

Cowichan Valley Soccer Association

Mini soccer training manual 2011-2012

The purpose of this manual is to provide our volunteer coaches a concise and user-friendly resource for coaching U7-U8 CVSA boys and girls.

Club Philosophy: To provide a safe and fun environment for players of all abilities to learn and play the game of soccer.

Coaches, if you have any questions please feel free to contact one of the following CVSA Technical staff.

Monica Savory, Technical Director Girl's mini programs.
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Nigel Large, CVSA Head Coach.

Introduction to U7/U8s

U7/U8s are still very egocentric, but their coordination, balance and agility is developing rapidly and a growing technical range allows some players to be quite sophisticated in their individual play. U7/U8s are beginning to think in terms of small groups, making planned passing more of a realistic tactical option. They can only kick the ball accurately over a short distance and they still do not like to deal with balls coming out of the air. They can dribble away from pressure and they are beginning to understand that the game can have a rhythm other than “frenetic.” Their range of techniques can include a number of different kicking surfaces and textures, but their vision for the game is almost exclusively post-control (after possession is secured). Their limited appreciation for space does not marry well with numbers above four or five. They will move to open areas to receive passes when given time to assess how to help their teammates and they are capable of playing and practicing with restrictions and more complicated rules. They do not understand offside.

U7/U8 Coaching Themes: Individual Play and a little passing

At the U7/U8 level, dribbling the ball is still the primary soccer focus, although passing can be expected and should be encouraged. The children will be much more aware of how to play soccer games and should be given more responsibility and challenge during training.

Games of up to 4v4 with goalkeepers are excellent small-sided versions of soccer for these children. Focus of practice time should be keeping the kids busy and moving all of the time with lots of individual time with the ball. Basic team concepts such as the give-and-go can be taught. Kids this age love to be the goalkeeper so be sure to include a goalkeeper training session and allow them all a chance to be the “keeper” at some point during the season.

NOTE: Every practice session ends with a small-sided scrimmage game (3v3 or 4v4 or whatever works depending on number of kids you have out that day) and includes a note to ***allow the players to play without interference***. Give the players the freedom to make mistakes and figure out the game for themselves. Offer lots of encouragement and praise. Avoid yelling instruction from the sidelines as it will only distract them and detract from their enjoyment of the game. Avoid criticizing the children’s performances. The body of the practice session is designed to provide the coach an opportunity to teach the skills but make sure that the end time is reserved to allow the players to ***play***. Keep in mind that “the game is the best teacher” so give them the freedom to learn by playing.

It is strongly recommended that this “let the kids play” mentality is what coaches bring to game day. On game day allow the kids to display the skills they have been taught in training. Give them all fair playing time and encourage them to try hard and play as a team.

Offer lots of encouragement and praise. Avoid yelling from the sidelines or criticizing the children’s performances. Relax and enjoy the games and take notes on what to work on during the next practice.

U7/U8 Dribbling Practice 1

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min) – players dribble within a marked area, focus on keeping ball close to body and in control at all times. Encourage use of both feet and the inside and outside of the foot.
- **Ball Gymnastics** (6min) – Ball skills in small area, Roll ball with bottom of foot forwards and backwards with right then left. Repeat from side to side. Tick-Tock: Pass the ball from inside of left to inside of right. Hat Dance: Lightly touch ball with bottom of right foot then with left. Ball should remain still. Increase speed for both.
- **Around the World** (8min) – Set out four or five cones in a large area. Have in mind either local cities or countries of the world. Name each cone and then have the players dribbling inside the area. On command they must dribble around the country/city that you name. Also name several countries/cities at one time to get the kids thinking.
- **Running Bases** (8min) - Players try to dribble their ball without being tagged. If they get tagged, they exchange places with the tagger. Have taggers carry a pinnie to distinguish themselves. Hand pinnies over to the player that is tagged and use their ball to dribble. Players are safe in any one of the 4 bases (4 cones set in a box). Only one player allowed in a base at one time. If a new player enters a base, the old player must leave.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Dribbling Practice 2

