



**AYSO RETURN TO PLAY
COACHING ACTIVITIES**

AGES 5-8

Ready! Set!



PLAYSOCCER®



AYSO National Office
19750 S. Vermont Ave., Suite #200
Torrance, CA 9050

Ready! Set! PLAYSOCCKER!

Please find enclosed a collection of age-appropriate activities that we have specifically selected in conjunction with The Coaching Manual to support your coaching in what is likely a modified environment.

Not every topic is covered since we prioritized increasing distance while reducing contact. Generally speaking, passing and receiving, spatial awareness, technique in isolation are all applicable to our new reality. Other activities will also work if you modify them through this new lens.

At times of challenge, we are forced to provide creative solutions; therefore, please modify the included activities to maximize success with your players in your environment under your local guidelines. Adjusting *Speed, Space, Opposition will help with modifications but pay particular notice to Space! Reducing player numbers is also an easy solution but be careful to engage players who may not be active.

Regardless of the activity, one thing to keep in mind is to make sure every child in your session is comfortable and willing to participate (depending on personal circumstances, there is likely a spectrum). Remember, for many this has been a very scary time.

On behalf of everyone at AYSO, thank you for hanging in there and helping us get kicking again.

Sincerely,

Scott Snyder
Director of Sport and Development

Paul Bright
AYSO Technical Director

AYSO Coach Council

* 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.).

NOTE: As stay-at-home orders and business restrictions are loosened, we know that there is a desire to return to play as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. **To be clear, this document does not constitute permission to return to the fields.**

Please follow specific rules and regulations set forth by your local public health authorities. Also, check the AYSO Return to Play microsite for updates to this document and other timely information to keep everyone as safe as possible in your Region.



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A Graduated Approach Based on Federal, State and Local Guidelines

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released guidelines for returning to youth sports.](#)

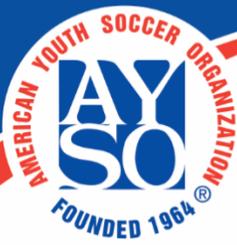
General Guidance

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) offers recommendations on how members of the public can limit the spread of the coronavirus. They currently include:

- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment (including balls).
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from non-household members. *Note: research is ongoing on appropriate physical distance for bodies in motion.*
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay at home if you are sick.

Overall – Standard Practice

- **Healthy Participants Only:** Any players, coaches, spectators who are sick will not be allowed at practices or games.
- Parents, and family members will abide by social distancing regulations and are strongly encouraged to remain inside their vehicles during practice.

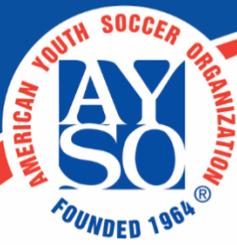


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Immediate recommendations upon return to practice/play

Region/Club:

- Identify strategies for working with public health officials to notify adult leaders, youth and their families if the organization becomes aware of a participant developing COVID-19 who came in contact with others during your activities. [Please click here for recommended reporting protocol.](#)
- Maintain participant confidentiality regarding health status.
- Sanction practices only when official parks and fields become available by local authority.
- Have an action plan in place, in case of notification of a positive test result.
- Provide coaches with a detailed explanation and training on these recommendations.
- Face masks recommended for coaches and volunteers.
- Schedule practices with ample space for physical distancing.
- Adhere to AYSO Safe Haven guidelines, i.e., 1:8 adult to child ratio; minimum of 2 adults present; no adult alone with children other than their own. Whenever possible, adult of same gender as players should be present.
- Support coaches with fitness and technique in isolation exercises, grid work and spatial awareness ([appropriate content can be found here](#)).
- Provide physical guides, such as signs and tape on playing fields, to help coaches and players remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Keep the same groups. Organize and schedule groups of players, i.e., by age or teams, and keep them consistent to avoid transmission.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents who may be uncomfortable with returning to play at this time.
- Avoid group events, such as games, competitions, or social gatherings, where spacing of at least 6 feet between people cannot be maintained.
- Limit nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible – especially with individuals not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
- Avoid activities and events such as off-site competitions or excursions.
- Communicate drop off, waiting and pick up protocols for parents to facilitate appropriate social distancing while providing for the safety of all participants.
- Create a communication plan for Region/Club to members and a communication pathway for parents to communicate their concerns or questions with Region/Club leadership (i.e.: BAND app).



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Coach*:

- Coaches will send pre-training communication to families ensuring that only healthy participants attend and reiterate expectations and guidelines.
- Coaches should maintain physical distancing requirements from players and family members.
- Wearing a face mask is recommended for the duration of the practice.
- Utilize technique in isolation exercises, grid work, fitness and spatial awareness to limit physical contact between players ([appropriate content can be found here](#)).
- Keep players together in small groups/cohorts with one coach and make sure that each group of players and coach avoid mixing with other groups as much as possible. Teams might consider having the same group of players stay with the same coach or having the same group of players rotate among coaches.
- Adhere to AYSO Safe Haven guidelines, i.e., 1:8 adult to child ratio; minimum of 2 adults present; no adult alone with children other than their own. Whenever possible, adult of same gender as players should be present.
- *Once regulations permit expanded numbers*, consider staging inner-squad scrimmages instead of games with other teams to minimize exposure among players and teams.
- Ensure all players have and handle their own labeled equipment (ball, water bottle, training disks, etc.).
- Coach should be the only person to handle coaching equipment (e.g.: cones, disks, etc.); do not let parents or attendees assist.
- Hand sanitizer or handwashing on arrival / mid-way and end of training session.
- No shared equipment in use (players will be provided with individual bibs/pinnies or can bring game jerseys as requested).
- No physical greeting of players (verbal acknowledgement is expected).
- Stay positive and create a fun environment in this new normal.
- Serve as focal point, or designate the Team Parent/Manager/Safety Director/CVPA, for notification from team families if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Complete and submit [AYSO's Incident Report](#) Form to the Region Safety Director immediately, including team roster.

**A designated volunteer or team parent can be added to help assist coach in accordance with the same health and safety guidance designated for the coach.*



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Team Parent:

- Assist Coach, as requested, with communications to families (including safeguard reminders, i.e., only healthy participants attend activities).
- As needed, serve as focal point for notification from team families if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Notify the Coach immediately.
- Maintain physical distancing requirements from coach, players and family members.
- Wearing a face mask is recommended for the duration of the practice/games.
- Support identified guidelines for coaches.
- Assist with hand sanitizer or other safety precautions like handwashing on arrival / mid-way and end of training session in support of the coach.
- Help team/teams adhere to AYSO Safe Haven supervision guidelines.



