

REACH FORTH

Sports played. Lives changed.

U11 DIVISION (Ages 9-11)

This practice manual is setup for teams to work on specific skill areas for 2-3 weeks in a row to allow coaches adequate practice time to teach the skill fundamentals. With each skill set, example drills have been suggested (full explanations of the drills can be found at the end of the manual). Many of these have been provided through the Byte Size Coaching resource and have been effective for coaches in the past. This manual is intended to provide a guideline for coaches when planning practices over the course of the summer. Teams may vary on the drills they use or the focus of their practice however we hope this resource provides some consistency within this age group and provides a starting point for coaches to work from.

Weeks 1-3

Dribbling/Ball Control and Throw In Focus

1.) Dribbling/Ball Control

A.) Rules and Technique: This is a skill that requires a significant amount of practice time dedicated to it. It is important for players to spend sufficient practice time with the ball at their feet to develop dribbling skills. Begin to have players use the inside, outside, and bottom of their feet to maintain control of the ball while moving. Also introduce and work on ball control using other parts of the body (ie knees, chest, head).

B.) Practice (Drills): Square Dance, Dribbling races around pylons, Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner/Dessert, British Crab or Bulldog

2.) Throw Ins

A.) Rules and Technique: At this age, throws-in is a skill that should be really enforced in practice. Instruction and skill development should be done in practice so that in the game situation, incorrect throws will be called by the referee and possession changed (not corrected during the game as in younger divisions). Players need to know the proper technique that begins with two hands on the ball behind the head, keeping both feet on the ground at all times, not twisting the arms or ball as it is being thrown.

B.) Practice (Drills): Have players divide into pairs and stand "throwing distance" apart. Players alternately take turns throwing the ball to their partner with proper technique. The receiving

player has to control the ball with whatever body part the coach is working on currently (ie feet, knees, chest, head). Once the players are able to control the ball, have them pass the ball back to their partner one touch with that same body part.

Weeks 4-6

Passing and Shooting Focus

1.) Passing

A.) Rules and Technique: Players should learn how to complete a pass using the inside of their feet (for shorter accurate passes) and using the top of the foot/toe (for long, less-accurate passes). Push Pass (Short Distance/Accuracy):

- Step beside the ball with non-kicking foot
- Have kicking foot turned out (ankle locked) and contact the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot
- Kicking follows through, up and at target Drive Pass (Longer Distance/Quick Moving):
- As above only passing foot and toes pointed down (vs. out) with ankle locked
- Contact ball with top of foot/laces - Knee and chest over the ball
- Receiving a pass:
 - Move if necessary to receive the ball
 - Cushion the ball with the inside of either foot as the ball comes
 - Cushion the ball with the outside of either foot (foot and toes pointing down)
 - Stop the ball with the sole of your foot (heel raised ~1 inch off the ground with toes pointing up, wedge ball between foot and ground)

Players should also start learning about one touch passing. It is important here, to teach players to be looking down-field for open teammates to direct the pass to. As the ball approaches, the player positions himself/herself to complete the pass without having to stop the ball first.

B.) Practice (Drills): Good Bye Drill, Monkey in the Middle, Soccer Golf

2.) Shooting

A.) Rules and Technique: Players should be taught the basics of shooting. Drive kick (low hard shot):

- Technique is similar to drive pass (as described above) only used for a shot on net.
 - As players become more and more comfortable with this technique, add the instruction of weight transfer to the non-kicking foot. As the player follows through with the shot, he/she should shift the weight to the non kicking foot and land on this foot.
 - B.) Practice (Drills)
 - Penalty shot competitions- players pass the ball to the coach who has their back to the net. The coach will then pass the ball to one side or the other and the player has to run up and shoot the ball at the net
 - Shots with a goalie in net
 - Line up players single file or side by side and practice taking shots on the goalie
 - Soccer Golf
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Weeks 7-8

Defending, Goal Keeping, and Positioning Focus

1.) Defending

A.) Rules and Technique: At this age level, it is important that players continue to develop their understanding of positioning themselves as defenders. Coaches should work with players to practice jockeying opposing players while defending rather than lunging for them, attempting to steal the ball. When working on drills and in game situations, encourage defenders to position themselves so that the ball is always in between them and the defenders, not allowing the forwards to get behind them.

B.) Practice (Drills): Simple 3 on 3 or 3 on 2 drills are effective for teaching this important positioning skill - 2 on 1 Rush- same concept as drill above (2 forwards and 1 defender) but this time add a goalie

2.) Goal Keeping

A.) Rules and Technique: Work with goalkeepers to establish the foundational skills of cutting down the angles for oncoming forwards, covering up rebounds inside the box, and the requirements for a penalty kick (ie goalie must stay on the goal line until the ball is kicked). It is also important that players understand the rules surrounding goal kicks (ie where in the box the ball should be kicked from and where other players must stand). Work with goalies on kicks from the ground and drop kicks.

