



Practice Guide for U10-U12 Coaches

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:

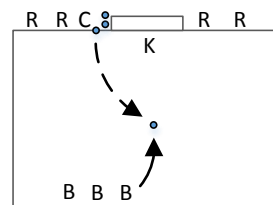
- Never criticize or yell at the players or referees
- Don't try to handle difficult players or parents on your own – email or call us so we can help

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

Practice # 1 Topic of the day – Shooting

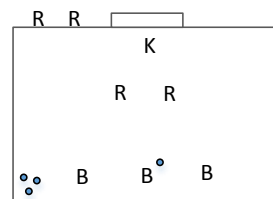
2 Team Shooting (10 minutes)

- 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



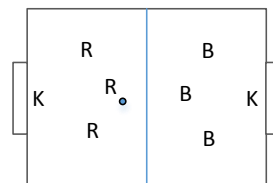
Play 3 vs 2 to the goal (15 minutes)

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



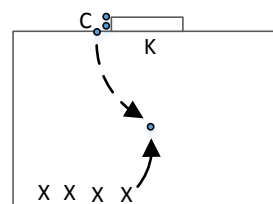
Scrimmage (15 minutes)

- Have players focus on trying to shoot as soon as they 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



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.

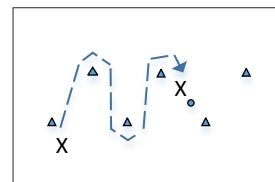
Lightning

- 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*

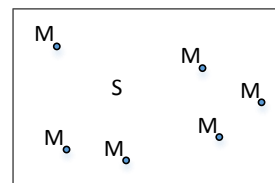
Diagonal dribbling relay racing (10 minutes)

- Divide into 3-4 groups with 2-3 players per group
- Set up cones so they are in a zig-zag fashion, spaced out evenly over a 10-15 yard span.
- Have each player dribble to the outside of the cones; when the player reaches the last cone, they need to dribble back to the next person in line and then they will go.



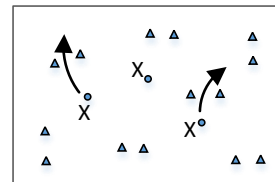
Sharks and Minnows (15 minutes)

- 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.



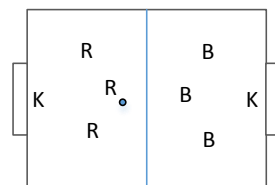
Dribbling through gates (10 minutes)

- 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*

Diagonal dribbling through cones

- 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.

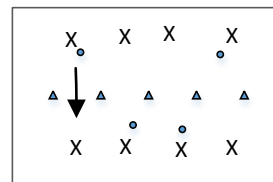
Scrimmage

- 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*

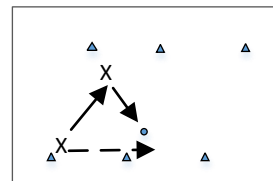
Passing and moving (10 minutes)

- 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



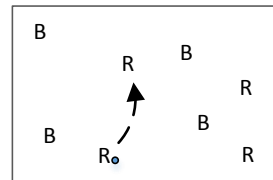
“Give and Go” passing (10 minutes)

- Have players get into groups of 2 and then have them work on passing and moving around a cone and getting the ball back. **(5 Minutes)**
- Next, break into 2 teams and have them play a scrimmage where there are no goals. Each team scores a point when they perform a give-and go. **(5 Minutes)**



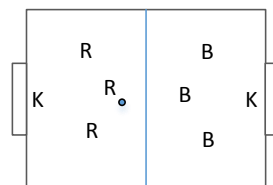
Air dribbling (15 minutes)

- 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.

“Give and go” passing

- Focus on passing and moving; try to get open after passing the ball
- Help find an open area to move to in order to get the ball back

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?

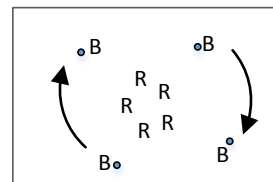
Scrimmage

- 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

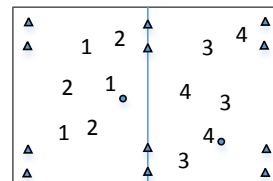
Windows (10 minutes)

- 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



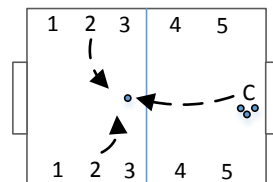
Two small-sided games (10 minutes)

- 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)



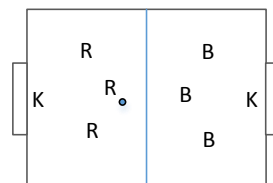
Steal the bacon (15 minutes)

- 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

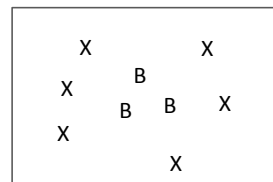
Scrimmage

- 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*

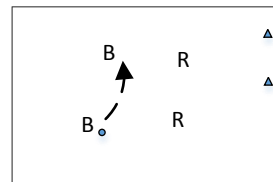
Knee tag (10 minutes)

- 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



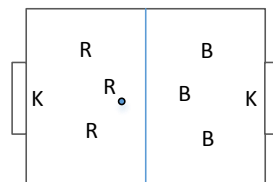
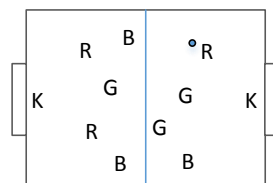
2 vs. 2 (10 minutes)

- Create a rectangle about 15 x 20 yards with a goal about 4 yards wide in one corner
- Defense and Offense start on opposite sides
- The coach kicks a ball out to the offense
- Offense gets two points if they score in the goal, the defense gets 1 point if they can dribble it over the opposite line from the goal..



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

2 vs. 2

- Work with your other defender to stop the opponents from getting to the goal
- Hustle to challenge the other player
- Stay between the ball and the goal at all times
- 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

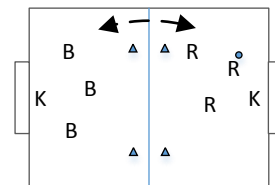
Scrimmage

- 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*

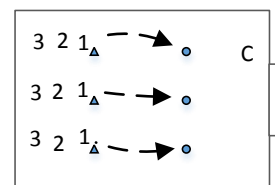
Wide play (10 minutes)

- Divide into two teams
- Tell the players that the ball must go to one of the outside “alleys” before they can score a goal.
- Encourage the players to look to play the ball wide before going directly to the goal



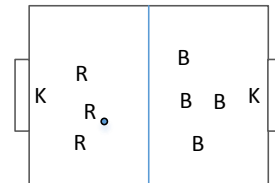
Shooting by the numbers (10 minutes)

- 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



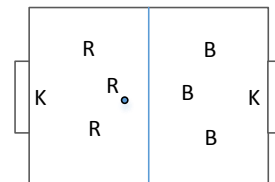
Numbers up (15 minutes)

- 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.*

Wide play

- Focus on spreading the game out by playing the ball wide into the “alleys”
- Work on using the width of the field to spread out.
- Pause play to point out that the ally on the other side of the field is open

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!