and denying space to allow the defense to get organized.

Dribble: A way of advancing the ball by a series of short taps with one or both feet.

Dynamic: Moving, i.e., dynamic stretching (during warm up).

Far Post: Side of the goal or goal post farthest from the ball.

Forward: Striker. Primarily an attacking player.

Functional Training: Training specific demands of a position or a role. This can be for an individual player or for a group (i.e., forwards playing together as a pair in a 1-4-4-2). Functional training should take place in the area of the field where that scenario would occur in a real game.

Goalkeeper: The last line of defense. The goalkeeper is the only player who can use his hands within the field of play (limited to within the penalty area).

Goal line: Define ends of the field.

Grid: A marked (usually with cones), restricted playing area.

Half-volley: Kicking the ball just as it is rebounding off the ground.

Handball: Illegal act of intentionally touching the ball with the hands or arms.

Heading: A method of scoring, passing, and controlling the ball by making contact with the head. No heading at 12U and below.

Inside of the Foot – Push Pass: This technique is used to advance the ball or to maintain possession by passing to a teammate.

Inside of the Foot – Ball Control: Technique used to control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

Instep Kick: Technique used for long passes and strong shots on goal using the instep of the foot.

Lob: Or chip. A high, soft kick, which lofts the ball over the heads of the opponents or goalkeeper.

Match: Game.

Marking: Guarding an opponent.

Midfielder: A player who is primarily responsible for moving the ball from the defenders to the forwards.

Mobility: Players changing positions (filling in for one another when necessary) and moving off the ball creates numerical advantages and thereby attacking/scoring opportunities.

Near Post: Side of the goal or goal post closest to the ball.

Obstructing: Preventing the opponent from going around a player by standing in the path of movement.

One-Touch Pass: A pass made without controlling (trapping) it first.

Overlap: The attacking play of a defender or midfielder going down the touch-line past his or her own winger.

Penetration: Advancement. Moving the ball and/or players past an opponent in order to get into position to shoot and/or score, and is achieved by shooting, dribbling, and passing.

Pitch: Another name for the field of play.

Pressure: Action of a defender to restrict time and space available to the offensive player.

Physical: A player's physical attributes: speed, agility, endurance, strength and power, etc.

Psychosocial: Respect, motivation, confidence, cooperation, competitiveness, etc., and how these emotions and feelings impact a player's development. Includes a player's ability to reason, learn and solve problems.

Screen / Shielding: Retaining possession and protecting the ball by keeping your body between the ball and opponent.

Set Play: A planned offensive movement to be executed at a free kick or corner kick.

Shoulder-Charge: Legally upsetting an opponent's balance by shoulder-to-shoulder contact.

Sliding Tackle: Attempting to take the ball away from the opponent by sliding on the ground and using the feet or legs to block and hold the ball.

Static: Stretching against muscle and holding for approximately 30 seconds (best suited to cool down).

Striker: A central forward position with a major responsibility for scoring goals.

Support: Supporting teammates by creating safe options for the player with the ball or movement to influence opponent's position to help a teammate receive the ball.

Tackling: Attempting to or taking the ball away from an opponent when both players are playing the ball with their feet.

Tactical: A player's capacity to use their skill and ability within a game environment (competition), i.e., playing out of the back, possession and transition, offense/defensive and quick transition, etc.

Takeover: A 2 vs. 1 combination play in which the two offensive players move toward each other and the ball is transferred from one player to the other.

Technical: A player's ability to master ball skills, i.e., ball control, shooting, etc.

Through Pass: A pass that goes between two players and behind the defense.

Throw-In: Used to restart the game after the entire ball has crossed the touchline, whether on the ground or in the air. Replaced with dribble-in or kick-in at 8U and 6U.

Touch line: Define sides of the field.

Training (team): Practice (individual).

Trap: Controlling a ball by means of the feet, thighs, or chest.

Two-Touches: One touch is used to control the ball and the second touch is used to pass the ball.

Volley: Kicking the ball while it is in flight.

Wall Pass: A pass to a teammate, followed by a return pass on the other side of the opponent. Also called "give-and-go" or "one-two."

Warm-Up: The warm-up activity should physically prepare your players for the session as well as introduce the technical component of your session, i.e., dribbling or ball control, etc.

Width: Attacking on a broad front (players spread out) stretches the defense and creates space for players to advance.

Wing: Area of the field near the touch-line.

Winger: Name given to the right and left outside forwards.

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THANK YOU!

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