



Introduction

Our primary goal today is to ensure you understand the key focus areas and best practices for coaching players at Hillwood. It's crucial to create an atmosphere where kids are having fun and developing their skills in a positive environment. Why? Because kids learn best when they are having fun. That's not just my opinion; that's science. The more they enjoy soccer, the more they learn. And I believe the more they learn about soccer, the more they will grow to love the game. I'm not concerned with creating 800 MLS players from Hillwood. But I'd be thrilled if we ended up with 800 lifelong fans of the sport.

Hillwood Soccer Club Philosophy

At Hillwood Soccer Club, our mission is to create a positive, fun, and inclusive environment where young players can develop their soccer skills, foster a love for the game, and grow both on and off the field. Our core values guide everything we do:

1. **Having Fun:** Soccer should be an enjoyable and engaging experience for all players. Our focus is on making practices and games fun, ensuring that every player looks forward to participating and cherishes their time on the field.
2. **Skill Development:** We are committed to helping each player develop their soccer skills to the best of their ability. Through age-appropriate training and consistent practice, we aim to enhance each player's technical, tactical, physical, and mental aspects of the game.
3. **Loving the Game:** We strive to instill a deep love for soccer in all our players. By fostering a passion for the sport, we hope to create lifelong fans and participants who appreciate the beauty and joy of the game.
4. **Positive, Player-Centered Coaching:** Our coaching approach is positive and player-centered. We focus on building confidence, encouraging effort, and recognizing individual achievements. Coaches are mentors who support and guide players, helping them grow as athletes and individuals.
5. **Ensuring Accessibility Through Scholarships and Inclusivity:** Every child who wants to play soccer should have the opportunity to do so, regardless of their financial situation. We provide scholarships and financial assistance to families in need, ensuring that no child is left behind due to economic barriers.
6. **Creating a Positive Environment:** We prioritize creating a positive, fun environment where players feel safe to explore, experiment, and discover the game. We encourage creativity, teamwork, and sportsmanship, ensuring that every player feels valued and respected.

SELF REFLECTION:: *What does having fun at practice look like for you?*

Coaching Suggestion - Play-Practice-Play Model

Summary

While not required, we will suggest taking the Play Practice Play class that USSF teaches through the US Learning Center where you did Safesport. Hillwood Soccer would reimburse for your appropriate grassroots age group online or in-person course.

Play-Practice-Play Model: This model is heavily player-centered and involves three stages:

- **Play:** Start with small-sided games that are fun and engaging. This helps players experience the game while the coach observes and guides them.
- **Practice:** Engage players in targeted learning activities that further develop their skills. These activities should resemble the game and allow for decision-making and creative problem solving.
- **Play Again:** Finish with a game that mirrors actual play. This allows players to apply what they learned during the practice phase.

The Details from US Soccer:



As the U.S. Soccer Grassroots initiatives continue to come online through the launch of the in-person and online Grassroots coaching courses, a critical concept that all Grassroots coaches will learn about is *Play-Practice-Play*. Researched and developed by technical leaders across the domestic Grassroots landscape, *Play-Practice-Play* is the optimal manner to structure a practice session for youth players, as it utilizes best practices for

the learning and application of game-like scenarios.

Here are five things you should know about this important component of U.S. Soccer's Grassroots initiatives:

WHAT IS PLAY-PRACTICE-PLAY?

Play-Practice-Play is a Grassroots developed philosophy designed around a player-centered approach to coaching. Taking a player centered approach places the needs and motivations of the player at the forefront of a coach's approach to coaching his or her players. The concept of *Play-Practice-Play* is to allow young players to experience the game and game-like situations as much as possible. This approach differs from traditional practices that may have children standing in lines, running laps and participating in drills that don't resemble the game of soccer.

STAGE 1: PLAY

When players arrive to practice, the first responsibility of the coach is to create an environment that is safe, engaging and fun. In the first *Play* phase, players engage in small-sided games with the primary focus on having fun. It is important that these pickup-style games are led by the players and facilitated by the coaches. During this first *Play* stage, players have the opportunity to experience the game while the coach observes and guides them towards developing their own solutions rather than being directed what to do.

STAGE 2: PRACTICE

In the second phase of *Play-Practice-Play*, children are engaged in different forms of targeted learning activities to further guide their opportunities to develop. The goal of the *Practice* phase is to create an environment filled with opportunities for players to experience and learn about the goal of the training session through repetition.

Practice activities should be of appropriate challenge (striking a balance between success and failure), resemble the game, involve the players making decisions and allow for creative problem solving. The role of the coach during this phase is to guide

players while using teaching actions. While it is during this phase that targeted learning takes place, there should always be an emphasis on keeping the atmosphere fun and enjoyable for the players.

STAGE 3: PLAY AGAIN!

The final stage of *Play-Practice-Play* is the game. This phase offers players the opportunity and freedom to play, without interruption, in an environment that mirrors the actual game. The focus of the final *Play* phase is to encourage players to express themselves and demonstrate what they learned during the *Practice* phase. A coach should observe and guide using minimal dialogue if possible. By silently observing the application of the *Practice* phase in the final *Play* phase, the coach is able to check each player's understanding and ability to execute the goal of the training session.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Through U.S. Soccer's Grassroots Licensing Courses, prospective coaches have the opportunity to learn more about the *Play-Practice-Play* methodology. These opportunities include gaining access to already created *Play-Practice-Play* training sessions. Go to <https://learning.ussoccer.com/> to access U.S. Soccer's free Introduction to Grassroots Coaching Education Module and start your journey towards becoming a licensed coach!

Coaching Ideals

Player-Centered Approach: Our coaching should be player-centered, not coach-centered. This means focusing on what the players need rather than what the coach wants. Use questions to give players the tools to make the right decisions for themselves. Ask what they did, why they did it, and how it felt. Initiate discussions among the group to get them thinking deeper into the practice. This helps them develop their own ideas and be prepared to make decisions in the match.

Ask Questions. I really can't emphasize this enough. Asking them questions is the best thing you can do for them. It helps them problem solve, helps recognize what is happening in the game. Everytime they discover something, it helps build a neural pathways. **Reflection:** When you ask a question instead of giving the answer, the entire brain gets active as it reflects, releasing serotonin (allowing it to relax). This encourages gathering intelligence from all areas of the brain, allowing for more insight than would happen if you provided solutions to others. New neuronal connections begin to be made as the brain moves closer to finding solutions..

Give Pointers: While a more democratic coaching style is encouraged, it's still important that you get your points across. Give pointers to set your players in the right direction for them to solve problems and think about specific patterns. Guide them to what you want solving or correcting but think of it as giving them the tools to do it.

Conditioned Games: Conditioned games give players the opportunity to make decisions under less pressure. By adjusting the game's rules, for example to three-touch, you work on pre-scanning, first touch, and passing. This approach helps players develop skills in an uncontrolled environment similar to a match.

Allow Leaders to Speak: Give your team leaders the opportunity to speak in sessions and lead parts of it themselves. It helps build leadership skills and ensures they are prepared to step up during games.

Find opportunities to get “buy-in” from the team: Are there times the players can create something and teach each other? For example: Direct Kicks near goal. Show them how to do a standard one. Then break them into groups to create direct kick plays, and teach the other groups that play. They will own this, and remember it. It also teaches them to be creative.

Establishing a Community Agreement Early

(We are gonna do this)

Create a team community agreement early in the season. Break them into four groups, and each group takes ownership of one of the standards:

Be Safe

Be Kind

Be Brave

Have Fun

Each group writes out what they can do to uphold their element. For example, for “Be Safe,” they might say wear shin guards, don’t push each other, don’t kick when someone’s head is there, no slide tackling, etc. The coach or leader writes all these items on a big board, and once we have all the items we agree on, each player signs it. Then we uphold each other to the standard during the season and remind everyone what they agreed to.

It’s also a good idea to talk to the team early in the season about what success looks like at the end of the season. Avoid making that about winning games. What does success look like without winning games?

Create a team motto.

What Makes a Good Soccer Session?

A good soccer session is one where players are engaged, learning, and having fun. Here are the key elements:

1. **Ball Mastery:** Incorporate drills that focus on individual ball control. Simple exercises that help players get comfortable with the ball at their feet are crucial at this age.
2. **Small-Sided Games:** Use small-sided games like 1v1 or 2v2 to encourage more touches on the ball and decision-making in game-like situations. These games are effective in developing both technical skills and game understanding.
3. **Variety and Challenge:** Keep the sessions varied to maintain interest and motivation. Introduce new challenges to keep the players engaged and push their limits in a fun way.
4. **Positive Reinforcement:** Use positive reinforcement to build confidence and encourage effort. Focus on what the players do well and celebrate their successes.

Cool-Down and Reflection: End the session with a cool-down and a brief reflection period. Ask the players what they learned and enjoyed about the session. This helps reinforce the lessons and ends the practice on a positive note.

Emphasizing Development Over Winning

Our philosophy is development first. Explain to the kids why development is more important than winning. Focus on skills, creativity, and enjoyment. Avoid making winning the primary goal. Losing is part of the learning process and should be seen as an opportunity for growth. Learning to deal with losses and setbacks is an important life skill. Emphasizing development helps players build mental resilience and a growth mindset, where they see challenges as opportunities to improve.

Long-Term Growth: Emphasizing skill development over winning helps young players improve gradually, setting them up for long-term success rather than short-term victories.

Encouraging Creativity and Confidence: Allowing players to experiment and be creative on the field fosters a deeper understanding and love for the game. Experts like Pep Guardiola and Johan Cruyff have highlighted the importance of creativity in developing well-rounded players. When the focus is on development, players are more likely to build confidence in their abilities. Positive reinforcement and a supportive environment encourage young players to take risks and learn from their mistakes.

For our micro teams, U6-U9
To commit to being a player-centered coach:

What We Don't Do

We don't coach from the field: Coaches should stay on the sideline unless they have to ref. If they are reffing, they shouldn't be coaching from the field. This is the players time to figure things out. They will make mistakes and learn. The ref tells them what is happening when the ball goes out of play.

No 'Plays' at This Age: Avoid teaching rigid tactics and strategies. Emphasize creativity and decision-making.

No 'Joystick' Coaching: Allow players to figure things out on their own. It's important for their development to make decisions independently on the field. Joysticking is coach-focused, not player-focused. It undermines their creativity.

Minimize Passing Emphasis: Particularly for U6-U7. Sure, teach the concept of passing but don't worry about them implementing it. Remember, U8 is the start of "Me And My Partner" Focus more on individual skill development.

Avoid Elimination Games: Keep all kids involved to maximize learning and fun. The problem with elimination games is the weakest players who need the most help are eliminated early. That's the opposite of the intention we are trying to accomplish.

No Laps for Punishment: Laps for punishment teach kids that running is bad. This is soccer; we don't want them to think that way. Physical punishment creates fear, and fear is the enemy of creativity and fun.

Do Not Leave A Defensive Player Hanging In Back: Don't leave a player back to defend the empty goal. Or have an extra defender with the goalie. Encourage all players to move up and down the field. US Soccer doesn't even want goalies until U10.