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min)- same as first session but introduce quick changes of direction using the inside and outside of both feet.
- **Ball Gymnastics** (6min) – Ball skills in small area, Roll ball with bottom of foot forwards and backwards with right then left. Repeat from side to side. Tick-Tock: Pass the ball from inside of left to inside of right. Hat Dance: Lightly touch ball with bottom of right foot then with left. Ball should remain still. Increase speed for both. Introduce movement. Tick-Tock but move ball slightly forwards each touch. Take it width of field then turn and return. Same with Hat dance.
- **Dribbling Gates** (8min) - set up 5 or 6 gates (each gate is 2 cones spaced 2m apart) and give the kids 30sec to try and dribble through each of the gates and return to start. Repeat and add restrictions such as you need to do an “outside cut” as you pass through the gate.
- **Relay Races** (8min) – Set up 2 or 3 dribbling courses so that each team only has 3 or 4 players in it. First time through have the players run the course without a ball. Then add in a ball.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Dribbling Practice 3

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min)- same as second session but introduce the use of the sole of the foot to move the ball forward and backward while moving.
- **Mud Monster Game** (8min)- Played in a 20x20m grid Similar to Freeze Tag, each player with a ball except two Taggers (the “mud monsters”). Players dribble around the square avoiding the mud monster that is trying to tag the dribblers. If dribblers are tagged by the mud monster they must stand with their legs apart and holding the ball over their head shouting “help me, help me, I’m stuck in the mud”. Players are freed from the mud when a teammate uses the sole of the foot to roll the ball between the frozen players open legs.
- **Line Soccer** (10min) – game played with two teams on a 15x20m grid. Each team is assigned one wide side of the field to defend. Players get a point for their team by dribbling a ball across the end line they are attacking. Once they cross the end line with the ball the player must leave the ball for the other team and sprint back to their own end line before re-entering the game. Use 3 or 4 balls to keep players involved. Coaches need to keep rolling balls back into play to keep the game moving.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Dribbling Practice 4

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min)- same as third session but introduce a right foot pullback (players stop the ball with the sole of the right foot, pull the ball back past their body, and turn towards the ball to change direction)
- **Mud Monster Game** (8min)- Played in a 20x20m grid Similar to Freeze Tag, each player with a ball except two Taggers (the “mud monsters”). Players dribble around the square avoiding the mud monster that is trying to tag the dribblers. If dribblers are tagged by the mud monster they must stand with their legs apart and holding the ball over their head shouting “help me, help me, I’m stuck in the mud”. Players are freed from the mud when a teammate uses the sole of the foot to roll the ball between the frozen players open legs. Add a rule that the dribblers can use a pullback to freeze a mud monster for three seconds.
- **Line Soccer** (10min) – game played with two teams on a 15x20m grid. Each team is assigned one wide side of the field to defend. Players get a point for their team by dribbling a ball across the end line they are attacking. Once they cross the end line with the ball the player must leave the ball for the other team and sprint back to their own end line before re-entering the game. Use 3 or 4 balls to keep players involved. Coaches need to keep rolling balls back into play to keep the game moving.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Passing Practice 1

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min) – continue from fourth session but add left foot pullback.

