



## Practice Guide for U6-U8 Coaches

[www.dprys.org](http://www.dprys.org) (920) 785-0203

# CONGRATULATIONS!

You are a soccer coach.

Now what???

## Roles of a youth soccer coach:

- Provide a safe, fun, and educational environment
- Communicate your plans with the parents
  - Schedule 6-8 practices on the same nights, times and locations as your games
  - Set a treat schedule – parent bringing treats should sit on the sideline with the kids
  - Take time to introduce yourself and meet the other parents at the first practice
- Give plenty of praise - focus on effort, not outcome
- Divide playing time evenly
- Be organized at game time – know your lineup
- Know the basic rules and how to restart the game when it goes out of bounds
- Find other parents who are willing to help out
- Contact us if you need help
- *Relax and have fun WITH the kids!*

## Coaching tips:

- Let the game be the teacher
- Limit your instructions to 15 seconds
- Ask questions that engage the kids and encourage problem solving
- Keep everyone moving – limit standing in lines
- Use a whistle to get their attention
- Talk to the kids at their level – understand their limitations and why they are there
- During the game, do your best to keep the kids involved in the play
- Let the game be the teacher (*this one is REALLY important*)

## What NOT to do:

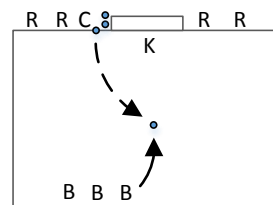
- Never criticize or yell at the players or referees
- Don't try to handle difficult players or parents on your own – email or call us so we can help

***You have accomplished your goal if your players want to come back and play next year!***

## Practice # 1 Topic of the day – *Shooting*

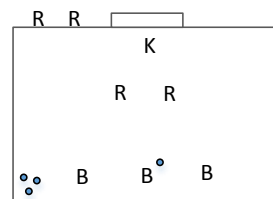
### 2 Team Shooting (10 minutes)

- Divide into 2 teams - Team one starts shooting with team 2 shagging behind the goal
- Round robin, each player gets 3 turns to take a 1-touch shot at the goal
- Have a player from Team 2 play goalie



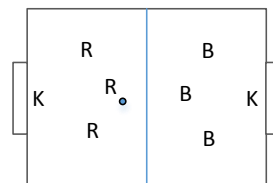
### Play 3 vs 2 to the goal (15 minutes)

- Divide into 2 teams - 3 offense vs 2 defenders plus a goalie
- Players take turns playing defense and goalie



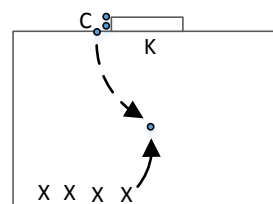
### Scrimmage (15 minutes)

- Have players focus on trying to shoot as soon as they can see the goal
- If the ball goes out, blow a whistle and have someone kick it back in
- Quick restarts will keep everyone moving – there will be time to teach throw-ins, corner and goal kicks later



### Lightning (10 minutes)

- 1 player starts as the goalie and the rest of the team forms a line about 10 yards away
- Coach rolls a ball and player gets one touch to shoot it in the goal
- If it gets stopped or it goes wide the shooter becomes the next goalie and the goalie goes to the back of the shooting line
- If the goalie gets scored on twice in a row they are out and the next person in line steps in to become the goal keeper



## Practice # 1 – *Coaching Points for Shooting*

### 2 Team Shooting

- Get started as soon as you have 2-3 players. Add players to the teams as they arrive.
- Have a coach or parent organize balls for the offense so the next player in line can start right away.
- Once the kids have the routine down, you should have time to work 1:1 with players on their kicking skills.

### Play 5 vs 3 to the goal

- Have a coach or parent help set up boundaries with cones so you can get started quickly.
- Take 15 seconds to explain, then GO!
- The first 2-3 turns will likely be unsuccessful – that's OK! On the next turn, ask..
  - Does anyone have any ideas on how to get past the defense? Is anyone else on the team open? Is passing the ball going to work?
- Have them do the next turn down in "slow motion" and point out that their teammate is open.

### Scrimmage

- Have players focus on trying to shoot as soon as they think they can see the goal.
- If the ball goes out of bounds, blow a whistle and have a player kick it back in as quickly as possible.
- It's OK to play without a goalie during the early practices, especially if you are using cones to mark the goals.

