

Texoma Soccer Coaching Curriculum

for ages 4-16



Texoma Soccer

Questions? development@texomasoccer.org

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Table of Contents

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT	3
AGES 4-5.....	3
Coaching Points:	4
Ages 6-10.....	5
Coaching Points:	6
Ages 11-15:.....	7
Coaching Points:	8
Ball Familiarity	9
Dribbling:	9
Passing:	9
Shooting:.....	9
Trapping/Control:	9
Heading:	10
Tackling:	10
Session Planner	11
Coaches Clinic (5-10)	12
Warm ups	12
Dribbling.....	13
Passing	13
Shooting	14
Fun Games	15
Session Template (5-10)	17
Coaches Clinic (11+)	19
Dribbling.....	19
Passing	20
Shooting.....	21
Session Template (11+)	22
Code of Conduct	24
Players Code of Conduct	24
Coaches Code of Conduct.....	25
Parents / Spectators Code of Conduct.....	26



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

AGES 4-5

Ages 4-5: Emphasis on soccer at this stage is fun! Through games and stories, you as a coach must try to understand how children learn, what makes sense to them, and how they feel working in groups, whilst putting these principles into their practice to promote their learning.

Technical: Run with the Ball
Stop the Ball
Turn with the Ball
Kick the Ball

Physical: Running
Turning
Balance

Psychological/ Social: Fun
Enjoyment
Enthusiasm
Imagination
Learning

Tactical: 3x3
No hands

Ages 5-6: Players must begin working towards improving their basic technical ability, whilst widening their understanding of the game (i.e. attack and defense). Again, coaches should keep sessions as fun as possible encouraging imaginative scenarios (i.e. pretending to be Cowboys/Cowgirls or characters from familiar movies) and encouraging the children to 'get into character', responding to different sounds or objects with different movements or techniques.

Technical: Run and Change Pace with the ball
Change Direction with the ball
Shoot with the laces
Pass the ball with inside of foot
Trap a pass with inside of foot

Physical: Running
Turning
Balance
Co-ordination

Psychological/Social: Fun
Enjoyment
Teamwork
Enthusiasm
Imagination
Observation
Learning

Tactical: Understand attack/defense
Understand boundaries
Understand basic rules



Coaching Points:

It is important to remember that every child is an individual and will therefore learn and develop in different ways and at different stages. Present the information in as many ways as possible and remember to promote interest and imagination, telling them stories or getting them to help you to tell the story will capture their imagination, and invite them to imagine what it looks like and feels like to be successful and achieve their soccer related tasks.

Your role as a coach is to:

- Make information easy to understand: try not to overload your players, but instead give them step by step instructions to perform your technique or movement.
- Allows players to learn at their own rate, be supportive, give praise and allow them to learn from their mistakes (Good try, never mind, but why not next time try....)
- Be aware that children are very sensitive to failure. Expect children to have lots of excitable energy and enthusiasm; try to build it, not destroy it.
- Expect them to all chase the ball, and to rarely pass, but do try to encourage the use of space.
- Allow players to stay focused by regularly changing the practice or progressing the technique or movement with the next stage of the story.
- Ask the children questions, and encourage them to ask “Why” questions back to promote their learning (What do we need to concentrate on when dribbling our soccer ball?... “Why?”... What do you think we need to look up and look out for?)
- Plan your session (Have a fun warm up, even sometimes without a ball, before introducing your fun games. Finish with a scrimmage, unless you feel your games are more appropriate)
- Don’t be afraid to repeat games, but try to use their favorites as a reward for their behavior and working hard.
- Never raise your voice or shout at them, be enthusiastic and upbeat, this will catch their attention much faster and don’t be afraid to use random facial expressions or statements, they’ll love it!
- If kids at first are unwilling to participate, allow them to sit and watch where they can see others having fun, until they feel they are ready to join in and then feel comfortable with you as their teacher or coach.
- Encourage the use of parents, not only as a fun factor, but also to gain/boost your relationship/trust with both player and parent.
- Finally, HAVE FUN! The more enthusiastic and energetic your session is the more enjoyable and productive as a learning environment it will be for everyone!



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PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Ages 6-10:

It is during these ages that children develop the most on and off the field. Coaches should prioritise on having fun and learning techniques by introducing practice drills focusing on the mastery of individual skill development, allowing the child to gain confidence, before progressing the skill by introducing a pressured environment (i.e. using a defender or time constraint) to simulate a competitive game scenario. Players should also begin to understand the concept of spreading out across the field, as well as a basic understanding of their roles of the position, the rules of play and restarting the game. Most importantly, as a coach you must remember how young your players still are and therefore continuing to practice your skill within a fun game followed by a scrimmage with an emphasis to practice the skills should boost confidence and enjoyment performing the skill.