B.) Practice (Drills): Penalty kicks on net- players take turns shooting on the goalie, 2 on 1 Rush, This Way That Way

3.) Positioning

A.) Rules and Technique: Some players at this age level may still need some coaching on how to properly play their position and not simply follow the ball around the field. Consistently remind players of their roles and where they should be on the field (ie defense move up to half when the ball is in the other end). Players should now have an understanding of Offsides and this should be called during game situations. B.) Practice (Drills): Small scrimmages can help coaches work with players in a game situation to remain in their position on the field

Weeks 9-10

Dribbling/Ball Control and Throw In Focus

1.) Dribbling/Ball Control

A.) Rules and Technique: Continue to work with players to establish a good ball control using different parts of the feet and body. Provide players with time during practices to work on this individually. This is a skill that requires a significant amount of practice time dedicated to it. Return to previous drills to continue the development of this skill.

B.) Practice (Drills): Square Dance - Dribbling races around pylons -

Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner/Dessert - British Crab or Bulldog

2.) Throw Ins

A.) Rules and Technique: By now all players should understand the proper throw in technique and be able to complete it during the game situation. Review this skill as needed during practice.

B.) Practice (Drills): Have players divide into pairs and stand "throwing distance" apart. Players alternately take turns throwing the ball to their partner with proper technique. The receiving player has to control the ball with whatever body part the coach is working on currently (ie feet, knees, chest, head). Once the players are able to control the ball, have them pass the ball back to their partner one touch with that same body part.

Weeks 11-12

Passing and Shooting Focus

1.) Passing

A.) Rules and Technique: Review the technique for the short and long passes (described above) from earlier in the season. Ensure that players are beginning to feel more comfortable with these techniques. As they progress, continue to work on the skill of one-touch passing. These drills can be reviewed at this point in the season and made more complicated as the players' skill progresses (ie modifying Monkey in the Middle to one-touch passing only)

B.) Practice (Drills): Good Bye Drill, Monkey in the Middle, Soccer Golf

2.) Shooting

A.) Rules and Technique: Review the proper shooting technique from earlier in the season and work with players to increase consistency with this skill. Return to drills as necessary.

B.) Practice (Drills): Penalty shot competitions- players pass the ball to the coach who has their back to the net. The coach will then pass the ball to one side or the other and the player has to run up and shoot the ball at the net, Shots with a goalie in net- line up players single file or side by side and practice taking shots on the goalie, Soccer Golf

Week 13

Defending and Goal Keeping Focus

1.) Defending

A.) Rules and Technique: Continue to work on the positioning skill with scrimmage-like drills to develop it.

B.) Practice (Drills): Simple 3 on 3 or 3 on 2 drills are effective for teaching this important positioning skill, 2 on 1 Rush - same concept as drill above (2 forwards and 1 defender) but this time add a goalie

2.) Goal Keeping

A.) Rules and Technique: Work with goalkeepers to establish the foundational skills of cutting down the angles for oncoming forwards, covering up rebounds inside the box, and the requirements for a penalty kick (ie goalie must stay on the goal line until the ball is kicked). It is also important that players understand the rules surrounding goal kicks (ie where in the box the ball should be kicked from and where other players must stand). Work with goalies on kicks from the ground and drop kicks. Review skills and drills from earlier in the season as necessary.

B.) Practice (Drills): Penalty kicks on net- players take turns shooting on the goalie, 2 on 1 Rush, This Way That Way

3.) Positioning

A.) Rules and Technique: Some players at this age level may still need some coaching on how to properly play their position and not simply follow the ball around the field. Consistently remind players of their roles and where they should be on the field (ie defense move up to half when the ball is in the other end). Players should now have an understanding of Offsides and this should be called during game situations.

B.) Practice (Drills): Small scrimmages can help coaches work with players in a game situation to remain in their position on the field

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Drills and Games 3 vs 3

Organization:

- Field size 20 x 30 yards.
- Goal is 3-yards wide.
- No goalkeepers.
- Goals only count below knee height.
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
 - Sideline - throw-in (or pass-in - opponents must be 5-yards away).
 - Endline - goal kick or corner kick (5-yard rule), depending on which player last touched ball.
- After a goal, re-start with center kick (opponents must retreat within two paces of own goal).
- In practice with numbers greater than twelve have two 3 vs.3, or if less than 12, have 3 teams and a separate practice operating and rotate teams in and out of the 3 vs.3 game.

