

# 10U COACH



Complete "How-To" for Coaching Young Children  
*Includes a Complete Season of Training Plans*



AMERICAN YOUTH  
SOCCER ORGANIZATION

COACHING SERIES

# THE ADVENTUROUS WORLD OF 10U

## LET THE GOLDEN AGE BEGIN

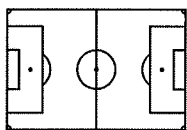
Ages 9-12 are often referred to as the “golden age” for learning. At AYSO, 10U is a time for **ADVENTURE!** where players’ willingness and ability to absorb new teachings are met with innovative and age appropriate **Player Development.**

From a coaching perspective, we now have two new significant elements to contend with: goalkeepers and offside. As you can imagine, this is a major shift in our players’ soccer experience. For the most part, the 10U game resembles that of full-sided, so our preparation, organization and coaching should progress accordingly.



# COACHING METHODOLOGY

## FROM THE FIELD



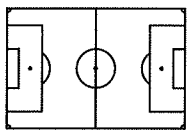
"One of my biggest pet peeves is youth team coaches who take winning too seriously. This has always bothered me, and I always tell coaches to forget about winning with young players. They need to create an environment where the kids enjoy playing and are developing their soccer skills. Winning should never be a priority."

*Landon Donovan, AYSO Alumni and Professional Player*

The AYSO Player Development Team and NCAC have researched current coaching methodologies and approaches to quality training from all across the soccer globe and are proud to present our findings for your consideration and implementation.

## DEVELOPMENT OVER WINNING

## FROM THE FIELD



"Development over winning. Being faithful to it, being really faithful to it every single day. Are the players, are the kids the most important thing? That's what I worry about. That's what I talk about. That's my only goal: making the players and of course, the coaches who teach them, all of us, better!"

*Claudio Reyna, Former U.S. Soccer Youth Technical Director*

Prioritizing **Development Over Winning** does **NOT** reduce competition, which is instrumental to a player's development. However, a competitive environment does not necessarily need to be all about wins, draws and losses.

Consider the emotional roller coaster of equating success *only* when you win the game or score a goal (aspects that are *not* 100% within your control)? How would we like to be judged as adults in that type of scenario?

**As coaches, it is our responsibility to determine if the competitive environment is healthy or not. Please consider this on your coaching journey.**

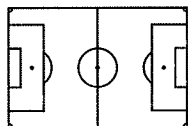
KEEP IN  
MIND



Children should be competitive, not the adults! And a competitive environment for our youth players should focus on **performance** rather than **outcome** (favoring ball skills, effort, creativity, etc., as means to find success, not the score).



## FROM THE FIELD

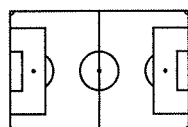


"In matches the coaches should keep out of the way. He/she is an important figure, of course, but is more likely to lose a match than win it. Matches are won by players."

*Romario, Brazilian Legend*

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCCER (VS. OTHER U.S. SPORTS)

### FROM THE FIELD



"AYSO emphasizes all the positives of soccer: the enjoyment that kids get from the sport, understanding how to play on a team and be a good teammate, and developing skills in a fun environment."

*Julie Foudy, AYSO Hall of Fame, 1991 & 1999 World Cup Champion, 1996 & 2004 Olympic Gold Medalist*

It is important to recognize some key differences between soccer and other American sports, as this impacts how the game should be played, viewed and coached. In comparison, soccer is:

- Free-flowing (fewer stoppages).
- Low-scoring (more often).
- Requires eye-foot coordination (versus eye-hand in baseball, basketball, football).
- Has no physical size requirement.
- Equal opportunity sport (girls are equally as talented and have comparable opportunities to boys).
- **PLAYER-based** (as game flows, *players* make the decisions and PLAY the game, less coach involvement).

## STYLE AND ATTITUDE

Mourinho, Ferguson, Klinsmann, Guardiola? Coaching styles differ based on personality and beliefs on how the game should be played. Effective coaches; however, *all* possess similar qualities:

- |                       |                            |              |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| • Leader              | • Knowledgeable            | • Observant  |
| • Teacher & Motivator | • Quality Demonstrator     | • Humorous   |
| • Conscientiousness   | • Enthusiastic & Energetic | • Personable |
| • Fair & Honest       | • Patient & Understanding  | • Confident  |
| • Smart Appearance    | • Communicator             |              |

The general qualities of any coach combine into four fundamental attributes all successful coaches share:

1. Soccer knowledge.
2. Prioritize athlete's well being.
3. Ability to communicate knowledge to the player.
4. Ability to observe and evaluate (coaching eye) to correct any apparent faults (in a positive manner).

#### KEEP IN MIND



Whatever coaching persona you may adopt, avoid being the center of attention! Create an environment where the players are the focus and priority, and they can gain success on their own.

## PREPARATION AND ORGANIZATION

### PREPARATION

**Always prepare a written Training Plan!** Consider what you wish to work on and what activities you can use to achieve your goal. A written plan ensures smooth transitions, less down time and a more economical use of precious time. A blank AYSO Training Plan is on *page 99* and numerous completed plans on *pages 74-85*.

Take a few minutes just before your training session to review your plan and the coaching points you want to make. (Consider saving your plans as a coaching library for future seasons/sessions or to share with other coaches in your Region.)

### APPEARANCE

Appropriate attire is expected when conducting your coaching session. Wearing soccer apparel and footwear go a long way to comforting your players that you know what you are doing related to your role as their "soccer coach."

Sunglasses are discouraged (unless you require a medical prescription), as the players cannot see your eyes. Even with a prescription, remove your sunglasses when in direct communication with your players.

### ORGANIZATION

Ideally, set up your area in advance of players and parents arriving. **Upon their arrival, they should see a planned and organized environment, which will immediately set the tone for the session as well as provide confidence for the parents.** In organizing your coaching area:

- Make sure the area is safe (playing surface, physical considerations, sprinklers, etc.).
- Plan for a smooth transition from one exercise to another.
- Minimize the number of cones that you have to pick up or reset.
- Have a place for equipment and breaks.



## EQUIPMENT

Below is a basic list of the minimum equipment you should have as part of your coaching kit:

- AYSO Player Registration Forms – which include the Emergency Authorization.
- Basic first-aid kit\*.
- **(Players should bring water to every session).**
- 12 cones (preferably multi-colored).
- **10** scrimmage vests (preferably 2 sets of different colors).
- Extra soccer balls (players should bring a ball to every session).
- Pump.
- Extra pair of shin guards (players must wear shin guards at **every** session).
- Pop-up goals (preferred).
- Whistle.
- Charged cell phone (in case of emergency).
- Training plan.

\*Be familiar with your first aid kit contents so that you know what you have **and where it is** if needed.

## AGE APPROPRIATE UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

The following chart generalizes age characteristics of children ages 9 through 12 years of age. (Note: *All* children are unique and often chronological age can conflict with developmental age; therefore, individual application should always be considered.)

KEEP IN  
MIND

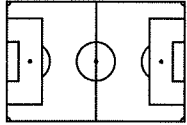


Our players are *not* mini-adults; therefore, our training sessions must be adapted to life through *their* eyes, *their* interests and most important, *their* capabilities.

AGE APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENTS	
<b>10U</b>	<p>9-12 years is the golden age for learning and the perfect age to increase focus on specific techniques and skills. It is the time for ADVENTURE!</p> <p>Physically, ages 9-10 are still in the early stages of development.</p> <p>Pre-pubescent players (9-12) are responsive to role models, friendships and peer approval.</p> <p>Players enjoy the team concept but will participate enthusiastically in competitive arenas, so 1v1 and 2v1 situations are perfect to develop individual skills. Passing technique/activities will help develop their team concept.</p>
<b>12U</b>	<p>Players have increased understanding of strategy and tactics so small-sided matches can help develop basic attacking and defensive principles. Players should still rotate positions to avoid early specialization (as well as participate in other activities/sports).</p> <p>Physical literacy (balance, agility, speed, coordination, etc.) improves.</p> <p>12U is the time for “polishing” the player’s technical skills.</p>

# COACHING MOMENTS

## FROM THE FIELD



"Football is simple; trainers (coaches) shouldn't make it so complicated."

*Johan Cruyff, Dutch Soccer Legend*

At the end of the day, it is the coach's job to coach! But having the content is one thing (and we are providing this for you), but knowing **how** to effectively communicate, motivate and develop your individual players is another talent.

### KEEP IN MIND



**Positive Coaching!** Regardless of your personal approach or delivery, **Positive Instruction and Encouragement (P.I.E.)** should *always* be used to instruct and motivate your players. They will respond better to you and it will help keep AYSO a developmentally rich and positive environment.

## MANAGING THE COACHING MOMENT...LESS IS MORE

Occupy a central but sideline position during training to allow a clear, panoramic view of the activity.

The coaching environment you create must be safe and conducive to learning. Players must be stimulated to learn and educational opportunities must be well thought out if you want to maximize player development. Players must be given freedom to be creative, find solutions **without** constant coaching, and ultimately learn from their mistakes. Remember, mistakes are guidelines for improvement!

It is a fine line, managing the flow of your session and finding the appropriate time to step in. Methods:

- Forced Stoppage (**freeze, get in, make your point, get out**).
- Natural Stoppage (be careful the coaching opportunity hasn't passed and the situation forgotten).
- Flow (talking as the game is playing...but **avoid** constant commentary).
- Individual Reference (pulling a player aside to make an observation).

## PRESENTING YOUR COACHING POINTS

**Avoid lengthy speeches!** Keep instructions for activities as simple and quick as possible and limited to one point at a time. Where possible, explain in images and provide visual analogies (much easier for kids to grasp). Coaching points or instructions should be:

- Concise (broken down, simple, small pieces of information).
- Accurate.
- Relevant (to a coaching principle or objective).
- **Demonstrated** (whenever possible)!

When addressing your players, make sure **they** are not directly facing the sun.

## LET THEM PLAY AND THE GAME TEACH!

### KEEP IN MIND



**Avoid lengthy speeches!** Keep instructions for activities as simple and quick as possible.

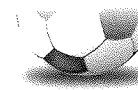
I HEAR...

I SEE...

I DO...



I FORGET



I REMEMBER



I UNDERSTAND

## VOICE

- Do consider the volume and tone of your voice.
- Avoid being monotone.
- Modulating the intensity of your voice can help emphasize your coaching points and gain the required attention.
- Always maintain control and *never* raise your voice in anger or frustration.

## INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS OF DELIVERY

### Questions

Children respond enthusiastically to questions and are stimulated to find the answer. Questions can be:

- **Factual** Definitive, simple answers (*what*).
- **Conceptual** Requires a higher level of processing and thought (*how*).
- **Stimulating** Requires complex reasoning (*why*).

**Commanding:** Definitive, controlled, lecture (less player-centered).

**Guided Discovery:** Guides the player through process by posing a series of questions whose responses lead to the understanding of a concept (like detectives).

**Experimentation:** Cause and effect comparison (try it and see, compare).

## COMPLETE SYSTEM OF DELIVERY

### Say, Show, Do and Review

An effective complete teaching method for any age group:

1. **SAY:** Explain skill or technique (keep it brief especially with younger players).
2. **SHOW:** Effectively demonstrate skill or technique.
3. **DO:** Have players perform skill or technique.
4. **REVIEW:** *Observe*, *Correct* and *Confirm* proper technique.

**Observe** (silently). Instead of trying to correct immediately, let them play uninterrupted for a time (they will learn from mistakes) and take notes (preferably written), focusing on *one* effort they can improve.

**Correct** what you saw in terms of the player's execution, and then provide the player with attainable modifications to correct one or two deficits by once again demonstrating.

**Confirm** accomplishments once success is achieved! Say it out loud, so everyone can hear.

### Post Session

**Discussion with the players:** Do not underestimate the value and impact of a positive comment or constructive feedback to a player after the training session (but keep it concise).

**Review your training plan:** Note what worked well and what needs to improve.

**Evaluate yourself:** Encourage constructive feedback from others in relation to your coaching management and session structure.



# COACHING YOUR OWN CHILD

A large percentage of you will be lacing up sneakers to coach your own children and this section outlines some perspective and tips to maximize the opportunity...for you, and more importantly for your child (and the rest of the family).

## KEEP IN MIND



In the blink of an eye, they are grown up and beyond our daily reach. Therefore, what an incredible opportunity to spend time in “their” world as “their” coach!

## But I’ve Never Coached Or Played Soccer Before!

- It’s okay if you never played soccer or don’t know much about it! However, by reading this manual and progressing through the AYSO National Coaching Program, you *will* gather valuable tools to succeed.
- No pressure! Do not misinterpret the role you’re supposed to play. Go out to enjoy!
- Change your adult perspective and **view the game through your child’s eyes.**
- If you can create a safe, fun and developmental environment for your child and team, **encourage self-expression and mistakes (learning)**, you are already in the running for Coach of the Year.
- Fun, exercise and the chance to play soccer is what it’s all about, particularly at the younger ages.

## What’s My Role As Coach?

- Maintain realistic expectations! It’s a game, a sport, a pastime. As you are likely aware, the odds are against your child making the pros; therefore, make sure your own adult expectations do not stray too far from those of your child.
- Soccer, perhaps more than any other sport, requires little teaching at the early ages. **The game itself is genuinely the best teacher.** In fact, the role of the coach in the first stages is simply to give children the opportunity to discover the game’s joys in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Generally speaking, through 10U let them play. At 12U we can expand their technical development and reading of the game.
- What you’re really doing is very similar to taking your child and his or her friends to the playground. You’re supervising soccer playtime while allowing the children to explore the fun on their own terms.
- Once you comprehend the expectations, you’ll find all aspects of the role less daunting, including the dynamics of coaching your own child.



## Coach or Parent?

- When you first start coaching you may be introducing your child to a new experience other than the game: sharing the attention of mom or dad with a larger number of **other** children (while at the same time, you are trying not to show favoritism).
- The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) recommends you explain to your child, “I always love you and you are special to me. But when I’m coaching you, I need to be fair and treat you like all the other players. And you need to respond to me as your coach, not your dad. Do you think you can do that?”