Technical: Dribble with close control
Dribble the ball at speed
Pass and Trap ball with inside of foot
Pass the ball with both feet
Shoot the ball with both feet
Shield the ball
Make a block tackle
Head the ball correctly
Execute a variety of Turns

Physical: Speed
Tackle
Protecting Ball
Turning
Balance
Co-ordination
Agility
Throwing

Psychological/Social: Fun/Enthusiasm
Enjoyment
Teamwork
Respect
Responsibility
Integrity
Sportsmanship
Leadership

Tactical: Understand Rules
Awareness of space
Use wide players
Introduce Offside
Retreat in Defense



Coaching Points:

It is important to remember that every child is an individual and will therefore learn and develop in different ways and at different stages. Present the information in as many ways as possible, however avoid talking and demonstrating at the same time. Explain the drill, and then demonstrate. Let the game be the teacher.

Your role as a coach is to:

- Be attentive: try not to overload your players, but instead give them more in depth step by step instructions to perform your technique or movement.
- Allows players to learn at their own rate, be supportive, give praise and allow them to learn from their mistakes (Good try, never mind, but why not next time try...)
- Be aware that children are very sensitive to failure. Expect children to have lots of excitable energy and enthusiasm; try to build it, not destroy it.
- Set challenges according to the individual's ability.
- Allow players to stay challenged and focused by progressing the technique/movement or by introducing a pressured scenario.
- Don't keep stop, starting the group
- Don't keep stepping in to correct faults.
- Encourage learning and invite questions (What do you think we could do to improve our technique?). Start Again.
- Let the game be the teacher: let the players play and practice.
- Plan your session (Have a fun warm up, before introducing your ball mastery drill (unopposed) and your pressured drill (opposed). Apply your learning towards a fun game before finishing with a scrimmage.
- Encourage players to practice and be successful with the inclusion of larger/more goals to aim for or using more than one soccer ball at one time during the scrimmage.
- Never raise your voice or shout at them, be enthusiastic and upbeat, this will catch their attention much faster and don't be afraid to use random facial expressions or statements, they'll love it!
- Encourage the use of parents during your warm up or fun game, not only as a fun factor, but also to gain/boost your relationship/trust with both player and parent.
- Finally, HAVE FUN! The more enthusiastic and energetic your session is the more enjoyable and productive as a learning environment it will be for everyone!



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PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Ages 11-15:

Coaching sessions for players of this age will begin to focus less on the technical aspects of the game and more on the tactical and physical elements of competitive play. Players should practice twice a week at this age, with sessions traditionally ranging from an hour, to an hour and a half each time depending upon the age and level of the team.

Although players will still need ongoing technical coaching to continue to perfect their core skills, by the time the players are 14, a significant portion of each practice session should be dedicated to game related coaching, to help develop the understanding of their roles on the field and also general team play. These practices should feature goals, direction, transition between offense and defense, and should emphasize on problem solving improving the players decision making.

Technical:	Dribble with close control Dribble the ball at speed Pass and Trap ball with inside of foot Pass the ball with both feet Shoot the ball with both feet Shield the ball Make a block tackle Head the ball correctly Execute a variety of Turns	Physical:	Speed Heading Protecting Ball Turning Balance Co-ordination Agility Throwing Tackle
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Psychological/Social:	Decision Making Enjoyment Teamwork Respect Responsibility Integrity Sportsmanship Leadership	Tactical:	Understand Rules Awareness of space Use of wide players Introduce Offside Roles in Defense Roles in Attack Movement/Positioning Formations
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Coaching Points:

It is important to remember that every child is an individual and will therefore learn and develop in different ways and at different stages. Be aware and sensitive to the impact of puberty may have on the individual and also be aware of the growing influence of peer pressure.

Your role as a coach is to:

- Be attentive: try not to overload your players, but instead run your players through one or two different set plays, showing them what decisions they could make on and off the ball.
- Allows players to learn at their own rate, be supportive, give praise and allow them to learn from their mistakes (Good try, never mind, but why not next time try....)
- Be aware that children are very sensitive to failure. Expect children to have lots of excitable energy and enthusiasm; try to build it, not destroy it.
- Set challenges according to the individual's ability.
- Allow players to stay challenged and focused by progressing the technique/movement or by introducing a pressured scenario.
- Don't keep stop, starting the group
- Don't keep stepping in to correct faults. Step back, observe and correct major faults.
- Don't provide all the answers, encourage your players to solve the problems.
- Let the game be the teacher: let the players play and practice.
- Plan your session: Warm up using technical movement with the ball and dynamic stretching. Introduce your unopposed and opposed drill. Next provide a game related phase of play (i.e. collecting the ball in midfield, and getting the ball out wide, before crossing to forwards). Introduce a conditioned game (Team A vs Team B, must play ball to wide players whom can play for both teams, get the defending team to shadow ball and progress to normal defending) before introducing a normal game, allowing players to freely make decisions and learn from their mistakes.
- Encourage players to practice and be successful with the inclusion of larger/more goals/targets to aim for or using more than one soccer ball at one time during the scrimmage.
- Never raise your voice or shout at them, if the team is struggling to motivate themselves, give incentives to try harder.