Cherry Pick We don't have a player stand by the goal to cherry pick.

Run Plays: We don't run plays at this age. Teach the basics.

Play the game. Do everything we do at a game. Throw ins, corner kicks, indirect kick, goal kicks. Use basic shapes of diamonds and triangles so they learn where to stand (secretly teaching them to spread out).

While there is no "build out line," at younger ages, have players move back to the half line on goal kicks.

Setting Expectations for Parents

Have a parent meeting as soon as possible to clarify roles and rules. At games, coaches coach, parents cheer, and referees ref. Educate parents on the importance of being supportive and positive. Encourage them to say, 'I love to watch you play,' instead of giving instructions or criticism.

Key Points for Parents:

- No jewelry for games.
- No dogs at playfields.
- Parents should sit on the opposite sideline from the team bench.
 - Better for players
 - Keeps players better focused
 - Teaches independence
 - Keeps them ready to be subbed in.
 - Kids have more fun
- Encourage positive behavior and involvement without coaching from the sidelines.
- Emphasis the goal is development, not winning.

Wrap-Up

To recap, remember the key points: focus on fun, ball mastery, free play, individual skills, and positive reinforcement. Prioritize development over winning and set clear expectations for parents. Avoid rigid tactics and keep the kids engaged and involved. As Ted Lasso says, 'Be curious, not judgmental.'

Thank you all for your time and dedication. Together, we're building a positive and developmental environment for our young soccer players. Keep up the great work, and let's make this a fantastic season!"

Coach-Centered Vs Player-Centered Coaching

Coach-centered

The coach-centered coach typically shows the following behaviors:

Coaching through drills

Practices tend to be very structured with use of progressive drills. These can be unopposed, semi-opposed or opposed. Sometimes the drills are practiced without relation to the game.

Authoritarian/ instructional/ didactic

The coach provides lots of instruction and feedback. There is little opportunity for player input and often the coach has a specific technique or method in mind. This coach often rules with an 'iron-rod' and is a real disciplinarian.

Technique-driven

The coach sets up lots of practices to improve technique. These are typically repetitive and unopposed. The coach often references key factors very well.

Focus on performance and emphasis on winning

The coach is concerned more with the result than the development of individuals. This coach tends to have very short term goals and has little consideration for long term player development.

Coach makes all decisions and uses a structured approach

The coach has very specific session plans with direct interventions. The coach progresses the session at his/her pace rather than referencing the players' readiness. This coach is not comfortable when there is chaos within practices.

Tell and show

The coach has a very formal structure for introducing practices or skills: 'tell - show (demonstrate) - do'.

Explicit and formal approach

The coach designs and delivers sessions for a specific purpose. Sessions develop in a very structured and formalized way.

Player-centered

The player- (or learner-) centered coach typically shows the following behaviors:

Coaching through games

The coach uses games to help players' understanding and decision making capabilities. The coach may use a 'whole – part – whole' approach where sessions start with a conditioned and opposed game, then specific skill weaknesses are worked on, and finally the coach returns to the game. This coach is not afraid of chaos and players making mistakes. This, in turn, gives players the confidence to express themselves rather than being fearful of failure.

Questioning for understanding

The coach continually checks for players' understanding. This can be physical or verbal questioning. Be wary that the verbal questioning does not take too long. This coach takes time to listen.

Needs of learner/individualized learning

Sessions and practices are designed and amended according to the players' needs. Practices are often differentiated so that more able players undertake more challenging activities and the weaker players have simpler activities.

Emphasis on development

The player-centered coach takes the long term view and puts development before the result. Of course, winning is important but the primary concern for this coach is the development of the individual and team.

Democratic leadership

The coach involves other staff and key players in the leadership group. Strategy and tactics are determined by consensus whereby the whole group agree on the way forward. The coach may influence this process. This coach is very open-minded.

Hands-off approach

The coach steps back and allows players to express themselves. This coach spends time observing and analyzing performance before generating feedback in an interactive manner.

Implicit and informal

The coach uses games as the vehicle for coaching. Learning is a byproduct of the conditioned nature of the games used in practice which enhance decision-making and game awareness.

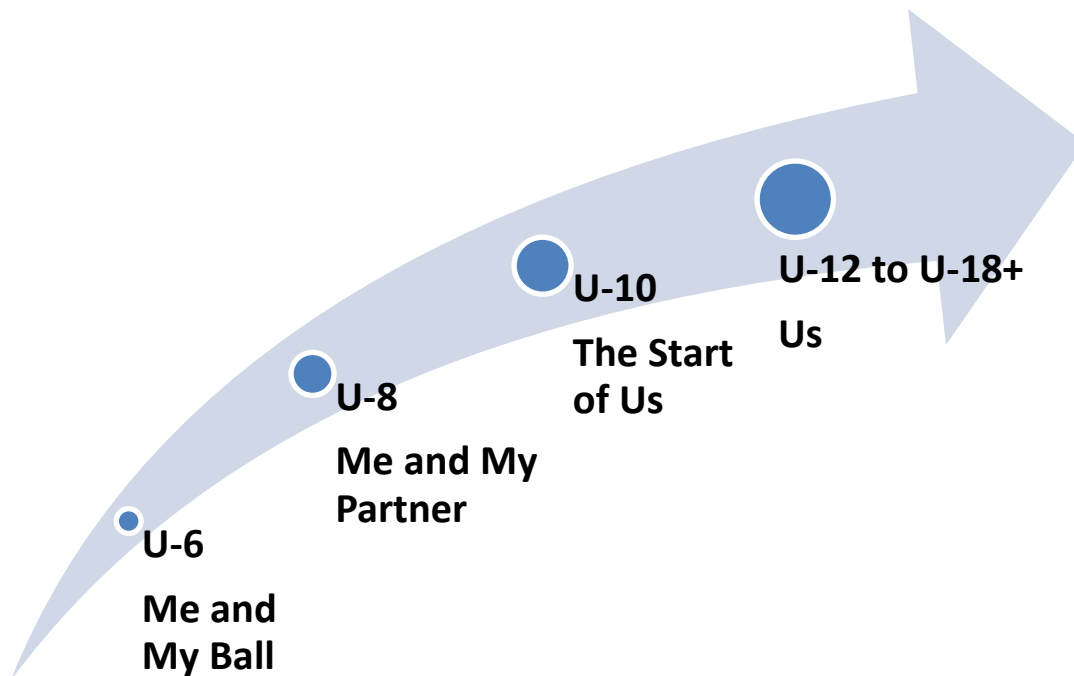


Figure 5: Stages for the Ages⁹

Once adults comprehend this realistic age for a fully developed player, they understand the sound logic behind a proper player development scheme. It begins to make sense that *too much too soon* will in fact harm the players more than help. Adults then become aware that the appropriate approach for development is not an out-come based approach but a process-based approach: why children should play small-sided games, why tryouts should be held off until the teenage years, why U-10 and younger teams should not make long distance trips or play in tournaments, why there should not be records kept of results until the players are in the U-12 age group, why overuse injuries occur in younger children when they play the same game too often, why youth are jaded toward the game by age 13, why players and soccer families experience burn-out from all the trips, tournaments, etc.

“There is no magic formula or short cut to successful development. Coaching at youth levels is all about working with players to improve performance, not about recruiting players to build teams to win championships. Soccer is a player’s game and players should be considered first when political, administrative and coaching decisions are made.”

- Bobby Howe, U.S. Soccer, former director of coaching, professional and National Team

Since a youth soccer club could potentially have a player from age 4 to 19, then it is clear that a patient approach to proper development is realistic. A great sense of accomplishment could come from winning

⁹ *Stages for the Ages* (2007), Vince Ganzberg, former director of coaching, Indiana Soccer Association

The Ten Commandments of Youth Soccer Coaching

(This is not original. Taken from a hockey lesson and adapted to soccer)

1. **Have Fun** - This is the sole reason why the players and coaches are brought together. It's simple; if you're not having fun coaching, then it's a good bet that your players are not having a good time either. Players will develop quicker and reach higher levels if they enjoy your coaching. This does not mean you don't work them hard. You and your players can still have fun while working very hard. A true indication of a fun and productive practice is when the players leave the field dripping with sweat and brimming with a smile.
2. **Think Like a Player** - Actually, think like a kid! Would you be having fun at your practices or games? Would you have understood the drill or play the way you just explained it? Is the play or drill too hard or simple for your players at their current level? Ask yourself these questions before you begin. Then remember – offer advice, praise, and discipline on their level, not yours. Follow the Platinum Rule: “Do unto others as they want.” Applying the Platinum Rule will help you create a team that is having fun and winning.
3. **Teach by Games - Let Them Learn on Their Own** - Part of your practice should consist of themed games that teach the skills you are targeting. They learn and practice the skill on their own, thus reinforcing it. This method of teaching keeps kids engaged and helps them learn more effectively.
4. **By the Inch is a Cinch - By the Yard is Hard** - This is the Golden Rule of coaching, teaching, and learning anything! Teach new concepts and skills in pieces. Break down each skill into individual components and teach the entire skill over the course of one or more practices. It is easier to digest small bites than large chunks.
For example, taking over a new team that was very low skilled, the first thing I did was start working on their defensive skills. I build teams from the back and move forward. Because you have to stop the bleeding. Teach them the things that will stop them from being scored on. Then move to controlling the middle, then finally on finishing. Too many coaches spend a lot of time on finishing and shooting drills when they will never get a chance to get a clean shot.
5. **Sincere and Honest Praise** - Right out of Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*: pointed, detailed, short praise to a player is more valuable than hours of condemnation. Always praise a player for a proper action before correcting them for an improper action. If you must discipline a player, quickly

follow it up with praise once the player acts correctly. Remember, children do not have the same tolerance for, and understanding of, criticism as adults.

6. **Challenge** - Adding challenge to the most basic drills will motivate your players tremendously. Athletes, at all levels, are competitive by nature. Find unique ways to integrate challenges into all aspects of your coaching. For example, incorporate competitive elements into drills to keep them engaging and fun. Make each cone drill a race.
7. **Keep the Players Moving** - Most line drills are boring. Plan drills that keep the players moving and standing around as little as possible. If line drills are necessary, divide the players into as many lines or sections as possible. A good indication that your players are bored or standing idle too long is when they start fooling around as they wait their turn. Additionally, constant movement benefits their endurance.
8. **Repetition** - An average youth player must repeat a skill hundreds, sometimes thousands, of times before they can perform the skill automatically. The more difficult the skill, the more it needs to be repeated. Repeat the skill in several forms both during a single practice session and over the course of several practices. The challenge here is to do something repetitive in a fun way!
9. **30-Second Explanation** - Most young players lose interest after 30 seconds. Therefore, it's your responsibility to be concise in your explanation of a drill or skill to avoid losing their attention. Start by explaining the drill in a stationary position, then follow it up with a demonstration. Address your players with your back to the sidelines to prevent them from being distracted by other activities. Additionally, try to keep drills to a maximum of eight minutes. After eight minutes, drills become tedious, and the players will stop having fun. Occasionally, schedule several simple three-minute drills to drive home a specific skill point. This approach keeps practices moving and maintains the players' attention levels.
10. **Do Not Make Negative Comments to Players in Front of Teammates or Parents** -Never put down or ridicule a player in front of other players or parents – especially when that player is not present. Likewise, do not allow other players or parents to make the same mistake. Negative remarks by coaches reduce players' trust and confidence in you. Simply put: give a dog a bad name, and the dog will bite. Give a dog a bone, and it will perform tricks.