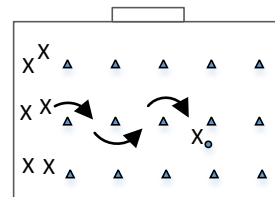
### Lightning

- Again.. take only 15 seconds to explain, then GO!
- Have a coach or parent help shag and organize balls for the offense.
- Set a goal for the number of points to score.

## Practice # 2 Topic of the day – *Dribbling*

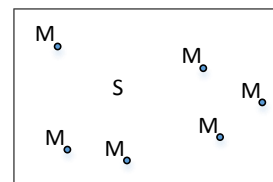
### *Dribbling through cones relay racing (10 minutes)*

- Divide into 3-4 groups and set up cones, spaced evenly over about 10 yards
- Have each player dribble to the left side of one cone, then the right side of the next
- After one player passes through a couple cones, send the next player in line



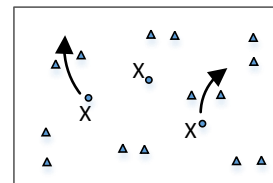
### *Sharks and Minnows (15 minutes)*

- Set up a 10 x 15 yard rectangle or a 10 yard circle
- All players start with a ball (minnows) except for one player (the shark)
- Sharks try to kick the balls outside the playing area. If the ball leaves the playing area, the player becomes a shark. Last minnow wins and becomes the shark for the next game.



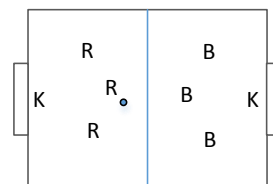
### *Dribbling through gates (10 minutes)*

- Take pairs of cones in place them a few yards apart to create “gates”
- Each player will have a ball and dribble through the gates
- As they get through each gate, they need to go left or right through another gate



### *Scrimmage (15 minutes)*

- Have players focus on trying to shoot as soon as they think they can see the goal
- If the ball goes out, blow a whistle and have someone kick it back in
- Quick restarts will keep everyone moving – there will be time to teach throw-ins, corner and goal kicks later



## Practice # 2 – *Coaching Points for Dribbling*

### *Dribbling through cones relay racing*

- Get started as soon as you have 2-3 players. Add players to the teams as they arrive.
- Have the players try to keep the ball as close to themselves as possible when dribbling.
- Remind them to keep their head up and look for the next cone.
- Keep track of time (in your head) and encourage them to beat their fastest relay.

### *Sharks and Minnows*

- Keep everyone moving – if they stand around, become a shark and help “stir” the pool
- The key to surviving is keeping the ball close and shielding the ball from the sharks

### *Dribbling through gates*

- Remind them to keep their head up and look for the next cone.
- When they can, make sure the players try to dribble with their other foot as well, just to get them used to that.
- Option: Have the players dribble randomly through the playing area. When you blow a whistle, they need to get through a gate as fast as they can.
- Advanced players should try dribbling with the outside of their foot to help them get through the gates faster.

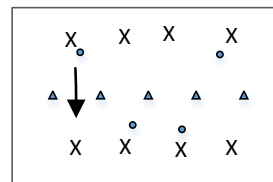
### *Scrimmage*

- Always remember, keep your instructions to 15 seconds and then GO!
- Have a coach or parent help shag and organize balls for the offense.
- Set a goal for the number of points to score.

## Practice # 3 Topic of the day – *Passing*

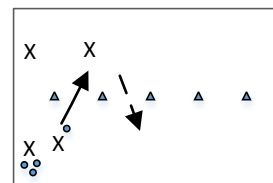
### *Passing and moving (10 minutes)*

- Set up two lines of cones about 5-10 yards apart
- After they pass to their partner a few times, have them back up 2 steps
- Continue to step back until they're too far apart, then have them start taking 2 steps forward after a few passes



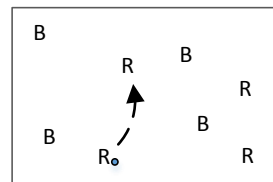
### *Passing through cones (10 minutes)*

- Set up one line of cones spread evenly across about 10 yards
- Form two lines, about 1-2 yards off each side of the cones
- While running down the field, the players take turns passing the ball to each other between the cones



