



## **CANTERBURY SOCCER CLUB COACHING MANUAL**

## **COACHING GOALS**

A Canterbury Soccer Coach has several goals:

- 1) To act as a role model
- 2) To provide guidance and discipline
- 3) To develop a player's respect for the game, the referees, their team members and their opponents
- 4) To promote a player's self-esteem
- 5) To communicate effectively with players and parents
- 6) To provide equal opportunity for all players
- 7) To maintain a safe environment for all involved

As coaches, we are bound by a set of rules laid out in the Code of Conduct. You must read this code carefully, and return a signed copy to the club as soon as possible. It is available on the club website, along with other resources.

You will also of course have personal goals - whether they are fitness, community support, or volunteer requirement related, Canterbury Soccer Club provides the perfect environment in which to achieve them.

## **COMMUNICATION**

As a coach you are a conduit for the club to both the parents, the players and to other coaches. You will need to communicate effectively in order to be successful - informing parents of schedules and plans, of your team's successes and achievements, perhaps occasionally (but hopefully not too often) discussing player disciplinary issues, and making sure relevant parties are aware of the Club's codes of conduct for both players and parents.

You will need to be able to communicate coaching plans to the players and demonstrate games and drills. At the younger ages, the 'drills' are more game-like and an in-depth knowledge of soccer is not necessary, just the desire to have fun. It is always beneficial to have more adults on the field, so you will need to communicate to the parents that their help is required. Parents will be told by the club that the expectation is for them to be present on the field once or twice in the season to act as your assistant - picking up cones, collecting balls, keeping the players focused etc. It is up to you to make sure they are aware of their responsibilities and when they have to perform them.

You will also need to communicate with other coaches to make sure there is consistency in the games, to ask for help, and to arrange plans with your co-coach (or co-coaches if you are lucky); you can decide between you before the season starts, perhaps over coffee (or something a little stronger), how much responsibility each one of you takes. Maybe you decide to share the load 50-50, so that each prepares a plan every other session. Maybe one is dominant due to experience or a desire to lead, or just available time. We encourage you to get out of your comfort zone and lead a session if that is something you feel

nervous about - it is a safe environment in which to learn and an amazing and rewarding experience as long as you plan well. See later in the manual for a sample practice plan and some games to use.

## **RUNNING THE PRACTICE**

A few principal rules to try your best to stick to when organizing and running a practice which should make things go a little more smoothly:

- **Have FUN.** Bring out your inner child. Play with the players. Encourage them to make mistakes and not to worry. Remove fear and praise often. The kids will pick up on your enthusiasm and will respond accordingly. Leave the day behind and focus on the kids and the practice session. Coaching is perfect therapy. Forget whatever woes of the day there may have been, and give 100% of your focus to the hour or so ahead of you. It is very rewarding.
- **Give players lots of and lots of touches of the ball.** Don't run laps. Don't have games with long lines that make players wait. One of the reasons why scrimmage time should be limited (to a degree) is because touch time is minimal. A player may only touch the ball 2 or 3 times in a half hour period, especially if there are stronger players on the team. This is disheartening (I've been there) as well as non-beneficial. Training should involve games where there are lots of touches incorporating game-like scenarios.
- **Keep good time.** It is important that timing is maintained according to the requirements of the division. For Mini-tykes, Tykes and Atoms, the drills session will last no more than 25 minutes, and a blast on an air-horn at 5 minutes to the hour will signal coaches to wrap up practice and prepare for the game with the opposing team. Start the game as soon as both teams are ready, and play until the second double blast at 20 minutes past the hour, giving time to close the session by shaking hands with the your opponents and packing up equipment. This will allow the following group to start promptly.



## The First Practice

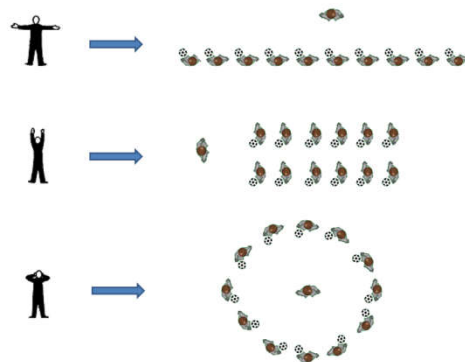
The first practice is generally a little different to the remainder of the season.

- **Equipment:** Check your equipment to make sure you have enough and it is the right size (Mini-tykes have size 3 balls, Tykes and Atoms have size 4, Mosquitoes have size 5). There should be at least one ball per player. All balls should hold air. If you find anything missing or defective, get in touch with your convenor as soon as possible and it will be replaced. Also, mark all your balls and cones in the bag with your team's colour/name using a Sharpie. This will help identify your kit at the end of the session.
- **Introductions:** Knowing your players' names is one of the keys to your enjoyment of coaching. Sticking labels on players' shirts with their names written in Sharpie is strongly advised and can be done each session until you're comfortable with calling each player by name. It will also help team mates identify each other and promote camaraderie.

Introduce your coaching team. Break the ice with a few questions to get the players talking to you and each other - get them to say their name, what school they go to, if they have any friends at the Club, what is their favourite sport, whether they've played soccer before etc.

- **Opening drills:** The drills in this first session should be also focused toward learning names, as well as a few basics that will be needed during games such as:
  - Throw-in technique
  - How to kick-off at the start of a game
  - Learning to stop when the whistle is blown
  - Which way to move the ball during the game and which goal they're aiming for

Arm signals can be a useful coaching tool. Arms out wide could mean stand in a line in front of me across the field; two arms high, get into two lines in front of me; or hands on head, form a circle around me. Do whatever works best for you.



## **General Good Practice for Training Sessions**

### **Plan**

It is important to have a plan for each practice because without one things tend to go a little adrift and it can be frustrating for both you and the players (the players will pick up on your frustration). There is a sample plan in this manual which you can choose to follow, modify, or ignore and go with what you know works best. A clipboard to hold the plan is a good idea, including a plastic envelope to protect the plan during inclement weather if required. There are more resources on the club's website, and plenty of others to look at on the internet.

Each session should typically have a theme based on one of the fundamental soccer skills: passing, receiving, ball control and dribbling, shooting, tackling, **BUT NOT HEADING**), and all the games should focus on or around that theme - even the warm up to a degree. It will make it easier to plan when there is a focus.

Schedule water breaks at convenient points (players tend to ask when they're thirsty), and more frequently in hot weather. Make sure to be firm that they have a couple of minutes only. Use the whistle if you have one to gather the players for the next drill/phase.

### **Equipment**

It is also important for you to have the right equipment and dress comfortably (typically a pair of track pants or shorts; jeans are too restrictive and can get very hot). Some coaches do not need a whistle, but some find it helps focus the players when needed. Some people are naturally engaging, others need a little help. You should also have a stopwatch with a clock to time drills (if you need to do a drill for 60 seconds for example), or at least a watch to keep track of time. It can be hung around your neck with your whistle for easy access.

Equipment (balls and cones) should be counted out and counted back in. All equipment should be labelled to make it easier for you to find at the end of the session (it often goes walk-about). Enlist the help of players and parents to fetch items. Even better, ask a parent to be your equipment manager for the season.

### **Arriving at the Field**

The coach should be there at least 10-15 minutes before everyone else. This allows time to get changed if needed, set out cones for the drills, relax into the soccer spirit, check the field for any dangerous objects, welcome the players, chat with parents.

You should ask that your players and their parents arrive 5-10 minutes before the start of practice so that you can start on time.

## **"Take A Knee"**

At the start of every practice (and every drill during the practice), get the players to gather round and "take a knee".

For opening of the session, ask them how their day was. Briefly review last practice, and give them an overview of what's to come tonight. It is good to take attendance, but it is not absolutely necessary. Make sure they have the correct clothing including shin-guards, and that no jewelry or head gear is being worn. Not only is this a danger to themselves, it is also a danger to other players on the field. This applies to coaches also.