## Am I Doing Okay?

- **Avoid being harder on your own child than the other players because you’re worried about perceptions of favoritism.** No matter what you say or how you say it, your comments can often register as a personal attack because they come from dad or mom.
- Don’t be afraid to praise your child and acknowledge her strengths and accomplishments at every opportunity. As well as your child they are also a player on the team!
- A good test on how to treat your child on the soccer team is to constantly ask yourself if your reactions to your child’s play or behavior are the same as they are to your child’s teammates.
- Another peril of coaching your own children is to leave your coaching hat on when the session/match is over. Limit your post-session soccer discussions once the whistle blows. Once the topic of food is raised, it is probably time to get back to your **full-time** role.

KEEP IN  
MIND

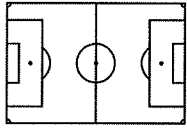


SAVOR EVERY MOMENT!

It will pass all too quickly!

# AGE APPROPRIATE (PLAYER) DEVELOPMENT

## FROM THE FIELD



"Learning to be a soccer athlete, there are progressive stages and if you don't get the early stages right, *in sequence*, then you are fighting an uphill battle in developing an athlete."

*Dave Chesler, Former U.S. Soccer Director of Coach Education  
Current WNT Performance Analysis Coach*

## THE SCIENCE OF AGE APPROPRIATE TRAINING

"To provide youth soccer programs *that enrich children's lives*."

This vision can **only** be achieved if we continually ask ourselves if the activity, method or decision will truly enrich the player's life. To achieve this goal, our training sessions **must** be adapted to the player's specific age and stage of development.

Technical, tactical, physical and psychosocial training components should be woven throughout each session; however, **at all-times** with deep respect to the player's specific age **and** stage of development. At AYSO, we prioritize these important aspects as follows:

### Psychosocial

Respect, motivation, confidence, cooperation, competitiveness, etc., and how these emotions and feelings impact a player's development. Also, includes a player's ability to reason, learn and solve problems. **At AYSO, we develop the whole person!**

### Physical

A player's physical attributes: speed, agility, endurance, strength and power, etc. **At AYSO, we promote a healthy lifestyle through soccer!**

### Technical

A player's ability to master ball skills, i.e., ball control, shooting, passing, etc. **At AYSO, we prioritize skill development and ball mastery.**

### Tactical

A player's capacity to use their skill and ability *within* a game environment, i.e., creating space in midfield, possession and transition, creating width, etc. **At AYSO, we educate our players on playing as part of (and within) a team dynamic.**

# KEY DEVELOPMENTAL COMPONENTS IN AYSO 10U TRAINING

## A TIME FOR ADVENTURE...

### PSYCHOSOCIAL

- May have fear of failure, not being liked, etc.
- May blame others or make up alibis to explain their own shortcomings or mistakes.
- Enjoy talking and being with friends.
- Like to be a coach's helper.
- Feelings can be easily hurt (need reinforcement).
- Recall details with considerable accuracy.
- Understand concepts of cause and effect.
- Enjoy putting on "shows" for parents and friends.
- Willing to join in games that require a moderate degree of strategy.
- Skill building is best achieved in non-competitive games.
- Take what you show or tell them literally; so be sure to say exactly what you mean.
- Children at this age are starting to be self-critical, so make sure you are always positive in your approach.



### PHYSICAL

- Still in the early stages of physical development.
- Will participate enthusiastically in competitive activities.
- Will practice new skills repeatedly to perfect them.
- Will likely experience lowered frequency of minor illnesses.

### TECHNICAL

- Instep kick
- Dribbling
- Throw-in
- Inside of the foot-push pass
- Inside of the foot-ball control
- Top of the thigh-ball control
- Juggling
- Tackling-front block
- Goalkeeping

### TACTICAL

#### Attacking Objectives

*Score*

*Maintain Possession*

*Advance Ball*

#### Attacking Principles

*Penetration*

*Support*

*Mobility*

*Width*

#### Defending Objectives

*Prevent Scoring*

*Regain Possession*

*Delay Opponents*

#### Defending Principles

*Pressure (delay)*

*Cover*

*Balance*

*Compactness*

# ELEMENTS OF SOCCER

## OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

ATTACKING OBJECTIVES			DEFENDING OBJECTIVES		
SCORE	Maintain Possession	Advance Ball	Prevent Scoring	Regain Possession	Delay Opponents
BASED ON A PLAYER'S RELATIVE POSITION TO:					
The Ball	Teammates	Opponents	Location on Field	Time in Game	

However, like most aspects of the game, **objectives vary depending on player age and stage of development:**

### ATTACKING OBJECTIVES (BY AGE)

	6U	8U	10U	12U
Score	√	√	√	√
Keep Possession		√	√	√
Advance Ball			√	√

### DEFENDING OBJECTIVES (BY AGE)

	6U	8U	10U	12U
Prevent Scoring	√	√	√	√
Regain Possession		√	√	√
Delay Opponents			√	√



# PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

The Principles of Play are used to **achieve** the Objectives of the Game.

There are ten **Principles of Play** utilized in soccer — five **attacking** and five **defending** principles, each introduced at a specific age and stage of development. **10U Principles of Play are highlighted in the chart below:**

For each attacking principle, there is a defending principle to counter it.		
ATTACKING	countered by	DEFENDING
<b>Penetration 10U v</b> Advancing the ball past opposing players by dribbling, passing and shooting.		<b>Pressure (delay) 10U v</b> Pressuring opponents in possession by giving immediate chase, denying their options, i.e., dribbling, passing, shooting, etc., or delaying the opponents in order to regain possession.
<b>Support 10U v</b> Supporting teammates by creating safe options for the player with the ball.		<b>Cover 10U v</b> Supporting the player(s) challenging the ball in case they are beaten. Limits options for 1st attacker.
<b>Mobility 10U v</b> Players interchanging positions (filling in for one another as needed) and moving off the ball. Unbalancing defense, creating numerical advantages and thereby attacking/scoring opportunities.		<b>Balance 10U v</b> Reading the attack and providing an equal or greater number of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.
<b>Width 10U v</b> Kin of mobility. Attacking on a broad front (players spread out) stretches and isolates the defense and creates space for players to advance.		<b>Compactness 10U v</b> Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area making it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball.
<b>Creativity</b> Creating opportunities for advancement, possession and scoring by utilizing individual skills such as feints and fakes.		<b>Control/restraint (composure)</b> Staying calm, disciplined and organized in the face of an attack by maintaining proper defensive techniques and positioning.

Remember, due to the fluid nature of soccer, players’ roles are in constant rotation, and supporting players can be behind, to the side, or in advance of the ball.

The only players with definitive roles are the 1st attacker and 1st defender.

Additional roles (support, mobility, width, creativity **and** cover, balance, compactness, control/restraint) can be provided by numerous players.

Ultimately, players must understand **all** attacking and defending roles to truly master the game.

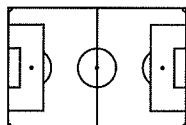
KEEP IN  
MIND



**In soccer there are no *absolutely* correct decisions.** You cannot always judge how well your team is playing by the results of the game. You need to have a standard method of assessing your team form moment to moment. The **Principles of Play** can be your measuring stick.

# POSITIONS

## FROM THE FIELD



"The Dutch change positions quicker than you can make a cup of coffee."

*Paolo Rossi, Italian Soccer Legend*

At AYSO we do not formally introduce position-specific coaching until **12U**. There is no harm *familiarizing* your players with the basic responsibility of each position at 10U, but this does NOT mean you have players rooted to one spot covering their positions, while the game develops...without them! How many times have you seen young defenders being contained in their "own" half because they are not permitted to cross the half-way line? **Frankly, this needs to stop as it is not conducive to player development and impacts the player's overall experience!**

**Regardless of age, all outfield players should be encouraged to defend AND attack. Players should be given the freedom to be involved in the flow of the game, but empowered with the responsibility to cover their position (or have someone else cover it) if they choose to explore.** Your center-half should be encouraged to score goals, your striker, encouraged to chase back and stop goal scoring chances.

Throughout the season, try to let all players experience all field positions (not in same game). Allow players to play one, or at most, two positions in a single game giving them some time to familiarize themselves and get comfortable with the position. This also applies to the goalkeeper position so that *all* children get a chance to develop their field skills.

**Everyone Plays!** Remember, every child in AYSO must play 1/2 of every game; however, we recommend strongly that each player play 3/4 of every game *before* any player plays a full game. Children of all abilities improve when they play and the more they play, the better they get.

Soccer has four basic positions: **goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, and strikers**. There are numerous specialized names for each: sweeper, forward, wing, outside back, center back, stopper, etc. We will concentrate only on the four *basic* positions whose *general* responsibilities are outlined below:

Position	Own Team with Ball	Other Team with Ball
Goalkeepers	Begin the Attack	Stop Scoring Attempt
Defenders	Maintain Possession Advance the Ball	Stop Scoring Attempt Regain Possession
Midfielders	Advance the Ball Maintain Possession	Delay Attack Regain Possession
Strikers	Score Advance the Ball Maintain Possession	Regain Possession Delay Attack

### KEEP IN MIND



All players should be encouraged to defend and attack, and given the freedom and responsibility to be involved in the flow of the game.



## SYSTEMS OF PLAY (FORMATIONS)

Refers to the formation of positions that a team engages during a game, i.e., 1-3-3-2 = 1 goalkeeper, 3 defenders, 3 midfielders and 2 strikers). **Age and stage of development should influence what and when to introduce shape and organization of play.**

Teaching players about systems of play, along with the principles and objectives of the game will begin to open them up to the concepts of **shape** and **organization** (*again, consider age and stage of development*).

- Systems are numbered with the first number indicating the goalkeeper, then the number of defenders, then midfielders, then forwards, i.e., 1-3-3-2 means: 1 goalkeeper, 3 defenders, 3 midfielders and 2 strikers.
- Players during a game should not be positioned in straight lines across the field. They fill general areas, **not specific spots**. Emphasize this to your players.

Do not be discouraged if your team plays as a herd at times with little or no organization (especially at the younger ages). Player maturity, skill and an understanding of the objectives, principles and systems will slowly but surely alleviate this problem. Guaranteed!

### KEEP IN MIND

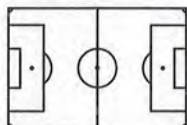


No system of play will overcome a lack of basic technique or skill. Systems of play must be appropriate for the players on your team. Therefore, find a system of play that fits the ability of your players instead of trying to fit **your players** into a particular system.

Soccer is a free-flowing and dynamic game (not static). Players must be encouraged and given the freedom to move relative to the ball, their teammates, their opponents, time in the game and the goal.

## STYLE OF PLAY

### FROM THE **FIELD**



"My life and the *beautiful* game."

*Pele*

As a major cornerstone to the game in this country, we have a responsibility to help develop our players in a manner consistent with our national teams and ultimately help prepare our players to reach and play at their desired potential.

Therefore, we have decided to share an organizational perspective, not a mandate, but a belief in how the game should be played.

At AYSO, we encourage player freedom, creativity and expression (remember our quest to enrich lives). We believe the game should be played with more intent, more purpose, using the ball to achieve our objectives... not relying on the luck of the bounce.

We should strive to make the ball do the work by keeping it moving, maintaining possession and quickly and proactively transitioning to create goal-scoring opportunities. All players attack when we have the ball, all players defend when we lose the ball. Our players should be technically efficient to adapt their role to whatever the coach requires to best suit the team.

Formations should be tailored to your specific group of players; however, two line-ups to consider for the 7 v 7 game are: 1-2-3-1 and 1-3-2-1. In both cases, the two outside players in the line of three should provide width and work both offensively and defensively.

In short, we want to create exciting soccer players who can play exciting soccer. To summarize:

- TECHNICALLY EFFICIENT.
- INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY AND EXPRESSION.
- DELIBERATE!
- PURPOSEFUL AND CONTROLLED POSSESSION.
- FAST PENETRATION!
- QUICK TRANSITION.
- TEAM UNITY AND TEAM IMPACT.
- ADAPTABLE!

### KEEP IN MIND



At AYSO, we urge you to consider a style of play that encourages player freedom and expression (remember our quest to *enrich lives*); however, in reality, we simply want for you and your players to have the most enjoyment you possibly can from this wonderful game, *whatever* style you choose to play.





# QUALITY TRAINING

## FROM THE FIELD



"The coach has to establish a playing environment where everyone is eager to train and perform at their best. Each player should understand what they should bring to each session, i.e., set of standards or expectations. Once everyone on the team understands their role, learning (and fun) develop naturally."

*John Kerr, Head Men's Coach, Duke University*

## THE COACHING CYCLE

- Coaching involves **OBSERVING** and **EVALUATING** player and team performance to determine what needs to be worked on (**ORGANIZING** and **COACHING**) during training in order to maximize (**player**) **DEVELOPMENT**.
- Training components (psychosocial, physical, technical, tactical) are then incorporated into a training session (plan) to develop and improve the player's competence within a match environment.
- **ORGANIZE/COACH:** Training sessions are comprised of: (free play); warm-up; activities I & II; small-sided matches & cool-down.
- **Principles of Play** should be considered and applied throughout the session.
- Adjusting **Speed, Space, Opposition** controls the intensity of an activity.
- Coach using sound methodology (P.I.E., Say, Show, Do, Review, etc.) to challenge, increase success and develop players.
- **DEVELOPMENT:** Players improved competence within match environment (finishing; short/long play; short combined with long play; ability to keep possession; risk; transition).
- **Observe and evaluate** performance and select elements for the next training session.



### KEEP IN MIND



Coaching involves **OBSERVING** and **EVALUATING** player and team performance to determine what needs to be worked on (**ORGANIZING** and **COACHING**) during training in order to maximize (**player**) **DEVELOPMENT**.



## DURATION AND FREQUENCY OF TRAINING SESSIONS

### KEEP IN MIND



It is widely accepted that it takes 10,000 hours of **deep** practice to learn a new skill. However, the real lesson of the 10,000 hours rule is **not** about the quantity; it's about the **quality** of the practice and the environment in which it takes place.

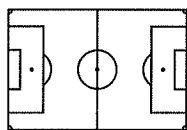
It is important to maximize the learning opportunity without **overdoing** duration or frequency. Exhaustion and fatigue can be detrimental to learning (slows brain, lessens focus, increases errors) so it is wise to consider you training in terms of the number of quality repetitions or touches as opposed to time.