 - **Ball Gymnastics** (6min) – Tick-tock and hat dance. Progress to moving. Introduce side swivel: Roll right foot over ball and stop with inside of left and then, on return, roll left foot over ball and stop with inside of right foot.
- Introduce Proper passing technique* (6min) – first head up to locate target, second eye on ball, third use instep to pass, fourth “cushion” the ball when receiving to keep control. Encourage accuracy and reasonable pace on the ball. Practice with partner.
- **Fox & hounds** (10min) – Set up a 20x20 grid. Tag game, one or two players (hounds) start with balls and try to hit the kids without balls (foxes) with a pass. If a player gets hit then they must also get a ball and help catch the others. Play until two foxes remain, they become the hounds for the next game.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Passing Practice 2

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min) – continue progression from fifth session as you get players to dribble without looking at the ball all of the time. Coach stands in the centre of the grid and holds up a certain number of fingers, the players must look to see how many fingers the coach is holding up and then yell out that number.
- **Ball Gymnastics** (6min) – Tick-tock and hat dance. Progress to moving. Review side swivel: Roll right foot over ball and stop with inside of left and then, on return, roll left foot over ball and stop with inside of right foot.

Review Proper passing technique (6min) – first head up to locate target, second eye on ball, third use instep to pass, fourth “cushion” the ball when receiving to keep control. Encourage accuracy and reasonable pace on the ball. Practice with partner. After each pass, the receiver performs 6 tick tocks before returning the pass.

- **Crazy Ducks** (10min) – Set up two triangles with 10m sides. One player is on each side of triangle and the fourth is in the middle of the triangle. Ball is passed between players on the outside of the triangle and the player on the inside trying to intercept a pass. If the players on the outside of the triangle complete 5 consecutive passes then the player in the triangle must perform a duck walk complete with quaking noises. Switch duck every 1min.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Passing Practice 3

- **Dribbling in the square** (6min) – players dribble in the square and coach calls out moves or dribbling technique or change of direction that the players try to perform. Encourage quick changes in direction and heads up dribbling.
Review Proper passing technique (4min) –After each pass, the receiver performs 6 tick tocks before returning the pass. Players should be approx 5m apart.
- **Give and Go** (10min) – Demonstrate a give and go (see appendix) with a cone in the middle acting as a defender. Players practice the technique in pairs. Progress to replacing the cone with a player but ensure that they use limited pressure only. Ensure that all players have the opportunity to be a passer, receiver, and defender.
- **Passing Gates** (6min) – set up a series of gates (each gate is two cones that are two meters apart). Players partner up and have 30 sec to run and pass the ball through as many gates as possible. Repeat two or three times encouraging players to try and beat their last score. Encourage *communication* so that the players know which gate they will go to next.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference. Before the game ask the players to each try and complete at least five passes during the game.*

U7/U8 Passing Practice 4

- **Dribbling in the square** (6min) – players dribble in the square and coach calls out moves or dribbling technique or change of direction that the players try to perform. Encourage quick changes in direction and heads up dribbling.
Review Proper passing technique (4min) – After each pass, the receiver performs 6 tick tocks before returning the pass. Players should be approx 10m apart.
- **Crazy Ducks** (8min) – Set up two triangles with 10m sides. One player is on each side of triangle and the fourth is in the middle of the triangle. Ball is passed between players on the outside of the triangle and the player on the inside trying to intercept a pass. If the players on the outside of the triangle complete 5 consecutive passes then the player in the triangle must perform a duck walk complete with quaking noises. Switch duck every 1min.
- **Give and Go** (8min) – Review give and go concept. Coach acts as an obstacle that players need to pass around and then take a shot on net. Start with another coach being the receiver-passer but switch to using a player to do this after a couple of minutes.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference. Before the game ask the players to each try and complete at least five passes during the game.*

U7/U8 Shooting Practice 1

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min) – continue progression from previous sessions as you introduce a double pullback – right foot pullback followed immediately by a left foot pullback.
- **Ball Gymnastics** (6min) – Tick-tock and hat dance. Introduce juggling using the laces part of the foot. Explain that using the laces part of foot is the correct part to kick the ball with. Ball is dropped and allowed to bounce, after the bounce the ball is kicked into the air and caught. Progress to drop-bounce-kick-bounce-catch. Progress to “drop-kick-catch” and “drop-kick-kick-catch”.