Teaching:

- Encourage at least one player to go fully wide on goal kicks.
- Encourage attacking teams to always have a rear-supporting player.
- Encourage players to pass, dribble and communicate with each other.
- On throw-ins, encourage one of the non-throwing attackers to look for a forward shooting chance - and not to go too close to thrower.

Target:

- To outscore opposing team. (Courtesy of ByteSize Coaching Resources)

Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner/Dessert:

Designate 4 areas as above using pylon markers. Each player has a ball and when the coach calls out one of the "spots" players race to get to that spot.

British Crab or Bulldog:

Setup field boundaries and designate 1-3 players to take the position on the field as crabs (walking on hands and feet, stomach up) or bulldogs (moving around normally). The remaining players line up at one end of the field each with a ball. At the coaches signal, players must dribble their ball from one end to the other, without the ball being touched by a crab or bulldog. Any player whose ball is touched becomes a crab or bulldog and joins players in the middle. Play repeats with the last surviving player declared the winner.

Goodbye Drill:

Position 3 players in a 10-yard by 10-yard grid so that they each occupy a corner of the grid. Player A passes the ball to Player B, then will say "Good bye" and run to the unoccupied corner of the grid. Player B then passes to Player C and runs to the corner that Player A previously occupied etc. Repeat this action several times. After players feel comfortable with the spacing provided by the 10-yard grid, remove the pylons. Request that all players travel in 3's repeating the movement in open space.

Monkey in the Middle:

Form a circle with your players- one player in the middle- one ball in play. Players are to pass the ball without it being intercepted by the player in the middle. You may not pass to the player directly beside you. When the ball is controlled momentarily by the player in the middle, the player from the outside of the circle who lost control (passer or receiver) goes in the middle and is replaced by the player who was in the middle. The object is to be the last player to have to go in the middle. Soccer Golf Description: setup pylons around the practice field and have kids take turns attempting to knock over the pylons with passes. Form two teams and keep track of which team can knock over the most.

Square Dance**Organization:**

- Mark a square approximately 15 yards by 15 yards, depending on numbers.
- Each player should have a ball.
- If not, use the "Change Soccer" principle: half the players inside the square, each with a ball, the remaining half outside the square, without a ball. Trade places when coach shouts "Change!"
- Players can dribble around anywhere within the square, but should not walk.
- Three instructions are given to the players inside the square:

- "STOP" - Put foot on top of ball quickly and freeze like a statue.
- "GO" - Move right or left with the ball, fast, for three or four yards.
- "TURN" - Quickly turn 180 degrees with the ball, moving three or four yards.

Teaching:

- Encourage players to keep the ball close to their feet.
- Occasionally insist on using left foot only or right foot only.
- See how many different ways they can turn with the ball.
- To avoid giving players too much information at once, introduce instructions one at a time and incorporate practice time between.
- Later, incorporate your own ideas.

Target:

- Stay in the area with the ball and make no contact with other players or other balls. (Courtesy of ByteSize Coaching Resources)

This Way That Way

Organization:

- Set out the practice as shown in Graphic A.
- If sufficient balls (one per player) work in pairs (Graphic A).
- Try to keep groups as small as possible for greater repetitions.
- Player facing the goal initiates the practiced by pointing to the ball "This Way" or "That Way."
- In Graphic B the coach demonstrates by pointing to one ball.
- You can see the good technique of the keeper in Graphic B.
- However, it is Graphic C where we see the full drill:
- Goalkeeper (at the front of the file) comes out and dives at the ball simulating the requirement in a real game.
- The Pointer having pointed, runs to the ball indicated, but does not try to kick the ball.
- The players then change.
- Or if more than two players, move to end of file and wait their next turn.
- Don't keep the activity going for too long, as it is basically a drill - a very important one nevertheless.

Teaching:

- You can see the good technique of the keeper in Graphic B.
- Hands must always lead, as they are the "protectors" and well as the "collectors."
- Hands and head cover the near post and the body and legs cover the middle off the goal and

the far post (in case they have to make a block in later years).

- Goalkeepers have to come on a line inside the ball to enable them to dive outwards on their side - otherwise they are diving headfirst.
- They must go down early and slide on their side into the collecting/blocking position.
- If they go down late their legs will swing round and they may dive over the ball.
- Watch for the player who "corkscrews" and swings around to dive on the wrong side of the ball, i.e., that the body and legs are outside the line of the near post.

Target:

- To learn the correct way of diving at an incoming player's feet that will protect the goal, but also protect the goalkeeper. (Courtesy of ByteSize Coaching Resources)