### AYSO National Coaching Program Training Duration & Frequency Recommendations

Age Group	Frequency	Duration
6U	One Activity Session/ Jamboree per Week ( <i>includes</i> 25 min. game)	1 Hour
8U	Once Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	1 Hour
10U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	1 Hour
12U	Twice Per Week, <i>Plus</i> Game	1 Hour

## SMALL-SIDED MATCHES

### FROM THE FIELD



"The need for parents to see their children play in 11-on-11 tournaments from a young age instead of insisting on more small-sided [matches] and practices to develop technical skills produces great athletes but limited soccer players. Parents need to become a little less shortsighted."

*Carli Lloyd, U.S. Women's National Team referencing the youth soccer culture for her team's technical shortcomings*

Youth players need to practice in a match-like environment, which provides **numerous** opportunities to practice and **repeat a skill**; not one **possible** chance every few minutes (like full-sided play can often present). Therefore, the concentrated ebb and flow of small-sided matches create the optimal learning environment for young players to develop.

There are unlimited benefits of small-sided matches:

- Children learn more when the ratio of coach to player is reduced.
- Maximize ball contact, involvement, and mistakes (markers for improvement).
- Increase scoring opportunities.
- Maximize attacking and defending play.
- Maximize transitions and decision-making situations.
- Present more coaching opportunities (observation and analysis).
- Excitement and fun!

To cultivate the numerous benefits of small-sided matches and maximize Player Development, AYSO has carefully balanced the number of players on the field and the number of players on the roster by age group.

AYSO National Coaching Program  
In-Season Play Recommendations

Age	Players Per Team	Max on Roster	Goalkeepers
6U	4	6	No
8U	4	6	No
10U	7	10	Yes
12U	9	12	Yes

## PROGRESSIVE (BUILD UP) TRAINING

It is essential to technical and tactical development to scaffold player challenges by adding different factors into our training sessions. In general, sessions should progress from:

**SIMPLE TO COMPLEX** and from **UNOPPOSED TO OPPOSED**

### Progression of Technical Build-Up

- Technique demonstrated with *no pressure*.
- Technique demonstrated while *under pressure* (passive to full, integrating decision making).
- Technique demonstrated in match-like situation.

### Match Pressure

Training should simulate match conditions as much as possible (most effectively accomplished through small-sided matches). Control methods used to manipulate the playing environment:

- Changing the physical **SPACE** available to players (increasing/decreasing size of playing area).
- Varying the **SPEED** of the play (adding time constraints or number of touches).
- Introducing and varying the amount of **OPPOSITION** (numbers up or down, opposition/defenders are bunnies and can only hop, etc.).

### KEEP IN MIND



Players must **FIRST** be successful with a technique to build success and confidence *before* you progress the activity (progression or build up should be paced with your player's success rate). Alternatively, manipulating **SPEED**, **SPACE** or **OPPOSITION** can help *enable* your players to succeed (i.e., increasing space, touches or numbers).

## TOPIC BASED TRAINING

**Repetition is a key component to skill development;** therefore, just like school, rather than bombard players with multiple topics per lesson, focusing on one topic, i.e., dribbling, provides the maximum opportunity to achieve mastery and success.

## UNEVEN TRAINING NUMBERS

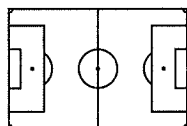
Whether it is due to your age group or attendance at training, a few suggestions on how to accommodate the possible discrepancy, **minimize isolation** and increase functionality:

- Rotate players in and out (players rest, watch, cheer, stretch).
- Pair up (players participate in activity but take turns with a partner).
- Play as a neutral (can play for either team).
- Play as two players (in numbered activities, i.e., Steven is 1 *and* 3).
- Help serve or retrieve balls.
- Have players help you demonstrate or help make small observations, etc. (Children can gain a deeper understanding of the skill if they have to explain it to others.)
- Emphasize number up number down practices (5 v 2, etc.).
- Weigh the challenge (lower number team has different goal, i.e., less touches, etc.).



# BUILDING YOUR 10U SESSION

## FROM THE **FIELD**



"We (the U.S.) are producing players who are *over-coached* and *predictable* as opposed to players who can caress the ball and make you sit up and take notice. Coaches need to be secure with themselves and not allow winning games to validate their importance in the lives of their players."

*Sonny Askew, former professional player and  
current youth coach, Baltimore, MD*

## FREE PLAY

In our current climate of over-organizing and over-coaching, Free Play is a useful method for players to develop in a natural and safe environment (like playing in the park with your buddies).

Free Play can be used as a pre-warm up upon arrival to prepare players for the technical warm up that will lead to the session's tactical work. For younger players, Free Play can be used to evaluate their technical level so you have a logical starting point when the actual session begins.

Free Play can also be used in an activity or scrimmage to simply encourage player's creativity, freedom and expression, not to mention learning through mistakes. In general, Free Play has simple limitations:

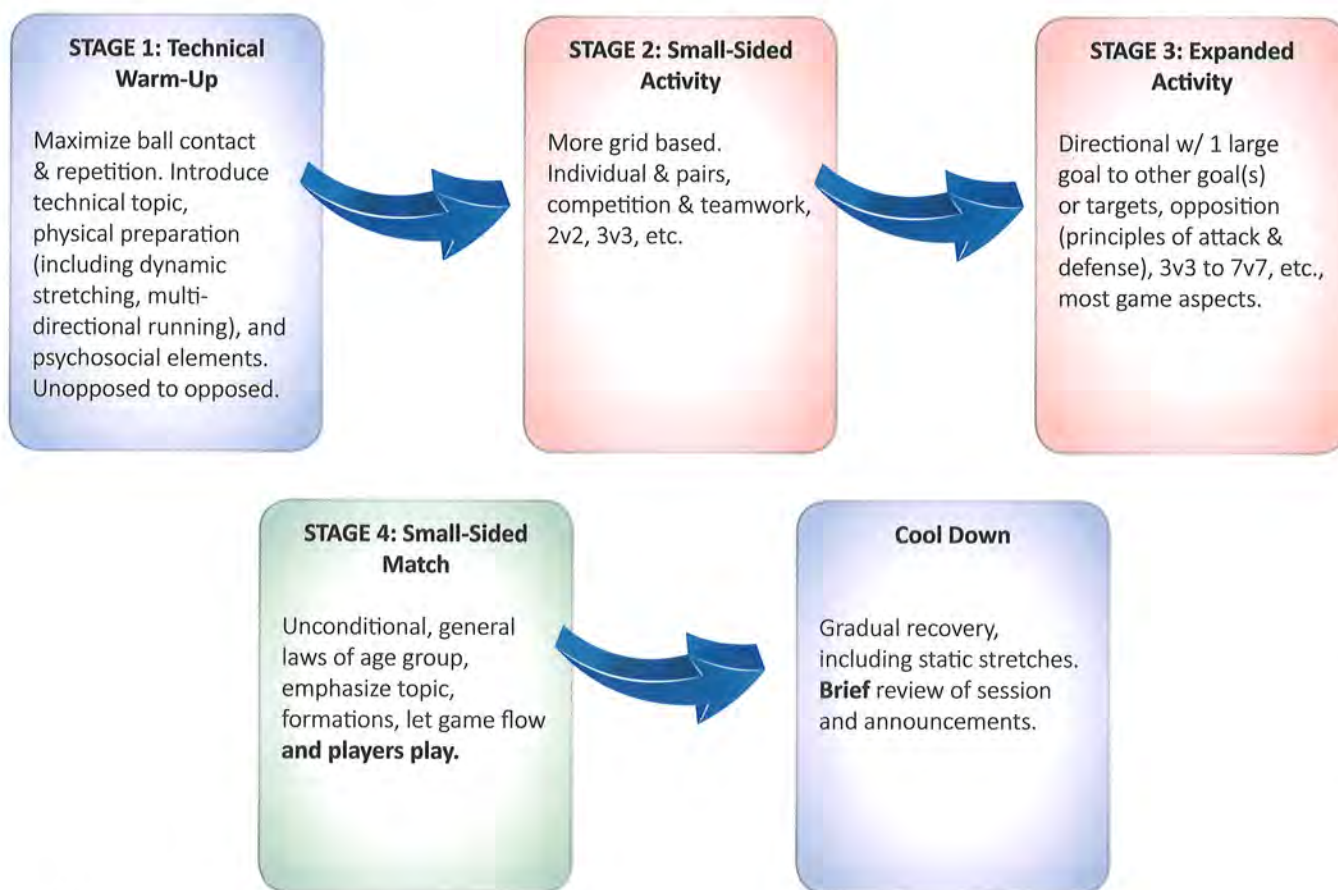
- A situation where individuals play **without** restrictions on time or space, or coaching.
- Players are given **general** directions on what they should attempt to accomplish and then left on their own.
- Free play allows players to **develop natural abilities** in a relaxed, coach-free environment.

### KEEP IN MIND



Ultimately the use of Free Play in our sessions will remind the players of the fun and intrinsic benefit of practicing freely on their own (i.e., juggling or passing against a wall) or pick-up games with buddies at the park...simply playing!

Generally speaking, training sessions should progress as follows:



## STAGE 1: WARM-UP

Your warm-up should be dynamic in nature, energize players, maximize ball contact/repetition and introduce the technical objective of your session. As well as physical and technical components, the warm-up also provides opportunity to introduce psychosocial elements such as leadership (having a player lead the warm-up), focus, communication and teamwork. Warm-ups should primarily be unopposed.

Warming up prepares the body for physical activity and should involve jogging as well as short sprints and multi-directional running (sideways and backwards). The intensity of the warm-up (especially sprinting) should be increased gradually to prevent a rapid increase in blood pressure. The warm-up improves blood flow to the heart and increases muscle temperature and pliability (and ultimately, reduces the risk of injury). Warming up should be done prior to any stretching. There are two methods of stretching:

- **Dynamic stretching:** moving limbs through the full range of motion that will be used during the game or training. Dynamic stretching is good for 'waking muscles up' and getting them ready to work hard, i.e., during warm-up.
- **Static stretching:** placing a muscle in its most lengthened position and holding for approximately 30 seconds. Cooling down is a good time for static stretching (helps the body recover and gradually return to its normal temperature).

At younger ages, a player's muscles are not developed to a point where injuries will occur often, especially due to a lack of warming up and stretching. However, players should be taught proper form (TPF) and *introduced* to the concepts in order to prepare them for the years to come. Priority should increase with age.



## STAGE 2: SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

Your **first** ACTIVITY should be more grid-based and integrate:

- Individual and pair work.
- Competition and teamwork.
- 2v2 and 3v3.

### Stage 3: expanded activity

- Opposition (attack & defense).
- Directional play (with goals or targets).
- Expanded numbers (3v3 to 6v6).
- Most game aspects.

## STAGE 4: SMALL-SIDED MATCH

Conclude your session with a match-like activity/small-sided match, which should emphasize the training topic and other components of the game.

The match should be (for the most part) unconditional, have general rules and some formation guidelines, but **most importantly, it is time to let the game flow...and the players play!**

## COOL DOWN AND DEBRIEF

Gradually slowing down the level of activity after training is just as important in reducing the risk of injury as the warming up process before exercise, especially for older players.

The major purpose of cooling down is to bring the body back to a pre-training state and to assist in recovery. Static stretches are more appropriate to the cool down as they help muscles to relax, realign muscle fibers and re-establish their normal range of movement.

During the cool-down process you can review the lessons within your session or discuss announcements but keep it concise and always end on a positive!

## LAPS, LINES AND LECTURES

Communicated often, but still a prominent factor in most training sessions, the 3L's are commonly regarded as detrimental to player development:

**Laps:** You **don't run laps** of the field during a soccer match and you can easily obtain the same cardiovascular benefit by running **with** the ball in a dynamic activity.

**Lines:** Do your best to **eliminate activities that involve players standing in long lines** waiting on their turn to play. We need to maximize time players have **with** the ball to avoid boredom and keep them engaged (two or three **active** groups are always better than one long inactive group). Remember circles are also lines.

**Lectures:** Children come to soccer to participate and be active not to sit and be lectured for long periods of time (either positively or negatively). **Keep your communication positive, brief and to the point.**

Eliminating **Laps, Lines, and Lectures** from your sessions will provide a healthier learning and developmental environment for your players.

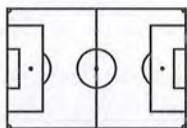
## WATER BREAKS

Proper hydration is vital to all children, but especially vital to young athletes; therefore, we need to make sure our training sessions provide adequate opportunity for rehydration. Some general guidelines:

- Players should hydrate themselves **throughout the day** not just prior to or at training (to allow for proper absorption into their system).
- Two to three hours prior to participation, players should drink approx. 16 fl. oz. (2 cups) to 20 fl. oz. (2.5 cups).
- Ten to 20 minutes prior to activity the players should drink approx. 7 fl. oz. (0.875 cups) to 10 fl. oz. (1.25 cups) of fluids.
- Break approximately every 10-15 minutes (**or as often as needed pending weather and age of players**).
- Fluids can be water or sports drinks.
- Rehydration should occur after the activity and ideally be completed within 2 hours.
- Rehydration should contain water to restore hydration status, carbohydrates to replenish glycogen stores and electrolytes to speed hydration.

# 10U TECHNIQUES

## FROM THE FIELD



"Teach skill every day! Create training environments where players are challenged and can use those skills in making quick decisions of how, why, and where to use them. Ask players to work on their own self improvement."

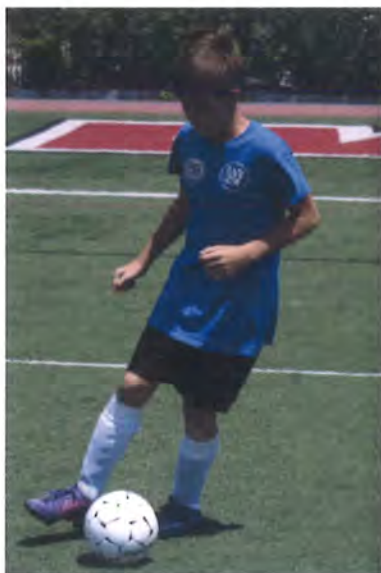
*George Kuntz, Cal State Fullerton University*

## DRIBBLING

Dribbling is using the feet to maintain possession of the ball, on the ground, under control, while moving to achieve **Penetration**. The two primary reasons to use dribbling skill are:

- Move the ball into a better position on the field.
- Retain possession of the ball.