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Ball Familiarity

Dribbling:

Slightly raise your heel, (therefore bent knee) point the toes and touch the centre of the ball with the bottom of the laces (instep bone) to move the ball forward. Keep the ball close to both feet when dribbling in tight areas, i.e. between defenders or when performing a turn or skill. When moving at speed touch the ball 2 yards in front or as close to both feet as possible. Use the Big Toe to hook the ball inside and the Little Toe to hook the ball outside of the body.

Passing:

Teaching the technique of passing is actually quite straightforward but it is not always easy to spot and remedy the mistakes that children make. Use inside of the foot. The non-striking foot should point in the direction of the intended target. Make contact with the middle of the inside of the foot. The striking ankle must be locked. Push through the center of the ball. Stay relaxed. Look up to find your target but remember to look at the ball as you strike it. Follows through in direction of your target.

Shooting:

The technique of shooting is quite difficult to master and younger players often lack the leg strength to execute the skill correctly. Stick with it and give the youngsters as much opportunity to practice as possible – they all figure it out eventually!

Approach the ball slightly from the side. Keep the head down and eyes on the ball. Look up to pick out the target, but then look back at the ball to shoot. Make your last stride longer than normal. Plant non-striking foot alongside the ball. Strike the middle of the ball with the laces of the shoe (instep bone). Keep the knee of the kicking leg over the ball. Follow through with the toes pointed in the direction of the shot.

Trapping/Control:

The receiver's first touch should protect the ball from challenging players and not give them a chance to regain possession. The receiving player should play the ball into available space to allow for the next touch and to gain or keep momentum. Some players make the mistake of killing the ball dead and not concentrating on getting it out of their feet.

Wedge control involves a large rigid surface where the player attempts to force the ball downwards or into space so he/she can move onto it. A cushioned control involves taking the sting out of the ball. This involves pulling the surface back just when the ball makes contact (the body becomes elastic) so that it simply drops at the players feet.

Coaching Points - When training, players can exaggerate the movements to get the feel of the right technique. Break down the technique and practice the individual elements before eventually, practicing the whole technique. Only once the basic techniques have been mastered should you move onto more advanced situations (i.e. pressure situations; defenders coming from the side, front, back, control while



moving at pace, control which involves an immediate layoff and controlling the ball for a team mate. The ball should be received from all angles, speeds and heights and all surfaces constantly used.

Heading:

It is extremely rare to see a header performed under 10 - 11 years of age. It is advisable to introduce children to the technique at 8+ ages so that they become comfortable with the skill, however it will not be a good use of time to focus on the technique in your practices.

Put feet in a balanced, athletic, ready position with knees slightly bent. Keep the neck stiff and lean back. Keep eyes open, and watch the ball until contact. Move your upper body and head forward towards the ball. Contact the ball with the forehead area between hairline and eyebrows. Arms should also reach forward as the ball is coming and pull backwards as the head moves forward, following through to the target area.

Tackling:

Any effort to steal the ball or knock it away from an opposing player. The most basic form of tackling is the front block tackle.

Place the non-kicking foot alongside the ball. The ankle joint of the tackling foot must be firm and locked. The knees should be bent to lower the centre of gravity of the player. The head and upper body should be over the ball. Contact is made with the inside of the foot. Contact on the ball should be made through the middle of the ball. Maintain pressure and keep the leg firm and locked throughout the tackle.



Session Planner

The Warm Up

The goal of the warm is to get the players physically and mentally prepared for the session ahead. Every coach is different. I personally like to get the attention of the players by doing as fun a warm up as possible, and afterwards ask for their 110% effort and concentration for a set amount of time while we learn a skill or complete a drill. You can begin gradually, both physically and technically, and progressively build up, so that the players raise their heart rate, breathing rate and body temperature.

Unopposed Practice

In this stage, repetition is the key to skill development so set up your practices to enable players to work as individuals, pairs or small groups. The practice should repeatedly use the technique that you are focusing on and the organization of the group should provide the maximum opportunity for each player to be involved. Once the players have a good understanding of the basic technique you can begin adding pressure by restricting space or adding time limitations.

Opposed Practice

The degree of the opposition should be appropriate to the age and the ability of the group and also to where they are in the learning process of the particular skill. The coach may even begin with limited opposition by restricting to the movement of the opponents e.g. have them walk, hop, jog, play like crabs, etc. Throughout the session the coach should remember what the goal of the practice is and should reduce the level of opposition if the players are not repeatedly executing the desired skill under pressure. Adding pressure too early will destroy any confidence they have and will lead to a lack of motivation and achievement.

Fun Game

Having performed the skill under pressure, the players should then be required to do the same in competitive game like conditions. The game related practice should have specific direction towards goals or targets, should involve two teams (not necessarily equal) and should place the players in situations where they are forced to make game like decisions and react both offensively and defensively. The coach should place restrictions on the practice that continue to allow successful repetition of the skill.