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Officials:

At all times:

- Stay at least 6 feet from anyone as much as possible.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Spitting or rinsing the mouth with water is to be avoided.
- Cough into elbow.
- Stay home if not feeling well and communicate to the Referee Administrator.

Pre-game:

- Prior to arrival, wash hands with soap or alcohol-based solution for at least 20 seconds.
- Arrival in full uniform is recommended.
- Maintain 6 feet distance from players, coaches, spectators and referee team for all administrative procedures.
- Mask is recommended for pre-game duties.
- No handshakes with coaches, players, or spectators.
- Coin toss options:
 - a. Modified. One player from each team; center official; no handshakes; physical distancing.
 - b. No coin toss. Home team selects the half of the field. Away team will take kick-off.

During play:

- Masks **are not** required for referees during active play.
- Assistant referees are *recommended* to wear breathable face coverings unless wearing a mask causes breathing problems.
- Referees are recommended to stay a minimum of 6 feet away from players, coaches, spectators, and the referee team during dynamic play and stationary play at all times.
- Avoid spitting.
- Cough into your elbow.
- Do not share whistles or, if possible, any other referee equipment.
- If not feeling well during the game at any time, go home immediately.

Post-game:

- After the game, applaud the players and coaches, but handshakes are not permitted; fist bumps/elbow bumps are not recommended.
- If shared, wipe down the handles of flags with an alcohol-based rub or wash with soap and water.
- Upon completion of the match, wash hands with soap or alcohol-based solution for at least 20 seconds.



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Parents

- Ensure your child is healthy. Test child's temperature before departing for soccer practice (if above 100.4, do not attend).
- Drop off and pick up players with special care given to the presence of children coming to and from the activity and receive verbal acknowledgement from the coach each time.
- Please wait in your car and/or adhere to social distance requirements, based on state and local health requirements and as requested by your coach or AYSO officials.
- Limit the use of carpools or van pools, and limit passengers to household members.
- Face masks are recommended.
- Wash your child's clothing after every training/activity (recommendation).
- Sanitize all equipment (ball, cleats, shin guards, etc.) before and after every practice.
- Clearly label your child's water bottle and personal items.
- Ensure your child has hand sanitizing products with them at every session.
- Notify your team/club immediately if your child or family member becomes ill for any reason.
- Do not assist coach with equipment before or after training.
- Check Region and Coach communication regularly.

Players

- Inform parent if feeling unwell.
- Wash hands before and after training.
- Responsible for cleaning all required equipment after each training sessions (ball, cleats, shin guards, etc.).
- Bring and use your own labeled hand sanitizer at every session.
- Do not touch or share anyone else's equipment.
- Practice physical distancing, place bags and equipment at least 6 feet apart.
- No sharing drinks or use of water fountains at facility (players should mark their own water bottles).
- No physical greetings with their teammates (verbal acknowledgement is expected, we are physical distancing not social.).

PLEASE NOTE: This is a live document and is subject to change. As state and local restrictions and guidelines are adjusted in your area with regards to youth sports, AYSO will communicate how to progress. PLEASE continue to check our [microsite](#) for updates.

5 Tips for Modifying Activities to Suit Your Environment and Stage of Reopening

1. Technique in Isolation

If you can only work with a small group, consider the Team-Teaching Grid as shown. Each colored grid can have one (or more) players and provide space and central positioning for you to coach. Remember with technique to try and add an applied outcome resembling the game.



2. Can you stagger your team into two groups at different times, i.e., 12 roster of 12: 2 x 6.
3. Restrict the participating numbers in the activity. Just make sure to keep the resting players active or engaged. Also, keep an eye on the time the working players play (fewer players require more rest).
4. Pending space, can you increase your coaching area/playing environment? Thus, providing more distance between players.
5. While it is not easy to replicate *game intensity* when there is no opposition, coaches may challenge their players to increase the competition and intensity of practice. Examples may include “how many can you perform in 60 seconds?” or first player/group/team to perform X.” Or, can you use equipment, i.e., mannequins, poles or tall cones to replace opposition?

Stuck with an activity you want to use but having trouble modifying? Drop us an email to programs@ayso.org and we will have our technical team take a look.

PASSING/RECEIVING

9-12 Fundamental Movement and Communication Warm Up



Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

 10 mins  10 players  10 balls  10 bibs  10 cones  30x25 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Stay Alert**
Be aware of surroundings
- **Concentrate**
Concentrate on the movements
- **Have Fun**
Have fun with the movement

Set Up

Working in pairs players take it in turns to count from 1 to 3 and back to 1. Eventually replace all 3 numbers with football specific movements. For example 1 could be a side step, 2 could be a jump and head, 3 could be forward sprint/backwards jog.

Make it more challenging:

1. Introduce more numbers/actions.

AYSO 6U - Magic Marble

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization



Set Up

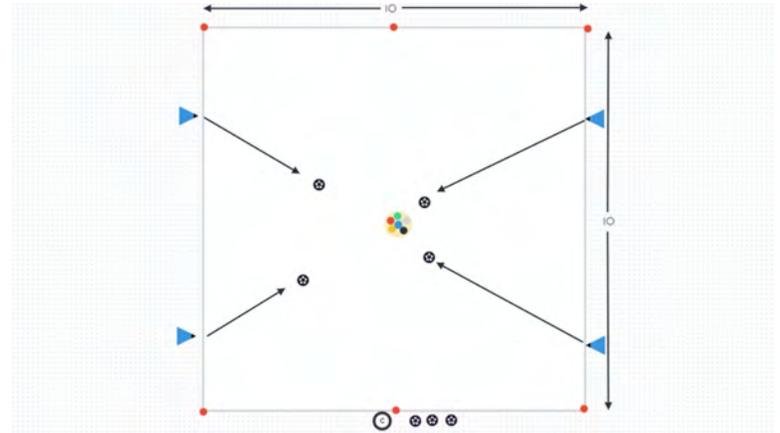
🕒 10 mins 👤 4 players ⚽ 4 balls 🚧 6 cones 📏 10 x 10 area

Key Coaching Points

- The body should be over the ball (forward).
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of the target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down striking the center of the ball and following through.

Set Up

Mark a 10 x 10 grid, one ball per player, one colored ball or beach ball (marble).



How the game is played

Two teams line up opposite each other (pending numbers have 2 players pair up). Each player has a ball. Players pass their ball to strike a central “Magic Marble” which only the coach may touch. After passing, players may retrieve any ball, except the “Magic Marble” and continue passing. Each team tries to knock the Magic Marble over their opponent’s line.

Make it more challenging:

1. Left foot, right foot kicks.
2. Vary distance pending success.
3. Chance of Glory: select a player to get a free shot. Move on quickly, rotate player.