Review Proper shooting technique (8min) – head up to locate target, then eye on ball, plant the balance foot next to ball, ensure that knee of kicking foot is over the ball and use laces part of foot to strike the ball. Players practice: first from standing still, second by pushing the ball forward and moving forward to strike it. Encourage correct technique but do not overemphasize it.

- **Clean Your Yard** (8min) – Split team into two groups setup a dividing line in the middle of the field. Every player has a ball. On signal from coach the players kick their ball into the other half of the field. The players keep kicking balls out of their area until coach stops the game. Count up how many balls are on each side of the grid. Encourage players to use proper kicking technique.

Game 4v4 (30min) - ***allow the players to play without interference.*** After practice ask the children to practice juggling at home.

U7/U8 Shooting Practice 2

- **Dribbling in the square** (8min) – continue progression from previous sessions and introduce the use of body fake or shoulder fake, player makes a quick body movement in one direction (fake) followed by a second body movement combined with an outside foot cut to move the ball in the opposite direction.
- **Ball Gymnastics** (6min) – Tick-tock and hat dance. Juggling using the laces part of the foot. Introduce pattern “right foot - left foot – catch”. It is unlikely that too many kids can do this but get them to try it.

Review Proper shooting technique (8min) – head up to locate target, then eye on ball, plant the balance foot next to ball, ensure that knee of kicking foot is over the ball and use laces part of foot to strike the ball. Players practice: first from standing still, second by pushing the ball forward and moving forward to strike it. Encourage correct technique but do not overemphasize it. Introduce shooting with left foot.

- **Long-shot one-timer** (8min) – Split team into two groups each in a single file line facing the net approx 15m from the net. One player from line A dribbles the ball and shoots from approx 10m out, then runs over to kick a one-timer rolled to them by the coach. They get one point for each shot that hits the cones that are in the corners of the net. Next, a player from line B goes, and so on. Most points wins.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Shooting Practice 3

- **Dribbling in the square** (6min) – at first players dribble feely around the grid, coach reminds them to keep their head up to avoid crashing into other kids. Progress to coach calling out moves to perform (Left foot only! Pullback! Change direction! How many fingers am I holding up? Stop! Now go!).
- **Ball Gymnastics** (6min) – Tick-tock and hat dance. Juggling using the laces part of the foot. Introduce pattern “right foot - left foot - right foot – catch”. It is unlikely that too many kids can do this but get them to try it.
- **Long-shot one-timer** (8min) – Split team into two groups each in a single file line facing the net approx 15m from the net. One player from line A dribbles the ball and shoots from approx 10m out, then runs over to kick a one-timer rolled to them by the coach. They get one point for each shot that hits the cones that are in the corners of the net. Next, a player from line B goes, and so on.
Most points wins.
- **Shooting under pressure** (8min) – see Games Appendix for details.

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

U7/U8 Attacking Practice

- **Dribbling in the square** (6min) – at first players dribble feely around the grid, coach reminds them to keep their head up to avoid crashing into other kids. Progress to coach calling out moves to perform (Left foot only! Pullback! Change direction! How many fingers am I holding up? Stop! Now go!).
- **Long-shot one-timer** (8min) – Split team into two groups each in a single file line facing the net approx 15m from the net. One player from line A dribbles the ball and shoots from approx 10m out, then runs over to kick a one-timer rolled to them by the coach. They get one point for each shot that hits the cones that are in the corners of the net. Next, a player from line B goes, and so on.
Most points wins.
- **Shooting under pressure** (8min) – see Games Appendix for details.
- **War** (8min) – see Games Appendix for details