4v4- Attacking- Building Up / Creating Chances in Opp Half (B)

AGE: U7-U8 / 4v4 / 8 players

MOMENT:



GOAL: Improve building-up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass/dribble, Spread out, Pass options

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Focus, Initiative

 8

 60 min

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

PRACTICE (Core Activity): 4 v 3 on Two Goal Lines Each

PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 4 v 2 on Two Goal Lines Each

PRACTICE (More Challenging): 4 v 4 on Two Goal Lines Each

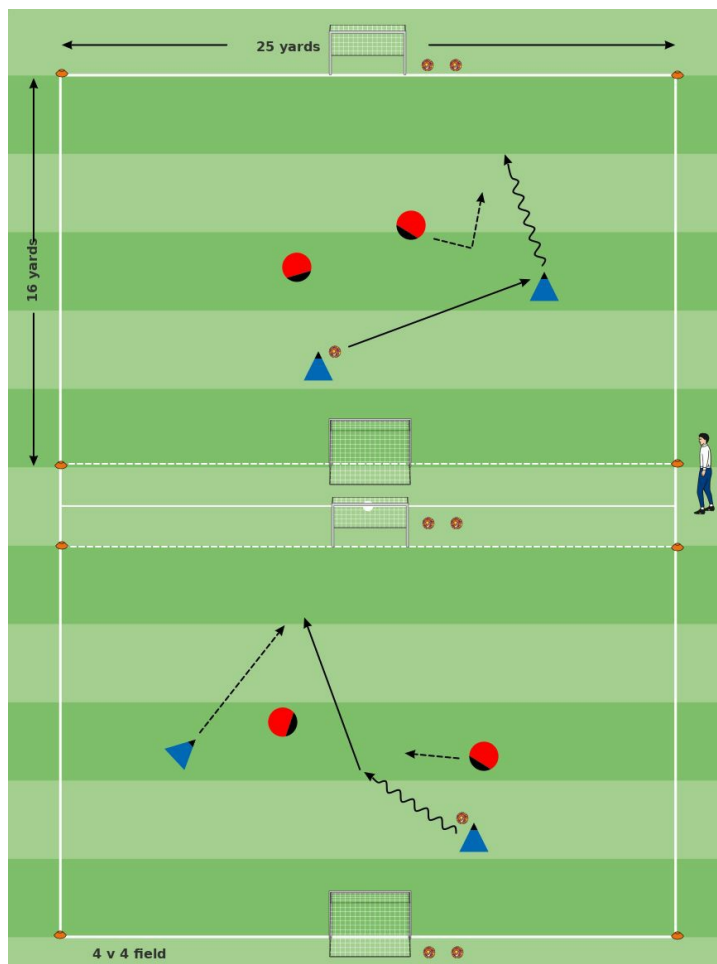
2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents and create chances.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass options

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out two 16 x 25-yard fields, each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS:

Opening, move forward, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) How do you find an opening? 2) How do you create an opening? 3) What should you do if you see an opening?

ANSWERS:

1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Make the opponent move. 3) Pass or dribble through it.

NOTES:

First break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. Second break: Players share answers with coach and each other.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U7-U8 / 4v4

PLAYERS:
2 vs 2

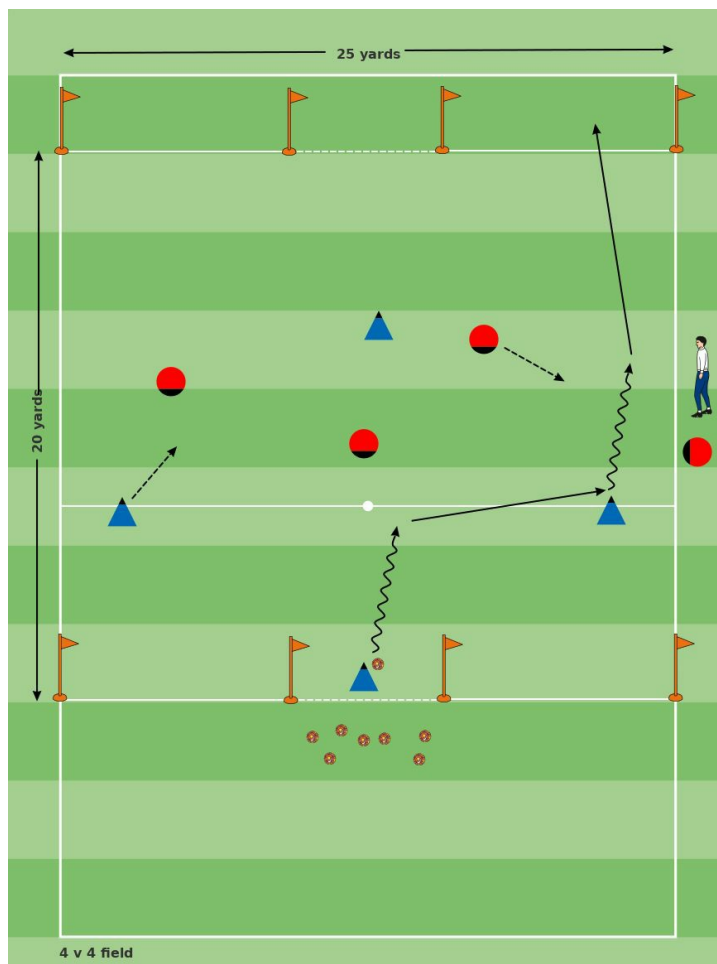
DURATION:
20:0 min

PRACTICE (Core Activity): 4 v 3 on Two Goal Lines Each

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass/dribble, Spread out, Pass options

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out a 20 x 25-yard field with two goal lines on each endline. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4 v 3 on two goal lines each and score by dribbling or passing past the goal line. The attackers have eight balls to attack with. If a ball goes out or a goal is scored, they start a new attack from their endline. Each defender sits out two attacks. After eight attacks, teams switch roles. Which team scores more goals? Play for 20 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) What are the ball carrier's options? 3) When should attackers dribble? 4) And when should they pass?

ANSWERS:

1) They should spread out and create openings. 2) Dribble or pass. 3) When they have space. 4) When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U7-U8 / 4v4

PLAYERS:
4 vs 3

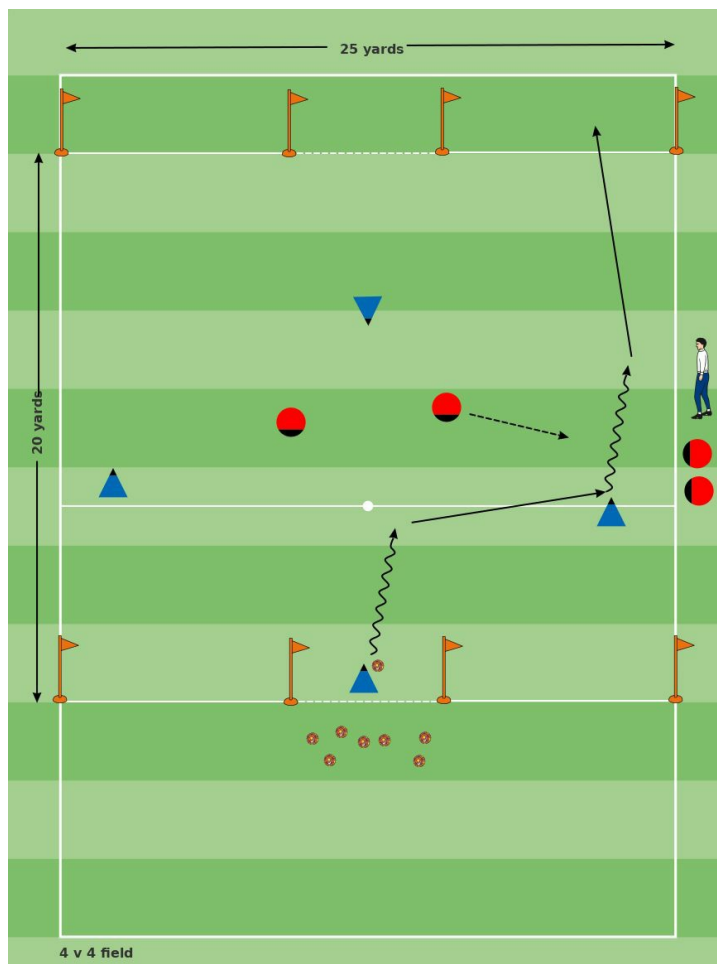
DURATION:
20:0 min

PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 4 v 2 on Two Goal Lines Each

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Focus, Initiative



ORGANIZATION:

Same as Core Activity, except teams play 4 v 2. The attackers have eight balls as above. The defenders rotate on and off in pairs every two attacks.

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) What are the ball carrier's options? 3) When should attackers dribble? 4) And when should they pass?

ANSWERS:

1) They should spread out and create openings 2) Dribble or pass. 3) When they have space. 4) When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open.

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.



MOMENT:

Attacking



AGE:

U7-U8 / 4v4



PLAYERS:

4 vs 2



DURATION:

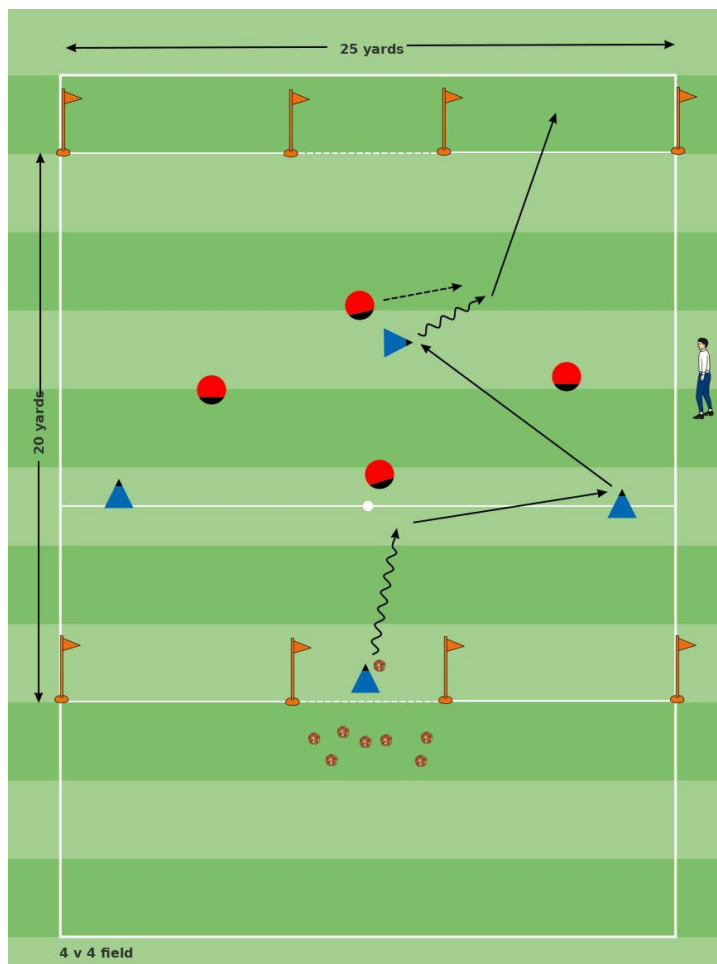
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PRACTICE (More Challenging): 4 v 4 on Two Goal Lines Each

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass options, Pass/dribble

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Focus, Initiative



ORGANIZATION:

Same as Core Activity, except teams play 4 v 4. The attackers have eight balls as above. Defenders do not rotate; teams switch roles after eight attacks.