AYSO 6U - Meteor Storm

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization



Set Up



10 mins



5 players



9 balls



8 cones



20 yard diameter circle area

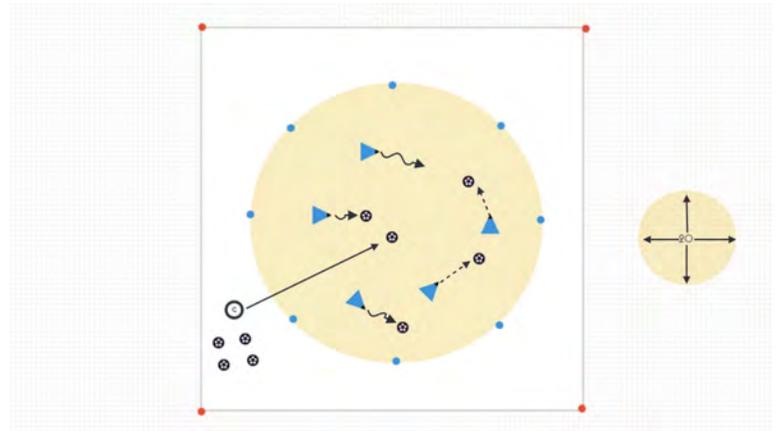
Key Coaching Points

- Scan to recognize if a 'meteor' (ball) is heading the players way
- Turn away from the meteor (ball) direction
- Keep head and body over the ball when trying to hit other players, keeping the ball low

Practice Animation

Set Up

Set out circle 20 yards in diameter, one ball per player, coach on the outside with spare balls.



How the game is played

Players are flying (dribbling) in their spaceships through a meteor field. Coach, using instep kick, “carefully” passes the ball (meteor) into the circle and attempts to hit the player’s ball or legs (below the knee). If a player is hit, they join the coach on the outside of the circle and use their ball to hit the remaining players using an instep kick. The last player to be hit by a meteor starts the next round.

Make it more challenging:

1. Left foot, right foot kicks
2. Vary distance of the meteor shooters

AYSO 8U - Pin Ball Wizards

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

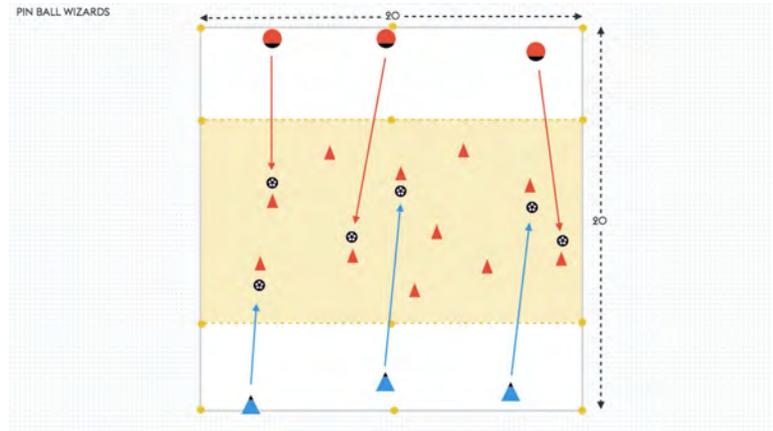
Set Up

🕒 20 mins 👤 6 players ⚽ 6 balls 🚧 11 cones 📏 20x20 area



Coaching Points

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



Practice Animation

Set Up

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).

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.

Make it more challenging:

1. Left foot, right foot passes.
2. Vary distance.
3. Add time challenge.

AYSO 8U - Clean Your Yard

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

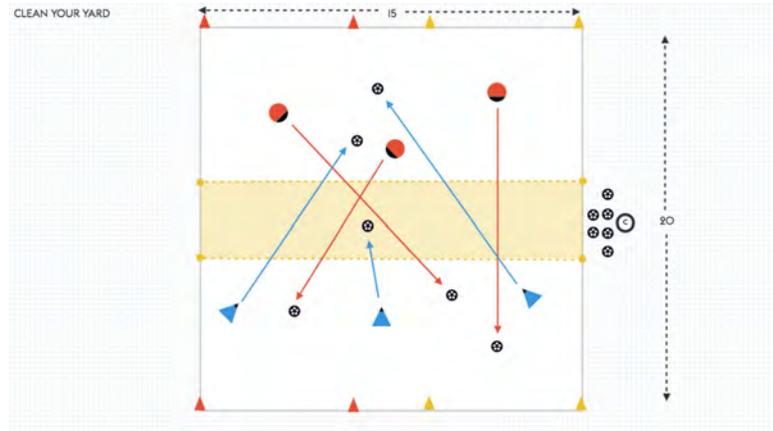
Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 6 players ⚽ 6 balls 🦸 6 bibs 🚧 16 cones 🏟️ 20x15 area



Coaching Points

- The body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on the ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of the target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the centre 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. Shoot every time they find a ball!



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mark a 20x15 yard playing area with two big goals on each end line and a 4-yard neutral zone in the centre. 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.

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).

Make it more challenging:

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

Passing Combination Play Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual



Set Up



20 mins



12 players



6 balls



12 bibs



18 cones



30 x 30 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Awareness**

Players should be aware of the space, ball, teammates and other players by checking their shoulder and playing with their head up to move the ball quickly.

- **Quality of the pass**

Players are encouraged to pass the ball firmly (punch pass) to each other to move the ball quickly with good accuracy.

- **First touch**

Playing on different angles, players should control the ball close to their body receiving on the back foot to move the ball quickly with two touches.



Practice Animation

Setup

Players divided into 2 x teams, with one team passing clockwise around the area to team mates in the square, and one team passing anti-clockwise. Players follow their pass to next receiving square.

Make it easier:

1. Make the passing distance smaller and the receiving areas bigger.

Make it challenging:

1. Players can come out of the square to receive and can either take ball back into square to pass or set back to the player who passed them to combine.
2. Make the receiving areas smaller
3. Limit touches

AYSO 8U - Gate Balls

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up



15 mins



8 players



4 balls



22 cones

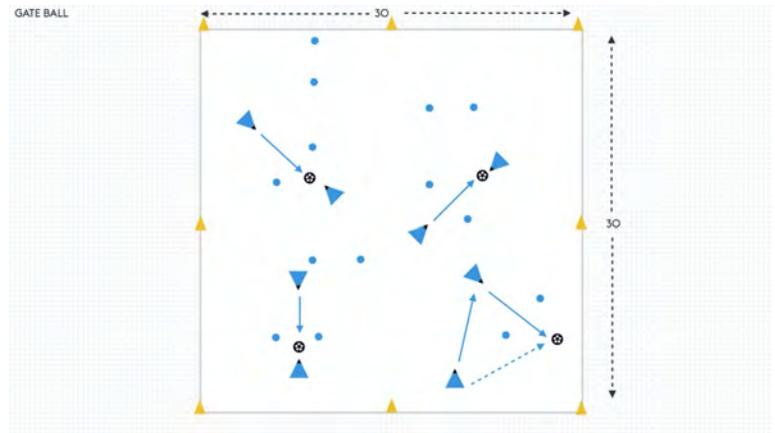


30x30 area



Coaching Points

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



Practice Animation

Set Up

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 the grid.

