

U8-U16 Practice Plan

by Tony Sloss

For most practices, I plan the time as follows:

1/3 warm-ups: individual and paired coordination activities, dribbling moves, juggling, fun games

1/3 skill building drills and small games: demonstrate, then practice with no pressure, a little pressure, then game pressure

1/3 small-sided games/scrimmage: may first add rules (2-touch, pass before shots take, use all players, etc., but always end with open game.

Warm-ups (for younger ages)

-individual: Simon says stretching, foot switching on ball, the 'fall down' practice, goalie catches

-paired: ball handling, stretching, bumping, pepper,

-games: freeze tag, blob tag, hospital tag, fire in the forest, tsunami in the sea, volcano island, empty the nest, demon, knockout, soccer tennis

Small-Sided Games

- 1v1 dribbler's dream with goals end to end or side to side

- 2v2 or 3v3 flying changes for quick transitions

- 2v1 or 3v2 with goalies to work on offense passing, defensive tactics

- keep away games with no goals. Start 4v1 or 5v1, then when is gets too easy, 5v2 then 4v2. Pinnies in hand of defenders, switch on loss of possession or at certain time.

- 4-goal games encourage switching point of attack, looking up off the ball

- 3v3 scrimmage with 3 goalies, a favorite for U8s. Yell 'switch' to change sides.

- King's Court: Series of 1-2 minute 1v1 games, either knock over the tall cone, or set up two small goals 10 yds apart. At the whistle, winners move up the ladder, losers go down. Rock-paper-scissors if a tie. Start with stronger players in the 'lower' courts.

-4v2, 6v3 with goals: uneven sided game where larger team has limited touches on ball (2 or 3 touch) and smaller team can dribble as much as they want. Use to develop the passing game and movement off the ball for the larger numbers team, and 'doggedness' (tenacious, aggressive play) for the smaller sided team. Rotate players between teams periodically. Vary numbers to suit the playing level, so that the larger sided team to find success in their passing game.

Flying Changes

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2v2 with small or large goals. Additional players line up behind endline (or at corners). As soon as ball crosses endline, new players rush out with a new ball, and former attacking team now on defense. Former defender goes to back of line with their ball. Pts. for goals only. Option: 3v3, 4-goal game. Encourage quick transitions, and a readiness to burst forward when its time.

Dribbler's Dream

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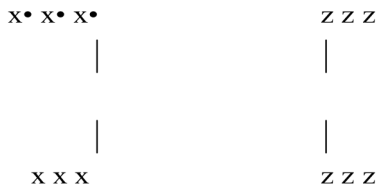
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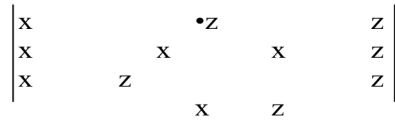
1v1 with small goals. First s serves ball to first a, and then chases to steal ball. A can score on either left or right goal. Use first touch, feints to throw off opponent. Switch lines, or stay in same and keep team score. Options: s serves from one endline toward a who is at other end line.

4-goal game



2 x bring out a ball and attack the z goals. Choice of goals gives them more choices, spreads the defense. Z attempts to steal ball and attack either of the x goals. Options: give each group of four a set time to play, or rotate out when ball goal is scored.

3v3 Scrimmage



Favorite for U8. Larger field scrimmage with large goals. 3v3 scrimmage with half the team, while the other half plays goalies. Go all out for 2-3 minutes, then yell “switch”; the field players go into goal, the the goalies come out and play on the field. Goalies stay on the goal line when playing goalie. Coach can group kids by ability to allow newer players more touches on the ball.

Dungeons and Dragons

1v1 and 2v1 against three separate defenders. Each defender starts on the back line of their box, and cannot leave their box. Finish with a shot on small goal, or large one with goalie.

Goalie Wars



Two full size goals about 25 yards apart. Teams lined up on their end line, each player with a ball. A has goalie in goal. First B dribbles out and shoots on A, then rushes back to be B goalie. Next A dribbles out as soon as B shoots their ball and shoots on B goal, then rushes back into their own goal. Continue at rapid pace. Goalies collect ball and get in line to be shooters. Options: keep score, games to 10; place two cones 5 yards apart in middle to mark zones for 3pt, 2pt, and 1 pt shots.

Soccer Tennis



2 cones mark a 6-yard goal (or “net”), with a team of two on each side. Team A serves by kicking the ball between the cones. B has to return the ball through the cones, with each players touching the ball once only. And, a dead (stopped) ball is a point for the other team. If a team misses the goal or let’s the ball stop, it’s a point for the other team. Start a new point after each score.