When talking to players, make sure the sun is not in their eyes. Remove your sunglasses and be clear in your instruction.

## **Warm-up**

Once done with the introduction, go straight into the warm-up drill. This should be theme oriented if possible (e.g. for a session on ball control, a good warm-up is red light / green light).

## **Coaching Drills/Games**

Demonstrate the game or drill where possible with your co-coach.

In general, you should introduce the drill and its purpose to the players. Constantly test their knowledge (e.g. why do we pass the ball? Because a passed ball travels quicker than you can run - you can demonstrate this).

The drill should incorporate at least one of the fundamental soccer skills, which are:

- Ball Control/Dribbling
- Passing/Receiving
- Shooting
- Tackling/Defending

Briefly talk about the key coaching points involved e.g. passing with the inside of the foot involves several key coaching points:

- Head over the ball.
- Non kicking foot planted along the side of the ball with toes pointing in the direction the player wishes the ball to travel

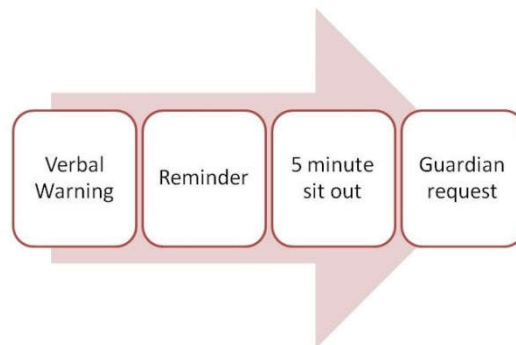
- Strike through the centre of the ball with the instep
- Follow through to the target
- Keep the ball on the ground

Demonstrate what happens if any of these points are not followed e.g. striking the ball low causes the ball to rise.

Key coaching points of the fundamental skills and also of the practice games are given in the Drills and Skill section.

## **Discipline**

An unfortunate part of the job is the need for occasional discipline. Do not be afraid to discipline a player who is not paying you or other players the correct level of respect. In general, the accepted escalation is as follows:



Disruptive behaviour is not something you have to put up with (and should not put up with), and neither should other players whose parents have paid for them to be in the program.

Be warned that touching the player should be limited to within the confines of item 10 of the Coach's Code of Conduct:

*"I will only touch players on the arm, shoulder or back as required to teach the sport of soccer and only with permission and in plain sight."*

## Sample Plan

This is just a sample planning sheet that can be typically use to run a practice. This would be front and centre on your clipboard, with the specifics of the drills and games behind it on separate sheets.

**SAMPLE PLAN (ACTUAL PLANS ARE AT THE END OF THE MANUAL)**

Date : 09 April 2016

Coach : Will H

Co-Coach : Bonnie S

Assisting Parents : Mr Angus and Miss Young

Today's Theme : **PASSING**

**TAKE REGULAR WATER BREAKS!!!!**

## Attendance

### Introduction (5 mins)

Welcome new players, BRIEF review of last practice, goals for this practice, any other business

### Warm-up Game (theme related)

a) Hunter Gatherers (5 mins)

### Practice Games (number depends on practice length)

a) Passing Pairs (5-7 mins)

b) Clear The Yard (5-7mins)

c) Reserve Game 1

d) Reserve Game 2

### 5 minute break

a) Water

b) Quick chat with other coach to establish format

c) Set up for game (players on/off field). Parent helpers to set up cones to mark field and nets.

## Game

Look for practice theme oriented results. E.g. Praise great passes. At all levels, it is OK to stop the game briefly to demonstrate good play or teach a "better outcome". Be confident, and be vocal!



## **DRILLS AND SKILLS**

There are many great resources online to find games for practices. Some of the most effective games are described at the end of the manual that have seemed to work at one time or another - be warned though, that just because one game works one night, it does not mean it will work another night, or with another age group, or with another team. General mood, weather, school events, fatigue, position of the stars - they all affect how well things go. You'll have to be dynamic occasionally and switch up plans on the fly if things don't seem to be working. Always have a reserve game or two planned.

**Don't run laps or use games with long lines that keep players waiting. They will get bored and lose focus. Ideally, all players should be engaged with a ball at all times during the drill.**

## GENERAL RULES OF SOCCER AT CANTERBURY

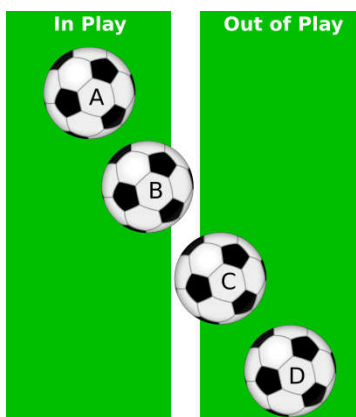
Some general rules that apply to all ages:

- 1) **Absolutely no heading of the ball is permitted.** Young brains need to be able to think about the game on the ground, and until they are more developed, should not be subject to potential harm by impact from the ball. To some, this is a little controversial but the rule is clear.
- 2) **No slide tackles.** Too many injuries result and it is not in the spirit of Canterbury Soccer Club. A slide tackle is when a player slides on the ground to collect the ball or kick it away. If mistimed, it can be a career-ending action. This is different to a block tackle, which is when the defending player remains upright and presents a solid obstruction with the leg to win the ball. Learning to block tackle without fear in this manner is an important part of the game.
- 3) **Injuries on the field of play.** If there is ANY suspicion of injury to any player, the play should be stopped immediately and the player attended to. Play shall not resume until the situation is resolved - either the player is fit to continue or is accompanied from the field to receive further treatment on the side-lines.
- 4) **Starting the Game.** The ball is placed on the centre spot. The team who start (either by toss of a coin or coach decision) have a player pass the ball to a nearby team-mate in a FORWARD direction. All other opposing players must be outside the centre circle (or 5 yards away from the ball).
- 5) **Scoring a Goal.** When the ball fully crosses the goal-line and enters the goal.
- 6) **Free Kicks.** Awarded for an infraction of the rules (hand ball, charging, pushing, holding, tripping, etc.). Direct and indirect kicks will be awarded at Mosquito level, including penalty kicks when an infraction resulting in a direct free kick takes place inside the penalty area.
- 7) **Corner Kicks.** Awarded when the ball crosses the goal-line of the defending team (without entering the goal) after last touching a defending player. A corner is award to the attacking team, who kick the ball from inside the corner arc at the nearest corner the ball left the field of play. A goal is permitted to be scored directly from a corner kick.
- 8) **Goal Kicks.** If a player on the opposing team plays the ball entirely across the goal line (but not into the goal), it is put back in play by any player from the defending team, via a free kick from anywhere inside the defending goal area.
- 9) **Throw Ins.** If the ball fully crosses the sideline, the opposing team of the player to last touch the ball is awarded a "throw in" at the point where the ball went out of play. The "throw in" must be with both feet on the ground, two hands on the ball, and over the head. The taker is permitted to step on the side-line but not into the field of play (i.e. fully across) with either foot before releasing the ball. It is important to teach the correct technique from a young age.
- 10) **Listen to the whistle at all times.** Players must stop when the whistle blows. It is very important as there may be an injury that needs attending to.
- 11) **Respect Others.** Players must show respect to team-mates, opposing players, coaches, referees, parents and themselves. At the end of a game, they must line-up and shake hands with the other team, as well as the coaches and referee, and say "good game" or words to that effect.

**Soccer Field Lines.** The following image shows the naming convention for lines on a full field of play. These lines will be used more or less depending on the level you are coaching.



**Ball in play / out of play.** Only Ball D has fully crossed the line. Ball C is still in play. This would mean Balls A, B and C would not result in a throw in, a corner, a goal kick or a goal.