The most important element of dribbling is developing a "feel" or "touch" for the ball with the feet...BOTH OF THEM. The key is then to **keep the ball close** by touching it softly.



General Coaching Points:

- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Arms relaxed and used for balance and protection.
- Touch the ball softly using all major surfaces of the foot.
- Keep the ball close and under control.
- Touch the ball every step or so (ball should never be more than one step away).
- Head up as much as possible (to see the field as well as ball by utilizing peripheral vision).

To see this in action visit  
[aysou.video/tech1](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech1)

### Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Ball is played too far ahead & player loses control of the ball.	Move slower and touch ball slower.
Player dribbles the ball into trouble or out of play.	Move slower, touch ball softer, look up.
Player re-positions entire body behind ball before touching.	Use motion of foot to direct ball instead of re-positioning.

### Fakes and Feints

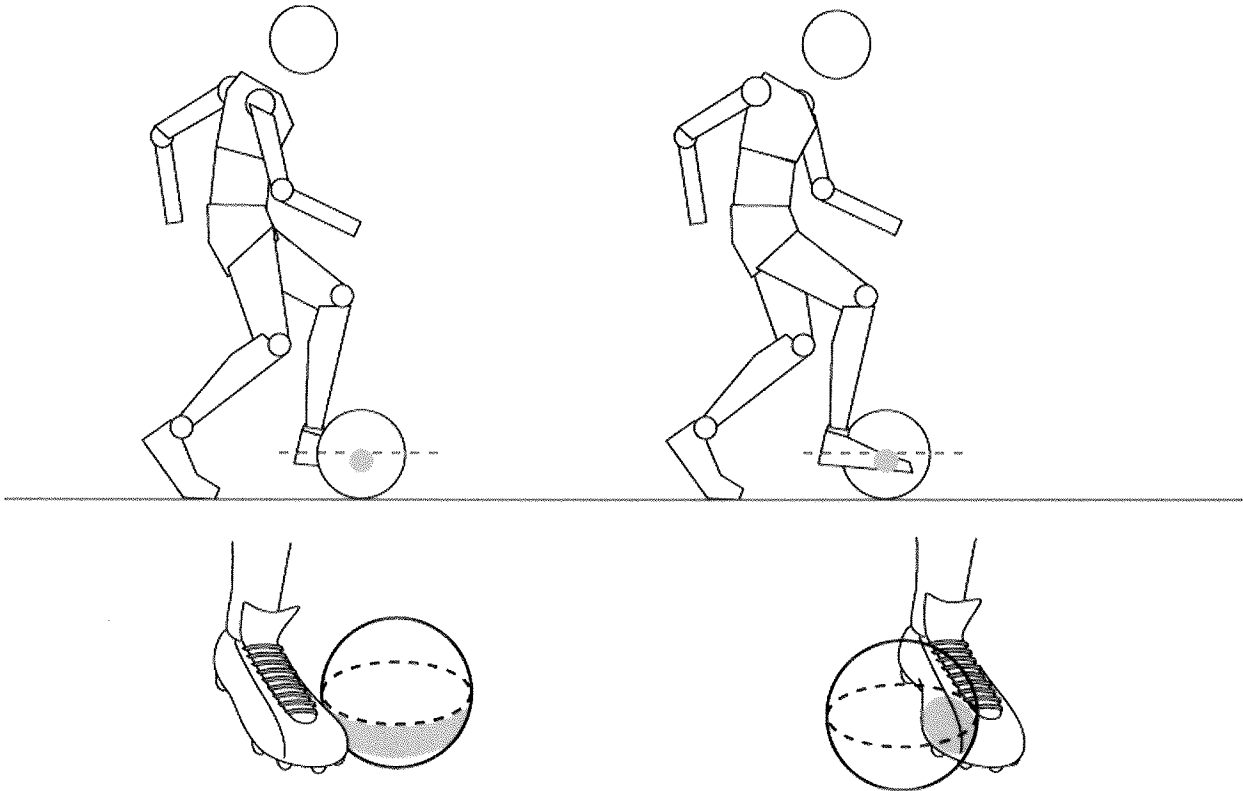
Fakes and feints or “moves” are used by the creative dribbler to unbalance an opponent and create an opportunity to penetrate or maintain possession of the ball.

Players should develop a repertoire of feints. A player often has two or three that are his “favorite moves” along with others to be called upon depending on the situation. Encourage your players to be creative, to try new moves. This expression and freedom is very positive in a player’s development.

One of the most simple and effective feints to get you and your players started is described below:

#### Fake Left, Go Right (or vice versa) Coaching Points:

- As dribbler approaches opponent:
- Step hard slightly in front of and to the left of the ball with left foot (speed of ball must be accounted for).
  - Left knee should bend as all weight is placed on left foot.
  - Upper body should move as well to “sell” the fake.
- Right foot is quickly brought up in between the left foot and the ball.
- Push off with left foot back to the right.
- Outside of the right foot pushes ball forward and to the right at approximately 45 degrees. Accelerate (explode) past the opponent and continue dribbling (the rapid change of pace and direction beats the opponent).



# INSTEP KICK (LACES)

The instep kick is used to kick the ball and, as players get older, for long passes and shots on goal (as seen on right).

## Instructions:

### **Prepare Plant Leg (Supporting, Non-Kicking Foot)**

- Place support foot next to the ball pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Extend arms out to sides for balance.

### **Prepare Striking (Kicking) Leg**

- Bend knee (cock lower leg).
- Withdraw leg straight back at hip.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.

### **Striking Movement**

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Set plant knee over ball (eye-knee-ball in line).
- Move thigh of striking leg forward (whip action).
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target:
- Pull leg straight through while maintaining balance.
- Lower body as leg rises.
- Keep ankle locked, follow through and lift knee.
- Step out of the kick.

### **General Coaching Points:**

- Body should be over the ball (forward).
- Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

### **Practice:**

- Planting their foot in the proper place.
- Swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.
- Have each player stand with plant foot in proper position and strike lightly until they begin to hit the ball solidly (properly).

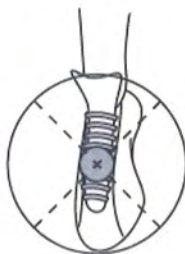
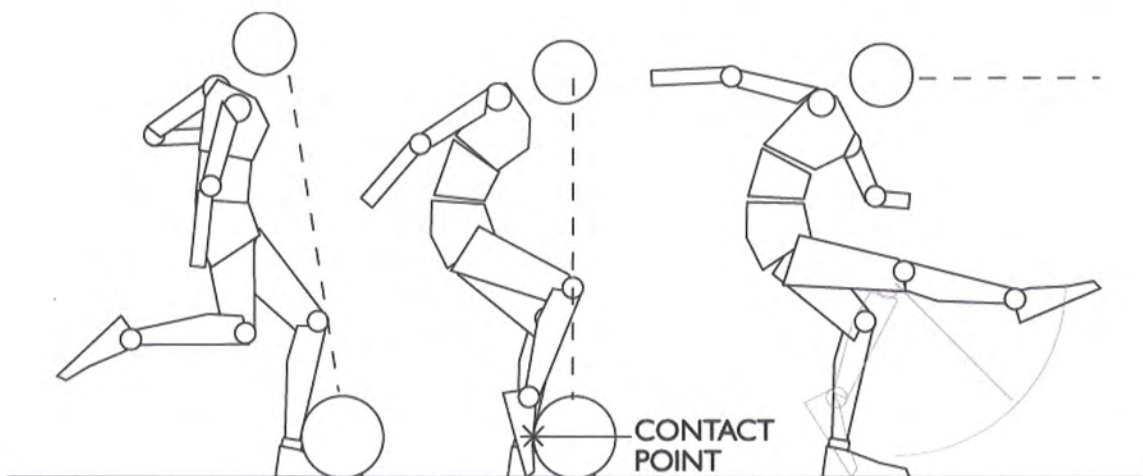


To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech2](https://www.aysou.video/tech2)



## Common Errors &amp; Corrections

Error	Correction
Planted foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.	Review proper technique with player(s).
Knee(s) are locked, not bent.	Review proper technique with player(s).
Ankle is not locked and toes are not pointed.	Lock ankle, point toes.
Ball is stabbed or jabbed.	Encourage player to follow through.
Leg is swung across the body instead of toward the target.	Encourage player to withdraw leg straight back and follow through straight toward target.



# THROW-IN

Used to restart the game after the *entire* ball has crossed the touchline (whether on the ground or in the air).

## General Coaching Points:

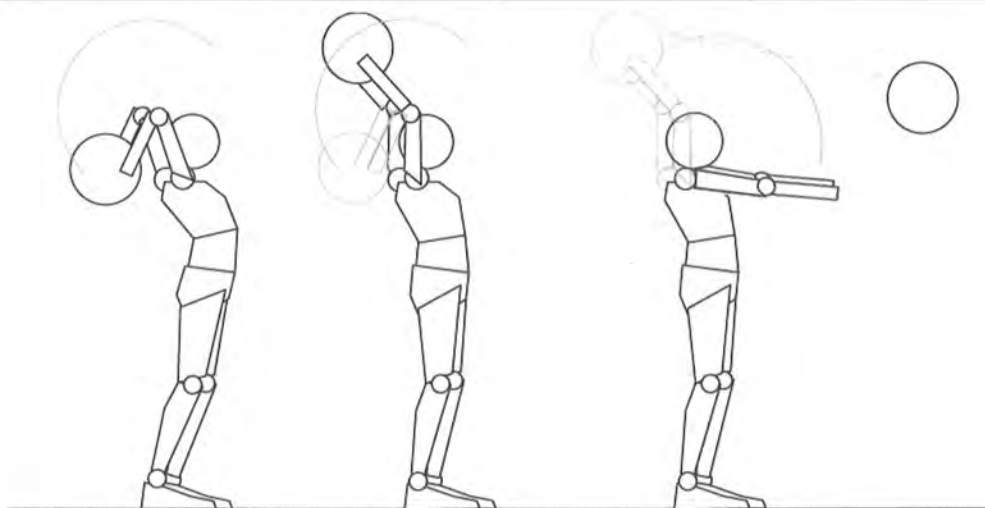
- Face the field of play.
- Have part of each foot on the ground, either on or behind the touchline when the ball is released.
- Use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion.
- Use the "W"/Butterfly method of holding the ball (touch thumbs together and grasp ball in hands).
- Feet must be kept on the ground until ball is released.



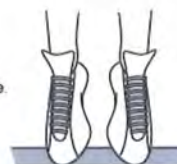
To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech5](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech5)

## Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Foot/feet come off the ground during throw.	Have players keep their feet <i>together</i> with knees bent and hold their feet down until they develop feeling of throwing without lifting feet.
Ball slips out of grasp.	Reinforce use of "W"/Butterfly method of holding ball. If player's hands are small, instruct them to spread hand out until they have a solid grasp.



Make sure your feet stay on the ground ON OR BEHIND the touchline.





# INSIDE OF THE FOOT - PUSH PASS

Used to advance the ball or to maintain possession by passing to a teammate. A consistent and safe technique once mastered.

## Instructions:

### Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to the ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms for balance.

### Prepare Action Leg

- Draw leg back from hip.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 90 degrees outward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target.

### Striking Movement

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Use arms for balance.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Follow through:
  - Pull leg straight through in general direction of target while maintaining balance.
  - Lower body as leg rises.
  - Keep ankle locked and follow through and lift knee.
  - Step out of the kick.

### General Coaching Points:

- Place support foot next to ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straightforward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet).
- Strike through center of ball and follow through in direction of pass.

### Practice:

Before having players strike the ball:

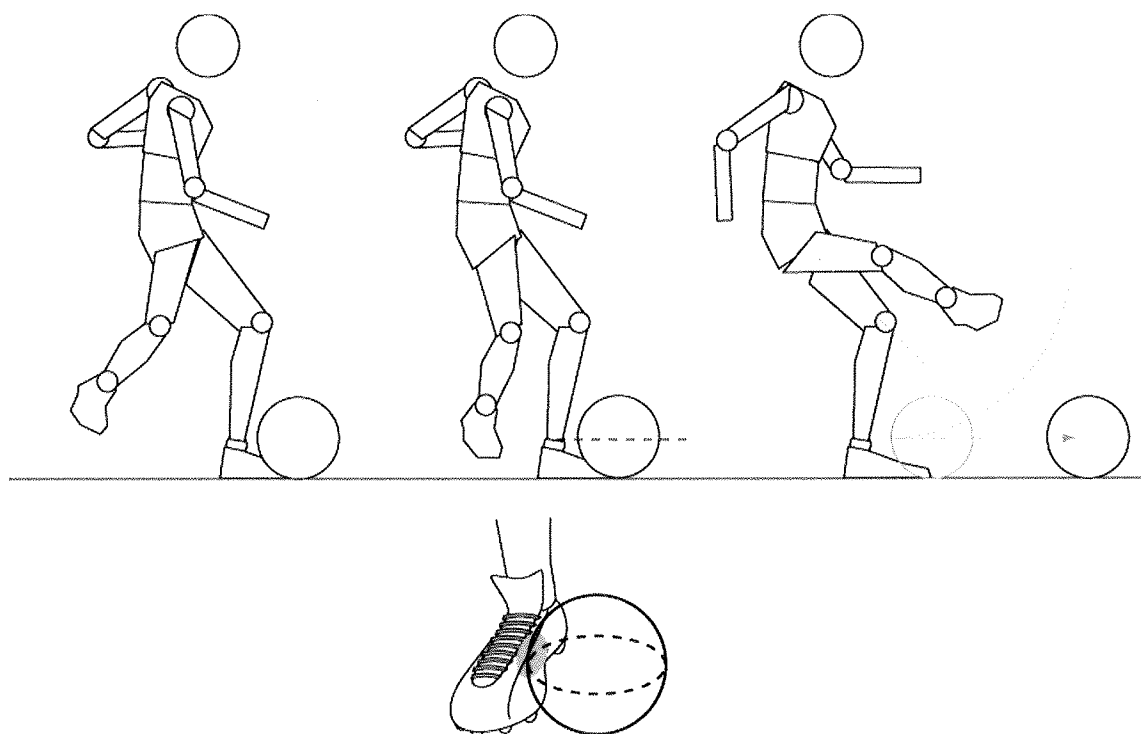
- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.