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 the foot. After each goal, the pair moves onto another set of empty gates to score. Each pair counts how many goals they score in a set period of me.

Make it more challenging:

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

Finishing: From Wide and Central Areas Technical

Practice (5-8)

Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up



15 mins



12 players



10 balls



12 bibs



28 cones

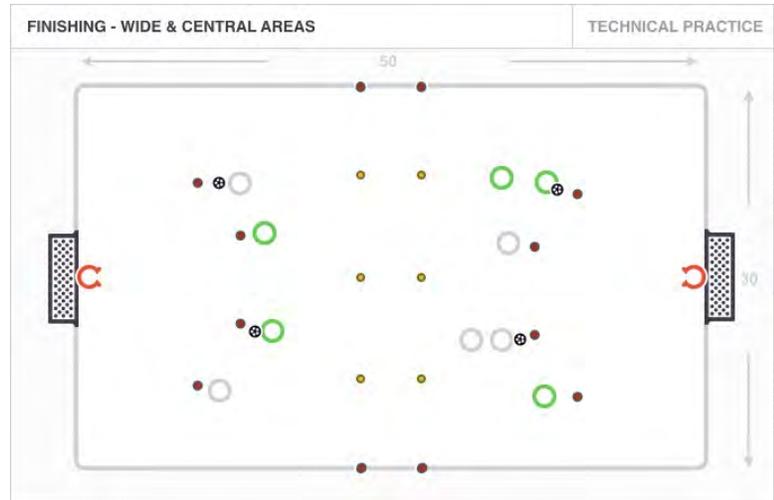


50x30 area



Key Coaching Points

- Technique to finish**
 Players should focus on their technique to finish on goal. This may be with laces, inside of foot, outside of foot, header or by being creative in front of goal.
- Movement to combine and finish**
 Players should work together and develop verbal and non-verbal communication to move in relation with each other and combine to finish on goal.
- Anticipation to finish rebounds**
 Both players should be in a position to react to any rebounds or spills by the goalkeeper and finish on goal. The player who does not take the shot should read the cue from their team mate and begin to move towards goal as the ball is struck.



Practice Animation

Setup

Groups working in each half with 2 x players positioned on cones centrally who look to combine and finish with the team mate following up for rebounds. 2 x players positioned on wide cones as player with the ball either attacks wide and crosses for team mate or drives inside to shoot as team mate follows in for rebounds. Rotate starting point of players (centrally and wide).

Make it more challenging:

1. Introduce 1 x defender who can win the ball and dribble to middle zone for 1 point.

DRIBBLING/RUNNING WITH THE BALL

AYSO 6U - Fetch Fido

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up

🕒 10 mins 👤 5 players ⚽ 5 balls 🚧 4 cones 📏 15 x 20 area

Key Coaching Points

- Physical coordination
- Simple decision making
- Follow directions and movement education

Practice Animation

Set Up

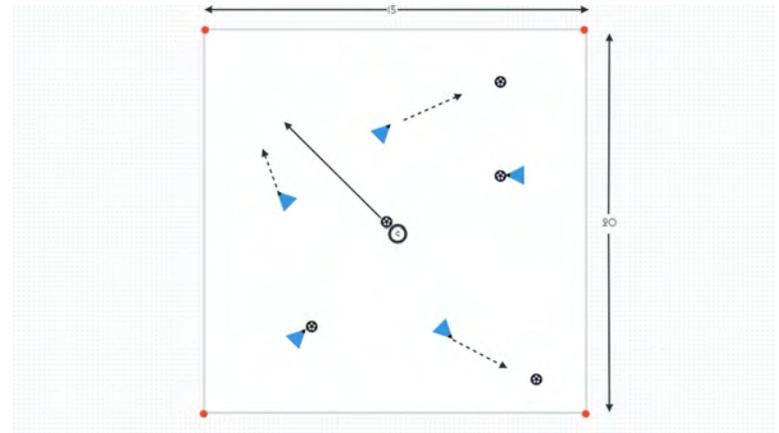
Mark a 15 x 20 grid, one ball per player.

How the game is played

Each player takes the name of their favorite dog, i.e., Fido (pet or favorite animal). Players hold their ball in hands and one at a time hand their ball to the coach. The coach then tosses the ball away from the group in any direction within grid (dog park). The coach then instructs the players to bring the ball back in a variety of ways, being sure to incorporate numerous body movements. (Instruction to the players should not be too specific to encourage problem solving and creativity in the way they accomplish the task.) Players bring their ball back to the coach as instructed as quickly as possible.

Make it more challenging:

1. Bring it back as fast as you can (do not specify how).
2. Dribble the ball back.
3. Bring it back using elbows only
4. Bring it back using head and right hand only.
5. Bring it back using knees only.
6. Bring it back using hand + elbow + knee.
7. Bring it back hopping.
8. Same challenges but performed in pairs.
9. As the players are retrieving the ball, the coach changes location so they must look up to find the coach as they work with the ball.



6 AYSO 6U - Welcome To Soccer City

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

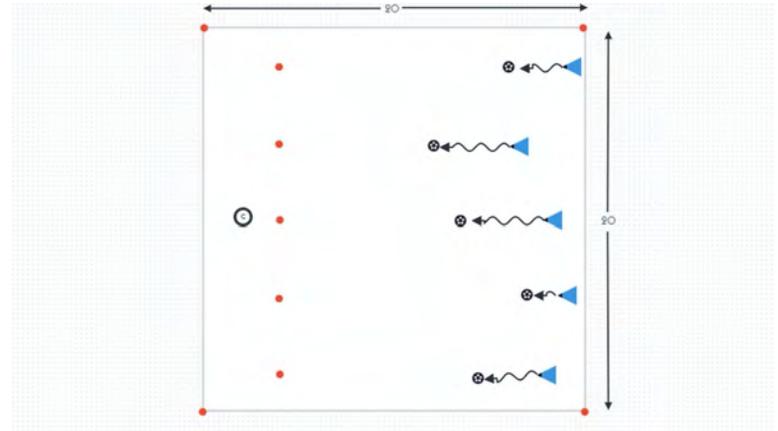


Set Up

10 mins 5 players 5 balls 9 cones 20 x 20 area

Key Coaching Points

- Knees should be 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
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so) with small touches. Players should attempt to use both feet.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mark a 20 x 20 grid, one cone per player approx. 15 yards away and one ball per player.