## **The Offside Rule (Mosquitoes ONLY)**

The offside rule in soccer is perhaps the most controversial and difficult to understand. Offside exists to prevent net-hanging or cherry-picking, and has resulted in professional teams adapting their defensive strategy in order to accommodate it (perfected by Arsenal in the 1980s and 1990s), sometimes getting caught embarrassingly static when opposing teams anticipate the "trap" and time their runs past the defensive back four, who are left stupidly staring at each other and the linesman with their arms in the air while the striker waltzes in alone on goal. So here it is:

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

A player is in an offside position if he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent, and is in the opponent's half of the field.

A player is not in an offside position if:

- he is level with the second last opponent
- he is level with the last two opponents

## **Committing an Offside Offence**

A player in an offside position is only penalised if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- interfering with play (the question always arises "if the player is on the field, then surely he is interfering with play")
- interfering with an opponent
- gaining an advantage by being in that position

## **No Offence**

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- a goal kick
- a throw-in
- a corner kick

For any offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free-kick to the opposing team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

## GAME FORMATS AND DETAILS FOR EACH AGE LEVEL

	Mini-Tykes	Tykes	Atoms	Mosquitos
<b>Nominally</b>	U6	U8	U10	U12
<b>Nights</b>	M,W	M,W	M,W	T, Th
<b>Start</b>	5:30	6:30	7:30	6:30
<b>Duration</b>	50 mins	50 mins	60 mins	90 mins
<b>Practice Length</b>	25 mins	25 mins	25 mins	30 mins
<b>Game length</b>	25 mins	25 mins	30 mins	2 x 25 mins
<b>Field</b>	third	half	full	full
<b>Goal Keeper</b>	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Throw ins</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Heading</b>	<b>ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!</b>			
<b>Referee</b>	N	N	N	Y
<b>Format</b>	5 aside	6 aside	7 aside	9 aside

Note that the team size includes the goal-keeper (e.g. 6 aside is 5 outfield players plus a goalkeeper). Team sizes are at the opposing coaches' discretion and can be determined at game time (e.g. due to low attendance levels with adverse weather, or just what makes more sense). Team sizes do not have to be even if it doesn't work out well for switching lines.

### MINI-TYKES & TYKES (U6 and U8)

Soccer rules will be kept simple at the Mini-Tykes and Tykes level as the objective of the games at this level is for the kids to have LOTS OF FUN and get lots of touches on the ball. Kids at this age love to run and kick the ball.

They also love to chase the ball in clumps of players. This is perfectly normal as they are aware they cannot kick the ball far, and grouping together is the most successful strategy to get and keep possession of the ball. They will figure out the whole spreading out issue as they progress in age and development. Do not despair that they are not yet making space for themselves.

The format of the game at this age is a guide. The two opposing coaches should discuss prior to the game to make sure teams are equal. Typically we would like to see no goal-keepers for minis, but goal-keepers for tykes. In any case, when there is a goal-keeper, they are allowed to pick the ball up (watch for potential injury and stop the game). Once the ball is in the goal-keeper's possession, encourage all players to move away from the ball and allow the goal-keeper to distribute the ball either by kicking or throwing to a team-mate.

Coaches from each team are allowed on the field of play to act as referees and to encourage flow of play (typically one coach on the field, and one coach managing the players on the side-lines). Use of the whistle is encouraged and it is important to remind players to stop when they hear the whistle.

There is no offside, but try to discourage net-hanging / cherry picking.

Throw-ins and general free kicks are to be used. The pause in the game usually presents a good teachable moment; do not worry too much about the correctness of the technique at this age.

During the game, rotate players en-masse approximately every 3-5 minutes so players on the field do not get too hot/tired and players off the field do not lose interest in the game. It works best when both teams switch at the same time.

### **ATOMS (U10)**

Players at the Atom level are beginning to take shape and develop skill. They will focus more on technique such as ball control, passing and receiving with both feet, striking with the laces and instep etc.

Focus is, as always, on fun and lots of touch-time. Games are a little longer, but not by much. Format is very similar to mini-tykes and tykes with the exception that there should be only one coach on the field from each team, and one of these should act as referee (perhaps half the time each).

Substitutions during the game must be made only when the ball is out of play. When, who and how many is up to the coach.

There is no off-side per se, but net-hanging should be disallowed and a free kick awarded.

Free kicks are neither direct nor indirect. Ensure opposing players are sufficiently far from the ball to allow the game to develop from the kick.

### **MOSQUITOS (U12)**

At this level, the players can understand much of the game's complexity and the need to spread out in position because a kicked ball travels faster than a player can run. They are able to focus on more difficult skills, and to understand concepts such as channelling and support. Offside is introduced for the first time and will need to be taught. Free kicks can be both direct and indirect.

Games will involve a referee at this age level. Coaches are not permitted on the field. It is important to drive home the need for respect of the other players, coaches as well as the officials, and to lead by example.

As for Atoms, substitutions during the game should be made when the ball is out of play. When, who and how many is up to the coach. With a larger team size, you may only have one or two substitutes off the field – try to ensure equal playing time for all, and have players play in different positions over time

from game to game and week to week (rotating positions during the game is tough to manage and is best done at half time – swap goalkeepers, change defence to forwards etc).

A possible way to manage substitutions is with a roster rotation sheet such as the one below which can be done in a spreadsheet and printed each week; one team coach (or a parent volunteer) can manage this while the other coach gives advice to the team from the sidelines.

Name	START	5 mins	10 mins	15 mins	20 mins	HALF TIME	START	30 mins	35 mins	40 mins	45 mins
Bill	x	OFF	x	x	x		OFF	x	x	x	OFF
Troy	x	OFF	x	x	x		OFF	x	x	x	OFF
Angie	x	OFF	x	x	x		OFF	x	x	x	OFF
Suzy	x	x	OFF	x	x		x	OFF	x	x	x
Tyson	x	x	OFF	x	x		x	OFF	x	x	x
Kevin	x	x	OFF	x	x		x	OFF	x	x	x
Dylan	x	x	x	OFF	x		x	x	OFF	x	x
Josie	x	x	x	OFF	x		x	x	OFF	x	x
Tristan	x	x	x	OFF	x		x	x	OFF	x	x
Julia	OFF	x	x	x	OFF		x	x	x	OFF	x
William	OFF	x	x	x	OFF		x	x	x	OFF	x
Audrey	OFF	x	x	x	OFF		x	x	x	OFF	x

**Sample Substitution Rotation Sheet**



## **EXAMPLE PRACTICE PLANS**



**Date:** 16 April 2016

**Assistant Coach:** Bonnie S

**Parent Helpers:** Ahmad (Mehrdad), Helen (Claire)

**Today's Theme:** Ball Control - get the players comfortable having the ball and moving with it.

**Set-up:** Arrive early!!! First practice. One big square of cones only (4 cones on each side). All games are within the square tonight!! Hooray! Check field for dangerous objects/debris.

- **Hand Out Shirts before practice**
- **Introduction (10 mins)**
  - a. Welcome to everyone.
  - b. Attendance and name labels
  - c. Introduction to Canterbury Soccer
- **Warm-up (5 mins)**
  - a. Red Light Green Light (5 mins)
- **Practice Games (10 mins)**
  - a. Throw ins - include intro to soccer and how the game is played (5 mins)
  - b. Controlled Chaos (Dribble Across a Square) - teach ball control key coaching points (5 mins)
- **5 minute break (have helpers set up field and goals)**
  - a. Water
  - b. Quick chat with other coach on format - 6 a-side (5 players, 1 goalkeeper)
  - c. Set up for game (players on/off field)
- **Game (20 mins)**
  - a. Coach Will on field with whistle
  - b. Coach Bonny and parent helpers keeping line under control and "active" if possible with mini-games - follow the leader, coach says, keepy ups etc
  - c. Cheer for other team at end of game. Shake hands, say "good game".
- Review of practice, hand out crests, and see you on Wednesday!! (5 minutes)

**Date:** 18 April 2016

**Assistant Coach:** Bonnie S

**Parent Helpers:** Tracy (Charla), Marcin (Adam)

**Today's Theme:** Shooting and goalkeeping - getting the feel of putting the ball in the back of the net

**Set-up:**

- Two lines of cones for games a) and b)
- Set up goal at your end of field (as for game) with circle of cones 15 feet front of net (game c))
- Check field for dangerous objects/debris.
  