To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech3](https://www.aysou.video/tech3)

### Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Planted foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.	Move planted foot closer to the ball and point in direction of target.
Knee(s) are locked, not bent.	Bend knees slightly.
Ankle is not locked and sole of foot is not parallel to ground and/or facing general direction of target.	Lock ankle and square body to the desired target.



## INSIDE OF THE FOOT - BALL CONTROL

This technique is used to control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

### Instructions:

- Get in line with flight of ball.

### Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to path of the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Put weight on plant leg.

### Prepare Control Leg

- Move leg toward the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg outward at hip, 90 degrees.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed up to ensure solid contact point.
- Raise foot off the ground and perpendicular to ball (form an "L" with feet).

### Controlling Movement

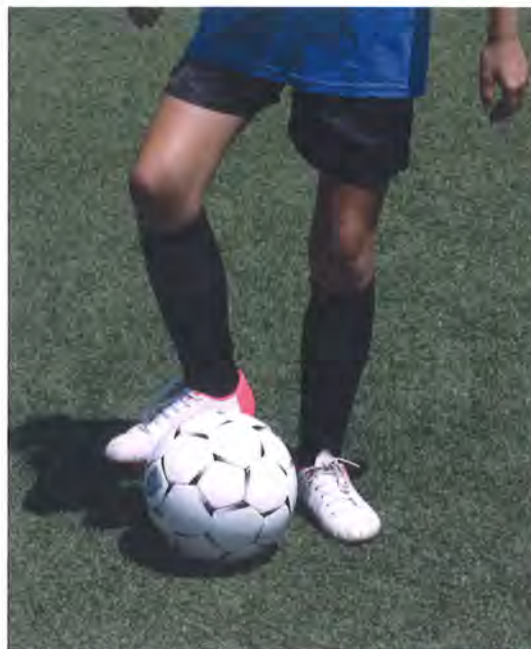
- Keep eyes on the ball.
- Extend the arms to the sides for balance and protection.
- Contact center of the ball with center of inside of the foot (in curve/arch).
- Withdraw action leg straight back as contact is made in order to cushion the ball.
- Prepare ball for your next move—pass, dribble, or shoot.

### General Coaching Points:

- On toes (ready to react).
- Get in line with flight of ball.
- Present inside of foot.
- Cushion the ball (by withdrawing the foot).
- Take touch into the best position for next move.

### Practice (before having players contact the ball):

- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice moving their leg and foot straight back and forth in a controlled motion ensuring proper body and leg movement.

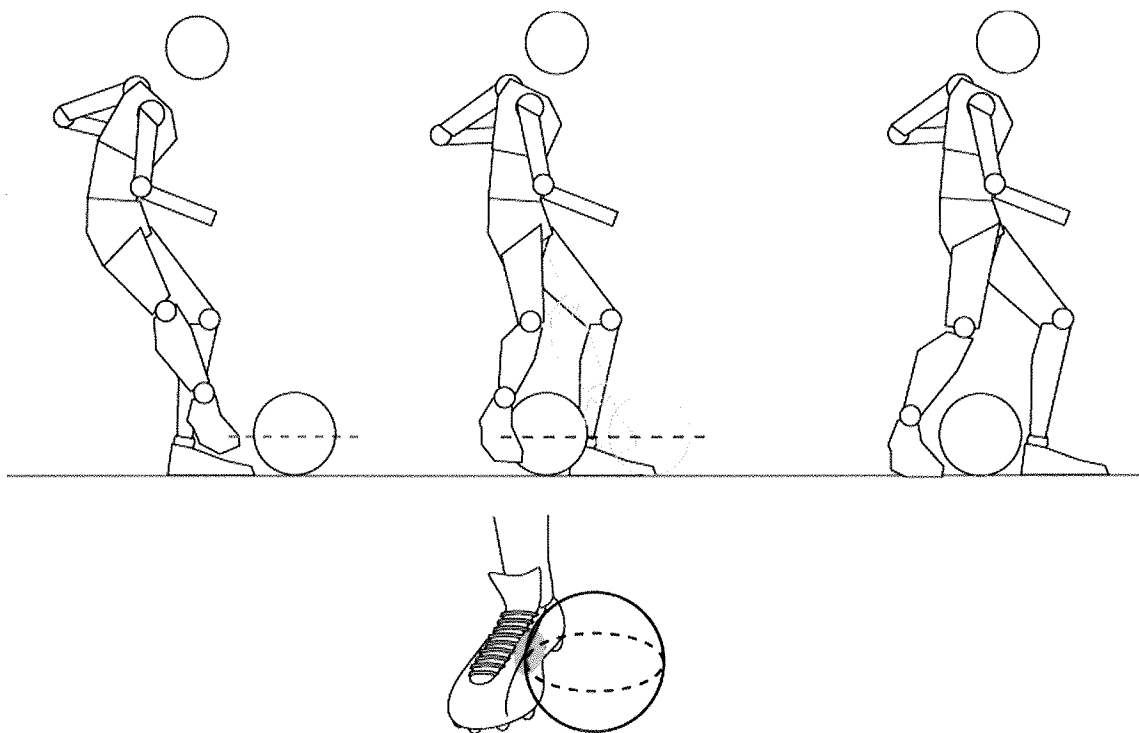


To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech4](https://www.aysou.video/tech4)



## Common Errors &amp; Corrections

Error	Correction
Player misses the ball.	Keep eyes on the ball.
Ball rolls over the controlling foot.	Lock the ankle, point toe slightly up.
Ball bounces off the controlling foot.	Draw the controlling leg back as the ball arrives.



## TOP OF THIGH - BALL CONTROL

This technique is used to control the ball in the air using the top of the thigh in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

### Instructions:

- Get in line with flight of ball.

### Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to path of the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Put weight on plant leg.

### Prepare Controlling Leg

- Raise leg from hip with knee bent.
- Raise leg until top of thigh is no higher than parallel to the ground.
- Use arms for balance.
- Target contact of ball with top of thigh between hip and knee.

### Controlling Movement

- As the thigh contacts the ball, cushion by withdrawing the controlling leg towards the ground.
- Move leg from hip to drop the ball at feet.
- Prepare ball for your next move — pass, dribble, or shoot.

### General Coaching Points:

- Get in line with flight of ball.
- Bring thigh up to meet ball.
- At moment of impact, withdraw surface to cushion first touch.
- Be on toes to react to falling ball.



To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech6](https://www.aysou.video/tech6)

### Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Player falls when controlling.	Have player practice balancing. Bend knees and use arms for balance.
Ball bounces off thigh.	Withdraw (cushion) thigh towards ground when ball hits. Ensure the ball doesn't hit the knee.

# JUGGLING

Juggling in soccer refers to keeping the ball in the air without it touching the ground utilizing all parts of the body except, of course, the hands. While juggling in and of itself is not a technique to be used in games, it is a tremendous way to develop your players' "touch" or feel for the ball and improving his or her ability to perform techniques.

## How to get your players started juggling:

- Drop ball, bounce kick and catch ball five times for each foot. One bounce – one kick.
- Drop ball, bounce kick twice and catch ball – five times for each foot. One bounce – two kicks, three kicks, etc.

## Progress to:

- How long can you keep the ball in the air?
- How many times can you?
- Kick ball without initial bounce.
- Utilize other body parts such as thigh and head.
- Drop/throw ball onto thigh/head first.
- Use of chest to drop ball onto thigh.
- Nomination of foot or surface area to be used.

## Coaching Points:

- Breathe and relax!
- Let ball drop to foot – don't touch too early.
- Arms out to balance.
- Present foot towards ball (laces).
- Lift ball upwards using laces (do not kick ball too high).
- Have busy (quick) feet to stay close to ball.
- Make constant minor adjustments.
- Emphasize constant movement and focus.



To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech7](https://www.aysou.video/tech7)



# TACKLING - FRONT BLOCK

Tackling is used to take the ball away from an opponent or to maintain possession.

## Instructions:

### **Prepare (front) Plant Leg (supporting, non-tackling foot)**

- Place support foot even with and next to the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms for balance.

### **Prepare Tackling Leg**

- Draw leg back from hip.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 45 degrees outward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.

### **Tackle**

- Keep eyes on the ball.
- Move tackling leg straightforward.
- Lower body and lean slightly forward.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Block through the ball with your body weight.

### **Follow Through**

- Keep foot behind the ball with body lowered.
- Keep the ankle locked through the tackle
- Win the ball from opponent.
- Dribble away or pass the ball to a teammate.

### **General Coaching Points:**

- Place support foot even with and next to the ball.
- Draw tackling leg back from hip.
- Lower body and lean slightly forward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Eyes on the ball.
- Strike at center of ball with the inside of the foot. Block through the ball with body weight.
- Keep ankle locked through the tackle.



To see this in action visit [avsou.video/tech8](https://www.avsou.video/tech8)

## Common Errors & Corrections

Error	Correction
Incorrect placement of plant foot puts plant foot too far away causing the tackler to reach for the ball and lose it.	Review technique and encourage player to place plant foot closer to ball.
Ankle is not locked and ball "dribbles" off foot.	Lock toe up on the tackling foot.
Tackling movement and follow through are tentative, causing player to miss and/or lose ball.	Build technique up slowly, beginning with "soft" tackles and progressing to "harder" tackles as player becomes more comfortable.

# GOALKEEPING

Goalkeepers are the only players on the field that are allowed to use their hands to play the ball (if within their own penalty area). They are the last line of defense when the other team is attacking and the first line of attack once they possess the ball.

At this age, one player should not be designated as your team's only goalkeeper. Anyone wanting to try the position should be given the chance, but do not force any player to play keeper if they are reluctant to do so.

## Basics: Receiving the Ball

### Body Position

- Stand on the balls of feet with knees slightly bent. Bending the head forward will help push the body weight to the correct position.
- Move body in line with ball when shot is taken.
- Always receive ball with body behind ball (between ball and goal).

### Hand Position

- Hands should be up at the side approximately waist level, facing field of play before the shot is taken.
- When receiving the ball, hands should be close together behind the ball in either:



**The High Contour** is formed by spreading the hands as wide as possible in a contour to fit around the ball, with the fingers up and the thumbs almost touching. It is utilized for receiving high balls – chest level and above.

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech9](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech9)



**The Low Contour** is formed like the high contour but with the fingers down and the pinkies almost touching. It is utilized for receiving low balls – waist level and below.

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech10](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech10)





### Two Methods of Saving Ground Balls:

1. Feet slightly apart (not too far), bend at the waist  
**OR**
2. Go down on the knee nearest the far post, body square to the ball

#### THEN

- Scoop up ball with hands in the Low Contour position.
- Let ball run over hands and up arms.
- Gather ball to chest and "hug" it.
- Stand up straight.
- Put the ball away.

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech11](http://aysou.video/tech11)



### Saving Waist-High Balls:

- Use arms to make a pocket for the ball.
- Bend slightly at waist and catch ball in pocket as it comes into the body.
- Allow body to move backwards slightly to cushion the impact of the shot.
- Put the ball away.



### Saving High Balls:

- Form a High Contour with hands slightly in front of the head.
- Extend arms to meet flight of ball.
- As ball arrives, bend elbows and use hands to cushion the impact of the shot.
- Put the ball away.



### Putting the Ball Away:

Regardless of the type of shot, keepers should always finish the save by “putting the ball away.” Once the save is made:

- Keep eyes on ball while “hugging” into chest.
- Breathe and look around for teammates.
- Distribute the ball.

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech12](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech12)

### Distributing the Ball

The goalkeeper starts the attack by putting the ball back into play. Once the goalkeeper has possession of the ball, they are allowed 6 seconds to restart play. Maintaining possession is the prime objective when distributing the ball, requiring an accurate delivery to a teammate. Distance is secondary. Encourage your team to play the ball out of the back using your goalkeeper and defenders.

#### 1. Throws

- **Underhand Roll** (similar to bowling) – for quick, short and accurate distribution (the ball shouldn’t bounce)
- **Sidearm Throw** (or sling style throw) – This throw provides both distance and accuracy and is best used for fast, waist level and below distributions. Used to start a counter attack and quickly send the ball up the wing.
- **Overhand** (or arc style throw) – This throw provides the most distance but least accuracy; it can also take too much time in the air to arrive at its destination, increasing chances for interception. Used to target open teammates further up the field.



*Underhand Roll (Bowling) Throw*

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech13](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech13)



*Sidearm (sling) Throw*

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech13](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech13)



*Overhand (arc) Throw*

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech13](https://www.aysou.com/video/tech13)



## 2. Punts

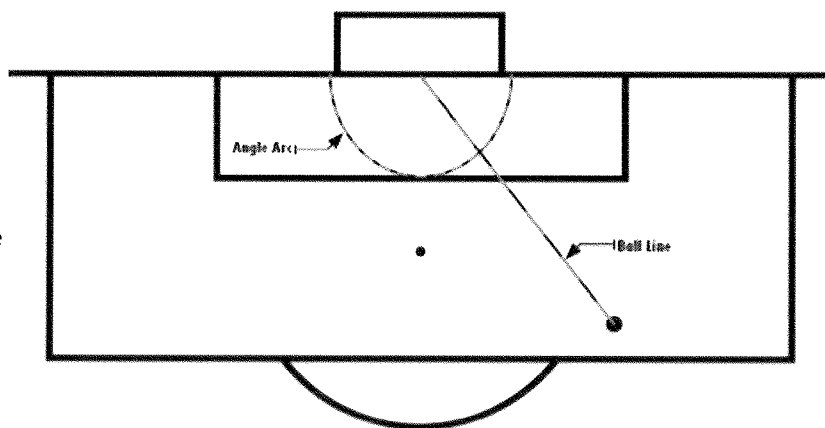
- In alignment with the US Soccer Player Development Initiatives, to encourage teams to play the ball out of the back using their goalkeeper, for 9U to 12U the goalkeeper shall NOT punt the ball.
- An indirect kick will be awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the offense if a goalkeeper for 9U to 12U deliberately punts the ball during a match.
- An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team inside the opposing team's goal area must be taken on the goal area line at the point nearest to where the goalkeeper punted the ball.