Game 4v4 (30min) - *allow the players to play without interference*

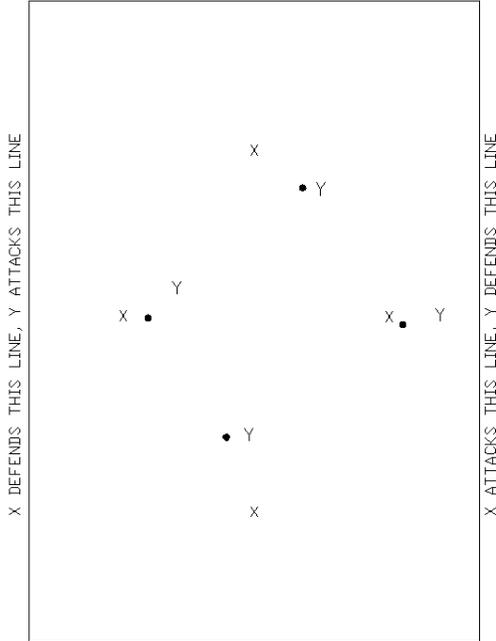
U7/U8 Goalkeeping Practice

(Suggest repeating this session at least two times)

- **Dribbling in the square** (6min) – players dribble around the square, coach stands in the middle of the grid and holds up a particular number of fingers, the players must call out the number that the coach is holding up (heads up dribbling). When the coach holds up 5 fingers all of the players must exit the grid as quick as possible.
- **Moving like a keeper** (4min) – introduce the idea of proper body positioning and keeping square to the shooter. Goalie position is feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, head up, hands at sides, palms facing up the shooter. Players practice moving around the grid maintaining proper goalie position. At coaches signal players must lie face down on the ground and then spring back up to goalie ready position as quickly as possible.
- **Stopping the Ball** (4min) – One partner rolls the ball on the ground, the keeper dips one knee, scoops up the ball with both hands, and pulls ball into body to protect it. Keeper always starts in proper ready position.
- **Catching the Ball** (4min) – One partner throws the ball underhand high in the air, the keeper moves forward, extends hands overhead to meet the ball, and pulls ball into body to protect it once it is caught. Keeper always starts in proper ready position.
- **Punt & Catch** (4min) – Get players in pairs, one ball per pair, one player punts the ball up in the air and the other tries to catch it after it bounces once. They then trade off. Add restrictions such as the catcher must sit down and get back up before catching the ball.
- **Change out** (8min) - set up a row of 3 or 4 cones, each spaced 5m apart, last cone is 10m from net. Players go one at a time, dribble in a weaving pattern around the cones, and shoot after they pass the final cone. If shooter scores a goal then they become the goalie. Encourage goalkeepers to return to proper ready position after every shot.

Games Appendix

LINE SOCCER

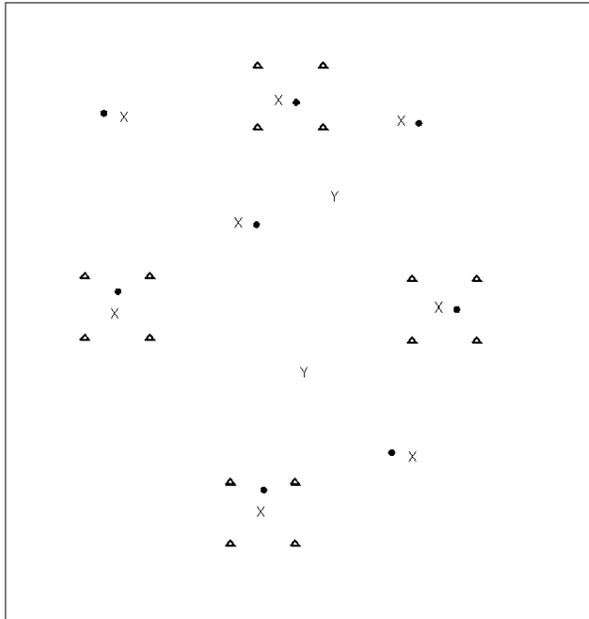


SET UP:
 - FIELD WIDER THAN LONG
 - NO GOALS
 - 4 V 4

RULES:
 - EACH TEAM ATTACKS ONE OF THE WIDE SIDES OF FIELD
 - POINT IS AWARDED FOR DRIBBLING BALL ACROSS THE END LINE OF THE SIDE THE TEAM IS ATTACKING
 - BALL IS DRIBBLED BACK INTO PLAY BY OTHER TEAM