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) What are the ball carrier's options? 3) When should attackers dribble? 4) And when should they pass?

ANSWERS:

1) They should spread out and create openings. 2) Dribble or pass. 3) When they have space. 4) When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open.

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Move to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 20 minutes in the Practice Phase.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U7-U8 / 4v4

PLAYERS:
4 vs 4

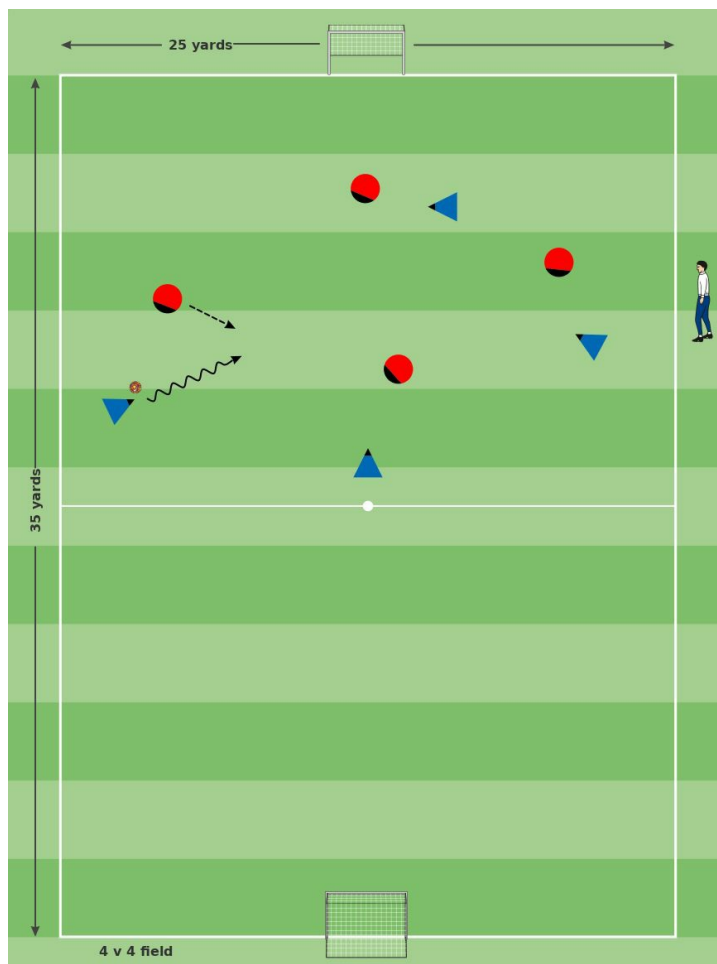
DURATION:
20:0 min

2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To pass or dribble past opponents, move the ball forward and create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Spread out, Pass/dribble, Pass options

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Focus, Initiative



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) with two mini goals. Teams play 4 v 4, using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs). Play for 20 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max).

KEY WORDS:

Use space, be open, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? 2) How do you find an opening? 3) How do you create an opening? 4) What should you do if you see an opening? 5) When should attackers dribble? 6) And when should they pass?

ANSWERS:

1) They should spread out and create openings. 2) Look at the opponent's position. 3) Make the opponent move. 4) Pass or dribble through it. 5) When they have space. 6) When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open.

MOMENT:
Attacking

AGE:
U7-U8 / 4v4

PLAYERS:
4 vs 4

DURATION:
20:0 min

4v4- Attacking- Building Up / Creating Chances in Opp Half (B)

GOAL: Improve building-up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass/dribble, Spread out, Pass options

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Focus, Initiative

AGE: U7-U8 / 4v4 / 8 players

Attacking

DURATION: 60 min



Five Elements of a Training Exercise

1. Organized: Is the exercise organized in the right way?
2. Game-like: Is the exercise game-like?
3. Repetition: Is there repetition, when looking at the overall goal of the session?
4. Challenging: Are the players being challenged?(Is there the right balance between being successful and unsuccessful?
5. Coaching: Is there proper coaching, based on the age and level of the player?

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

Do-focus on the situation

1. Did you achieve your goals? Yes/No
2. What went well?
3. What could you do better?

NOTES:

7v7 Defending- Improve Preventing the Opponent from Building Up in Their Own Half (B)

AGE: U9-U10 / 7v7 / 12 players

MOMENT:



GOAL: Improve preventing the opponent from building-up in their own half

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal, Get compact, Stay compact

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus

12

90 min

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

PRACTICE (Core Activity): 6 v 5 + GK (Two Small Goals to Large Goal)

PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 6 v 5 + GK (Two Small Goals to Large Goal)

PRACTICE (More Challenging): 6 v 5 + GK (End Zone to Large Goal)

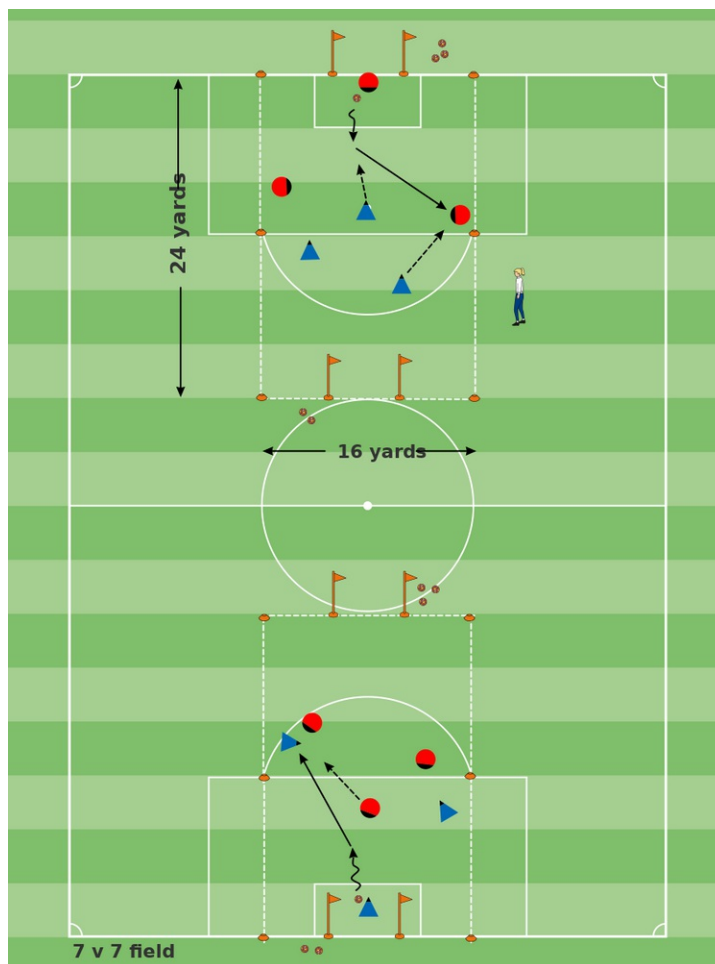
2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from building up, win the ball back and score.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Stay compact, Pressure/cover/balance

KEY QUALITIES:



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out two 24 x 16-yard fields. Divide players into four teams of three. Teams play 3 v 3 on 6-yard goal lines without goalkeepers. Free play, kick-ins. Play for 30 minutes with two to three breaks.

KEY WORDS:

Hunt the ball, get together, move together

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) What does the closest defender to the ball need to do? 2) What are some cues to steal the ball? 3) What do the other two defenders need to do? 4) How do we deal with the opponent when they spread out and create passing options?

ANSWERS:

1) Protect the goal by blocking the path towards our goal. 2) When the attacker's head is down or takes a bad touch. 3) Get compact to close openings. 4) Continue to protect the goal by staying compact/together to keep the openings closed.

NOTES:

First break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. Second break: Players share answers with coach and each other. Refer to the Training Session Manual.

MOMENT:

Defending

AGE:

U9-U10 / 7v7

PLAYERS:

6 vs 6

INTENSITY:

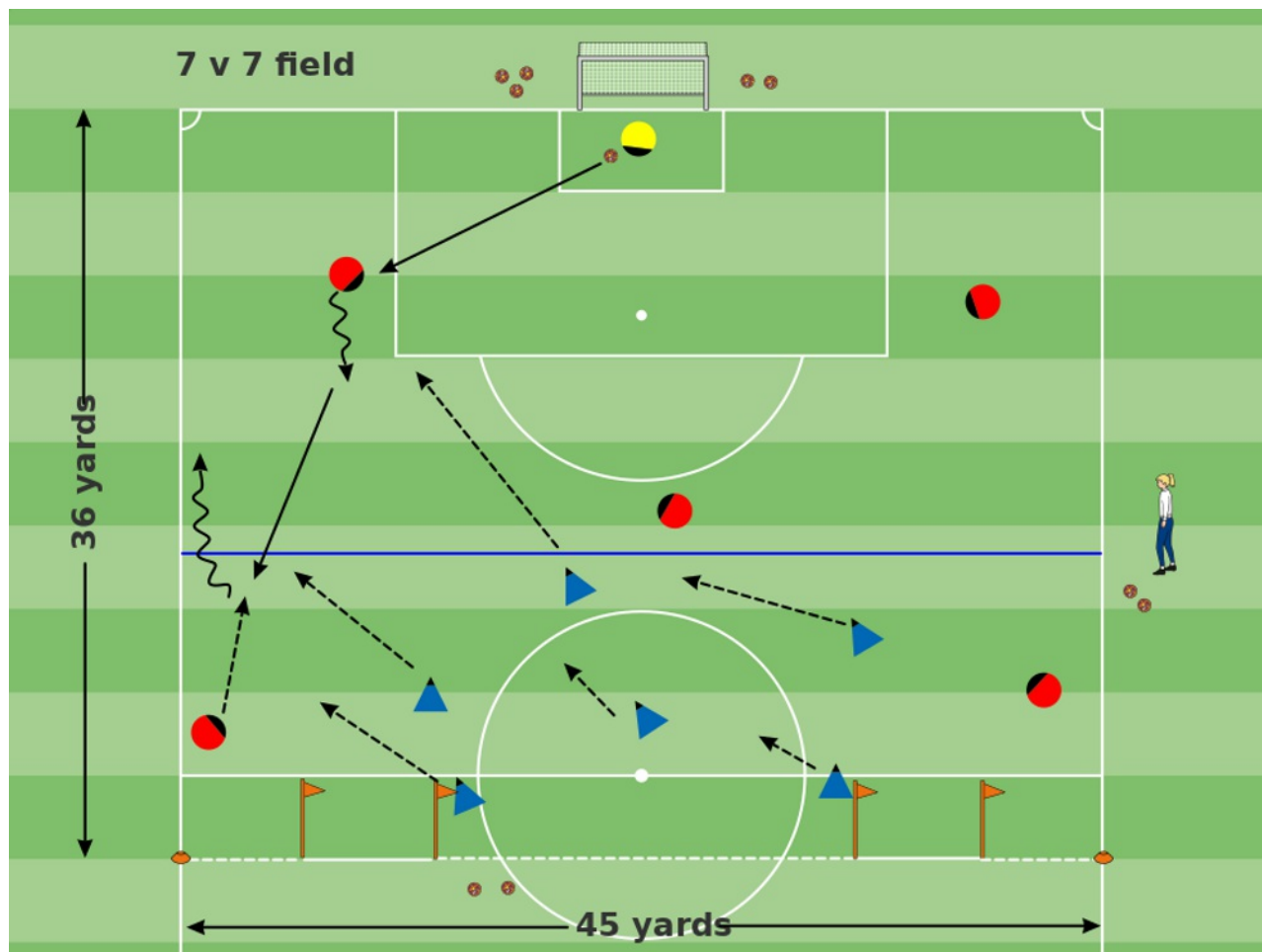
Moderate

PRACTICE (Core Activity): 6 v 5 + GK (Two Small Goals to Large Goal)