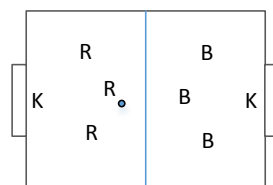
### *Air dribbling (15 minutes)*

- The player with the ball cannot move while they are holding the ball. They must..
  - pass it to a teammate
  - run while the ball is in the air (they can throw it to themselves 3 times)
- Tossing the ball in the air and heading it across the goal line scores 2 points
- Passing the ball across the goal line scores 1 point
- If the ball hits the ground, the other team gets it



### *Scrimmage (15 minutes)*

- Set a rule that the players can only touch the ball 3 times then they must pass



## Practice # 3 – *Coaching Points for Passing*

### *Passing and moving*

- Players should plant one foot next to the ball and carry their body through the ball as they kick, almost as if they keep running while they kick
- Have the players try to pass with the inside of their foot and not their toes
- Keep them looking straight at their partner while they pass. Their hips should be square to their target.

### *Passing through cones*

- Keep the players close enough that they can make a successful pass to their partner
- Discuss that it is important to run to where the pass will be so they are ready to receive it

### *Air dribbling*

- After a few (unsuccessful) tries, pause the play and ask the player with the ball..
  - who can you throw it to?
  - where should your teammates go to be open?

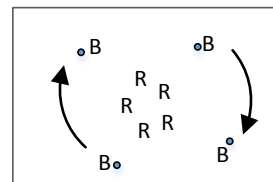
### *Scrimmage*

- Start introducing throw-ins, corner kicks and goal kicks
- Encourage them to keep their heads up so they can see their teammates
- Pause the play a few times and ask the players..
  - are you open for a pass?
  - where could you move to be open?
- Point out the right time to pass is BEFORE the defense gets to them
- Have the players try to pass the ball wide and not always down the middle of the field

## Practice # 4 Topic of the day – Trapping

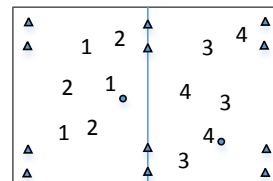
### Windows (10 minutes)

- Divide into 2 teams and make 2 circles, one inside the other
- Players on the outside have a ball and dribble clockwise around the outer circle
- When you whistle, they stop and pass the ball to a player in the inner circle
- After 5 minutes, switch teams



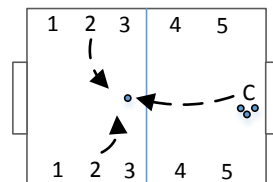
### Two small-sided games (10 minutes)

- Divide into 4 teams and create 2 small playing fields (Team 1 vs. Team 2)
- Set up 4 goals, one in each corner of the field – each team has two goals to defend
- Play for 5 minutes and then switch the teams (Team 1 vs. Team 3)



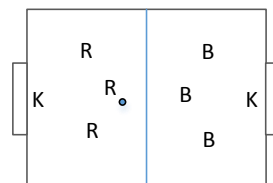
### Steal the bacon (15 minutes)

- Divide into 2 teams, and starting at 1 give each player a number
- Each team stands on their end line
- The coach rolls out a ball and yells out a number. The player on each team with that number races to trap the ball and dribble it back to their side



### Scrimmage (15 minutes)

- Set a rule that the players can only touch the ball 3 times then they must pass



## Practice # 4 – Coaching Points for Trapping

### Windows

- Be ready for the whistle.
- Trap and pass back as quickly as possible.

### Two small-sided games

- Keep your head up while dribbling so you can see your teammates
- Emphasize that they need to try to pass across the field to try and score
- Pause play and ask..
  - Do you have a teammate that is open for a pass?
  - Is another goal open? Should someone move to the open space for a pass?

### Steal the bacon

- Be ready to hear your number
- Control the ball quickly and kick it back to your side as hard as you can

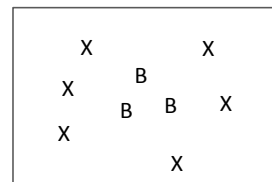
### Scrimmage

- Continue working on throw-ins, corner kicks and goal kicks
- Pause the play a few times and ask the players..
  - are you open for a pass?
  - where could you move to be open?