KEY COACHING POINTS:
 - ENCOURAGE PLAYERS TO STRETCH THE LENGTH OF THE FIELD BUT KEEP THE FUNDAMENTAL SHAPES OF TRIANGLES AND DIAMONDS
 - HEADS UP PASSING AND RUNS TO OPEN SPACE
 - SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION
 - CLOSE DOWN DEFENDERS QUICKLY
 - THE WIDE FIELD LENDS ITSELF TO LOTS OF 1V1 SITUATIONS

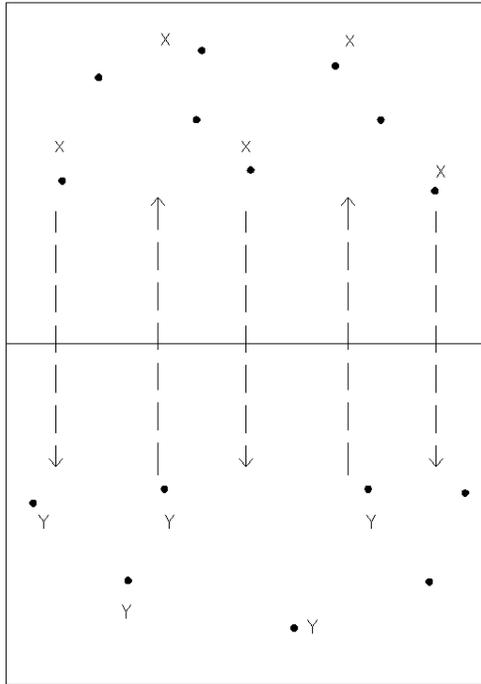
RUNNING BASES



SET UP:
 FOUR OR MORE BASES
 NEED TWO CHASERS WITHOUT BALLS, EVERYONE ELSE HAS ONE BALL

RULES
 1. PLAYERS DRIBBLE AROUND THE FIELD AND ARE ONLY SAFE WHILE THEY ARE IN A BASE
 2. IF A NEW PLAYER ENTERS THE BASE THE OLD PLAYER MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY
 3. IF A CHASER TAGS A DRIBBLER THEN THEY CHANGE ROLES

VARIATION
 1. CHASER MUST STEAL THE BALL FROM THE DRIBBLER
 2. RATHER THAN CHANGING ROLES, ANY DRIBBLER THAT IS CAUGHT JOINS THE CHASERS
 3. MAKE BASES FURTHER APART OR CLOSER DEPENDING ON WHETHER YOU WANT TO EMPHASIZE ACCELERATION OR BALL CONTROL



CLEAN YOUR YARD

SET UP:

- TWO END ZONES SEPARATED BY A MIDDLE LINE
- ONE TEAM ON EACH SIDE OF THE LINE
- BALLS DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN EACH TEAM

RULES:

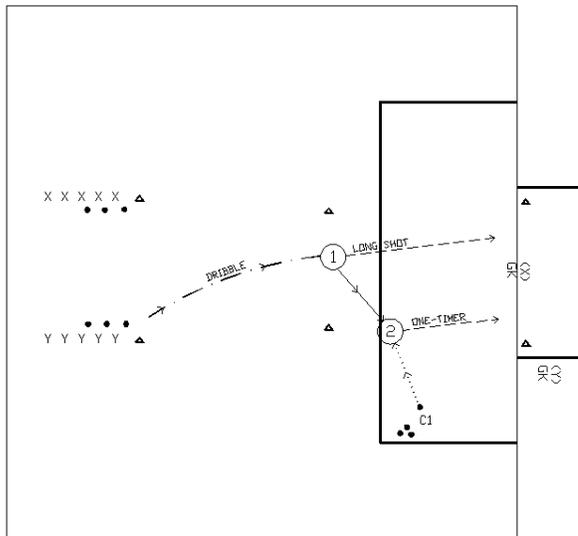
- EACH TEAM TRIES TO KICK ALL OF THE BALLS ONTO THE OTHER TEAMS SIDE OF THE FIELD
- GAME IS WON BY KICKING ALL OF THE BALLS ONTO THE OTHER TEAMS SIDE OF THE FIELD