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from building up, win the ball back and score.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal, Get compact, Stay compact

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus

**ORGANIZATION:**

Mark out a 36X45 yard field and include the build-out line. 6 blues (2-3-1) attack large goal vs. 6 reds (1-2-3) to two small goals. Mostly begin from red goal kick, but vary the restarts (from GK hands, throw-ins, play blue team attack, etc). Play for 30 minutes with 2-3 breaks.

KEY WORDS:

Hunt the ball, stay together, move together

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) Who should pressure the opponent with the ball? 2) When do you step to steal the ball? 3) How do you step to steal the ball? 4) Why do the other defenders need to get compact and stay connected?

ANSWERS:

1) The closest defender. 2) When the attacker's head is down, takes a bad touch, or makes a soft pass. 3) Fast approach (long steps) while the ball is moving, and then slow arrival (short steps) when close. 4) To keep openings closed and keep them closed by moving together.

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity after the first Play Phase. If it's too difficult, switch to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, switch to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to the Training Session Manual/Coach's Toolkit.

MOMENT:

Defending

AGE:

U9-U10 / 7v7

PLAYERS:

6 vs 6

DURATION:

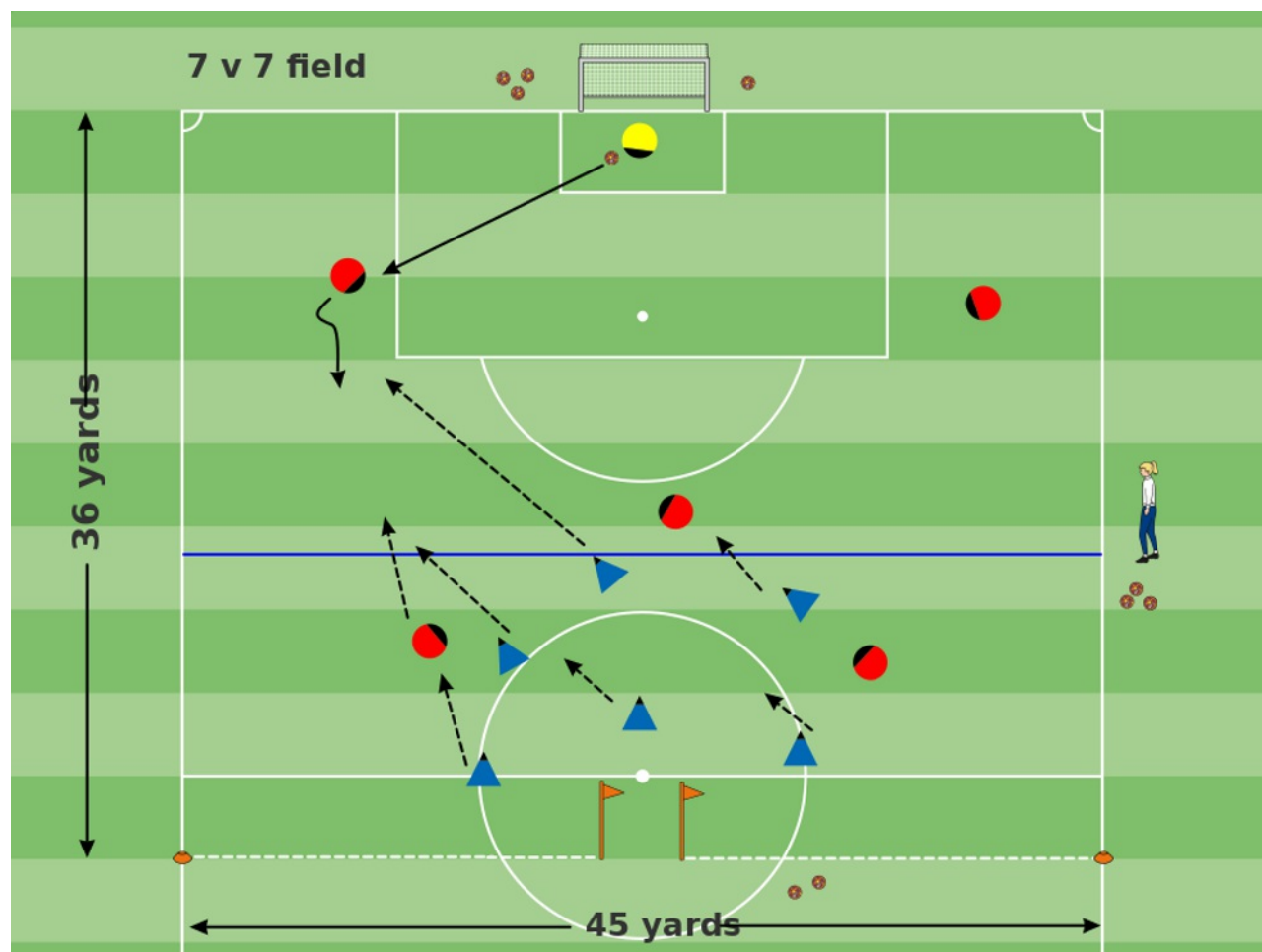
30:0 min

PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 6 v 5 + GK (Two Small Goals to Large Goal)

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from building up, win the ball back and score.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal, Get compact, Stay compact

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Same as core activity, except with just one 15-yard goal line in the middle. Be sure to vary restarts from the red team (goal kick, from GK hands, throw-ins, start with blue team, etc).

KEY WORDS:

Look for a soft pass, hunt the ball, stay together, move together

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) Who should pressure the opponent with the ball? 2) When do you step to steal the ball? 3) How do you step to steal the ball? 4) Why do the other defenders need to get compact and stay connected?

ANSWERS:

1) The closest defender. 2) When the attacker's head is down, takes a bad touch, or makes a soft pass. 3) Fast approach (long steps) while the ball is moving, and then slow arrival (short steps) when close. 4) To close openings and keep them closed by moving together.

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to Training Session Manual/Coach's ToolKit.

MOMENT:

Defending

AGE:

U9-U10 / 7v7

PLAYERS:

6 vs 6

DURATION:

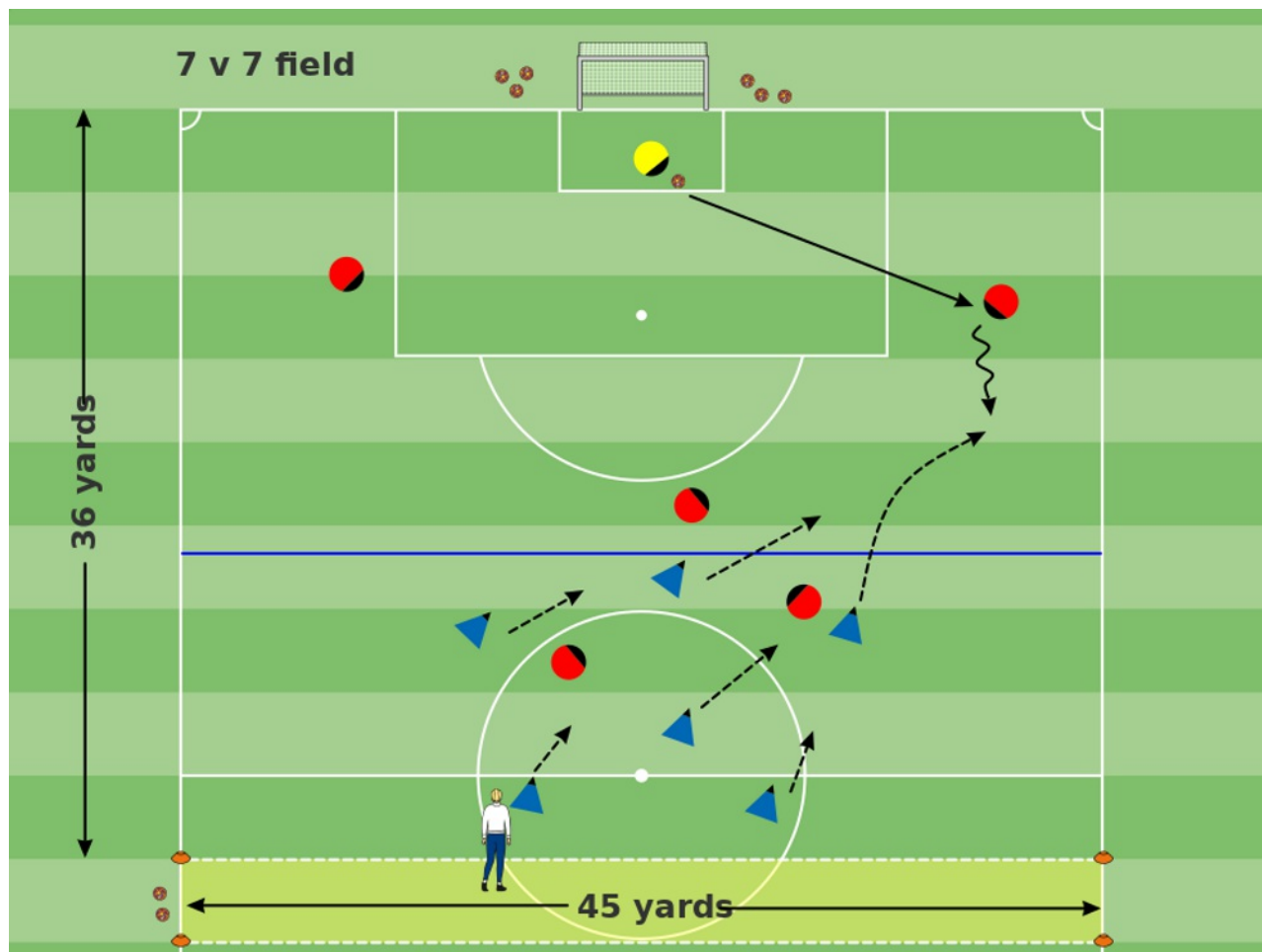
30:0 min

PRACTICE (More Challenging): 6 v 5 +GK (End Zone to Large Goal)

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from building up, win the ball back and score.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal, Get compact, Stay compact

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus

**ORGANIZATION:**

Same as core activity, except use an end zone instead of goal lines for the Red team to score, and red must dribble into it or pass to the coach there to score. Be sure to vary the restarts so that the red team uses different options to try to build up.