Game or Scrimmage

Where possible, use the appropriate number of players per team; assign goalkeepers and set players in positions, as they would be in a normal league game. Players now should be encouraged to make decisions about how, where and when they execute the specific skill on the field. Try not to break the flow of the game by repeatedly stopping it to correct bad technique or incorrect decision making.



Coaches Clinic (5-10)

Warm ups (Age 5-10)

Number runaround – All of the players run around the inside of a 20 x 20 grid, weaving in and out of each other. Players are encouraged to make sharp turns, skip, spin, and change pace as they run. The coach will call out a number and the players must immediately get into groups of that number. Any player left outside of the correct number groups loses a life.

Coaching Points – Players need to keep the ball close, get their head up, be aware of who and what is around them, reacting quickly and communicating with each other. Players can try to get players from another group to join theirs. The coach can add math problems such as “6 divided by two”). Begin without, and then introduce a ball.

Circle chase – The players stand next to a cone on the perimeter of a large circle. The coach walks around the circle and gives each player a number – either one or two. The number one players sit down and on the coaches command the number two players all run one lap of the circle and try to catch up with the player ahead of them. The groups then switch places.

Coaching Points – For variation, try having the players weave in and out of the cones; run backwards; hop, etc). Introduce a ball.

Numbers Band – Players respond to coach’s orders, by not only repeating what the coach has said, but also performing the action.

- “Number 1 is on the run” : Players Dribble in and around the perimeter
- “Number 2 is on the shoe” : Players Stop and Put Foot on the ball
- “Number 3 is on the Knee” : Players Stop the ball, and lower one knee at a time onto the ball
- “Number 4 is on the Floor” : Players Stop, take a step back and Superhero dive onto and over the ball
- “Number 5 is staying alive” : Players Stop, sit on the ball, and repeat from famous Saturday night fever dance, “Ah Ah Ah Ah, Staying Alive, Staying Alive”

Stuck in the Mud – Split your team into two. One team finds a space in the perimeter, stands still with their legs open wide and arms out. The second team has 90 seconds to run and crawl under as many legs as possible. Switch Teams. Make it into a competitive, and add soccer balls.



Dribbling (Age 5-10)

Animated dribbling – Each player moves in and around the grid with a ball at their feet experimenting using the insides, outsides, bottom and top of the feet while dribbling. Children can imitate cars or horseback (cowgirls) and make the sounds of their vehicle/animal as they move around the grid. Coaches should associate aspects of the animation towards a particular skill.

e.g. Red Light – Stop
Overtake – Skill

Green Light – Go
Change Lane – Turn

‘Police Tickets’ – Failing to stop
‘Beeping’ – When nearing a player

Coaching Points – The players should be encouraged to look up frequently between touches as they dribble the ball into the spaces and away from the ‘traffic’.

Monsters Inc / Shrek’s Land– Each player moves in and around the grid with a ball at their feet experimenting using the insides and outsides of both feet while dribbling. When the coach calls “Turn” they begin slowly practicing the specific technique. After a few practice runs, the coach explains the game; entering the grid, chasing the players, ‘scaring’ like a monster. The player must quickly turn and dribble away in the opposite direction.

Coaching Points – Once performed the turn, the players must accelerate away from the monster / defender, whilst keeping control of the ball. Player who takes the time to perfect the correct technique can have a go being a ‘monster’ or helping the coach as ‘Donkey’ or any other favorite character.

Shadow dribble – Players are put into pairs. The number one players will start as the leaders and JOG anywhere within the grid. Their partner must follow them, dribbling their ball focusing on their touch technique and getting their head up. Change the pairings.

Coaching Points – Make sure the leaders are jogging at a reasonable pace, and not running away from the person with the ball. Also encourage more diagonally movement, and encourage the person with the ball to use the ‘Big Toe’ and ‘Little Toe’ depending on the direction of movement. Introduce Feints/Fakes. If the leader fakes to move one way and moves in the other direction, encourage the shadow to perform a scissor or fake with the ball.

Passing (Age 5-10)

Clean your room – The players are divided into two groups and each player has a ball. The two groups stand at either end of a 20 x 25 grid, there is a 3 yard “no go” zone marked down the middle with cones. The object of the games is to kick as many balls as possible into the opposite half of the grid. As soon as the opponents kick a ball into one half, the other team can kick it straight back. No one can touch balls that end up in the “no go” zone.

Coaching Points – You should initially allow the children to kick the ball however they wish so that they get the hang of the game. You should then ask the players to try and trap incoming balls, before



passing the ball into the space away from the opposition, maybe with a particular foot or with a particular part (i.e. outside). You can also make the no go zone larger to test distance in passing/shooting. This is a great game with younger kids and parents.

Godzilla – (city perimeter with a team of 2/3 in. 2nd perimeter ‘closed off by police’) Players start dribbling round the grid, when coach shouts “Ahhhh Godzilla!!” Players pass the ball and knock down the cones / skyscrapers whilst making dinosaur noises. Team inside city must run round and rebuild the city.