- **Introduction (5 mins)**
  - a. Attendance and name labels - again!!
  - b. Brief review of last practice and today's theme
  
- **Warm-up (5 mins)**
  - a. Hit the coach (5 mins)
  
- **Practice Games (15 mins)**
  - a. Passing pairs - get used to kicking the ball. One ball between two. Teach correct technique for "passing". Pairs standing facing each other on opposite cone lines (5 mins)
  - b. Similar to asteroids - dribbling in cone (ball control), coach calls out one player's name who breaks from the circle to dribble toward the goal and shoot. They become goalkeeper, and the next player called goes. Goalkeeper collects ball and dribbles back to circle. (10 mins)
  
- **5 minute break (have helpers set up field and goals)**
  - a. Water
  - b. Quick chat with other coach on format - 6 a-side (5 players, 1 goalkeeper)
  - c. Set up for game (players on/off field)
  
- **Game (20 mins)**
  - a. Coach Will on field with whistle
  - b. Coach Bonny and parent helpers keeping line under control and "active"
  - c. Cheer for other team at end of game. Shake hands, say "good game".
  
- Review of practice, hand out crests, and see you on Wednesday!! (5 minutes)

**Date:** 25 April 2016

**Assistant Coach:**

**Parent Helpers:**

**Today's Theme:** Passing / Moving the ball

**Set-up:** Before practice : Grid of cones for Clear the Yard (see manual).

- **Introduction (5 mins)**
  - a. Welcome to everyone (Optional : Discuss FA Cup final and reinforce that Man Utd are the greatest team in the world and the only soccer team they should ever be concerned about).
  - b. Attendance
  - c. Review of last week and today's practice
- **Warm-up (5 mins)**
  - a. Passing pairs with instep (5 mins). Informal, anywhere on the field. Move around while passing.
- **Practice Games (15 mins)**
  - a. **Clear the yard (see manual).** Be patient with the younger players. Have a few adults along the sides, keeping the balls in play and encouraging kicking the ball but not too hard. Will take a couple of games to get used to it. Score properly - it gives the game authenticity. Emphasize clearing their yard IN CONTROL.
  - b. **Steal the Crown.** Groups of 4 players with two balls - 3 attackers and 1 "Defender of the Crown". Place one ball on a cone (the Crown). Set up a small "no go" zone around the target that no-one is allowed in. Attackers have a ball and try to pass between them to set up a chance to knock the "crown" off of its perch (by passing their ball at it). Let each player be "Defender of Crown". Encourage movement into space and to take a shot when an opportunity arises (don't dither) using the instep for accuracy (power isn't as important).
- **5 minute break (have helpers set up field and goals)**
  - a. Water
  - b. Quick chat with other coach on format - 6 a-side (5 players, 1 goalkeeper)
  - c. Set up for game (players on/off field)
- **Game (20 mins)**
  - a. Coach on field with whistle
  - b. Co-Coach parent helpers keeping line under control and "active" if possible with mini-games
  - c. Cheer for other team at end of game. Shake hands, say "good game".
- Review of practice, hand out crests, and see you all next week (well, that was easy)!! (5 minutes)



## **WARM-UP GAMES**

## WARM UP GAMES

Ages : ALL

Tap On Top – using the underside of the boot, alternate taps on top of the ball, keeping the ball stationary. Can be timed, or done by a count. Speed and agility are key points.

Tick-Tock – similar to Tap on Top, moving the ball side to side with the instep of each foot.

Rolling Rock – rolling the ball with the sole of the foot back and forth (or side step side to side). Timed or count. Can incorporate pull backs (inside hook, outside hook). Use alternate feet.

Coach Says – Simon says. Don't use hands. Examples are Coach says tap on top 10 times, or Coach says sit on ball. **NEVER STAND ON THE BALL WITH BOTH FEET.**

Red Light Green Light – players move around dribbling the ball. When the coach shouts red light, they stop with by “trapping” the ball with the underside of their boot. When the coach shouts green light, they start again. Can be done inside a square of cones. Be creative with tasks (e.g. Turn left, go in opposite direction, tap on top, tick tock, use only left/right foot etc etc)

Follow The Leader (Snakes) – players line up facing toward the leader with a ball each (can be the coach), and they have to follow behind copying the actions. Snake can cross-over the tail, speed up, slow down, stop the ball. Also can have the last player run ahead to be the leader on the whistle (older players)

## **WARM UP GAMES**

**Ages : ALL**

Hit The Coach – all players with a ball, and they have to hit the coach who then has to perform an action if hit (e.g. Do an impression of an animal of choosing for the small kids). Can get painful with older players. Can restrict power by using weaker foot, or only instep etc.

Passing Pairs – get together in pairs, and practice passing/receiving back and forth. Can be threes and fours as well. Make sure to move around and call names.

Keepy Ups – start by holding the ball (one of the only times this is allowed, the others being throw-ins and goal-keeping). Then drop the ball on the knee and bounce it back into the hands. Progress from there with two bounces, using the feet, alternates feet etc. It is important to stay relaxed and flexible. Be prepared for balls to fly everywhere at first. The important thing is to relax. See who can do the most by the end of the season.

Shoulder to Shoulder Walk – teaches the correct level of aggression and strength from players. In pairs, players walk up the field shoulder to shoulder, trying to push (using only the shoulder) the other player off line. This is a legal challenge in soccer (as long as the ball is within reach). Try this with one player with the ball and then swap.



# **FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS AND COACHING POINTS**

# Passing

**Why Pass?** Passing allows the team to keep possession while moving the ball toward the opposing goal.

It is less risky in general than trying to beat a player by dribbling, and a passed ball travels much faster than a player running with the ball. Also, passing saves energy and forces the other team to chase the ball and spend energy.

**When passing the ball** the following key coaching points should be taught:

- Eyes on the ball at the moment of contact
- Non-kicking foot alongside of the ball; don't reach for ball
- Ankle locked on kicking foot
- Follow through toward target. Call name if delivering to a fellow player.
- Inside-of-the-foot pass, toe pulled up at a 90-degree angle
- Inside to keep the ball low, strike the ball at the midline of the ball or above
- Outside-of-the-foot pass, toe pointed down, strike across the ball toward the target
- Instep drive: For long passes in the air make sure that the player is making contact with the ball below the midline. When trying to drive the ball with less air under it, the player should not follow through up into the air with the kicking foot. Stop the kicking foot at the point of contact
- Practice passing with both feet at all times
- Emphasize the importance of pace and accuracy.



# Receiving

**When receiving the ball** the following key coaching points should be taught:

- Call for ball by shouting name of passing player if asking for ball.
- Keep your eye on the ball and anticipate the speed and flight
- Move to the ball if time allows (more skilled players)
- Get the body in line with the direction of the ball.
- Choose which surface to receive the ball with (this may depend on the location of the defender).
- Present the chosen body part to the ball
- When receiving the ball with the instep of the foot keep the toe pointed up (ankle locked). Contact the ball approximately half way up (too low, and it will “pop”, too high and it might be missed or “stick”)
- Cushion and relax to keep the ball close. The importance of a good first touch (as in any sport) cannot be under-emphasized
- Don’t stop the ball. Instead, prepare it for the next action: shot, dribble, pass or to play away from pressure.