KEY WORDS:

Delay, force inside/outside, step, hold, slide

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) Where should the first defender try to force the opponent? 2) When do the other defenders hold position or drop back? 3) What do we do if the opponent tries to change the point of attack? 4) What can we say to help us prevent their build-up?

ANSWERS:

1) Towards our help defenders or to a weaker opponent (could be inside or outside). 2) When we do NOT get pressure on the ball. 3) Stay in a compact block and slide across together to keep the openings closed. 4) Be specific- "Delay, Force inside/outside, Step, Hold, Slide right/left"

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase.

MOMENT:

Defending

AGE:

U9-U10 / 7v7

PLAYERS:

6 vs 6

DURATION:

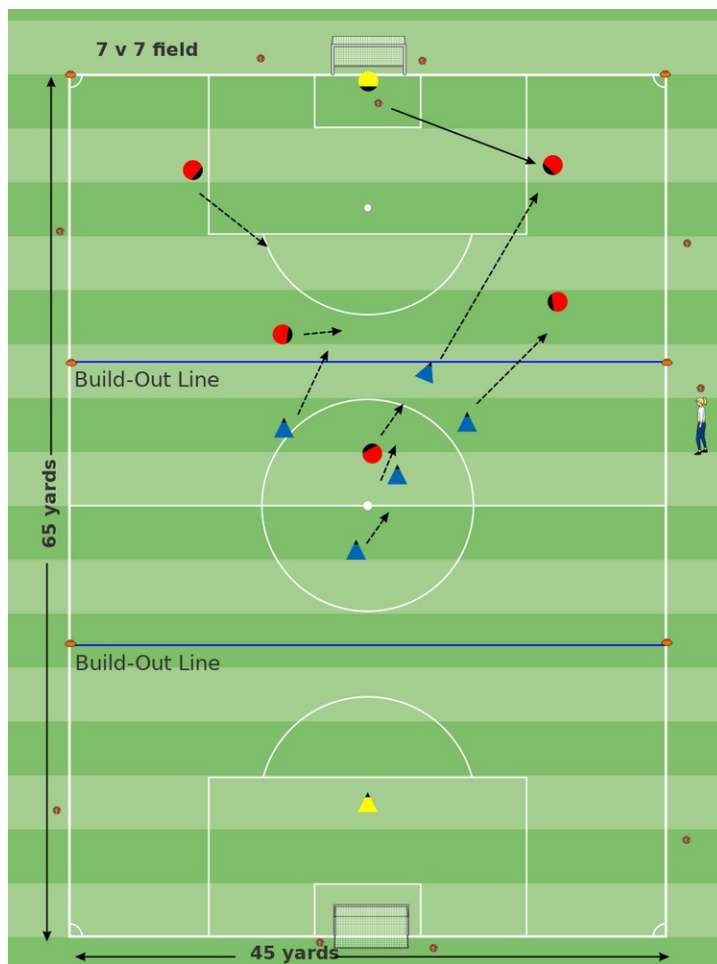
30:0 min

2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To prevent the opponent from building up, win the ball back and score.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal, Get compact, Stay compact

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out a regular 7 v 7 field with build-out lines. Play 6v6 (Blue 1-1-3-1 vs Red 1-2-2-1). Play for ~30 minutes including one "halftime" (5 min.) using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs).

KEY WORDS:

Hunt the ball, stay together, move together, force inside/outside

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

Half-Time- Repeat all questions previously used as needed. End of Game- 1) How did you do in stealing the ball? Where and when should we move to do it? 2) Why is it important to focus as a team to get compact and stay compact? 3) How did you take initiative and confront the situation?

ANSWERS:

Half-Time- Repeat all questions/answers previously used as needed. Players provide examples (specific communication, forming a compact block, forcing the opponent in a certain direction).

NOTES:

Refer to the Training Session Manual and U.S. Soccer Coach's Tool Kit for the appropriate Teaching Actions during specific Teaching Moments (in flow and at "halftime"). Allow the players to play freely; observe to check for player's understanding on today's training session goal.

MOMENT:

Defending

AGE:

U9-U10 / 7v7

PLAYERS:

6 vs 6

DURATION:

30:0 min

7v7 Defending- Improve Preventing the Opponent from Building Up in Their Own Half (B)

GOAL: Improve preventing the opponent from building-up in their own half

PLAYER ACTIONS: Steal, Get compact, Stay compact

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Focus

AGE: U9-U10 / 7v7 / 12 players

Defending

DURATION: 90 min



Five Elements of a Training Exercise

1. Organized: Is the exercise organized in the right way?
2. Game-like: Is the exercise game-like?
3. Repetition: Is there repetition, when looking at the overall goal of the session?
4. Challenging: Are the players being challenged?(Is there the right balance between being successful and unsuccessful?
5. Coaching: Is there proper coaching, based on the age and level of the player?

Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

Do-focus on the situation

1. Did you achieve your goals? Yes/No
2. What went well?
3. What could you do better?

NOTES:

9v9 Improve Building Up in Opponents Half to Create Chances- (A)

AGE: U11-U12 / 9v9 / 16 players

MOMENT:



GOAL: Improve building-up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Support, 2v1/1v1, Change point

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical

16

90 min

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

PRACTICE (Core Activity): 6 v 4 on Two Goals Each

PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 6 v 3 on Two Goals Each

PRACTICE (More Challenging): 6 v 5 on Two Goals Each

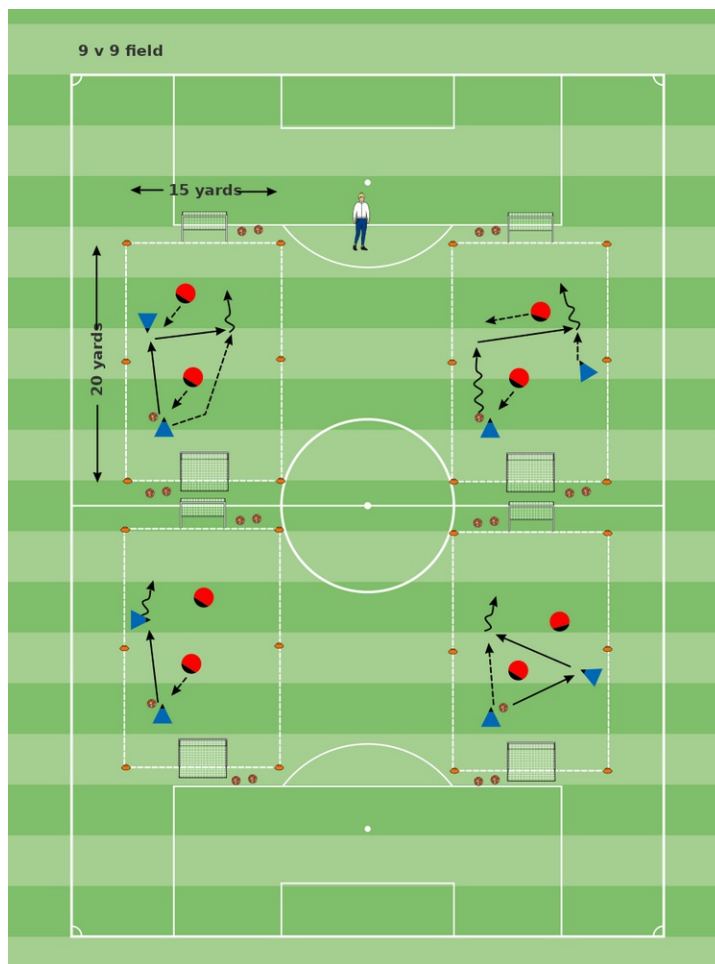
2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play

OBJECTIVE: To beat the defender(s) and score goals

PLAYER ACTIONS: 2v1/1v1, Support, Change point

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical



ORGANIZATION:

Mark out four 20 x 15-yard fields, each with two mini goals. Players are divided into pairs and take turns playing 2 v 2. Free Play. Play for 30 minutes with two to three breaks. Rotate players/teams as needed according to the Five Elements.

KEY WORDS:

Opening, move forward, pass, dribble

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) How can you beat the defender 1 v 1? 2) How should you do that? 3) How can you beat the defender 2 v 1?

ANSWERS:

1) Dribble past him/her. 2) Try a move or a fake to get the opponent to move in one direction, and then accelerate past the defender in another direction. 3) Force him/her to move.

NOTES:

First break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. Second break: Players share answers with coach and each other. Refer to the Training Session Manual.

MOMENT:

Attacking

AGE:

U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:

2 vs 2

DURATION:

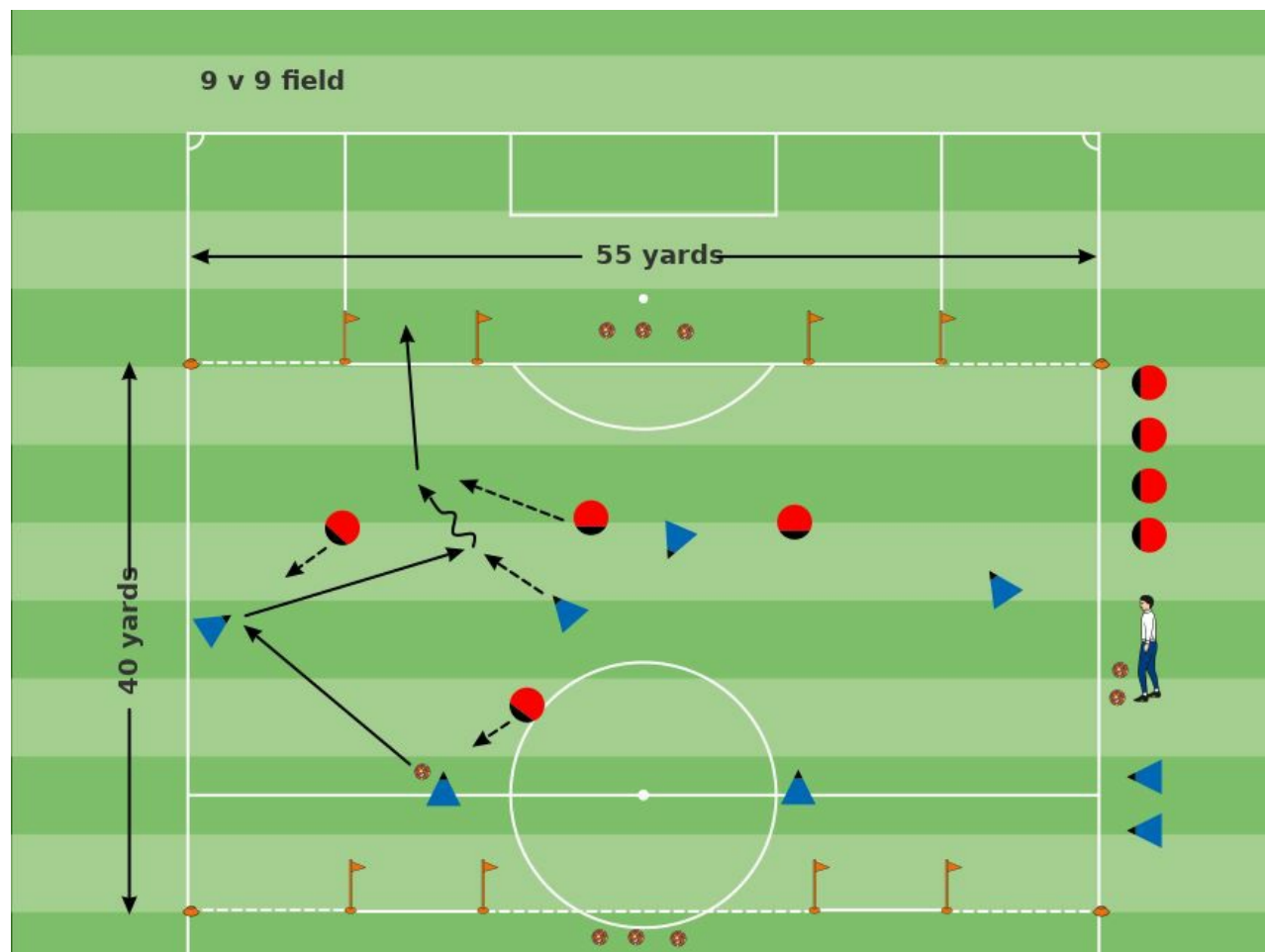
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PRACTICE (Core Activity): 6 v 4 on Two Goals Each

OBJECTIVE: To beat defenders and score goals by creating 1 v 1s and 2 v 1s.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Support, 2v1/1v1, Change point

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical

**ORGANIZATION:**

Mark out a 40 x 50-yard field with two goals per team. Teams play 6 v 4. The attackers (Blue) must dribble or pass on the ground to score. The defenders can only score on ground balls. After a goal, Blue starts a new attack. Use kick-ins for restarts. Play for 30 minutes with two to three breaks. Rotate players every three minutes.

KEY WORDS:

Take opponents on, support, switch it

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) Where is your best chance to score? 2) Why? 3) How can you help the ball carrier?

ANSWERS:

1) "Over there." 2) Because it's less crowded. 3) Try to get more attackers than defenders around the ball.

NOTES:

Start here at the Core Activity after the First Play Phase. If it's too difficult, switch to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, switch to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to the Training Session Manual.

MOMENT:

Attacking

AGE:

U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:

6 vs 4

DURATION:

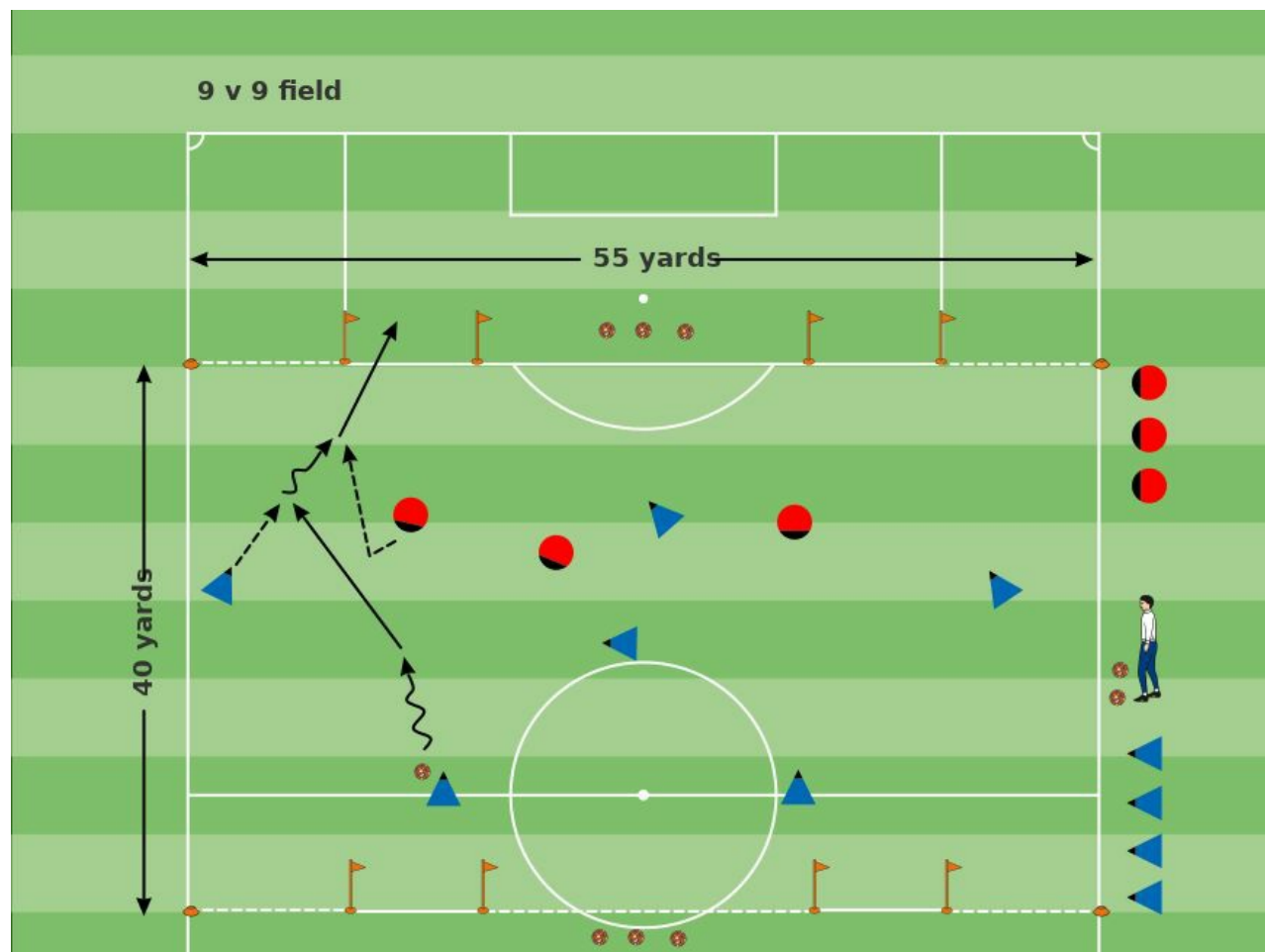
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PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 6 v 3 on Two Goals Each

OBJECTIVE: To beat defenders and score goals by creating 1 v 1s and 2 v 1s.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Support, 2v1/1v1, Change point

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical



ORGANIZATION:

Same as Core Activity, except teams play 6 v 3 and can only score on ground balls.

KEY WORDS:

Take opponents on, support, switch it

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) Where is your best chance to score? 2) Why? 3) How can you help the ball carrier?

ANSWERS:

1) "Over there." 2) Because it's less crowded. 3) Try to get more attackers than defenders around the ball.

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this Less Challenging activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to the Training Session Manual.

MOMENT:

Attacking

AGE:

U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:

6 vs 3

DURATION:

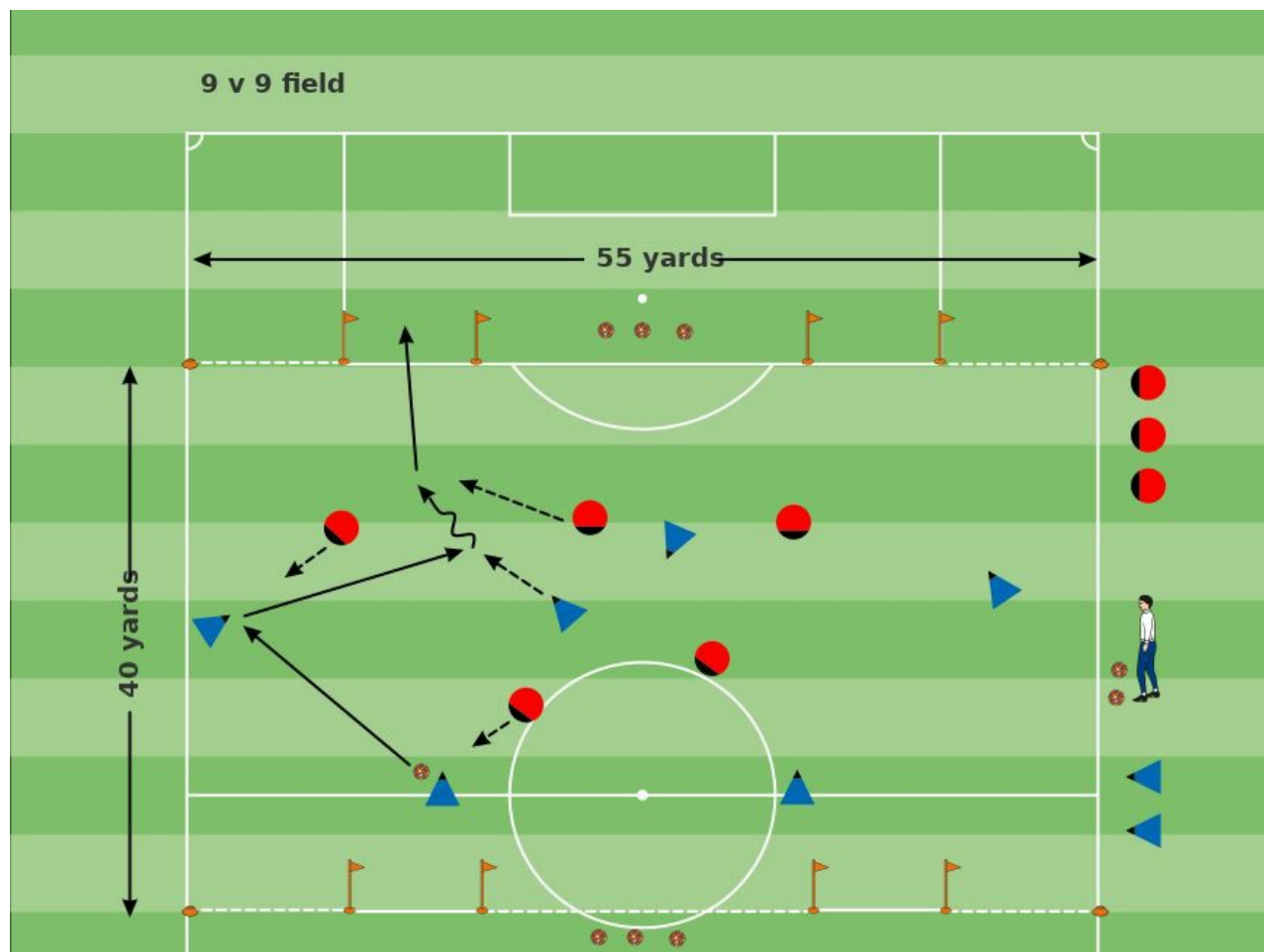
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PRACTICE (More Challenging): 6 v 5 on Two Goals Each

OBJECTIVE: Same as Core Activity, except teams play 6 v 5.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Support, 2v1/1v1, Change point

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical



ORGANIZATION:

Same as Core Activity, except teams play 6 v 5.

