

MIDLAND SOCCER CLUB



**MANUAL FOR
U7 TO U8 RECREATIONAL COACHES**

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INTRODUCTION:

First of all, we would like to thank you for volunteering to coach a soccer team. The Midland Soccer Club realize that not every volunteer who signs up to coach at the club has had any experience of playing soccer let alone coach the game. In order to try and make your coaching experience a positive one we have put this coach's booklet together. This booklet will hopefully cover everything you will need as a coach from team formations to soccer drills that you can use in your practice sessions.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact one of the Midland Soccer Club trainers by either phone (832 0895) or e-mail (drewemrich@midlandsoccerclub.org).

MIDLAND SOCCER CLUB PHILOSOPHY

The Midland Soccer Club philosophy is to make every kids soccer experience a positive one. The Midland Soccer Club is here for the children and their development as soccer players. Every child must play 50% of every game and each player must experience every position on the field throughout the season. We also stress to coaches that they try to make everything fun based from training sessions to games.

At the Midland Soccer Club we are not concerned with results and no score or record should be taken at this age group. If your team is dominating another please try to rotate your players in order to stop your team running up a score.

To follow the Midland Soccer Club philosophy we recommend that before you hold a practice session, hold a team meeting and explain to parents your goals for the season as well as what the club is trying to achieve.

At MSC we believe training sessions at this age group should take place twice a week and last for roughly one to one and a half-hours. This should be enough time to hold a training session, which will keep the concentration of the players while enabling you to focus on a specific skill. If you plan correctly the time allotted should allow for a warm up, at least two drills and a small-sided game (see coaches organization).

GOALS AS A MIDLAND SOCCER CLUB COACH

In order to create continuity at the club and improve the standard of players throughout the Recreation Program we have identified areas of play, we want you as a U7 / U8 coach to teach. At this level we are going to ask that you concentrate on these soccer fundamentals:

- Dribbling Technique
- Running with the ball
- Moves and Turns
- Passing and Control Technique
- Basic Goalkeeping and Shooting Technique

There are a number of drills included in this booklet to help you teach these basis skills. They vary in difficulty from easy to hard.

Things to remember as a coach:

1. Training sessions should take place twice a week and last no longer than one and half-hours.
2. Recreational soccer is supposed to be fun.
3. Each child plays 50% of the game.
4. Players should experience playing in every position.
5. Coaches should stress to parents the importance of abiding by the guidelines set by the Midland Soccer Club.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

1. **Support your child:** Remember to encourage your child and the whole team. Encourage your children to work hard in order to improve skills as well as emphasizing good sportsmanship. Implement a philosophy that hard work and enjoyment is more important than victory.
2. **Always be positive:** It is important to become not only just a role model but a positive role model. Always try to applaud good play from both teams.
3. **Remember children just want to have fun:** It is your child that is playing soccer and not you. Encourage your child to create their own goals and support them throughout. Try not to impose your own standards and goals, let them play the game for themselves. Did you know that 72% of children would rather play for a losing team than ride the bench for a winning team.
4. **Reinforce positive behavior:** Nobody likes to make mistakes and if your child does remember it is all part of learning. Always encourage your child's efforts and only point out the good things that your child has accomplished.
5. **Don't be a sideline coach or referee:** Coaches and referees are usually parents like you or children like your son or daughter. Coaches at the club are volunteers who takes time out of their busy schedules to help make your children's soccer experience a positive one. Most of the referees at the club are boys and girls that play or have played at the club, they need your support as much as your children do. Therefor we ask you to refrain from coaching or refereeing from the sidelines.

COACHES ORGANIZATION AND EVALUATION

Organization: This is the most important aspect of any training session. As you move through this manual you will find a number of drills that concentrate on specific soccer techniques. These drills should be used to plan training sessions that teach your players the skills recommended by the soccer club.

Training sessions should start with a warm up consisting of walking, jogging, sprinting and stretching (this element will become more important as your children get older). Once players are warm you should move into the main body of your session. Make sure this part of your session is the focus of the days training. Try not to deviate between different skills in one session, this will lead to confusion among your players. The focus of your training should change weekly and you should try to cover all the soccer techniques that the soccer club recommends. Always finish a session with a small-sided game. Don't forget to carry on the focus of your session during this game.