# Dribbling/Ball Control

**Why Dribble?** Passing is not always an option, or is the expected option by the opposing team (i.e. They are waiting for it). Dribbling allows better passing and scoring opportunities to open, and is an invaluable skill in getting out of a tight spot. It should be avoided in the defending third if at all possible, as losing possession of the ball here can lead to the opponents have a scoring opportunity.

**When keeping the ball under control while moving** the following key coaching points should be taught:

- Lean forward and over the ball
- Knees bent, and relaxed, on the balls of feet to stay athletic and balanced
- Keep ball close
- Use inside, outside, instep (laces) and bottom (sole) of both feet
- Be creative, use imagination - develop your own style
- Use body feints
- Unpredictable changes of speed and direction is key to beating opposing players
- Keep your head up
- Use body to shield/protect ball – be strong and aggressive within the rules of the game
- Take bigger risks in offensive third of the field.

# Shooting

- Accuracy is the key – shooting on goal is merely passing the ball into the goal past the goalkeeper
- Power is determined by the speed of the foot at the point of contact and the technique used
- Body alignment - whenever possible, head and kicking knee over the ball and hips and shoulders square to target
- Firm ankle. Toe down if striking with laces / out-step.
- Non-kicking foot placed comfortably beside the ball, with the toe pointing to the target
- Eyes kept on the ball at the moment of contact - on approach to goal take a quick look up and pick out target, then focus on ball. Many young players try to look at the target while making contact with the ball.
- Follow through - ankle remains firm and follow through to the target
- Do not try to over-hit the ball (many kids swing so hard at the ball that they usually swing around the ball and mishit it badly). It's a firm pass to someone standing in the goal behind the defending goal-keeper, that is all.

# Tackling

**Why Tackle?** Tackling is used to dispossess the opponent of the ball. It is an important part of defence. It needs to be performed with controlled aggression to prevent injury to both parties, but in no way is it intended to hurt the opposing player. The decision to tackle can be tricky because it involves a commitment which can then be avoided by the attacking player, leaving the defender open. Sometimes it is best to herd and control rather than fully commit (e.g. Move the player away from the goal and into a corner)

When teaching the block tackle (**NO SLIDE TACKLES PERMITTED**), the following points should be taught:

- Get close but not too close to your opponent – about two to three feet is ideal.
- Keep your eye on the ball.
- If the ball carrier lets the ball get slightly away from him or her, immediately get your non-kicking foot alongside the ball.
- Lock the ankle of your kicking foot (the foot you're going to tackle with).
- Bend your knees slightly to give your body a low centre of gravity – this gives you more power.
- Now get really close to your opponent and strike the ball firmly.
- Most importantly (and this applies to all tackling situations) a player must not go in half heartedly. Good tackling is as much about confidence and controlled aggression as.

# Throw Ins

When practising throw ins, the following key coaching points should be taught:

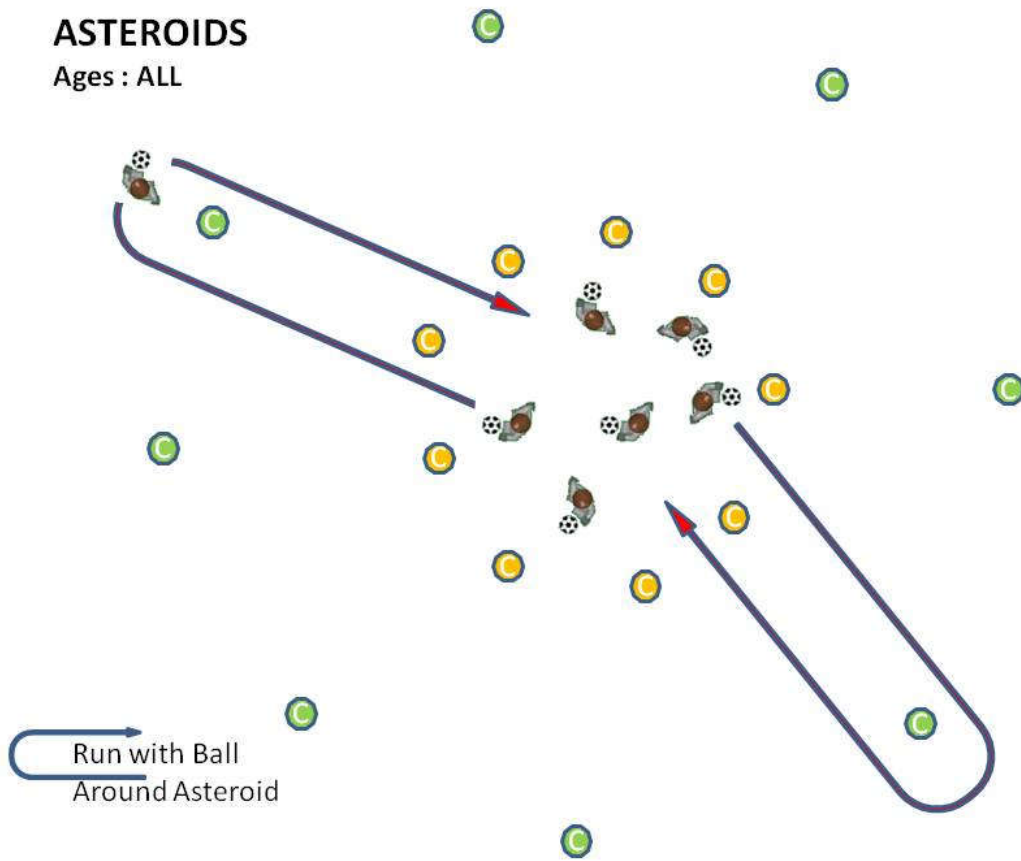
- Practise without a ball first
  - Stand facing the field with feet apart
  - Place one hand on each side of the ball
  - Take the ball behind the head and throw forward onto the field
  - Both feet must stay on the ground
  - Can stand on or behind the side line
  - Ball must go behind the head
  - Must use both hands equally (can't use only one hand & if there is a lot of side spin the referee may say one hand was used too much)
  - Must face the field
  - Beginners should throw toward the other team's goal (the goal the opposing Goalie is in)
  - Cannot throw to yourself
- 
- For more advance players, stepping in to the throw and dragging the back foot are good techniques to get power.



## **MAIN SESSION PRACTICE GAMES**

# ASTEROIDS

Ages : ALL



# ASTEROIDS

**FOCUS :** Ball control and speed

## **Set Up**

- Two circles of cones, one inside the other. Diameters will depend on number and age of players, as well as how much space you want to give them

## **Game**

- Have the players dribble inside the central circle. Red light, green light can be played as part of this.
- On the whistle, each player dribbles with the ball outside the circle around one of the outer “asteroids” and back into the inner circle. Last one back does a forfeit (e.g. 10 tick-tocks)

## **Coaching Points**

- Keep heads up in inner circle and ball close to feet for close control
- When moving into clear space to orbit asteroid, ball can be kicked forward into free space (but not too far!) to speed up. If players are too young, keep ball close for control.