How the game is played

Invite the players into a magical Soccer City, where the ball provides power. Before gaining entry, players must first get to the gates. Coach stands on one end line with back to the players who are spread along the opposite end line. A cone per player is placed behind you. Start players in straight line dribbling end line to end line. Start with two instructions: Green light=Go! Red light=Stop! (by placing foot on top of ball). Upon shout of "Green light" the players must dribble toward the opposite end line. Before the coach turns around he yells "One, Two, Three, Red Light" and then turns around. At that point each player must have stopped the ball with the sole of their foot. Any player seen moving is sent back to the end line to start again. The coach turns his back again. Repeat. The first player to pick up a cone (key to the city) wins.

Make it more challenging:

1. Left foot, right foot; outside of the foot, inside of foot dribbling.

AYSO 6U - Soccer City

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

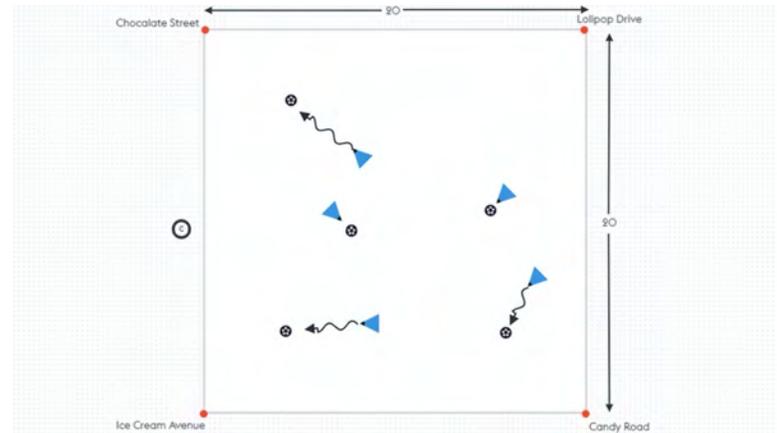


Set Up

🕒 10 mins 👤 5 players ⚽ 5 balls 🚧 4 cones 📏 20 x 20 area

Key Coaching Points

- Knees should be 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
- Change direction and move into space. Use the 'laces' to give you more power and pace when changed direction.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mark a 20 x 20 grid, one ball per player.

How the game is played

Now the players are through the gates and inside Soccer City, players must abide by the city rules. Players explore Soccer City by driving in various directions throughout the city limits. Introduce three speeds (and sounds) to drive at: bike speed=slow; truck speed=medium; sports car=fast. Players should react to these speeds upon specific command.

Make it more challenging:

1. Left foot, right foot; outside of foot, inside of foot dribbling.
2. Introduce engine revving: tap the ball back and forth with inside of feet (tick-tock).
3. Introduce Bye-Bye (drag back turn): Player stops ball by planting standing foot next to the ball, placing kicking foot on top of the ball, dragging the ball back across the body and changing direction. Encourage use of drag back turn, i.e., stopping the ball from going out of Soccer City.
4. Introduce special destinations (one per corner): ice cream avenue, candy road, chocolate street, lollipop drive. Upon your command, players must change their direction and drive to that location (at different speeds)

Running With the Ball Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual

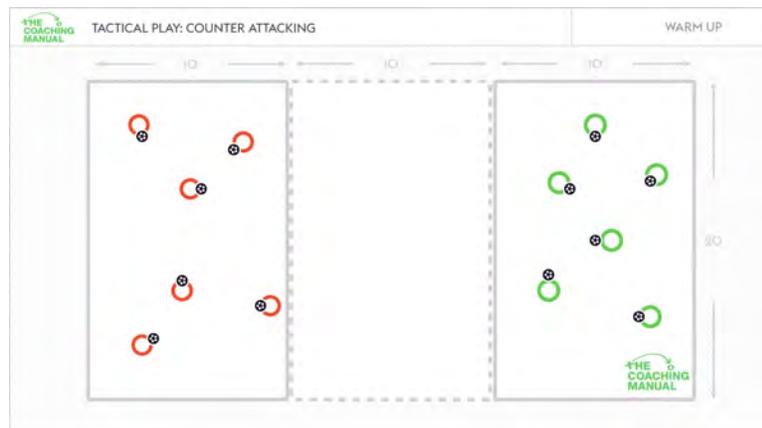
Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 12 players ⚽ 4 balls 👕 12 bibs 🚧 16 cones 📏 40x20 area



Key Coaching Points

- **Awareness of space, teammates and opposition players**
Players should be encouraged to have their heads up when dribbling to scan and assess where the ball, space, team mates and opposition are.
- **Change of speed and direction**
On recognising the opportunity to counter attack, players should have a first touch out of feet and explode into the space
- **Ball mastery moves and turns**
As the space is constantly changing, players need to continue moving with the ball and use ball mastery skills to maintain possession and be ready to change direction and explode into the space



Practice Animation

Set Up

2 x teams of 6 in each area with a ball each and number themselves 1-6. Teams take it in turns to send 1 player at a time into the opposition area coming up with a trigger to send a player out so that the other team isn't made aware. As soon as player moves to enter the opposition area the other team have to send 1 player to their area and it is a race to get to the opposition area first. All players that are in the area have to perform a ball mastery exercise until they move to the other half.

Make it more challenging:

1. Add a player in the middle zone to combine play in order to get to the other area
2. Add a defender in the middle zone for players to beat when going to the other area
3. Add a defender in each area to put pressure on players who are performing ball mastery and 1v1 moves

Receiving And Turning Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual



Set Up



15 mins



16 players



8 balls



8 bibs



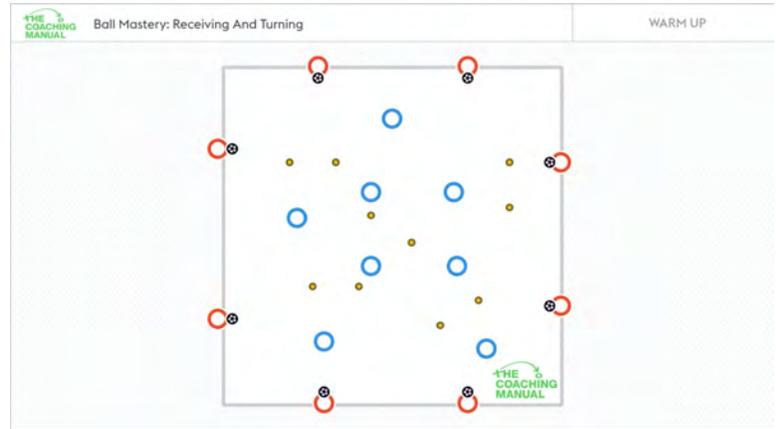
14 cones



30x30 area

Key Coaching Points

- Scanning**
 Players need to have their head up and be aware of the ball space and other players to pass and maintain possession of the ball.
- First touch**
 When receiving players should focus on their first touch, depending on the space the touch should be into space and aware from the body or close to the body to protect the ball and maintain complete control.
- Communication**
 Players must also always communicate both verbally and non verbal to work with the outside players.



