

U10 How to run a practice. 1 hr. 15 minute practice plan.

WARM-UP

A brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the time ahead. Incorporate movement with stretching, utilizing a ball whenever possible.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not necessarily a real 1v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals or cooperate in small groups in a game environment. An example would be a kind of tag game, or a keep-away game. Keep players in motion at all times. Be creative. These players like "crazy" games with a lot of action. Maximize participation, no standing in lines. Avoid games of elimination, or games where a "loser" sits out.

PLAY THE GAME

Small sided games from 4v4 on up to 8v8 are a great way to heighten intensity and create some good competition. Play with multiple goals (4) or 2 balls. Play with or without boundaries. Multiple goals or more than one ball in a game is a creative way to change things up. Utilize flags or cones if regulations goals are unavailable. Maximize participation, utilizing more than one game at the same time as needed. Change the teams up often, provide more opportunities for everyone to enjoy success. Provide more opportunities for players to shoot as well. Play once again can & should be utilized to emphasize a particular skill, i.e. **complete a pass to a teammate** over an end line to score a point.

COOL DOWN

Allow the kids to finish with a stretch and possibly a neat trick with the ball. (i.e. ball balance on nose; bounce ball off knee and catch; balance ball on foot; toss, clap, catch, then go for two!) A brief review of the training session, followed by a trick with the ball to work on for the week is a great way to bring closure to the day's effort. Make sure you finish on time!

U10 REMINDERS

Use small sided games as the main teaching vehicle. Not only will they get more touches on the ball, but the full 11-a-side game is still too much..... it is important to change up the players often in training because the ability levels begin to separate more.....added significance to a good warm up and stretch before and after training.....the game is becoming faster and the shinguards become more of a safety issue.....practice more than twice a week is not necessary.....all players should come to training with a size #4 ball and be encouraged to train with it on their own.....organize activities in competitive environments as much as possible.....competition will keep them focused and keep things fun for them.....it is possible to start teaching positional play, but DO NOT specialize kids in any one position.....ask the kids to solve problems as this will aid their tactical development.

U10 UNDERSTANDING WHO YOU ARE COACHING

- Frantic, fast paced games that are unpredictable.
- These kids look like they are turning the corner, Skills emerge becoming more predictable and recognizable.
- Will begin to discover the thrill of playing with skill, but still stop to laugh at the little things.
- They will begin to understand offsides, but still forget themselves when the goal is in front of them.
- They will really beat up on each other during practice... especially boy's teams.
- Parents will scream out "HAND BALL" or "COME ON REF, CALL IT BOTH WAYS" at least ten times.
- The thought of ice cream after a loss will stop the crying.
- You might find them on their own practicing without you telling them to do so.
- Their parents are telling them to do one thing during the game, you are telling them another thing, but what they end up doing might be what their friend is telling them to do.
- You will see a pass that is deliberate. You might even see a "back pass".
- You will see your first \$100 pair of cleats during practice. They will call the other team bad names... really bad...
- Gross and small motor skills becoming more refined and reliable. " Boys and girls begin to develop separately.
- Will make decisions throughout the course of play, but not necessarily understand why it was a good choice.
- Skill development should be done with plenty of repetition, through dynamic activities.
- Respond well to positive feedback and reinforcement.
- Directions & explanations should be clear, brief, and to the point. Can stay on task for extended amount of time.
- Peer pressure starting to be a factor.
- Prefer identification with a team. Like to have good uniforms, equipment, balls.

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U10 Exercises & Activities

U10 – Intermediates

1. bumper tag

SET UP: partners stand shoulder to shoulder forming a circle. The player who is "it", holds a cone and chases the first runner. The runner is safe when he/she attaches to a set of partners. The player on the end opposite the player that joins to the partners gets bumped off and will now be chased. The "it" should drop their cone and run when they have tagged someone new. Runners may run through the middle of the circle.

note: variations can be adding 2, and then 3 people as "it"

COACHING POINTS: competitive, thinking, cooperative, fun, must be alert, anticipation, not an A to B process – but an A to C process

2. sequential passing

SET UP: organize a defined area and create small groups of 3-5 players. Each different group should wear their own color pinnies and number off accordingly. Within the defined area, each group moves throughout connecting passes in the number order of the group.

COACHING POINTS: sort out the available time and space, without hitting others, accuracy of the pass, weight of the pass, type of surface to make the pass.