Coaching Points - Give players 2-3 balls each. Encourage composure, technique and accuracy rather than a time limit as they will rush the pass. Choose a variety of grid perimeters to test players.

Cookie Monster – Place a team in each corner of the grid. On the command, the first players from each team sprints to the center and collects a ball with a specific turn and takes it back to their corner, high fiving the next players to set them off. The winning team is the first team to collect the most balls. Additionally, challenge the teams to race back into the middle. Not only does this avoid chaos of all the balls coming in at once, but it also gives the team with the fewest balls an opportunity to score points. After a few goes, once all the balls have been taken, players can “steal” from other team’s collection of balls. Working in teams, one person can stay at home, and receive the passes from the thieves, or every player can go and dribble and collect a ball.

Coaching Points – Head up, dribbling at speed, communication and moving away quickly after performing the specific turning technique. Place gates in front of the team to encourage passing accuracy, or for really talented players, make them hit a cone over before the next person can go.

Shooting (Age 5-10)

Asteroids – 3-4 players line up with a few balls at their feet. Rest of team is to line up and side step across the grid together as targets. Mark color coordinated cones for the direction of movement. Once the players get close enough, direct the use of the weaker foot to avoid injury. See which team of players can strike the most ‘asteroids’.

Capture the Gold – Setup a large grid. Get 3/4s of your team to line up at one end of the grid with a soccer ball each. The following ¼ of your team line up opposite each other with a number of balls per person. At the empty end of the grid, drop as many cones or pinnies (gold) that you have. The aim of the game is for each player to dribble their soccer ball to the ‘treasure’ picking up one piece at a time, before returning back to the starting position. If the player is hit with a ball from the two teams either side of the grid, then the player must start again, or return the piece of treasure, before returning to the start. The player with the most cones / pieces of treasure at the end is the winner. Alternate teams.

Coaching Points – Explain that any hits above knee do not count. Encourage players to keep the ball low. Tell players to keep their head up and be aware of what is not just in front of them, but what is going on around them. Keep ball close in danger areas, and use speed knocking ball out of feet when getting towards the finish.



Fun Games (Age 5-10)

Alien Invasion – Players dribble their balls within the grid. The players are astronauts who have escaped the alien prison and must dribble around the grid or planet to avoid being caught again. After 15 seconds, the alien realizes that the astronauts have escaped and sets about running after the players zapping them (tagging them) with their zap gun. If zapped, the players must hold their balls above their head, standing still with their legs open. The other astronauts must dribble their ball and pass it between the frozen players' legs to be set free.

Coaching Points - Begin by encouraging players to keep the ball close in tight areas and push the ball out of their feet when dribbling into space. Keep heads up at all times. Allow the astronauts a special power i.e. a specific turn whereby the alien leaves them alone and goes to zap somebody else. Allow the person performing the best technique to become an alien. See if a pair or aliens can re-capture all the astronauts.

King of the Ring – The players dribble their ball around the inside of a 25 x 25 grid practicing looking up between every 2nd or 3rd touch. When the coach shouts “Go” one player wearing a contrasting color pinnie attempts to kick the other player's balls out of the grid. Players should be allowed to re-enter the game for the first one minute, and then when the coach announces that it is “Knock out” time, they are eliminated if their ball is kicked out.

Cowboys/Indians – Cowboys/Cowgirls line up without a ball and have to run across the grid without being hit by a ball from the coach. If the coach hits a player, then they become an Indian also. Final player who avoids being hit is the winner.

Army – Similar principles apply, however if the player is struck with the ball, he/she must hop across the grid. If struck again, he/she must then crawl on hands and knees, and finally crawl on belly. Teammates can also help others by picking them up and carrying them.

Coaching Points – Get the players to shout or perform an action for every time they set off. Be aware of everything around them, not just what's in front of them.

King Crab – All players line up and must dribble the ball to the other side of the grid on the coach's command. However the coach in the middle of the grid on his hands and feet must move to try and knock the balls out of the square. When succeeded, the players join the coaches as a ‘crab’ in the middle of the grid.

Coaching Points – Head up, dribbling at speed, encourage feints or fakes to go past the ‘crabs’ and also turns to change direction.

British Bulldogs – Players must run across the grid without being tackled by the coach who is defending across the centre line. If tackled the player must then join the coach as a defender on the centre line.



Elimination – 2 teams; both begin in each corner of the grid. One team has a ball each, the other team without. The team with the ball has 90 seconds to dribble around the grid and try and hit the other team with the ball. When hit, the player is eliminated and must go and stand in their corner or ‘stadium’. For every person hit, the team scores a goal. Team with most goals after x amount of games is the winners.

Coaching Points – No elimination for any hit above knee height. Encourage players to dribble at speed, and use the turns to change direction. Also encourage players to get close enough to pass the ball to strike the player rather than attempt from long distances.