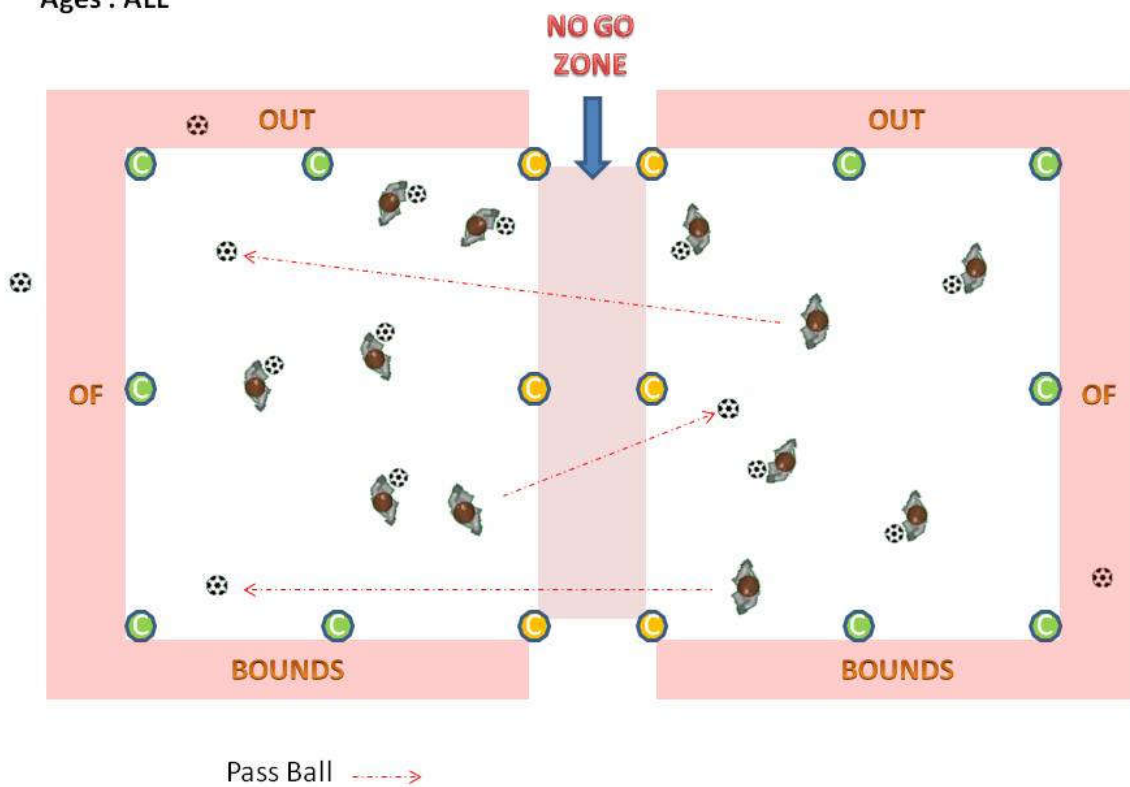
## **Increasing Difficulty**

- Run without the ball round the asteroid, and the coach removes one ball. The player that doesn't have a ball when all are back in the circle dribbles around the outer circle one time then rejoins the group. This teaches a little more aggression to win the race and get to a ball. Can teach shoulder to shoulder contact and shielding for older players.
- Use out-step only, in-step only, strong/weak foot etc.



# CLEAR THE YARD

Ages : ALL



# CLEAR THE YARD

**FOCUS :** Controlled Passing, Awareness

## **Set-Up**

- Two squares opposite each other with a “no go” zone (NGZ) in between.

## **Game**

- Two equal teams, one in each square. Each player has a ball to start the game.
- At the whistle, the players pass the ball from their yard into the opposing teams yard through the NGZ.
- Play for one minute and then blow the whistle to stop the game. NO MORE KICKING!!
- Subtract the number of balls in the team’s out of bounds area from the number of balls in their yard. The team with the lowest score wins (try to work

## **Coaching Points**

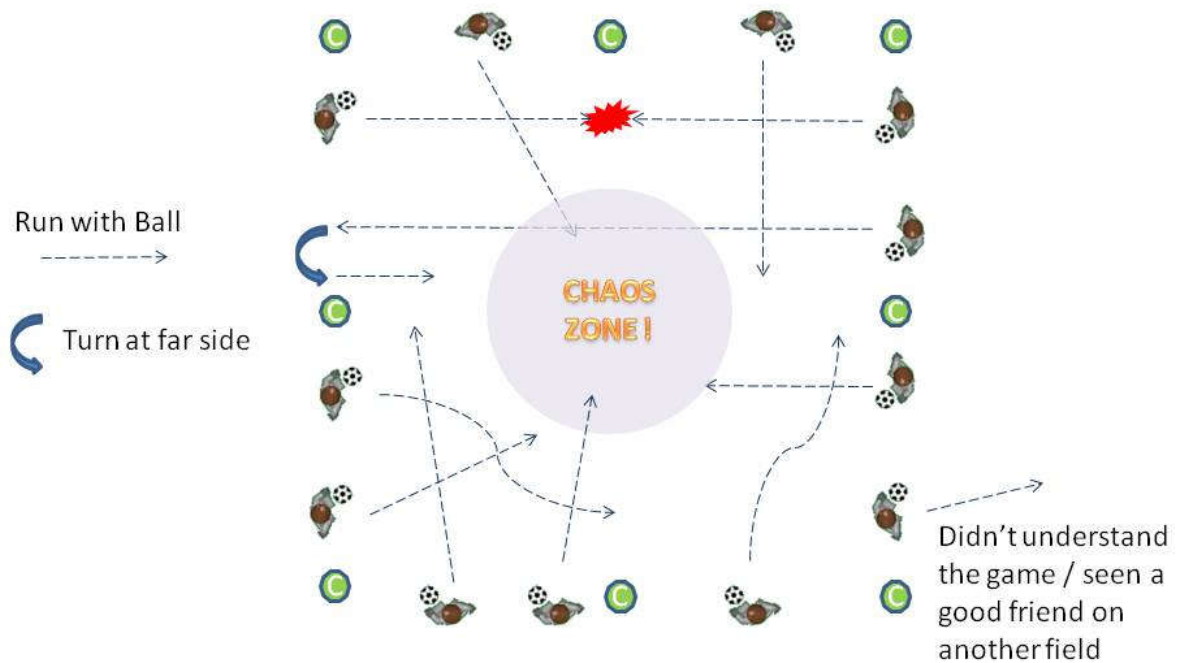
- Passing strength and accuracy is key. If they pass too hard or without direction, the balls will go out of bounds and they will lose a point.

## **Increasing Difficulty**

- Only use in-step, out-step.
- One pass to team mate before passing into opposite zone
- Larger no go zone (more difficult if overall area stays the same)
- Coach as defender in the NGZ (stops the ball or passes it back) – older players

# CONTROLLED CHAOS

Ages : ALL



# CONTROLLED CHAOS

**FOCUS :** Close Ball Control, Turning, Awareness

## **Set-Up**

- One large square with a centre cone on each side

## **Game**

- Spread out around the square facing inwards
- At the whistle, the players navigate with the ball to the other side of the square, turn and navigate back to the starting side. This is one 'lap'
- First one back to their starting side shouts "HOME!"

## **Coaching Points**

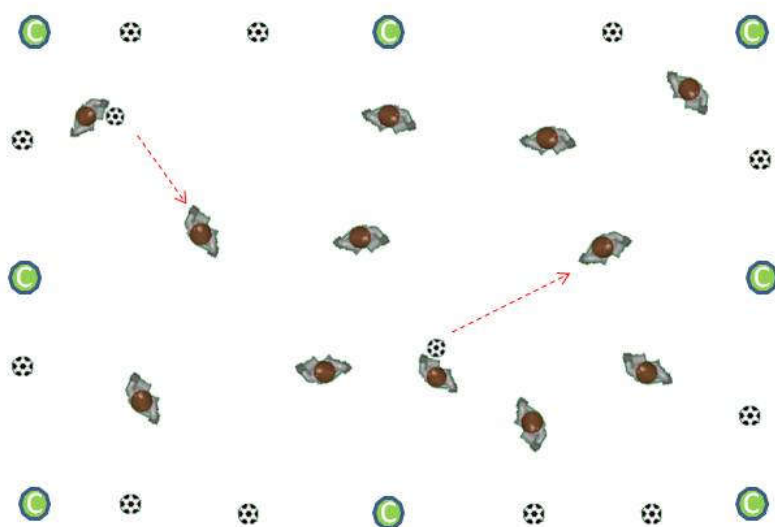
- Keeping ball under control in extremely stressful conditions
- Keep head up, look for space to move into and avoid collisions to go faster. Down the sides are good places to look.
- Tap ball into open space when in the clear or see that there is a clearing
- Different types of turn – speed of turns. Long turn, pull back, hook (inside and outside of boot)