Practice Animation

Setup

5/6 x gates set up with cones inside the area. 2 x groups of 8 players with a group positioned around the outside of the area and a group inside the area. Players complete the following warm up challenges and ensure rotation of players on the outside to inside. 45seconds to 1 minute each challenge;

1. Players on outside have the ball and players on the inside look to receive and play back to outside player, and then find another ball
2. Players on the inside have possession of the ball and look to combine and play a 1-2 with as many outside players as possible
3. Players on the inside receive the ball and dribble through 2 x gates before combining again with an outside player

Make it easier:

1. Start with the hands

Make it more challenging:

1. Challenge players individually
2. Adjust the area
3. Limit touches

AYSO 8U - Galaxy Battles

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

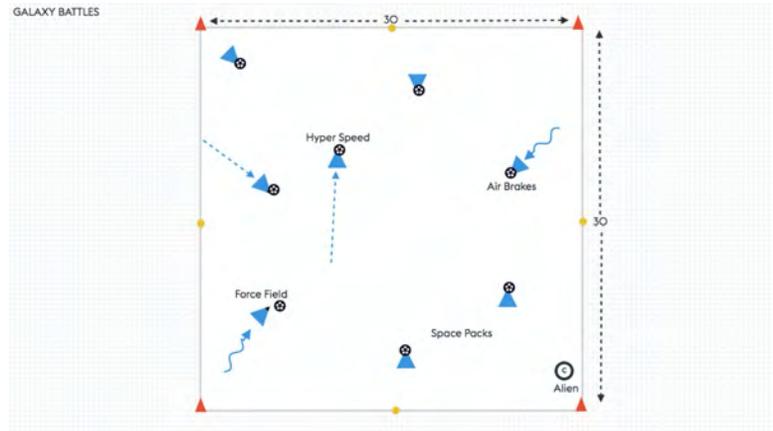
Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 7 players ⚽ 7 balls 🚧 8 cones 🏠 30x30 area



Key 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 utilising peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- The ball should be kept close using so touches (never more than a step or two away).
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- The ball should never be more than a step or two away.
- Change direction and move into space.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mark 30 x 30 grid. Ball per player.

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 out-space (or similar theme) are given to the players to dribble their ball in this galactic adventure.

Cruise: Dribble at light pace around spaceship with both feet.

Hyper Speed: Dribble ball as fast as possible.

Alien: (Coach) can enter the spaceship at any given time and knock the player's ball into space.

Air Brakes: Each player must stop and place the foot on top of the ball. (If a player does not stop the ball quickly enough, the Alien can kick the ball into space.)

Force Field: Each player must find a space away from others. (If a player doesn't find a space beyond arm's length of another player, the Alien can kick the ball into space.)

Fighter Pilots: Each player must find a partner and sit down behind each other. (If a player doesn't find another Fighter Pilot, the Alien can kick the 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 Spaceship to retrieve their ball, they must cover their ears with their hands to prevent internal body explosion.

Make it more challenging: 1. Left foot, right foot; outside foot, inside of foot dribbling.

AYSO 8U - Body Brakes

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up



15 mins



7 players



7 balls



8 cones

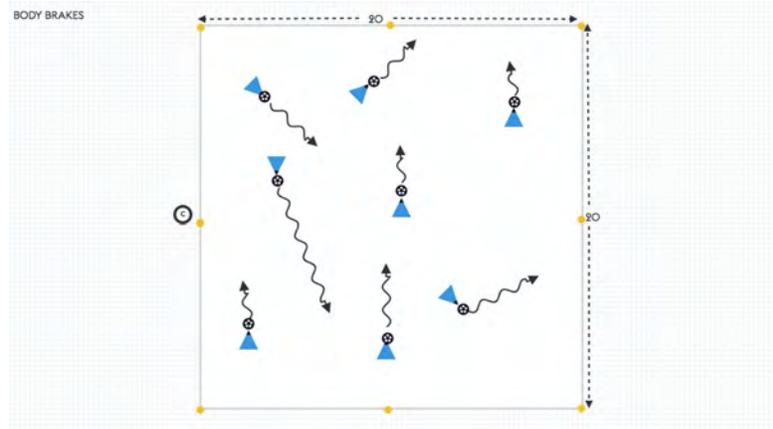


20x20 area



Key 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 utilising peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- The ball should be kept close using so touches (never more than a step or two away).
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- The ball should never be more than a step or two away.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mark 20 x 20 grid. Ball per player.

How the game is played

Players dribble the ball around and through the area, changing pace and directions. Coach calls a part of the body, i.e., right knee.

The players must first stop the ball with their foot, then place that part of the body on the ball. The first player to stop the ball gets 10 points.

Make it more challenging:

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

AYSO 8U - Steal or Shield

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

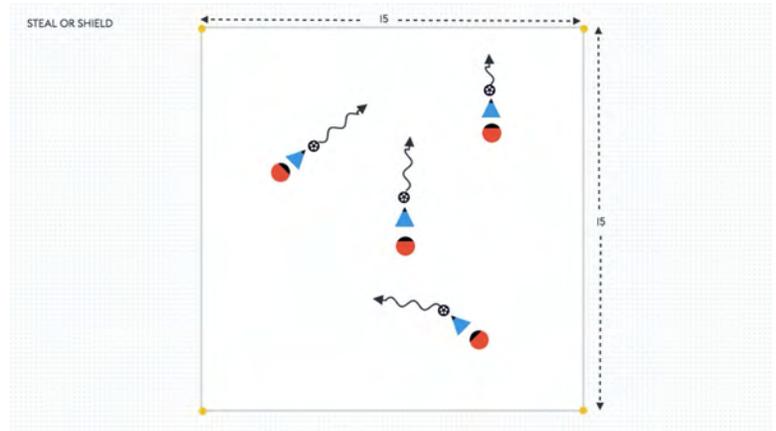
Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 8 players ⚽ 4 balls 🦸 8 bibs 🚧 4 cones 🏟️ 15x15 area



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 utilising peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- The ball should be kept close using so touches (never more than a step or two away).
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- The ball should never be more than a step or two away.