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Session Template (5-10)

Session will be broken down into four parts. Warm up, ball mastery unopposed practice, skill focused opposed and then a fun game finishing with a scrimmage.

Warm up – Traffic lights

The players dribble the ball around the area and the coach shouts out one of the following commands:

1. Red light – Players stop the ball with the sole of their feet
2. Orange light – Players slow down & walk with the ball
3. Green light – Players accelerate with the ball

Progression: Coach can shout out various parts of the body and the players have to stop the ball with that part. Also progress by not calling out the colors of the lights, but holding them up instead to encourage the players to look up.

Coaching points – Keep close control of the ball in tight areas, push the ball out of the feet when driving into the space, be aware of your surroundings including team mates and to keep your head up between touches.

Introduce Ball Mastery skill (Unopposed) – Drag back turn

Bring players in and demonstrate the skill.

Drag back turn:

1. Squish the ball and lean forward for balance.
2. Using the sole of the foot, roll the ball backwards and turn at a 180 degree angle with the direction of the ball, keeping your eyes on the ball at all times.
3. Burst away with the ball at your feet and with your head up

Demonstrate this step by step process slowly, and ask questions of why it is beneficial to do these turns/tricks (i.e. Get away from the defender, keeping the ball close and protecting it from the opposition). Ask players to find some space and demonstrate in front of you. Also to help the players, get them to shout out commands to help them understand the skill (i.e. Squish, Roll, Burst). Allow others to proceed and try to make your way round the group. If some find it easy, challenge them to use their weaker foot or develop the turn further (i.e. the L turn; perform a mini drag back to the standing foot's heel, and use the inside of the same foot to knock the ball sideways into the desired direction.

Progression (Opposed): Play “King of the Ring”. Aim of the game is for the players to kick other players’ balls out whilst protecting their own. Encourage close control, moving into space, bursting away. Eliminated players can act as defenders.



Skill focused drill – Alien Invasion

Fun game that works in a group environment. Players dribble their balls within the grid. The players are astronauts who have escaped the alien prison and must dribble around the grid or planet to avoid being caught again. After 15seconds, the alien realizes that the astronauts have escaped and sets about running after the players zapping them (tagging them) with their zap gun. If zapped, the players must hold their balls above their head, standing still with their legs open. The other astronauts must dribble their ball and pass it between the frozen players' legs to be set free.

Coaching Points - Begin by encouraging players to keep the ball close in tight areas and push the ball out of their feet when dribbling into space. Keep heads up at all times. Allow the astronauts a special power i.e. the drag back, whereby the alien leaves them alone and goes to zap somebody else. Emphasize bursting away from the defender, teamwork and communication. Allow the person performing the best technique to become an alien. See if a pair or aliens can re-capture all the astronauts.

This game is very fun and the players usually get very involved. It also provides a challenging, competitive environment whereby the players can show off their tricks that they have learnt or ones that they already know. Encourage the use of parents (age appropriate) and encourage players to explore their creative side in the drill.

Scrimmage

Finish with a small-sided game. Allow the players to express themselves. Do not make use of the boundaries unless players manage to make it miles away from the pitch/field (age appropriate). Encourage communication, using the space and keeping the ball under close control. Don't expect your players to master the skill straight away and repeatedly do it in the scrimmage but encourage the practice verbally.



Coaches Clinic (11+)

Dribbling (Age 11+)

Zig-Zags: The size of the area will depend on the number of players and the size of the space available. Setup a square grid. On the outside of the grid, setup a series of zig-zag formations. Coach your players a fake or skill to go past or get away from a defender inside your grid. Ask players to find some space and demonstrate in front of you. Also to help the players, get them to shout out commands to help them understand the skill (i.e. Step, Lean, Feet Together, Pinky Push). When you feel your players are comfortable get them to dribble along your zig-zag formations and back again to practice the skill with both feet. Repeat this process coaching 2-3 different skills. Once learned, fill your square grid with color coded cones or markers with a specific skill for each marker. Get your players to dribble inside the grid performing each skill according to the cone they dribble up to.

Progression: Reduce size of the grid/size in between the zag-zags. Race teams between the zig-zags.

Coaching Points – Encourage technique rather than speed. Over emphasize each step of the technique. Explain how you would use such skills in tight areas and therefore keep the ball close, until the end of the technique were pushing the ball out of the feet would require player to explode away from the DEF.

Colors – Setup a triangular, square or star shape, with a further cone/marker 6 yards outside of each cone. Split group into 3, 4, or 5 lines, depending on the number of players and pinnies, and give each line a different colored pinnie. You should use up to a quarter of the field depending on the area available. Place one player on the inside markers, and the rest of the group on the outside marker. Start with the front player passing to their teammate at the inside cone and then moving to the cone, then going to the back of the line. The player at the cone returns the pass to the new front player.

Progression: Player on the inside cone, once passing the ball back to the front of the line, spins off to their left and joins the back of the next line.

Player on the inside cone, spins away to the left **with** the ball, and passes it to the front of the next line.