## **Increasing Difficulty**

- Increase number of laps to three, then five, then ten,
- Go as fast as possible (it will be slow at first)
- Reduce square size to limit space

# HUNTER GATHERERS

Ages : ALL



Pass to hit



# HUNTER GATHERERS

**FOCUS :** Accurate Passing, Close Ball Control

## **Set-Up**

- One large square with enough soccer balls for each player spread around the perimeter

## **Game**

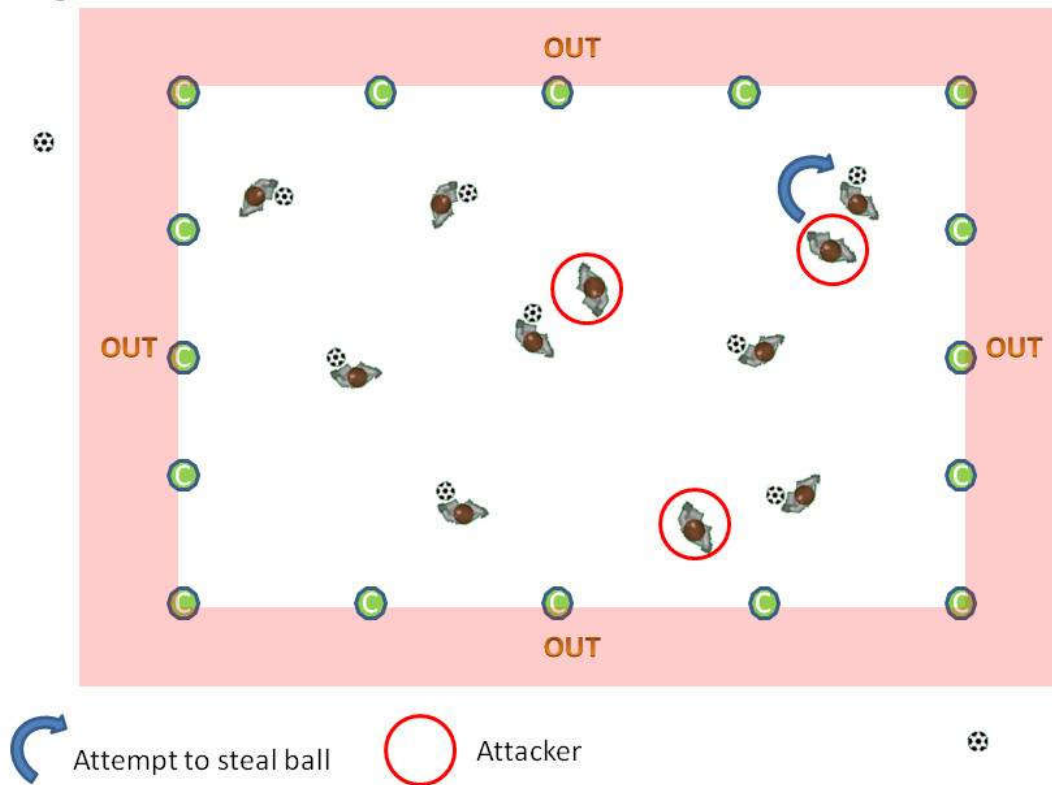
- All players inside the square without a ball.
- At the whistle, the first player designated the hunter by the coach goes and gets a ball, dribbles it into the square and tries to pass into the legs of the other players.
- When hit, a player goes and gets their own ball from the perimeter and joins the hunt
- If the ball misses, the hunter must go fetch their ball and try again
- Last player to be hunted wins and becomes the first hunter for the next game

## **Coaching Points**

- Hunters with the ball need to look-up and control the pass into the legs of the intended target
- Use the in-step to gain more accuracy and do not try to hit it too hard (otherwise a miss will need more running to get the ball)
- Control the ball closely and get nearer to a player before passing OR try to catch a player off guard by passing early (perhaps when the target's back is turned)

# SHARKS & MINNOWS

Ages : ALL



# SHARKS AND MINNOWS

**FOCUS :** Close Ball Control, Awareness, Protecting the Ball

## **Set-Up**

- Area marked out with cones inside which the game takes place

## **Game**

- All players with a ball (the minnows) except one or two sharks. The minnows **MUST** protect their egg (the ball) from the shark using all fair methods available.
- At the whistle, the sharks try to steal the eggs from the minnows by kicking their ball out of play. If they succeed, the minnow becomes a shark.
- Last minnow with an egg is the winner

## **Coaching Points**

- Keep the ball close for control
- Keep head up so as not to bump into other minnows and be aware of sharks
- Put body between shark and ball, and some space between body and ball to protect it and hold off shark. Watch for pushing which is illegal.
- Sharks can work together to be **MUCH** more effective

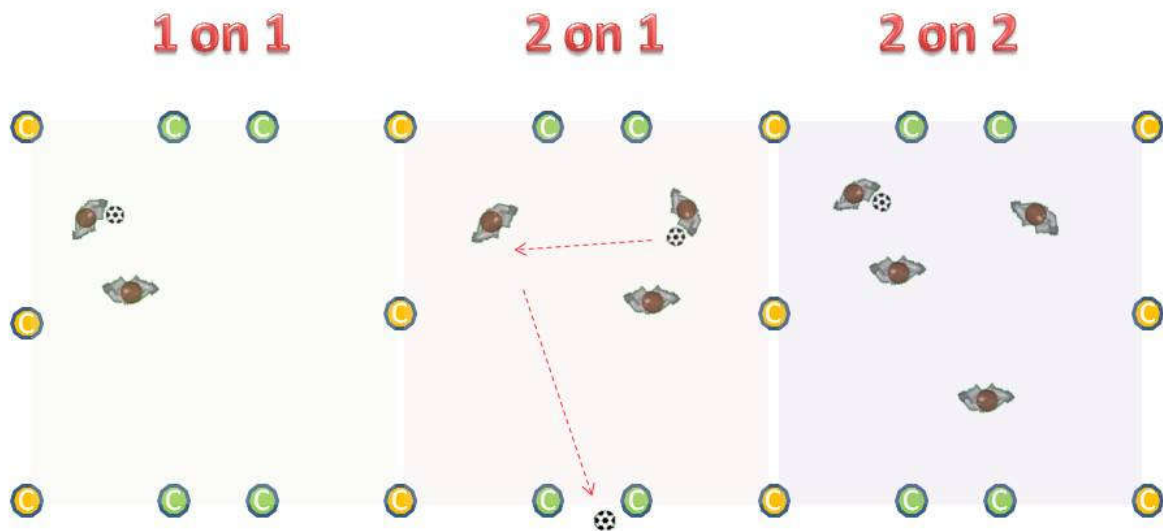
## **Increasing Difficulty**



- Sharks must steal ball and not just kick away – shark becomes minnow, minnow becomes shark