Evaluation: After each session ask yourself these questions:

- Was the session on the same level as your kids?
- Did players understand and learn from the session?
- Can you see any progression in your players?
- Did players learn the skills desired and implement them into the game?

PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

You will encounter many difficulties and problems when trying to coach a U7 / U8 team. Below are just some of the problems you may encounter and some possible solutions:

1. PROBLEM: Probably the most difficult aspect of coaching a U7 / U8 team is trying to keep the children's attention during games and training sessions.

SOLUTION: To keep players interested during games and training try to make every aspect of the game fun.

2. PROBLEM: Another challenge will be trying to stop players bunching during games.

SOLUTION: To TRY and keep the players apart make the soccer match into a fun game while limiting the areas each player can move into. Give each player a certain mission, for example, both central defenders must guard the goal from getting scored in and in order to do that they must not cross the half way line. Keeping children apart and playing positions, at this age is almost impossible

Possible problems and solutions continued.....

3. PROBLEM: Players do not like new drills and want to play the same games over and over again.

SOLUTION: This is OK but try to incorporate new skills into the same game. Always have a list of drills just in case players do not react well to anything new.

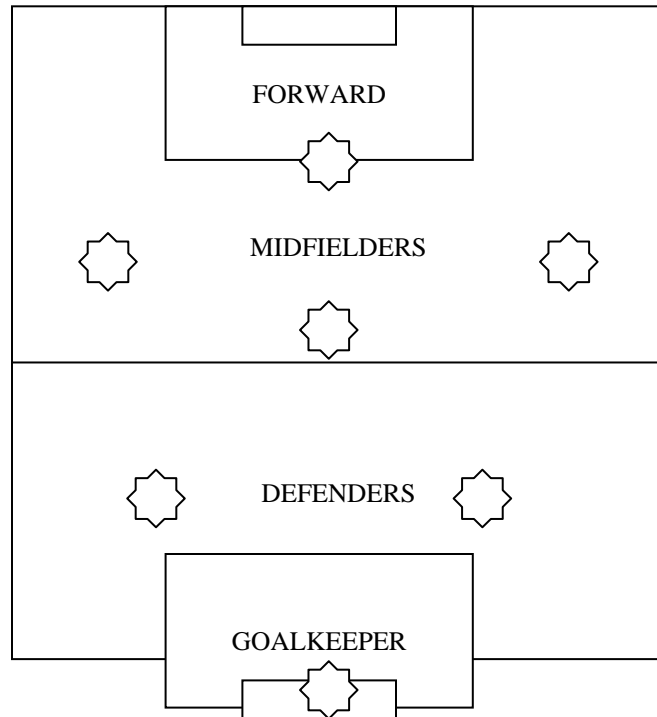
4. PROBLEM: Players do not play as a team.

SOLUTION: Players at this age are just beginning to realize that there are other players on the field. You may find that certain players will play together but don't expect them to play as a team, this will come as player's progress and grow.

You will find that some players are more advanced than others are both physically and mentally. Every player you coach will be different so don't expect all players to react and learn in the same way. **Remember as long as the players are enjoying their soccer experience and having fun then you have done a good job.**

FORMATION: U8 Recreation

7-A-Side one of which is a Goalkeeper



This formation includes:

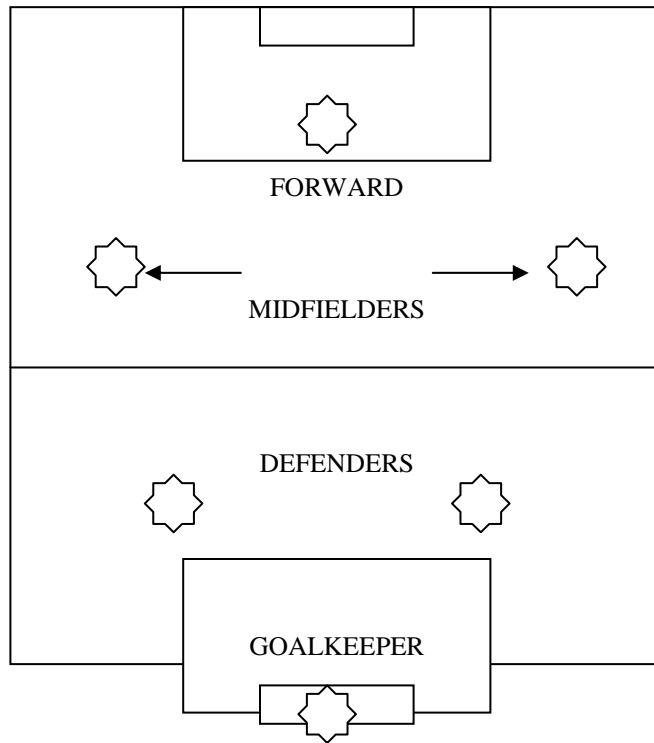
- One goalkeeper.
- Two central defenders.
- One central and two wide midfield players
- One forward.