Shielding Coaching Points:

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

Practice Animation

Set Up

Mark a 15x15 grid. Players in pairs with one ball.

How the game is played

One player starts dribbling the ball and at the coach's command, their partner tries to steal the ball away.

The player that ends up with the ball gets a point.

Make it more challenging:

1. Change the size of the grid as needed.
2. Set time before a defender can challenging for the ball.

Dribbling and Running with the Ball Carousel

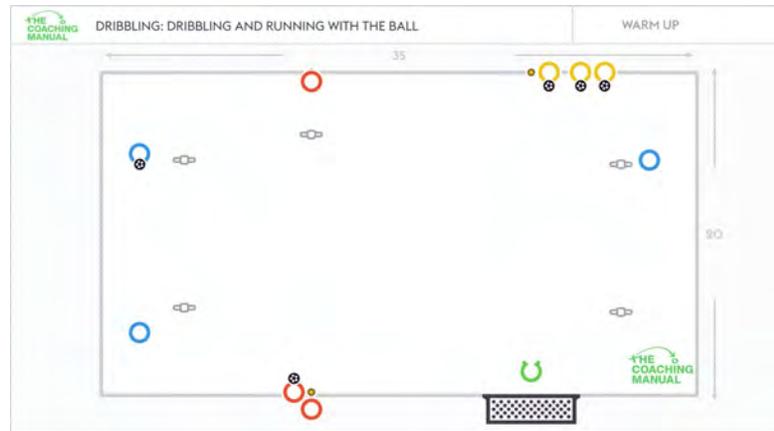
Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

🕒 15 mins ⚽ 3 balls 👤 10 bibs 🏟️ 30x20 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Head up to scan**
Players need to be aware of where the ball is at all times as well as team mates and opposition players.
- **Close control**
Players need to have the ball under control in order to retain possession and travel forwards quickly.
- **End product**
In a game a dribble or run with the ball needs an end product. This may be a combination, a cross or a shot at goal.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Team split into 3 x groups. Dribbling circuit set up with first group dribbling to goal and finishing past goalkeeper. Second group activity involves players dribbling to then combine around the mannequin. The third group dribbles across the length of the area to then play a cross/pass to a team mate. Rotate roles of players so all have a go on each circuit.

Make it easier:

1. Reduce the distance of the area
2. Remove the Goalkeeper from the goal

Make it more challenging:

1. Add defenders on all 3 circuit activities
2. Time limit or touch limit to dribble forwards before an end product

AYSO 8U - Rob The Nest

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up



15 mins



4 players



10 balls



20 cones

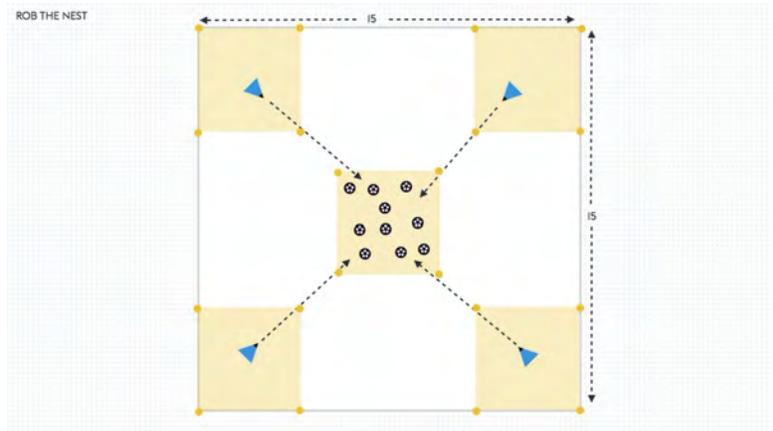


15x15 area



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 utilising peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- The ball should be kept close using so touches (never more than a step or two away).
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- The ball should never be more than a step or two away.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mark a 15x15 grid with a square in each corner and a square in each corner and a square in the centre. Divide the team into each of the four corners. Put all the balls in the middle square.

How the game is played

Players are foxes trying to steal eggs from the nest.

Players organise themselves into first, second, third, etc., or one player per square (pending numbers).

On the whistle, one player from each team runs into the 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 the sole of the foot inside their square.

The winning team/player is the one that has the most eggs in their own nest.

Make it more challenging:

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

Dribbling and Ball Mastery Moves To A Finish Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

🕒 10 mins 👤 7 players ⚽ 7 balls 👕 7 bibs 🚧 10 cones 🏟️ 24x12 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Change pace**
When performing ball mastery skills, players are encouraged to do them at a game realistic tempo to replicate real situations.
- **Ball mastery**
As an individual, players should be inventive and come up with their own skills and tricks to replicate losing a defender.
- **Ball under control**
With lots of touches, players need to have complete control of the ball by keeping it close to them using both feet.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Area 24x12 with players with a ball each and dribbling inside the area performing ball mastery skills and turns.

Make it more challenging:

1. Left Foot/Right Foot only

Dribbling Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 12 players ⚽ 10 balls 🚧 10 cones 🏟️ 20x15 area



Key Coaching Points

- Keep the ball moving**
 Encourage players to not let the ball stop and go as fast as they can whilst demonstrating the correct technique to dribble.
- Individual skills/tricks**
 Players should be confident enough to attempt different skills and tricks whilst expressing themselves.
- Ball under control & lots of touches**
 Keep the ball close to your feet in order to change speed and direction quickly and under control.



Practice Animation

Setup

Players in groups of 3 dribbling along the "corridor" and having to dribble to 2 sides of the corridor whilst keeping ball under control. Players then dribble along the outside of the corridor back to start position.

Make it easier:

1. Begin with teaching the players the techniques on the spot. When they are comfortable with these then get them to do the skills

Make it more challenging:

1. Players perform different skills along the corridor (players or coaches choice) and also perform a different skill on their way back to start point.
2. Groups of players start at opposite ends of the corridor and dribble at the same time to cause interference.