Coaching Points – Accurate and perfectly weighted passing. Encourage turning on the first touch, head up, and bursting away at speed.



Passing (Age 11+)

Pass and Move – Split your team into two. The size of the area will depend on the number of players and the size of the space available. Team 1 begins with the soccer balls, spread out on each side of the grid while Team 2 stands in the middle. Start the drill by asking Team 1 to pass the ball to Team 2, whom pass the ball back and find a new partner. Swap after 2minutes.

Progression: Player in the middle, turns when receiving the ball, and bursts to the opposite edge of the grid, before turning once more, dribbling through the other players, and returning the pass when space is available.

Introduce a defender, who shadows the players in the middle: when shadowing, the players on the outside of the grid call either “Man On” whereby the player returns the pass, or “Time” whereby the player can turn, dribble, turn and pass back, depending on whether the DEF is present.

Balls now with Team in the middle, players dribble round and play and one-two pass with the players on the outside. Get the players on the outside to side step around the grid to increase the difficulty. Also encourage players in the middle to check over their shoulder for a DEF. If present, move and create an angle for the return pass.

Coaching Points – Allow both Teams to play. On each change over, ask both teams what could be done to improve the exercise: Communication, Distance between pass, Trap and Pass with both feet, Movement between passes (don’t have team going round in circles).

Find a Friend – The size of the area will depend on the number of players and the size of the space available. Mark out a large square grid, and mark out 4 squares in each corner of the grid, 5yards inside each of the boundary lines. Split your group into 3 Teams. Team 1 stand in corner squares, and Team 2 and 3 compete against each other 2v2-4v4. The aim of the game is to complete 3 passes before passing to the targets inside the squares. Swap the teams round.

Progression: Increase the number of players in the middle, increase the number of passes before reaching the target man. Reduce the number of targets at either end.

Coaching Points – Every player should have two options to pass to when in possession of the ball. Encourage your players to spread out and trust other team mates to get the ball to them. Try to keep a triangular or diamond shape when in possession of the ball, and encourage your players to move behind the gaps of the defenders. Use effective communication and accurate passing.



Shooting (Age 11+)

Cross and Finish – Split your team into three, with three markers on the outside of the 18 / penalty box; one central, and one either side towards the corners of the box. Label each group 1 (outside), 2 (central) and 3 (outside). Each player should have a ball. Number 1s touch the ball out of their feet and shoot on goal. Immediately afterwards, they move in towards the PK spot and play a 1-2 pass with the Number2s. Just as Number 1 has taken their shot, number 3 dribbles to a marker on the outside of the 18, and as soon as Number2 has taken a shot, they deliver a cross into the box for both Number1 and 2 to finish.

Progression: Swap teams around, and deliver crosses from both the left and right. Ask the crossers to first deliver balls on the ground, balls at volley height and balls at head height.

Coaching Points: Direct Numbers 1 and 2 to move towards a specific post, making a diagonal run (preferably 1 near post, 2 back post). Face the ball at all times. Coach the technique of re-directing a ball towards goal, on the ground, volleys (point toes down) and headers (always head down and back across goal).

Four Goal Shooting - Divide the group into three teams. Two of the teams compete against each other, trying to score a goal in any of the sides of the four-sided goal that stands in the centre of the grid. The third team plays as goalkeepers who defend each side of the four-sided goal.

Progression: Add bonus points for a team who score with a first time shot off a pass or with their weaker foot. Also, as soon as a goal is scored, the goalkeepers change quickly with the team that allows the goal and the coach feeds a new ball in at once.

Coaching Points – Follow up all of your teammate's shots and finish the rebounds. If you cannot get a shot off before the route to goal is closed down, turn and attack one of the other goals.



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Session Template (11+)

Warm up – Copy Cat

Get your players to line up single file, one behind another. Coach stands in front of the group and shouts a number of commands for players to copy whilst jogging on the spot; Up (hands up), Down (Hands Down), Left (Side step left and back to middle), Right (Side step right and back to middle), and Turn (180degree turn).

Progression: Speed up the process so the players think faster. Then get players to perform the opposite to the coach's command i.e. "Left" move right. Eventually, eliminate players who make mistakes until you have a winner.

Introduce Ball Mastery skill (Unopposed) – Duo's / Overlaps

Pairs of players stand opposite each other in two lines 10-15yards apart. One ball per pair, all balls on one side. Players pass the ball to their partner, follow their pass and run around the back and receive the ball back and dribble back to the starting line. Repeat process x amount of times and swap turns. Next players pass the ball in, run around the back, but this time, instead of returning to their starting position, they will dribble diagonally to the position next to them. The person at the end with no position to run to, receives the ball back from their partner, and must sprint with the ball to the very first starting position. Drill stops when players return to their normal starting position. Repeat process with both teams.