## TRAINING GOALKEEPERS

- Start by rolling, tossing or throwing the ball gently to your goalkeeper. Make sure you toss the ball so they must work on all different (types) heights of receiving the ball.
- Progress to rolling, tossing or throwing the ball slightly to one side or the other causing them to move to get the body behind the ball in a ball side/goal side position.
- Increase the distance you roll, toss or throw the ball so the keeper has to move and react faster and faster.
- Once they have mastered the correct technique, continue to increase the speed and change directions and heights of the balls.

### Positioning

- As your goalkeepers begin to master the fundamental techniques, they must begin to understand fundamental positioning. Teaching basic positional play is essential. Goalkeepers should always position themselves on the "shooting line." This is an imaginary line from the ball to the center of the goal. The location of the ball in the field dictates how far from the goal line the goalkeeper should be.



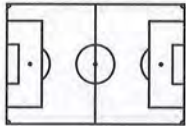
- If the ball is in the opposing half, the goalkeeper should be on the shooting line about 12 – 18 yards from the goal line.
- If the ball is just over the half way line, the goalkeeper should be on the shooting line between 6 and 12 yards from the goal line.
- If the ball is close to the defensive 18-yard line, the goalkeeper should be on the shooting line between 2 and 6 yards from the goal line.
- On one-to-one breakaways, the goalkeeper should cautiously advance along the shooting line to cut down on the shooting angle and to put pressure on the shooter. At the time of the shot, the goalkeeper should be stationary and balanced on the balls of the feet, with the body leaning slightly forward.
- As logic dictates, the goalkeeper should move across the goal relative to the position of the ball on the field.
- Goalkeepers should not remain on the goal line, but can come out from the goal in order to “cut off the angle” of a shot, thereby covering more of the goal.
- Once the shot is taken, the goalkeeper should run perpendicular (90 degree angle) to where the ball will be. This is the shortest distance to the ball.
- Demonstrate this by having them stand on the goal line. Roll the ball to the far post and ask them to count the number of steps to touch the ball.
- Have them step out toward the ball two steps. Roll the ball to the far post and ask them again to count the number of steps to touch the ball.
- Repeat one or two more times. It will become clear that it takes fewer steps to reach the ball the more they have come out to “cut off the angle.”

### Getting Scored On

- No goalkeeper enjoys being scored on and some at this age may take it very personally. Remind them, yourself and the entire team that if a goal is scored it is scored on the *entire* team. The opponents had to get the ball by 10 other players before it got by the goalkeeper.
- Never allow anyone to place blame on the goalkeeper for a goal scored! (*Consider* having an outfield player collect the ball out of the net.)

# 10U TRAINING ACTIVITIES

## FROM THE FIELD



"Players should have the freedom to express themselves, be creative, take risks and make mistakes! Learning from trial and error is a key to *all* development and it is crucial that the environment we create (as coaches) promotes this freedom."

*AYSO Player Development Team*

## KEEP YOUR TEAM ENGAGED

This section will provide you with age appropriate training activities (options) recommended to help your 10U players practice their skills. The activities are grouped according to the skill that they will most effectively help to teach (and generally progress from fundamental to more challenging). Despite all of the coaching techniques that can be utilized, nothing will ever teach 10U players more effectively than just letting them play.

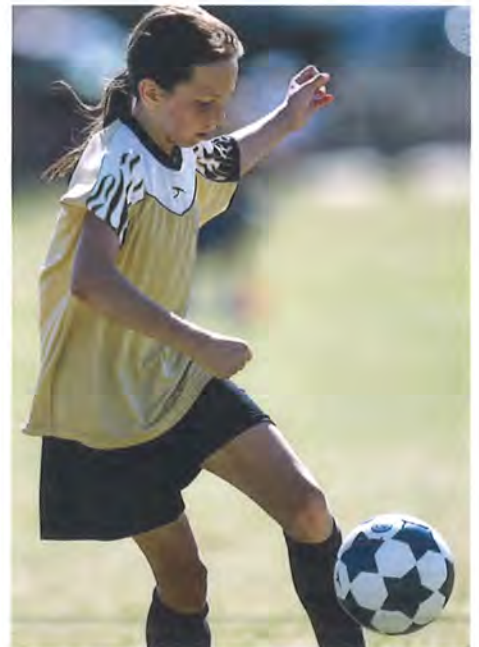
Be creative with the names of the games and modify them to suit *your* players. Use your own creativity and personality; paint in vivid images to effectively communicate with your players in a language *they* can relate to. If an activity is *not* working as intended, modify (increase/decrease) the Speed, Space, and Opposition to maximize success. Let the players work through the adaptations to find success. Remember, all players are different (often regardless of age), so **adapt accordingly to the needs of your specific group.**

KEEP IN  
MIND



The game itself  
is the best  
teacher!

**Have fun!**





# DMTS

## TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling, moves and turns.

## Equipment/

**Organization:** Mark 25 x 25 grid. One ball per player.

To see this activity in action visit  
[aysou.video/dmts](https://www.aysou.video/dmts)



## VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Introduce drag-back turn.
- Introduce drag-back then toe-taps.
- Introduce drag-back then tick-tock.
- Introduce drag-back then some dynamic movement/stretching, i.e., high thighs, heel kicks, opening/closing the leg (up and over motion), etc. Approximately five reps then dribble.
- Introduce step-over and Cruyff turn.
- Introduce moving the ball with soles of the feet (roll four to left, four to right).
- Introduce fake left-go right and fake right-go left.
- Introduce ball switch: Upon command of "switch," players leave their ball and collect someone else's ball. Coach should shout "switch" about every 10 or 15 seconds.
- Coach controls tempo of dribbling, encouraging change of pace and direction into space.
- Introduce passive pressure by simply walking through the grid and approaching the players as they perform the dribble plus technique.

## HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- All players dribble ball *throughout* the grid performing progression of moves and turns.
- At all times, keeping ball under control.

## COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.
- Encourage creativity.
- Drag-back turn: Player stops ball by planting standing foot next to ball, placing kicking foot on top of ball, dragging ball back across body, pivoting and changing direction.
- Tick-tock: Tapping ball back and forth with inside of feet. Ball stays between feet, not out in front. Body weight and head over ball.
- Step Over: Both feet are placed at side of ball, with strongest foot nearest ball. Strongest foot is taken over the ball and planted. Upper body moves downwards (dropping shoulder), attempting to throw defender off balance. Weaker foot then takes the ball away in the opposite direction. Change of pace and direction (explode).
- Cruyff Turn: Place non kicking foot at side of ball, kicking foot in front of ball at 90 degrees; using inside of kicking foot push ball back in opposite direction; player should then turn and pivot around non-kicking foot. Change of pace and direction (explode).

## BOXERS

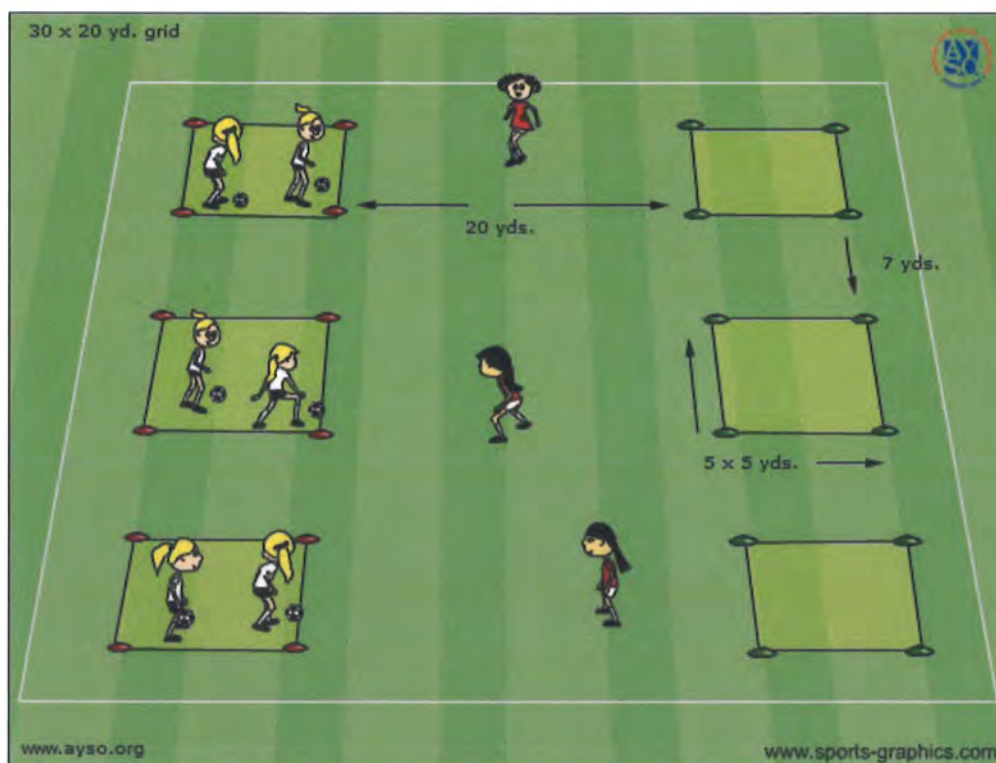
### TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling

### Equipment/

**Organization:** 24 cones/markers (two colors). Mark 30 x 20 grid. Six 5 x 5 yard boxes 20 yards apart (as per diagram). Seven yards between boxes.

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/boxers](https://www.ayso.org/video/boxers)



### HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Two players per box (on one side) with ball each. Two/ three players in between boxes as defenders.
- On coach's command, every player must switch to box at other end. First without ball, then with ball.
- Defenders in middle try to regain ball and dribble to one of the original boxes. If dispossessed, the player is out (and must perform toes taps and juggles on sideline). The first team with no players in the game takes the defending positions.

### VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Defenders can be passive to start (or bunnies that can only hop).
- Defenders only need to clear dribblers ball out of grid.
- No more than one player per team per box. Three players maximum per box. Vary number of defenders.
- Dribblers must perform turn, fake or feint before reaching other box.

### COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.



# CALL ME

## TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling, (1 v 1, shielding, defending)

## Equipment/

**Organization:** Mark 35 x 20 field with a four yard zone either side (like the six yard box), two goals (make sure they are wide enough to give the attackers a chance to score and to make rear defending more challenging, i.e., 10 yards). Two teams numbered one to five spaced in either four yard zone. Supply of balls to keep activity flowing.

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/callme](https://www.aysou.video/callme)



## HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Call two numbers to compete in central zone for offensive break and score. Players called out cannot go into the back zones during the play.
- Those numbers not called become "rear defenders" and take up good defending angles (they cannot use their hands or goal tend).
- Field players can use their rear defenders for a back pass when closed down (instep or inside of foot pass).
- Rear defenders can wait until a field player creates space to receive the ball before passing (receive using inside of foot control).
- Back players cannot go out of their zone.
- Goals only count below knee height (instep kicks or inside of foot pass).

## VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Call out two numbers to create 2 v 2.
- Call out two numbers from one team versus one number from the other, i.e., 1 and 3 vs. 2 to create a 2 v 1 (switch next time).
- Add goalkeepers.

## COACHING POINTS

- Encourage creative dribbling and moves (using proper dribbling techniques).
- Encourage attackers to take on opponents and go for goal.
- Defenders should stay on their feet as long as possible, rather than over-committing.
- Defenders must try to run back and recover even when beaten.
- Quality technique (instep kick, inside of foot pass, inside of foot control).

# YOU'RE "OUTTA" THERE!

## TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling (1 v 1)

## Equipment/

**Organization:** Mark 15 x 20 field with small goals marked A and B. Coach sets up in middle of field on sideline with all balls. Two teams, one on either side of coach.

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/outta-there](https://www.ayso.org/video/outta-there)



## HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Team on left tries to score in Goal B and team on right tries to score in Goal A.
- The coach serves a ball into play.
- At moment ball is in play, first player on each side enters the field and plays 1 v 1 until a goal is scored or ball goes out of play.
- When ball goes out of play, coach shouts "You're Outta There!" Players leave field and coach serves a new ball for the next two players.
- Game lasts until all balls have gone and all players have played.

## VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Game can be played without a goal and goal is scored by *dribbling* over the end-line.
- Players can only score with right or left foot, using instep kick or inside of foot push pass.
- Players can only score, once they have tried a fake or feint.
- 2v2, 3v3, 4v4.
- If a player scores, the two players stay on and play as a team against two new players.

## COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.
- To beat opponent, emphasize change of pace and direction.
- Encourage creativity and expression with fakes and feints.



# THE CAGE

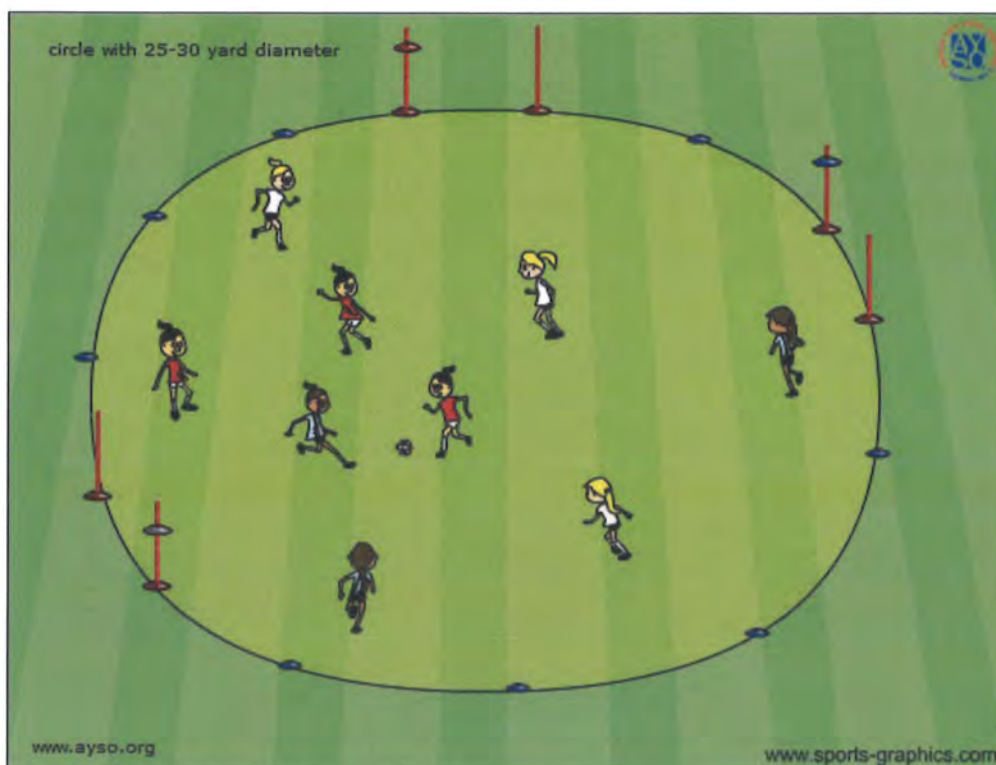
## TECHNIQUE:

Dribbling, first touch efficiency, passing, decision making, communication, shooting, marking

## Equipment/

**Organization:** Use disc cones to mark a circular playing area approximately 25-30 yards in diameter. Place three goals evenly spaced around perimeter (large with no goalkeepers to encourage rapid shots). Divide squad into three balanced teams.