3. coach toss/partners retrieve

SET UP: coach stands in the middle of the group and explains clearly that they should hand the coach their ball when asked. In a group of 12 players, organize small groups of 4 and the coach should have 3 soccer balls. The coach will then toss the balls away asking the groups to bring them back in the following numerous ways.

1. "Bring the ball back with all 4 of you touching the ball."
2. "Do that again and bring it back a different way." (Do this 2-3 more times.)
3. "See how this group brought it back? TRY this way."
4. "Bring the ball back with all in your group touching the ball higher than your shoulders."
5. "Bring the ball back where everyone has touched the ball at least once."
6. "Bring the ball back where everyone has touched the ball at least twice."
7. "Bring the ball back where everyone has touched the ball at least three times."
8. "Bring the ball back with everyone touching the ball using short, short, long passing."
9. "Bring the ball back with everyone touching the ball using short, short, long passing, with the long pass in the air."

note: There is no failure in trying. Use the word TRY.

COACHING POINTS: LET THEM PROBLEM SOLVE! Recognize creativity and let them fail and recover. Soccer is a constant cycle of failure and recovery

4. dynamic group passing

SET UP: organize two short lines of 4-5 players facing each other, one ball. Pass across to opposite line, and then player sprints to opposite line. This activity moves very quickly and allows for little standing in line. To increase level of difficulty, reduce touches down to 2 touches, and possibly one. Set a goal for the group to reach that is reasonable.

COACHING POINTS: accuracy of the pass, weight of the pass, type of surface to make the pass.

5. 8v8 team knockout

SET UP: half of the group in one color on the outside of the box, the other half in a color in the middle, each player with a ball. Set up an area that is approx. the size of the penalty box (44x18). Play! When a ball is knocked out, it is only dead when it comes to a complete stop. If it is saved, that player may bring his/her ball back to the playing area and resume the game. If it dies, that player may help out his/her team by assuming a good passing angle to help in possession. The winning team is the one who keeps a ball in the game the longest. When the last ball is knocked out, coach stops his/her watch.

COACHING POINTS: dribbling, passing, receiving, shielding, passing angles, first touch, decision making, vision, speed of play.

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6. 8v8 team knockout to end zones

SET UP: half of the group in one color on the outside of the box, the other half in a color in the middle, each player with a ball. Set up an area that is approx. the size of the penalty box (44x18), and add 7 yd. end zones on each side of the box. Play! A ball is knocked out when it comes to a complete stop in the end zone. If it is saved, that player may bring his/her ball back to the playing area and resume the game. If it dies, that player may help out his/her team by assuming a good passing angle to help in possession. The winning team is the one who keeps a ball in the game the longest. When the last ball is knocked out in an end zone, coach stops his/her watch.

COACHING POINTS: dribbling, passing, receiving, shielding, passing angles, first touch, decision making, vision, speed of play, transition.

7. 4v4

SET UP: play 4v4 in an area 44x18, coach is "boss of the balls". When the ball goes out, coach plays a new ball in.

SMALL SIDED GAMES

Among the many great reasons as to why small sided games should be used in practice, here are just a couple to name a few:

- Maximizes participation and increases opportunities to get touches on the ball (Technique).
- Increases opportunities among youth players to make decisions, problem solve, and doing so in a less complicated environment (Tactics).
- Participating in a space that is reduced in size creates more of an opportunity for the kids to be physically effective (Fitness).
- Creates more "teachable moments" for the coach, therefore increasing the opportunities for feedback. (Psychological).
- Creates more opportunities for attacking & defending (Tactics), and more opportunities to shoot/score (Technique).

The following games are terrific variations that can be used as small sided options in practice:

- **One Goal Game**
SET UP: Organize 2 teams of equal numbers, with one goal, designated by cones/flags, and one ball. Anytime a team scores between the cones, scores a point.
- **4 Goal Game**
SET UP: In a defined area, lay down four sets of cones/flags, and establish the two goals each team will attack, and the two they will defend.
- **Gate Game**
SET UP: In a defined area, lay down multiple sets of cones/flags, and create two equal teams to compete. Anytime a team can move a ball between a gate (via dribble or a pass) scores a point.
- **3v2+1**
SET UP: Coach sets up two small goals, organizing 3v3. The game – 3v2+1 – involves the team with the ball (3) attacking the team without the ball that has 2 defenders and the last player that falls back to become the GK (2+1). When the team of 2 defenders wins the ball, they may start their attack, once they have connected on a pass to their goalkeeper, forming their team of three. In the transition, the team that turned the ball over (3), must then evolve into a team of 2 defenders with one falling back to become the new GK (2+1).

Keep the game FUN !