Progression: When passing the ball in, get partner to pick ball up, and throw ball back, working on heading, soft volley returns. Time how long both teams take to get around and back to position. Turn it into a competition, with a fun punishment

Skill focused drill – 3 v 2 Overlaps

Split your players into three groups, and place them on 3 cones 15-20yards in front of goal; one central, and one either side 10yards apart. Group in the middle begins with the ball. Person at the front passes to ball to the group either side, follows their pass, and overlaps the player, and runs down the line. The player who has received the pass, waits a second and plays a pass down the line, and then moves towards the edge of the penalty box / PK spot. The player in the final group who has not touched the ball, should be running into the box to attack the cross and score a goal.

Progression: Add a DEF to close ball down. Person receiving ball should hold ball to commit DEF before passing down the line. Add 2 DEF; one DEF closes ball down, other DEF must pick an ATT to mark. Makes person crossing the ball, get head up and cross to free player.

Fun Practice – Cross and Finish

In the same groups, same positions, label groups 1-3. Everyone has a ball. First person in group 1, knocks ball out of there feet and shoots on goal. Immediately turning to play a give and go with player in group two, who shoots on goal. As players 1 and 2 are beginning to play their give and go. Player in group three dribbles down the line to cross the ball in. Players 1 and 2 who have shot on goal, must



immediately prepare for the cross, making diagonal runs towards a post (Player 1 – first post, Player 2 – back post). Swap group position.

Scrimmage

Finish with a small-sided game. Allow the players to express themselves. Use boundaries, with additional 5-10yard boxes either side. If players manage to overlap into those boxes they are free to dribble down the line and cross the ball. Encourage positioning, communication, using the space and keeping the ball under close control. Don't expect your players to master the skill or movement straight away and repeatedly do it in the scrimmage but encourage the practice verbally.



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Code of Conduct

Players / Coaches / Parents / Spectators

Players Code of Conduct

Players are the most important people in the sport; playing for the team, and for the team to win. But not winning at any cost. Fair play and respect of all others are fundamentally important.

Obligations towards the Game

Every player should:

- Make every effort to develop their sporting abilities; skill, technique, tactics and stamina
- Give maximum effort and strive towards peak performance, even when results have been achieved
- Set a positive example to others, particularly youngsters and supporters
- Avoid any form of gamesmanship
- Not use inappropriate language

Obligations towards Own Team

Every player should:

- Make every effort within Fair Play and Laws of Game to help team win
- Resist any influence which might, or be seen to, bring question towards commitment of team

Obligations towards Laws and Rules

Every player should:

- Know and abide by the rules and spirit of the game
- Accept success and failure, victory and defeat equally
- Resist any temptation to take banned substances or banned techniques

Obligations towards Opponents

Every player should:

- Treat opponents with due respect at all times, irrespective of the result
- Safeguard the physical fitness of opponents, avoid violence and rough play, help injured opponents

Obligations towards Officials

Every player should:

- Accept the decision of Match Official without protest
- Avoid words or actions which may mislead Match Official
- Show respect at all times

Obligations towards Coach

Every player should:

- Abide by instructions of their coach, provided they do not contradict spirit of the game.



Coaches Code of Conduct

Coaches are key to the establishment of ethics in soccer. Their concept of ethics and their attitude directly affects the behavior of players under their supervision. Coaches must therefore take particular care towards their moral conduct. The following code tries not to defeat the winning mentality of coaches, but instead tries to dissociate the idea of a win at all cost attitude. The responsibility as a coach is to place the health, safety and education of the players, before the achievement or reputation of the club / parent / yourself.

Obligations towards the Game

Every coach should:

- Respect rights, the dignity and worth of each person representing the club with equality
- Place the safety and well-being of each player above all considerations, even development performance
- Adhere to all guidelines laid down by club / governing body
- Develop a mutual relationship with each player based on trust and respect
- Not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Ensure that the activities directed, are appropriate for age, maturity, experience and ability
- Clarify to players what is expected from them, and what they should expect from the coach
- Encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their behavior and performance
- Co-operate fully with other 'specialists' (i.e. Officials, Physios, Doctors)
- Always promote the positive aspects of sport (Fair Play) and never condone violence or behavior contradicting the laws and spirit of the game.
- Consistently display high standards of appearance and behavior
- Not use or tolerate inappropriate language



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Parents / Spectators Code of Conduct

Parents / Spectators influence the player's enjoyment and success in soccer. However good a player becomes, it is essential that parents and spectators reinforce the message that positive encouragement will contribute to:

- Child enjoyment
- Sense of personal achievement
- Self-esteem
- Improvement in the child's skills and techniques

A parent/spectators expectations and attitudes have a significant bearing on the children's attitudes towards

- Other players
- Officials
- Managers
- Spectators

Ensure that parents/spectators within your club are always positive and encouraging towards all children, not just their own. Encourage parents / spectators to:

- Applaud the opposition as well as your own team
- Avoid coaching the players during the game
- Not shout or scream
- Respect the referee and their decisions
- Give attention to each of the children involved, not just the talented
- Encourage everyone participating in the game



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