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/cage](http://aysou.video/cage)



## HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

- Each team defends one of the goals and attacks the other two (place a colored disc cone or scrimmage vest on each goal to identify each team's goal).
- No goalkeepers or goal tending.
- Each team begins with five lives but loses a life per goal that they concede.
- Once all lives are lost, that team is eliminated from the main competition. However, rather than be excluded, that team can either A. join forces with one of the remaining teams presenting an *overload* situation for the other team to handle or B. be distributed between remaining teams.

## VARIATIONS/PROGRESSIONS

- Vary size of goals.
- Add passing requirement prior to shooting.
- Add a FREE goal, which if scored upon, deducts a life from *all* the remaining teams.

## COACHING POINTS

- Encourage players to recognize opportunities to explode *into* space.
- Encourage players to recognize visual cues, i.e., 1 v 1 opportunity, space in front of dribbler, etc.
- Encourage players to recognize verbal cues from teammates, i.e., take him on, time, etc.
- Have players consider balance and shape, coverage (1st defender).
- Have players look to switch play.



# 10U TRAINING PLANS

## RUN YOUR SESSION LIKE A PRO

It is a great pleasure to present a collection of 10U Training Plans from all across the soccer globe, including AYSO, Division 1 Universities, U.S. Soccer, and the NSCAA. This broad perspective from top level youth coaches is representative of today's game and will give you a solid base to use for your in-season training sessions **or a solid framework to help design your own plans.**

Plans are grouped by topic and (and *generally* progress from fundamental to more challenging).

### KEEP IN MIND



As with all sessions, you will need to **customize and adapt each session** and activity to your **own** players' stage of development and levels of ability (grid size, numbers, equipment, etc.). Some activities will work more effectively than others, pending numerous variables, so try them out and have fun with it (*they are only suggestions*).



# TRAINING PLAN 10U DRIBBLING

CREATED BY  
Region 688

## STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- \* Max. ball contact, repetition
- \* Introduce topic
- \* Physical prep. (dynamic)
- \* Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/10u1](https://www.aysou.video/10u1)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 25x25 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Players dribble through grid performing progression of moves & turns.
- Drag back turn, toe taps, tick tock, step over, Cruyff turn, rolling ball with soles, fakes.
- Upon command of "switch" players leave their ball for another player & collect someone else's.
- Tempo dribbling.
- > Create passive pressure by simply walking through grid.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form).



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Movement, touch on ball.
- Freedom.
- Preparation.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- \* Individual & pairs
- \* Competition & teamwork
- \* 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/10u2](https://www.aysou.video/10u2)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid. Players in pairs w/ 1 ball.
- 1 player starts dribbling and at coach's command, his partner tries to steal the ball. Introduce shielding.
- Player who ends up with ball gets a point. Keep score.
- If ball goes out, have pair collect quickly to keep flow.
- > Change size of grid as needed.
- > Set time before defender can challenge for ball.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Quality shielding technique (knees bent, sideways stance, arms for protection, feel, balance. Rotate/turn as defender attacks.
- Use sole of foot to control ball.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☐  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- \* Opposition (attack & defense)
- \* Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- \* Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- \* Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/10u3](https://www.aysou.video/10u3)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x30 grid w/ 2 end zones 5 yards deep.
- Teams score when a player dribbles the ball into opponents end zone and stops ball with sole of foot.
- Opponents defend their own end zone.
- Use team names, keep score.
- > Players must pass, fake or perform turn before penetrating end zone.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Quality passing technique.
- First touch efficiency.
- Confidence to penetrate.
- Change of pace and direction to explode past opponent. Creativity.
- Individual effort and competitiveness.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

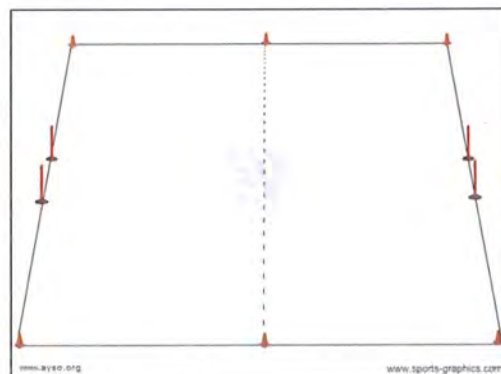
## STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

- \* Unconditional
- \* Emphasize topic
- \* Age group laws
- \* Formations
- \* Let them Play!

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small sided match with general rules.
- To score, players must dribble the ball through goal and stop ball with foot.
- > Add goalkeepers.
- > Add sideline goals.



## COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality dribbling technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

Cool Down/Debrief

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



# TRAINING PLAN 10U DRIBBLING

## STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- \* Max. ball contact, repetition
- \* Introduce topic
- \* Physical prep. (dynamic)
- \* Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/10u4](https://www.aysou.video/10u4)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Mark a circle (20 to 30 yards in diameter) and one ball per player.
- All players on perimeter of circle numbered 1-10 (pending # of players).
- Coach calls a # who dribbles counter clockwise around the grid.
- 2nd player to left of the called player chases and tries to tag the called player before they reach their starting position.
- > Change chaser to 3 players to left.
- > Have both players dribble their ball.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form).



## COACHING POINTS

- Use all major surfaces of both feet.
- Knees slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.
- Players should play with their head up.
- Keep ball close using soft touches.
- Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
- Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- \* Individual & pairs
- \* Competition & teamwork
- \* 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/10u5](https://www.aysou.video/10u5)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x20 grid. 24 cones, 2 colors). 6 5x5 boxes 20 yards apart (per diagram).
- 2 players w/ ball per box. 3 players in between boxes as defenders.
- On command, players switch to box at other end. 1st w/out ball, then w/ ball.
- Defenders in middle try to regain ball and dribble to 1 of the original boxes. If dispossessed, player is out (set juggling grid on side for them to go in & practice). 1st team with no players in the game become defenders.
- > No more than 1 player per team per box. 3 players max. per box. Vary # of defenders.
- > Defenders start as bunnies (hop).
- > Dribblers do feint/fake before reaching other box.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- Keep game active and at high intensity.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- \* Opposition (attack & defense)
- \* Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- \* Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- \* Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.video/10u6](https://www.aysou.video/10u6)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 field with small goals marked A and B. Coach on sideline with all balls. 2 teams, 1 on either side of coach.
- Team on left tries to score in Goal B and team on right tries to score in Goal A.
- When coach serves a ball into play, 1st 3 players on each side enter field and plays 3v3 until a goal is scored or ball goes out of play.
- Game lasts until all balls have gone and all players have played.
- > 4v4, 5v5.
- > Score by dribbling over end-line.
- > Only score with right or left foot, using instep kick or inside of foot push pass.
- > Players can only score, *once* they have tried a fake or feint.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality dribbling technique.
- To beat opponent, emphasize change of pace and direction.
- Encourage creativity and expression with fakes and feints.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

## STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

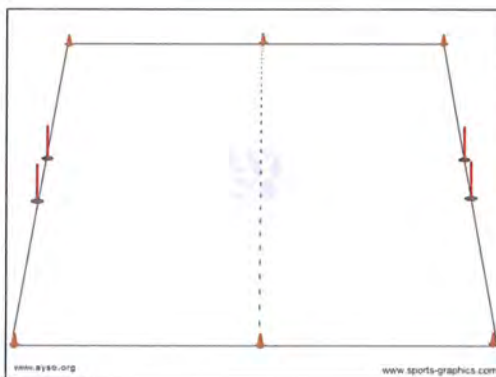
- \* Unconditional
- \* Emphasize topic
- \* Age group laws
- \* Formations
- \* Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.
- To score, players must dribble the ball through goal and stop ball with foot.
- > Add goalkeepers.
- > Add sideline goals.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form), *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



## COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality dribbling technique but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒



# TRAINING PLAN 10U PASSING/RECEIVING

CREATED BY  
Kuntz  
Cal State Fullerton

## STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

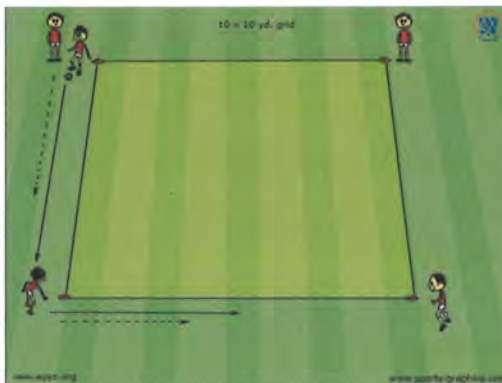
- \* Max. ball contact, repetition
- \* Introduce topic
- \* Physical prep. (dynamic)
- \* Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/10u7](https://www.ayso.org/video/10u7)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 10x10 square(s). 5 players per square, w/ 2 players on 1 corner.
- 1st player passes to next corner & follows pass at speed. (Play using 1 or 2 touches).
- This continues around square.
- > Change direction so players are receiving & passing w/ both feet.
- > Left / right foot variations, i.e., inside right foot to inside left foot, etc.
- > Wall pass around cone.
- > Short, then long pass.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form).



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing and receiving techniques.
- Angle runs after pass is made to receive and play.
- Body open to larger part of field.
- Change of speed to receive.
- Suitable weight, timing and accuracy of pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- \* Individual & pairs
- \* Competition & teamwork
- \* 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/10u8](https://www.ayso.org/video/10u8)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 25x25 grid w/ 12x12 square in middle.
- Players in pairs, 1 ball. 1 on outside & 1 on inside of grid.
- Inside players dribble and pass to anyone on outside who passes ball back.
- They must then receive, turn & dribble to the inside square, then dribble & pass to another side of the square. They pass to the outside for 1 minute then change roles with partner.
- Rotate any spare players as needed.
- > Outside players have ball & pass to inside players who play the ball 1 or 2 touch back to them.
- > Outside players serve ball in air to inside players for control w/ feet
- > Pass to triangle.
- > Increase grid for longer passing, reduce for shorter.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing and receiving techniques.
- Movement off ball to support.
- Body position.
- Correct decision.
- Transition.
- Short versus long passes.
- Suitable weight, timing and accuracy of pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- \* Opposition (attack & defense)
- \* Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- \* Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- \* Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [ayso.org/video/10u9](https://www.ayso.org/video/10u9)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 40x30 grid, 4v4 w/ 1 goal and goalkeeper. 2 small sets of counter attack goals on opposite end-line from goalkeeper.
- Played as a normal game.
- The team going to goal must have four passes before they can go to goal.
- The opposing team can counter immediately and head for the counter attack goals.
- Keep score.
- Teams switch roles.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing & receiving techniques.
- Movement off ball to support & be free.
- Vision.
- Dribbling w/ controlled speed versus dribbling for possession.
- Opportunity.
- Switch point of attack.
- Dribble, pass, combine.
- Body position to shoot.
- Field position (to find ball & shoot).
- Suitable weight, timing and accuracy of pass

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

## STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

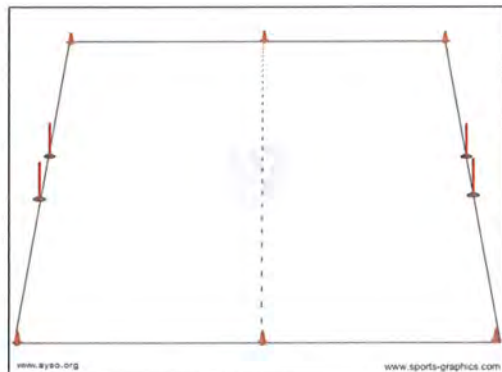
- \* Unconditional
- \* Emphasize topic
- \* Age group laws
- \* Formations
- \* Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 5v5 field approximately 40x30. Small goals.
- Before going to goal, a team must have 3-5 passes in possession.
- > Use Goalkeepers.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality passing & receiving techniques, but let them play.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒



# TRAINING PLAN 10U FINISHING/SHOOTING

CREATED BY  
Brady  
Duke University

## STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- \* Max. ball contact, repetition
- \* Introduce topic
- \* Physical prep. (dynamic)
- \* Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/10u16](https://www.aysou.org/video/10u16)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 15x15 grid. 1 ball per player.
- Players dribble through grid performing progression of moves & turns (grey players).
- Drag back turn, toe taps, tick tock, step over, Cruyff turn, rolling ball with soles, fakes.
- > Use all surfaces of both feet.
- > Upon command of "switch" players leave their ball for another player & collect someone else's.
- > Players pair up with 1 ball. 5-10 yards apart, players pass (using inside foot pass) and move throughout grid (red players).

\*\*Diagram shows progression.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form).



## COACHING POINTS

- Players get comfortable moving w/ ball.
- Quality inside foot pass technique: Support foot next to ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target. Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target. Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straight forward toward target, ankle locked and toe up.
- Strike at center of ball w/ the inside of the foot.
- Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form "T" or "L" with feet). Strike through center of ball & follow through in direction of pass.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

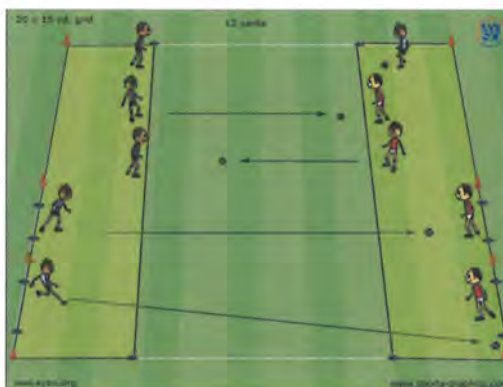
- \* Individual & pairs
- \* Competition & teamwork
- \* 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/10u17](https://www.aysou.org/video/10u17)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x15 yard grid. 2 cones to mark approx. 12 yard central zone. Players in pairs on either touch line. Ball per pair.
- Players start w/ side foot passes over 12 yards back and forth.
- > Players move back to end line, approximately 20 yards apart, & start striking the ball using instep kick/drive.
- > Add small goals/gates behind each player to aim at. (Can't be blocked.)
- > See who can score the most goals in set period.
- > Section off goals into corners and middle. Award two points for hitting corners, 1 for center.