Dribbling And Running With The Ball Technical Practice

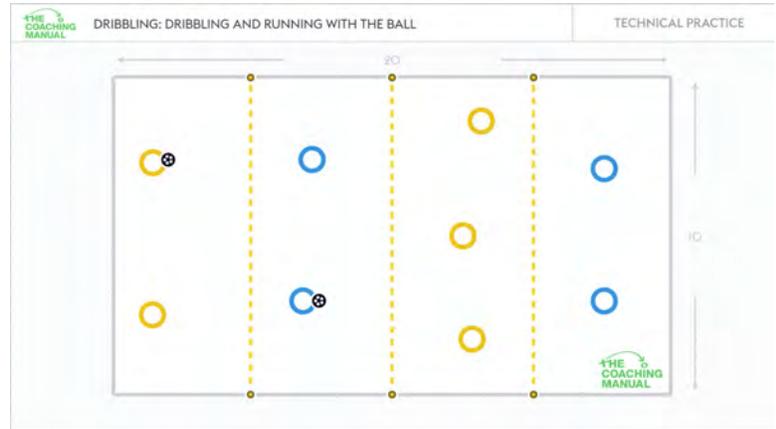
Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

🕒 20 mins 👤 10 players ⚽ 4 balls 👕 12 bibs 🚧 12 cones 🏟️ 20x10 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Awareness**
When dribbling or running with the ball, players should have their head up to be aware of the ball, the space, team mates and opposition in the area.
- **Lots of touches**
Depending on the space available, attackers need to identify when to dribble and when to run with the ball.
- **First touch**
When receiving the ball, players need to have a quality first touch out of their feet and travel into the available space.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Teams divided between channels with Blue's attempting to pass to each other (in same or different channels) or Blue's can dribble/run with the ball across to the channel and a team mate swaps place. Orange's also pass, dribble or run with the ball across their channels.

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in their hands

Make it more challenging:

1. As Blue's dribble and run with the ball across channels, Orange's can attempt to tackle and win possession. If so, Orange's play with both footballs. Blues's can also tackle Orange's.
2. Add defender who defends in 2 middle channels. If defender wins the ball then passes to other team.

Ball Mastery Warm Up 1

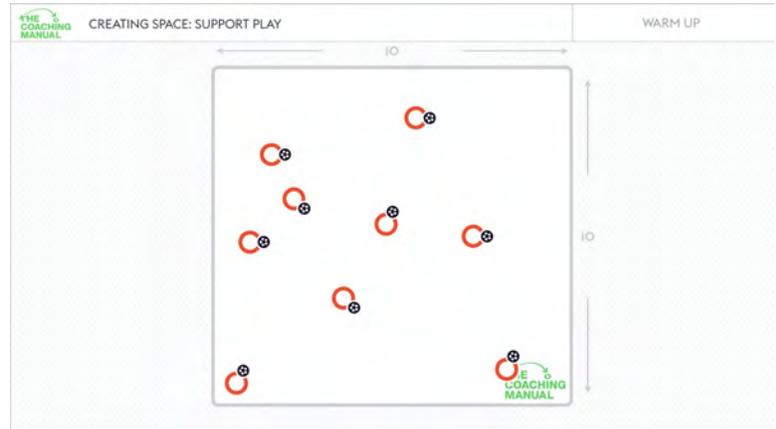
Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

 20 mins
  10 players
  10 balls
  10 bibs
  8 cones
  25 x 25 area

Key Coaching Points

- Lots of touches on the ball**
 Make sure that your players get lots of touches on the ball.
- Both Feet**
 Ask your players to use both feet and try to identify when they aren't so you can help them get better.
- Awareness**
 Players on the ball need to be aware of the ball, space, team mates and other players by keeping their head up.
- Focus on the correct technique**
 When your players are practicing specific ball mastery techniques, try to ensure that they do it correctly. They may need to slow the technique down.



Practice Animation

Setup

Each player has a ball. They dribble around the area performing ball manipulation skills, turns, feints and tricks. Pick 4-5 Ball Mastery techniques and ask the players to focus on each one for 4-5 minutes. Ask your players to learn the techniques before they come to training.

What Ball Mastery Techniques Can My Players Focus On?

There are lots of Ball Mastery techniques that your players can focus on. Make sure they watch the Ball Mastery videos and practice the techniques before they come to training. You will save yourself a big headache if your players are already familiar with the moves. In this practice we use:

- Inside Only** - Your players move around using only the insides of their feet.
- Toe Taps** (<https://ayso.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/5199291754741760>) - The players touch the top of the ball with the sole of the foot.
- Scissors** (<https://ayso.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/6428397980876800>) - The players step over the top of the ball in a circle with one foot, then take the ball in the opposite direction with the other foot.
- V Cuts/Pushes** (<https://ayso.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/6152702956404736>) - The players drag the ball towards them with the sole of the foot and push it out to the same size with the same foot.
- Rollover** (<https://ayso.thecoachingmanual.com/Content/4580971082940416>) - The players roll over the ball with the sole of the foot.
- Heel Toe** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAPVAel7y-M>) - The players fake to pass with the heel of the foot and then bring the ball back to them with their toe and a quick movement.

Make it more challenging:

- Make the area smaller
- Challenge them to get as many touches as possible in 30 seconds.

Ball Mastery Skills Corridor Warm Up 2

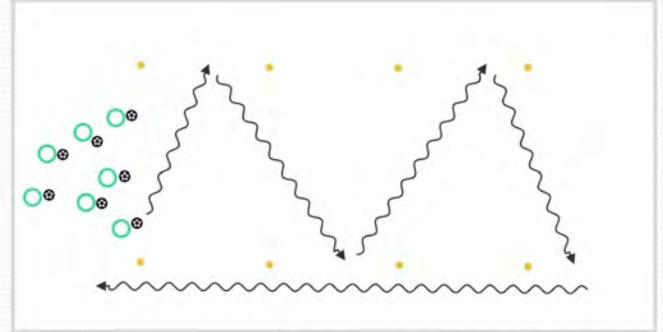
Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

🕒 20 mins 👤 10 players ⚽ 10 balls 🧥 10 bibs 🚧 8 cones 🏟️ 20x15 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Awareness of ball, space and team mates**
Dribble with head up and checking the space around you.
- **Lots of touches on the ball**
Make sure that your players get lots of touches of the ball.
- **Focus on the correct dribbling technique**
Ensure your players are always in control of the ball, if they lose control, ask them to slow down and focus on technique.



Setup

Players dribble through the corridor (marked by white cones on each side). They have to touch each side of the corridor twice.

When the players reach the end of the corridor they dribble around the outside of the corridor to return to the start. If the players are capable they can perform keepie uppies on the way back to the start.

Options for coaches to challenge players

Choose 3/4 Ball Manipulation moves to travel along the corridor. For example, using Toe-Taps, Inside Outside, Rollover Stop, Penguins, Rollover Stepmover, Heel Toe.

Make it easier:

1. Encourage players to slow down and focus on their techniques
2. Ask them to touch each side of the corridor once

Make it more challenging:

1. Ask them to touch each side of the corridor 3 times.