KEY COACHING POINTS:

- ENCOURAGE PROPER KICKING TECHNIQUE
- DISCOURAGE PLAYERS FROM BACKING UP BEFORE KICKING, RATHER ENCOURAGE THEM TO TOUCH THE BALL FORWARD AND MOVE FORWARD TO STRIKE IT
- COMMUNICATION AMONGST TEAMMATES TO CALL FOR AN INCOMING BALL OR TO RETRIEVE BALLS FROM DEEP IN THE ZONE

VARIATION

- USE OF LEFT FOOT ONLY
- ASSIGN ONE PLAYER FROM EACH TEAM TO BE THE ROVER WHOSE JOB IT IS TO PASS BALLS FORWARD TO TEAMMATES



LONG SHOT, ONE-TIMER

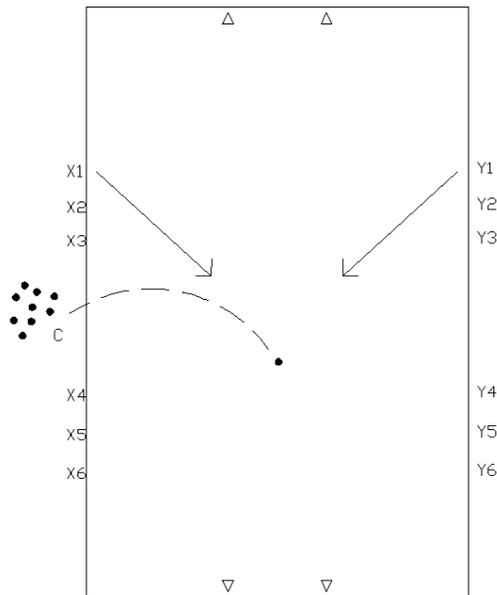
SET UP:

- TWO TEAMS LINE UP BY CONES AS SHOWN
- TWO GOALKEEPERS SELECTED, ONE FROM EACH TEAM

1. PLAYER FROM TEAM Y DRIBBLES AND HAS A SHOT ON GOAL FROM BEYOND THE PENALTY AREA (MARKED BY CONES)
2. PLAYER THEN MOVES TOWARDS GOAL C1 WHO PASSES A BALL FOR A ONE-TIMER
3. PLAYER EARNS 1PT FOR THEIR TEAM FOR EACH GOAL
4. ROTATE GK AND PLAYER FROM OTHER TEAM TAKES A TURN

VARIATIONS

1. ALLOW TWO TOUCH RECEIVE/SHOOT FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN
2. BOUNCE BALLS RATHER THAN ROLL THEM
3. LONG SHOT MUST BE LEFT FOOTED KICK
4. HITTING CONES IN CORNER OF NET EQUALS DOUBLE POINTS



WAR

PURPOSE:

- VISION, ATTACKING MULTIPLE TARGETS
- DRIBBLING AND BALL CONTROL UNDER PRESSURE
- INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP ATTACK AND DEFEND

SET UP:

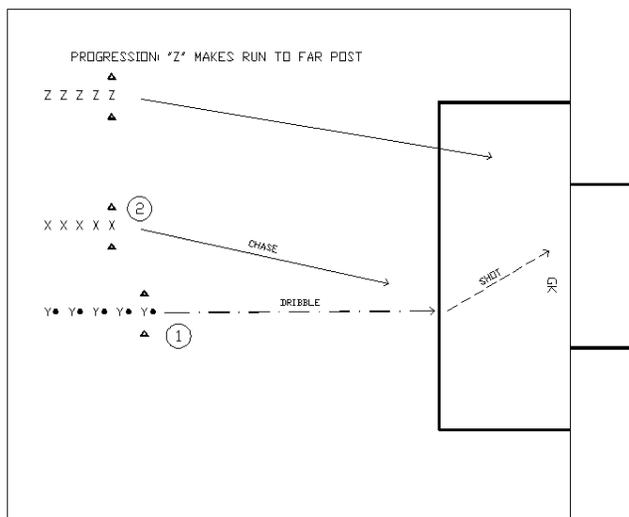
- FIELD WIDER THAN LONG, APPROX 10x15M
- SMALL GOAL ON EACH OF THE ENDS
- NO GOALKEEPERS
- TWO TEAMS WITH EVEN NUMBER OF PLAYERS

RULES:

- TEAMS LINE UP ON OPPOSITE SIDERS FROM EACH OTHER
- EACH PLAYER IS ASSIGNED A NUMBER (THERE IS A PLAYER ON THE OTHER TEAM WITH THE SAME NUMBER)
- COACH TOSSES OUT A BALL, CALLS OUT A NUMBER (OR NUMBERS) AND THOSE PLAYERS BATTLE TO SCORE A GOAL BY DRIBBLING THROUGH EITHER GOAL
- SCORE A GOAL TO EARN A POINT FOR YOUR TEAM

KEY COACHING POINTS:

- ENCOURAGE PLAYERS TO REACT QUICKLY TO BE FIRST TO THE BALL
- HEADS UP DRIBBLING AND PASSING AND RUNS TO OPEN SPACE
- SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION
- TIGHT AGGRESSIVE DEFENDING
- ENCOURAGE ATTACKERS TO USE 1V1 MOVES TO CHALLENGE DEFENDERS



SHOOTING UNDER PRESSURE

SET UP:

- TWO LINES NEAR MID FIELD FACING GOAL, ONE LINE (Y) WITH BALL IS APPROX 5-10YDS CLOSER TO GOAL

RULES:

1. PLAYER FROM Y DRIBBLES FORWARD AND CAN SHOOT AT EDGE OF PENALTY AREA
2. PLAYER FROM X CHASES Y AND ATTEMPTS TO GET IN A POSITION TO WIN THE BALL
3. X CANNOT START CHASING UNTIL Y TOUCHES BALL
4. PLAY CONTINUES UNTIL Y GETS A SHOT ON GOAL OR X WINS THE BALL

COACHING POINTS:

1. ENCOURAGE Y TO USE FEINTS OR FAKES TO THROW OFF TIMING OF Y
2. ENCOURAGE HARD RUNS TO GOAL AND EYE ON BALL WHEN SHOOTING
3. ENCOURAGE SHOOTING TO FAR POST

PROGRESSION:

1. ADD A SECOND ATTACKING LINE (Z) THAT MAKES A RUN FOR FAR POST

As a coach it is important to reflect on the season and to think back on what went well and what you would like to improve for next season.

End of season skills checklist

Dribbling with left and right foot

Stops and starts with the ball

Changes of direction with the ball

Shooting with dominant foot

Improvement in balance and coordination

Goalkeeper Basics: using hands to pick up ball, rolling the ball, throwing the ball, punting

Ask yourself (if the answers are YES then the season was a success)

Did the kids have fun during practice and games?

Did the kids learn the basic skills?

Was it enjoyable helping the kids learn some new skills and get some exercise?

Was the experience positive for everyone involved?

A few extra things to consider

Were there any safety issues that occurred during the season?

What will I change for next season?

Would I benefit from additional training?

Thank you for volunteering your time and for being a positive influence in the lives of some young children.