\*\*Diagram shows progression.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality instep drive technique: Body should be over the ball (forward). Eyes on ball.
- Support foot next to ball pointed in general direction of target.
- Lock ankle back and down, toes pointed down and slightly away from standing leg.
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep ("laces" of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

## STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- \* Opposition (attack & defense)
- \* Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- \* Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- \* Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/10u18](https://www.aysou.org/video/10u18)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 30x25 field. Balance teams. 2 goals (close to full size for 10U) w/ GKs. Balls start next to posts of both goals.
- 2v2 to goal.
- Team A starts w/ ball & attacks opposite (Team B) goal. If they score they immediately defend against 2 new players from team B who start w/ a ball by their goal post.
- If attacking team shoots wide they defend 2 new opponents. If GK makes a save & keeps ball they continue play. If ball goes out on the sideline it is a throw-in for other team.



## COACHING POINTS

- Quality instep kicks/strikes at goal.
- The 2 players at front of the lines by the goal posts should be ready to attack quickly (this game should be fast & fun).
- Coach players to create space for shots or dribble opponents to go to goal.
- Encourage them w/ the freedom & confidence to shoot!

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

## STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

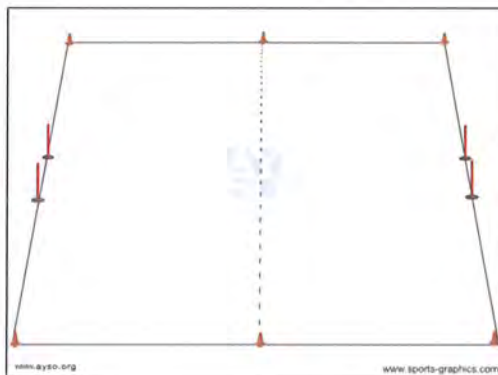
- \* Unconditional
- \* Emphasize topic
- \* Age group laws
- \* Formations
- \* Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with GKs and general rules.
- > Place additional goals/gates on either sideline.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form), *brief* review on lesson and any announcements.



## COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize quality shooting and finishing technique but let them play.
- Establish a confident and free learning environment; where players are encouraged to take the shot without fear of missing.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒



# TRAINING PLAN 10U DEFENDING

CREATED BY  
Presta  
NCAC

## STAGE 1

(Technical Warm-up)

- \* Max. ball contact, repetition
- \* Introduce topic
- \* Physical prep. (dynamic)
- \* Unopposed-opposed

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/10u19](https://www.aysou.org/video/10u19)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x20 grid. Players w/ ball each dribble through grid but on coach command, poke tackle their teammate's ball away from them out of grid (while keeping control of their own ball).
- Once ball is out of grid, players become defenders without a ball and poke tackle as many players' balls as possible.
- Winner is last player in grid with ball.
- > Introduce shielding.
- > Introduce sole of foot control.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form).



## COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball and get goal side of attacker.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Await opportunity to challenge.
- Don't overcommit or dive in.
- Challenge with leading foot to retain balance.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 2

(Small-Sided Activity)

- \* Individual & pairs
- \* Competition & teamwork
- \* 2v2 and 3v3...

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/10u20](https://www.aysou.org/video/10u20)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 20x30 grid w/ numerous mini gates around the area (as many gates as there are players). Players have ball, 3 players are gate keepers (defenders).
- Players score by dribbling through as many gates as possible. 3 gate keepers block gates preventing attacker from scoring (and if possible, steal ball from dribblers by block tackling or poke tackling their ball out of grid).
- 45 seconds then switch gate keepers (rotate through team).



## COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball and get goal side of attacker.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Await opportunity to challenge.
- Don't overcommit or dive in.
- Challenge w/ leading foot to retain balance.
- Communicate w/ other gate keepers to work as group.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☐

## STAGE 3

(Expanded Activity)

- \* Opposition (attack & defense)
- \* Directional play (w/ goals or targets)
- \* Expanded numbers (3v3 to 7v7...)
- \* Most game aspects

To see this activity in action visit [aysou.org/video/10u21](https://www.aysou.org/video/10u21)

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- 50x30 grid w/ 1 main goal and 2 flag/ pole goals positioned on opposite end line either side of field.
- 3 defenders and a GK play against 3 midfielders and 2 forwards.
- Object is for defenders to win ball and quickly transition forward by passing or running ball through any of the flag/pole goals.
- Attacking team try to score in the main goals.
- > Switch offense and defense.
- > Change number of attackers and midfielders to test your defenders.



## COACHING POINTS

- Defenders close down ball and get goal side of attacker.
- Feet close together, on toes to pivot as needed, low center of gravity, knees bent, side-on stance (1 foot forward & 1 back).
- Await opportunity to challenge.
- Don't overcommit or dive in.
- Challenge w/ leading foot to retain balance.
- 1st defender role: delay!

PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

## STAGE 4

(Small-Sided Match)

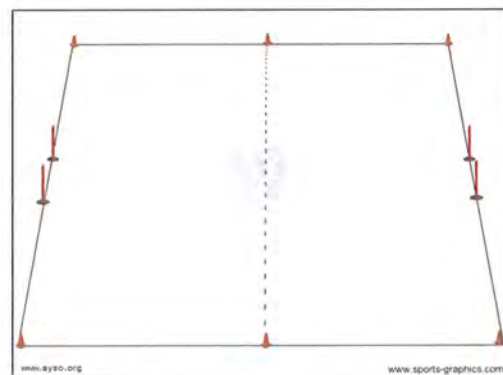
- \* Unconditional
- \* Emphasize topic
- \* Age group laws
- \* Formations
- \* Let them Play!

Cool Down/Debrief

## ORGANIZATION/RULES

- Small-sided match with general rules.

Player leads stretching (light at this age but teach proper form), **brief** review on lesson and any announcements.



## COACHING POINTS

- Emphasize defensive role and techniques but let them play.

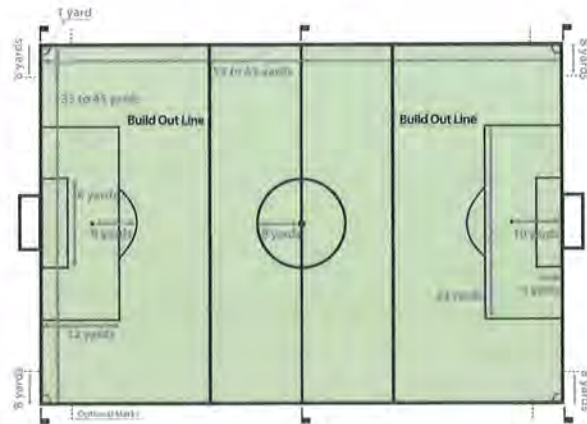
PSYCHOSOCIAL ☒  
PHYSICAL ☒  
TECHNICAL ☒  
TACTICAL ☒

# 10U PROGRAM GUIDELINES

## PLAYING THE GAME

### Field

- **Dimensions:** 55-65 yards long, 35-45 yards wide.
- **Markings:** Distinctive lines recommended.
  - Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.
  - Center circle with a eight-yard radius in the center of the field.
  - Corner arcs with a one-yard radius at each corner of the field.
  - Goal area in front of each goal measuring 4 x 8 yards.
  - Penalty area in front of each goal measuring 12 x 24 yards.
  - Penalty mark ten yards from the goal line.
  - Penalty arc extending in an eight-yard radius from the penalty mark.
  - Build out lines should be equidistant between the top of the penalty area and the halfway line.
- **Goals:** The maximum goal size is 6.5' high x 18.5' wide. The recommended goal size is 6.5' high x 12' wide.



### Ball

- Size 4

### Players

- **Numbers:** Seven per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper. Ten maximum on roster.
- **Substitutions:** Approximately midway through each half, at halftime and for injuries.
- **Playing Time:** All players, unless injured, are required to play at least half of every game.
- **Teams:** Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

### Players' Equipment

- **Footwear:** Soccer shoes are recommended (or similar type athletic shoes). The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.
- **Shinguards:** MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.
- **Jerseys:** Rolled or tied up sleeves are permitted, provided that the referee approves it is done in a safe manner.

### Duration of Game

- Matches should have two equal halves not to exceed 25-minutes each.
- Halftime shall be a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes. No added time.

### Referee

AYSO-certified regional officials or higher are required for 10U and older games. Be a "thinking" referee who only interferes with play when necessary for the safety of the players and the good of the game. The game belongs to the players.

### Assistant Referees/Club Linesmen

If available, qualified assistant referees who have completed Assistant Referee Certification may be used to assist the referee. This is an opportunity for new assistant referees to begin getting experience. If qualified assistant referees are not available, club linesmen (untrained volunteers who may be affiliated with one of the teams/clubs) may be recruited from the spectators to assist the referee with calling the ball in and out of play only. This is an opportunity for parents to get involved.

# 10U MATCH KNOWLEDGE

## KNOW THE TERMS

### The Start of Play

To start the first and second halves and following each goal in all age group games, play is started or restarted with a kick-off in the center of the field. A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and which team kicks off to start the second half. Following a goal, the team scored upon kicks off.

### The Kick-off

The kick-off is taken from the center of the field with each player, except for the player taking the kick-off in their own half and the team not kicking off at least eight yards from the ball.

### The Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is out of play in all age group games when it wholly crosses the touchline (side line) or goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air.

### The Method of Scoring

A goal, in all age group games, is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal.

### Fouls

For 10U and older games, all fouls identified in Law 12 apply. Refer to AYSO's Summary of the Laws of the Game for more information. Although there is now the potential for more fouls, referees still try to only stop play for deliberate breaches of the Law that are not trifling or doubtful. The goal is to maximize playing time and minimize unneeded stoppages.

### Misconduct

Misconduct should still be relatively rare in 10U games. Coaches at all levels of play have the option of calling players to the touchline to receive a few words of "positive instruction" concerning the player's behavior. A coach also has the option of telling a player to ask the referee for permission to leave the field and then, after getting the player under control, having the player request permission to reenter the game. The referee should permit these requests. However, substitution is not allowed for the player leaving the field in this situation.

### Free Kicks

Free kicks, in 10U and older games, may be either direct (may score directly) or indirect (must be touched or played by another player before a goal can be scored). Opponents must be at least eight yards from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks in 10U games. Free kicks awarded the attacking team inside the defending team's goal area are to be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line parallel to the goal line. Refer to AYSO's Summary of the Laws of the Game for further details.

### Goalkeeper Punts

For 9U to 10U, the goalkeeper shall not punt the ball. An indirect kick will be awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the offense if a goalkeeper for 9U to 10U deliberately punts the ball during a match. An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team inside the opposing team's goal area must be taken on the goal area line at the point nearest to where the goalkeeper punted the ball.

### Penalty Kicks

Penalty kicks may be awarded in 10U and older games. A penalty kick results from a player committing a direct free kick foul inside his/her own penalty area. The penalty kick is taken from the penalty mark with all other players outside the penalty area except for the opposing goalkeeper. Refer to AYSO's Summary of the Laws of the Game for further details.

### Throw-in

Second chances are not given for improper throw-ins for 10U and older players. An improper throw-in results in a throw-in for the opposing team. The referee, in an attempt to keep the game moving and to minimize unnecessary interruptions, must judge if indeed the throw-in violated the spirit of the throw-in Law, or if the violation was trifling and not worthy of stopping play.



### Goal Kick

A goal kick is awarded the opposing team when the attacking team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves. Opposing players may cross the build-out line when the ball is kicked and clearly moves.

### Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded the opposing team when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least eight yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in 10U games. Refer to AYSO's Summary of the Laws of the Game for further details.

### Offside

The offside Law applies in 10U and older games. In 10U, the build-out line is used to determine offside.

- A player is in an offside position if any part of the head, body, or feet is (beyond the build-out line) nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second to last defender. Being in an offside position in itself is not an offence. A player is not in an offside position if:
  - Not past the opponents' build-out line or
  - Level with the second last opponent or
  - Level with the last two opponents
- The player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball is touched or played by a teammate, the referee considers that player to be actively involved in the play by:
  - Interfering with play or
  - Interfering with an opponent or
  - Gaining an advantage from being in that position
- There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:
  - A goal kick, a throw-in or a corner kick
- The punishment for an offside offence is an indirect free kick for the opposing team.
- The indirect free kick is taken from the location where the offside offence was committed.
- The referee may or may not declare a violation of the Offside Law depending upon judgment of the circumstances.

### Build-Out Line

- The build-out line promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting.
- The build-out line shall be placed across the field equidistant between the top of the penalty area and the halfway line.
- The opposing team must move behind the build-out line for a goal kick or when the goalkeeper has possession.
- At any time, the goalkeeper may pass, throw or roll the ball to a teammate on either side of the build-out line. Punts and drop kicks are not allowed.
- The goalkeeper or the player taking the goal kick does not have to wait for the opposing players to move behind the build-out line before putting the ball into play.
- After the ball is put into play, the opposing team can then cross the build-out line and play may resume as normal. The ball is in play from a goal kick when it is kicked and clearly moves. The ball is in play from goalkeeper possession when it is thrown or released from the hands.
- The build-out line shall be used as the line to determine offside. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offence between the halfway line and the build-out line.
- Referees should be flexible with the 6-second rule – the count should not start until all opposing players have retreated behind the build-out line.

### No Heading!

- Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division players 11U (12U for programs without single age divisions) and below in both practices and matches. An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team if a player age 10 or younger deliberately touches the ball with his/her head during a match. The indirect free kick will be taken from the place where the player touched the ball with his/her head.
- Players 10 years old and younger, approved to play up in a division where heading is allowed, are still prohibited from heading the ball. The player, parents and coaches are responsible for ensuring the player does not head the ball in practice or in matches consistent with the standards set by US Soccer.