KEY WORDS:

Take opponents on, support, switch it

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) Where is your best chance to score? 2) Why? 3) How can you help the ball carrier?

ANSWERS:

1) "Over there." 2) Because it's less crowded. 3) Try to get more attackers than defenders around the ball.

NOTES:

Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to the Training Session Manual.

MOMENT:

Attacking

AGE:

U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:

6 vs 5

DURATION:

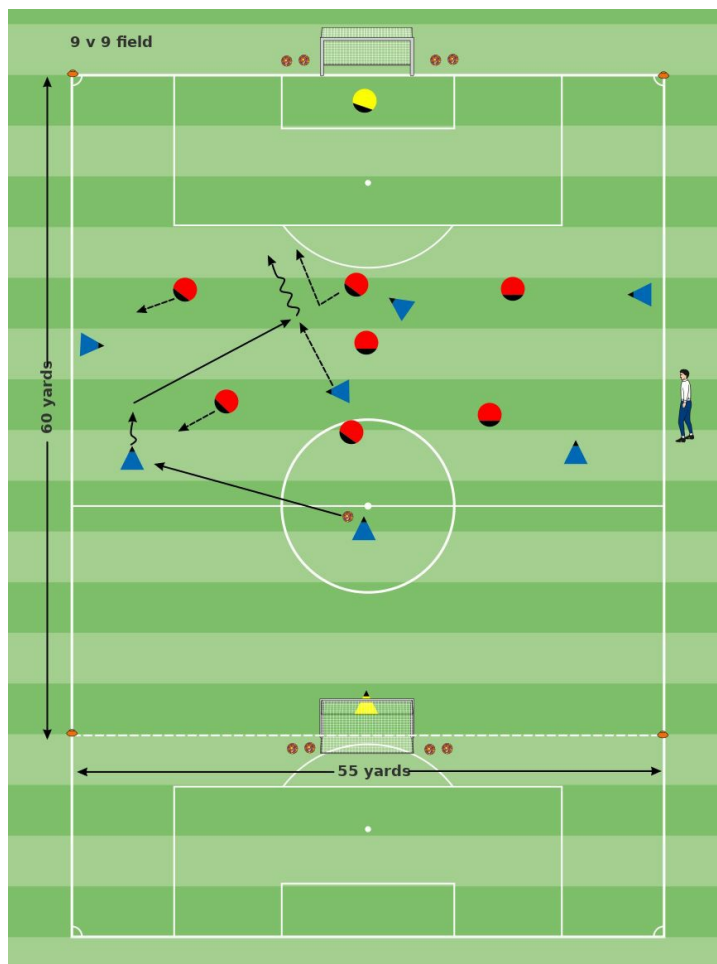
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2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To beat defenders and score goals by creating 1 v 1s and 2 v 1s.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Support, 2v1/1v1, Change point

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical



ORGANIZATION:

Teams play 8 v 8 on a 60 x 55-yard field. Each plays a 1-3-1-3 formation for 30 minutes including one "halftime" (5 minutes max) Play according to the Laws of the Game and the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives.

KEY WORDS:

Take opponents on, support, switch it

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

1) How can you beat the defender 1 v 1? 2) How can you beat the defender 2 v 1? 3) Where is your best chance to score? 4) Why? 5) How can you help the ball carrier?

ANSWERS:

1) Get the defender off balance. 2) Force him/her to move. 3) "Over there." 4) Because it's less crowded. 5) Try to get more attackers than defenders around the ball.

MOMENT:

Attacking

AGE:

U11-U12 / 9v9

PLAYERS:

8 vs 8

DURATION:

30:0 min

9v9 Improve Building Up in Opponents Half to Create Chances- (A)

GOAL: Improve building-up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Support, 2v1/1v1, Change point

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical

AGE: U11-U12 / 9v9 / 16 players

Attacking

DURATION: 90 min



Five Elements of a Training Exercise

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Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

Do-focus on the situation

1. Did you achieve your goals? Yes/No
2. What went well?
3. What could you do better?

NOTES:

U5-9 Developmental Recommendations

	U-5	U-6	U-7	U-8	U-9
Field Size* (yards)	20-35 L 15-25 W	25-35 L 15-25 W	25-35 L 15-25 W	35-45 L 25-35 W	55-65 L 35-45 W
Maximum Goal Size* (feet)	4 x 6	4 x 6	4 x 6	6 x 8	6 x 18
Build-Out Line*	Midfield	Midfield	Midfield	Quarter	Quarter
Ball Size	3	3	3	3	4
Players on field	3 v 3	4 v 4	4 v 4	5 v 5	7 v 7
Roster Size (max)	6	8	8	9	12
Min. Players to Play	2	3	3	4	5
Goalkeeper*	N	N	N	Y	Y
GK Punt	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N
Game Time (# periods x minutes)	2 x 16	2 x 18	2 x 20	2 x 20	2 x 25
Score Directly from a Kick-off	N	N	N	N	N
Offsides Called	N	N	N	N	Y
Heading	N	N	N	N	N
Sendoffs & Cautions	N	N	N	N	N
Slide Tackling	N	N	N	N	N
Direct Kicks	N	N	N	N	Y
Penalty Kicks	N	N	N	N	Y
Retry Throw-ins	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Score Directly from Goal Kick	N	N	N	N	N
Retry Corner Kicks	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Referees Provided	N	N	N	N	N
3-Goal Policy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scores Recorded & Standings	N	N	N	N	N

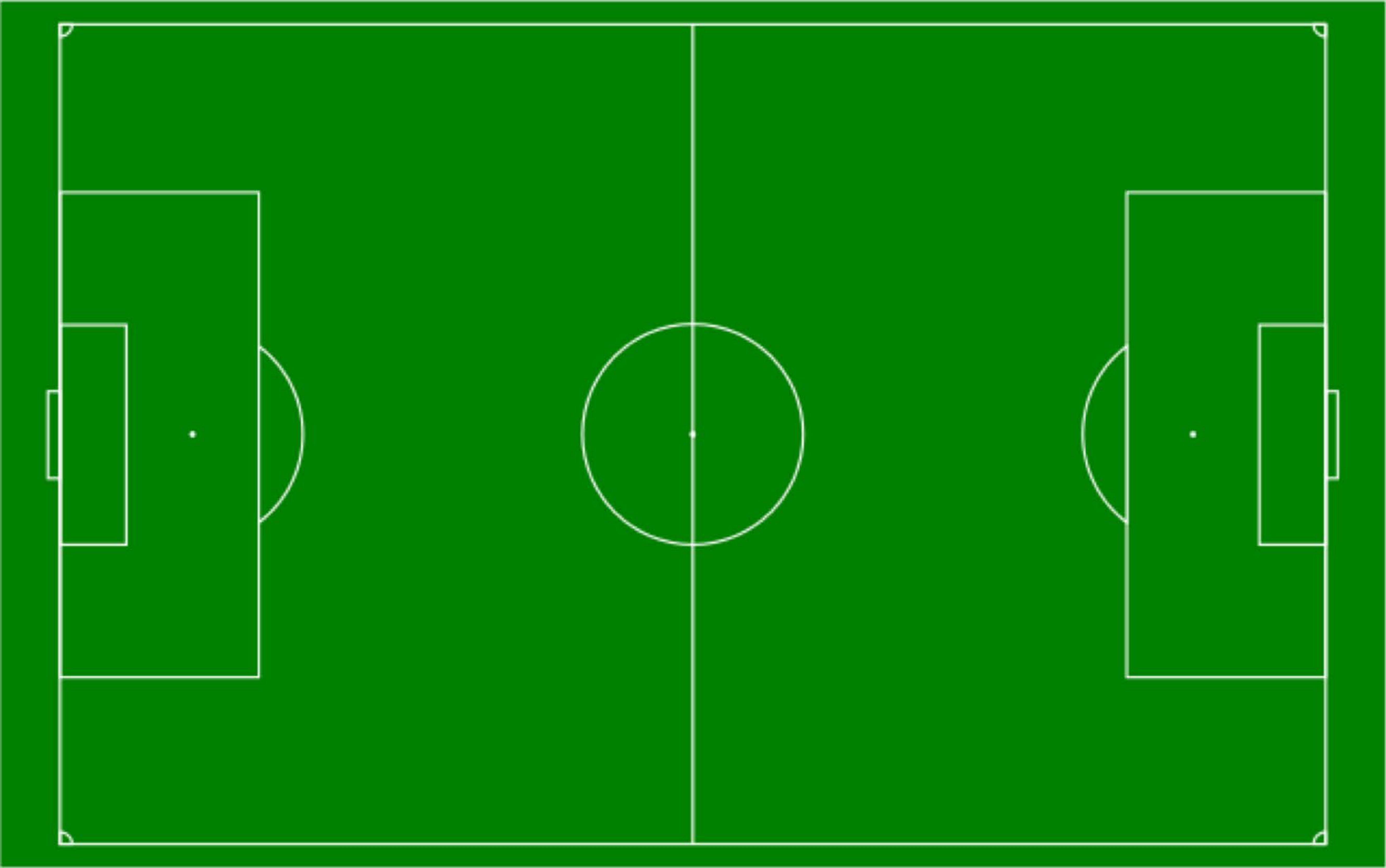
SYSA Rules of Competition

Official U10-19 Citywide Rules of Play for Fall League and City Tournament

	U-10	U-11	U-12	U13-14	U15-16	U17-19
Field Size* (yards)	55-65 L 35-45 W	70-80 L 45-55 W	70-80 L 45-55 W	100-115 L 70-80 W	100-115 L 70-80 W	100-115 L 70- 80 W
Maximum Goal Size* (feet)	6 x 18	6 x 18	6 x 18	8 x 24	8 x 24	8 x 24
Build-Out Line*	Quarter	Quarter	Quarter	N	N	N
Ball Size	4	4	4	5	5	5
Players on field	7 v 7	9 v 9	9 v 9	11 v 11	11 v 11	11 v 11
Max. Roster Size	12	14	14	18	22	22
Min. Players to Play	5	6	6	7	7	7
GK Punt	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fall Game Time (minutes)	2 x 25	2 x 30	2 x 30	2x35	2x40	2x45
Spring Game Time	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25
Score Directly from a Kick- off	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Offsides Called	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Heading	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Sendoffs & Cautions	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Slide Tackling	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Direct Kicks	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Penalty Kicks	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Retry Throw-ins	N	N	N	N	N	N
Score Directly from Goal Kick	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Re-try Corners	N	N	N	N	N	N
Referees Provided	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3-Goal Policy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Team "A" Bench

Team "B" Bench



Team "A" Parents

Team "B" Parents