## Practice # 5 Topic of the day – *Defending*

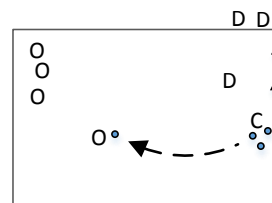
### *Knee tag (10 minutes)*

- Create a square about 15 x 15 yards, making about 1/3 of the players wearing a pinnie – they are the taggers
- They must tag another player's knees to freeze them
- Once frozen, they need another teammate to tag their knee to unfreeze them
- Play for 3 minutes then switch the taggers



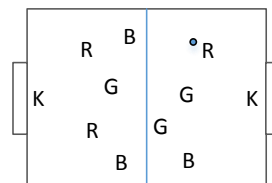
### *1 vs. 1 (10 minutes)*

- Create a rectangle about 7 x 10 yards with a goal about 2-3 yards wide in one corner
- Defense and Offense start on opposite sides
- The coach kicks a ball out to the offense
- They score 1 point if they shoot it through the goal, 2 points if they dribble it through.



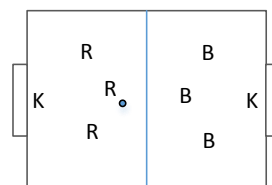
### *3 team defending (15 minutes)*

- Divide into 3 teams. One team wears pinnies and is trying to score on either goal.
- The other two teams try to play keep away from the team with the pinnies.
- If the team wearing the pinnies scores, the ball is put back into play by the other teams
- If the ball goes out of bounds, it is a turnover to the other team
- Play for 3-5 minutes and switch the team wearing the pinnies



### *Scrimmage (15 minutes)*

- Set a rule that the players can only touch the ball 3 times then they must pass



## Practice # 5 – *Coaching Points for Defending*

### *Knee tag*

- Hustle! Get your teammate's attention by calling their name

### *1 vs. 1*

- Hustle to challenge the other player – it's ok to miss
- Stay between the ball and the goal
- Be ready to chase the player if they get past

### *3 team defending*

- Only 1-2 defenders challenging the offense at a time
- Cover other players to cut off the pass
- Spread out so you your teammates can clear the ball by passing to you

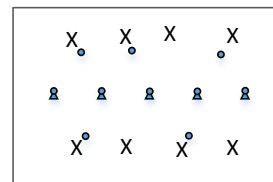
### *Scrimmage*

- Be aggressive on defense – challenge right away and all the time
- Run back to cover on defense if the offense gets past you
- Clear the ball to the sides of the field

## Practice # 6 Topic of the day – *Game Play*

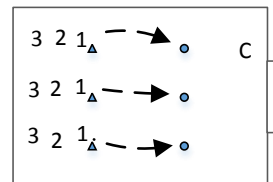
### *Kick the ball off the cone (10 minutes)*

- Set up a rectangle about 10 x 15 yards, placing 4 balls on 4 cones in the middle of the playing field
- Divide the players, putting half on each end line of the field
- Teams score 1 point for knocking a ball off a cone
- Balls are placed back on the cones during the game
- Play 3 games for 3-4 minutes each. Losing team does jumping jacks



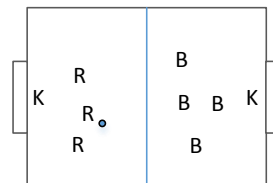
### *Shooting by the numbers (10 minutes)*

- Make 3 even lines and give each person a number
- Coach calls out a number and that person has to run to the ball and try to score
- The first player to score gets 2 points, then scoring is 1 point per goal
- Have a content to see who can score the most points



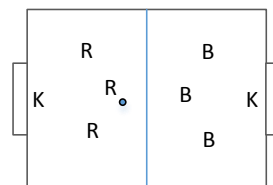
### *Numbers up (15 minutes)*

- Divide into 2 teams, making sure that one team has fewer players than the other
- The team with fewer players gets 2 points for each goal, the team with more players gets 1 point for each goal



### *Scrimmage (15 minutes)*

- Set a rule that the players can only touch the ball 3 times then they must pass



## Practice # 6 – *Coaching Points for Game Play.*

### *Kick the ball off the cone*

- Point your body at the ball – hips square to the target
- Follow through on your shot

### *Shooting by the numbers*

- Be ready! Hustle to ball

### *Numbers up*

- You are building situations where you have more offensive numbers so you want to encourage them to look to shoot and try to score.
- In defensive situations, you want to challenge the offense but run back to cover if you the offense gets past you

### *Scrimmage*

- Put it all together
  - Throw-ins, corner kicks, defense, hustle, heads-up play, passing..
- Have fun!