## SMALL GRID COMPETITIONS

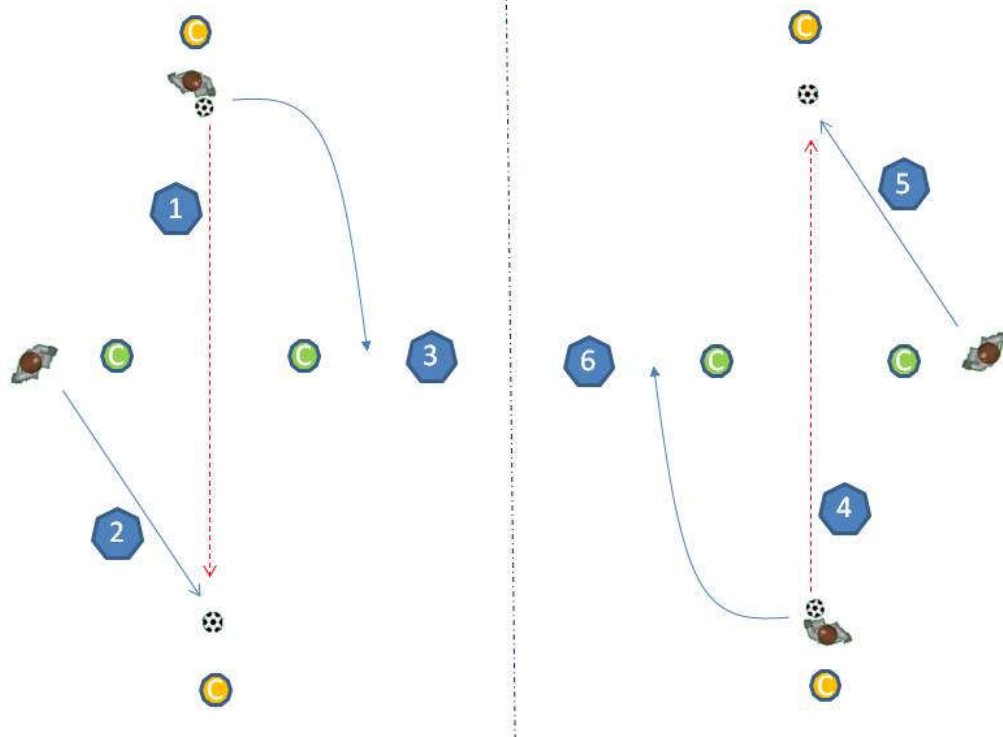
Ages : ALL



  Goal (optional) – without goals, game is “keep-away”

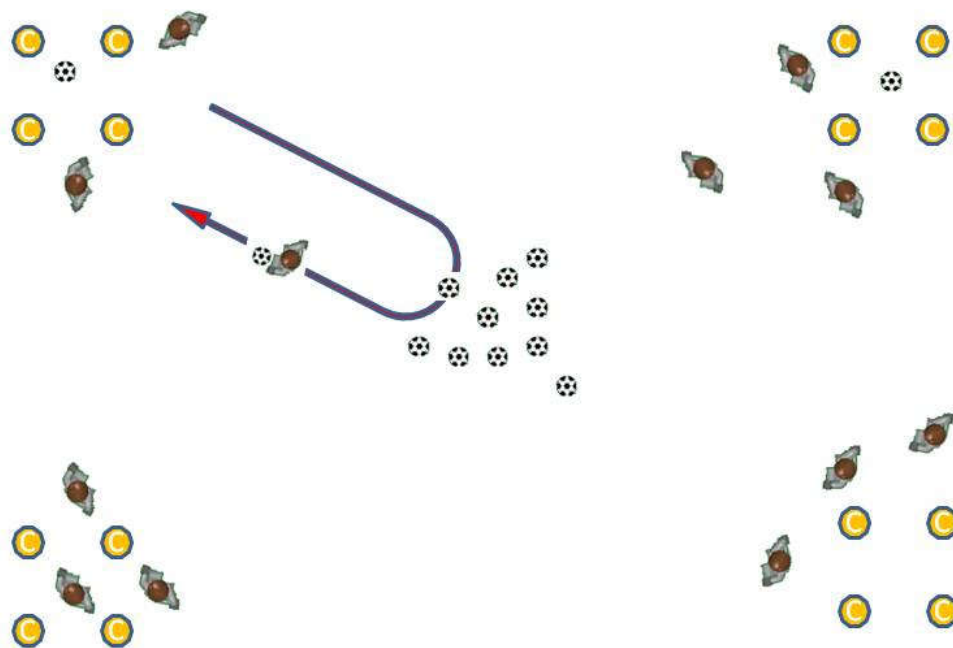
# PASS INTO SPACE

Ages : ALL



# COLLECT & PROTECT

Ages : ALL



## COLLECT & PROTECT

**FOCUS :** Ball control, running with the ball, protecting the ball

### Set-Up

- Set up 4 safe zones using 4 cones each at four corners of a large square
- Place all balls in the middle
- Split the players into four groups (about three/four players) at each zone

### Game

- On the whistle, one player from each group must run to the centre, collect a ball and dribble it back to their safe zone. Then the next player goes.
- Once all balls are collected, they may go and steal from other zones
- Play for 60 seconds
- The team with the most balls in their safe zone when time is up wins

### Coaching Points

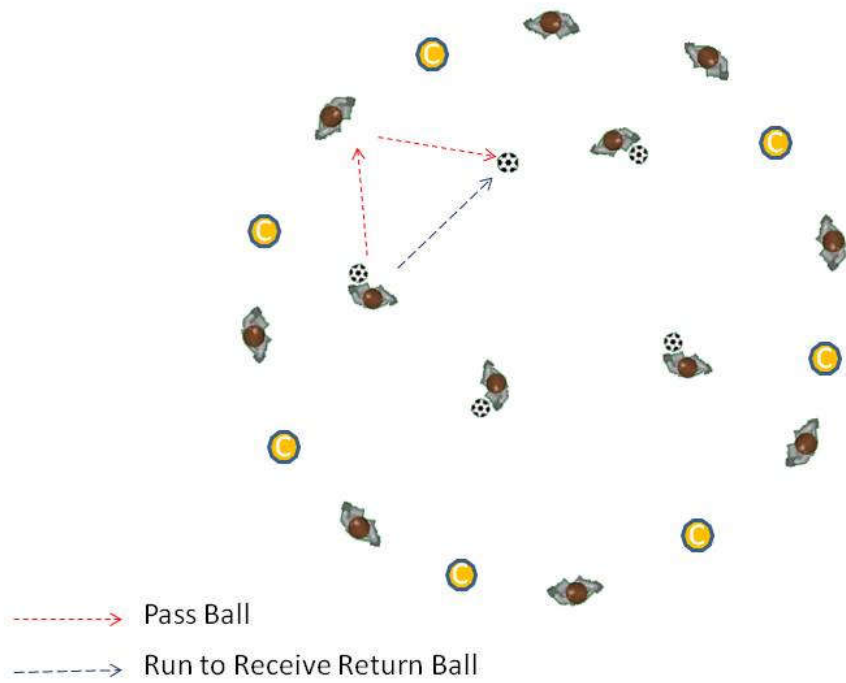
- Keep the ball close for control
- Control the ball to stop it in the safe zone
- Put body between enemy and ball, and some space between body and ball to protect it. Watch for pushing which is illegal.

### Increasing Difficulty

- Use turns when collecting ball (pull backs, inside hook, outside hook)
- Use only instep, out-step, weak foot when controlling ball

## CIRCULAR PASSING

Ages : OLDER



# CIRCULAR PASSING

**FOCUS :** Running with the ball, passing and receiving while moving, learning names

## Set-Up

- A rough circle of cones
- Half the players without balls stand on the perimeter
- Half the players with a ball each inside the circle

## Game

- On the whistle, players inside the circle begin to move around, dribbling and controlling the ball
- They must look for an open player on the circle perimeter to pass to
- The pass is instigated by either the passer calling the receiver's name, or the receiver calling the passer's name
- Passer must ensure both are ready to pass and receive by making eye contact
- Receiver returns the ball to the passer, either directly back or into space.
- Play for 60 seconds and then swap passers and receivers

## Coaching Points

- Keep the ball close for control and keep head up
- Call names and ensure both players are prepared to receive and return the ball

## Increasing Difficulty

- Speed up
- Use only instep, out-step, weak foot when controlling ball