This formation provides balance:

- Width (midfielders)
- Length (forward)
- Depth (defenders).

FORMATION: U7 Recreation

6-A-Side one of which is a Goalkeepers



This formation includes:

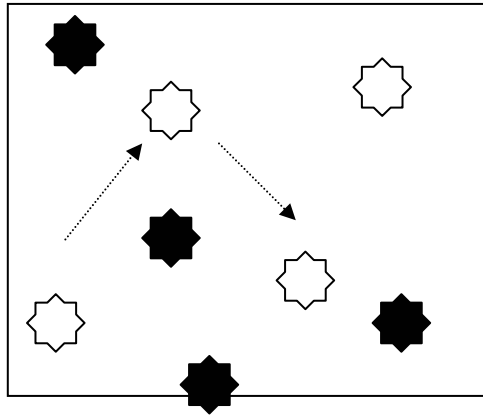
- One goalkeeper.
- Two central defenders.
- Two wide midfield players
- One forward.

This formation provides balance:

- Width (midfielders)
- Length (forward)
- Depth (defenders).

WARM UP DRILL 1

1. SOCCER BASKETBALL: Passing Warm Up!



Organization

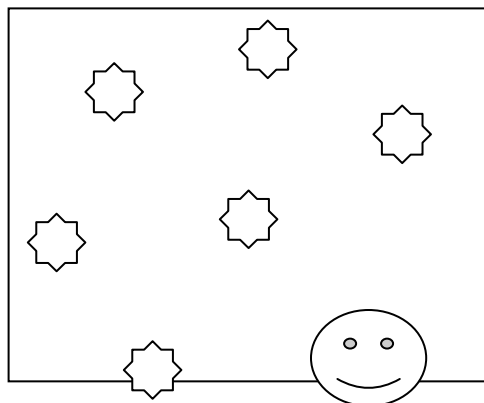
- Split your team into two equal teams.
- **RULES:** A player may carry (yes with their hands) the ball for three steps, before passing it.
- **GOAL:** To score a goal the ball must not touch the ground during three consecutive passes.

Coaching Points

- **Movement:** Try to keep the kids constantly moving.
- **Pass and Move:** once a player has passed they must move into open space.
- **Head Up:** Can you see where defenders and teammates are.

WARM UP DRILL 2

2. STAR WARS POD RACING: Dribbling Warm Up!



Organization

- All the aliens have bibs tucked in the back of their shorts.
- The coach is ANIKIN SKYWALKER and has to try and catch each alien in order to win the race.
- Once an alien loses its bib they help Anikin catch the other aliens.
- Start without the ball.

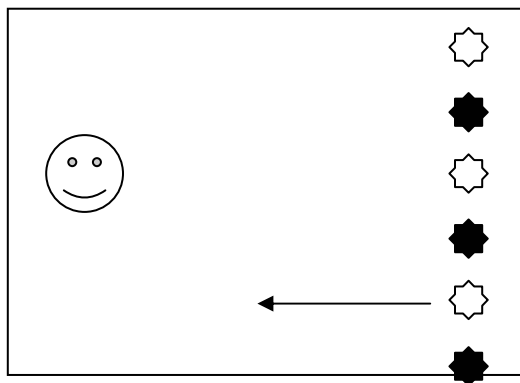
Coaching Points

- Movement: Change speed and direction.
- Move into space - away from Anikin.
- Head Up when dribbling - looking for Anikin and Aliens.
- Use inside and outside of both feet to dribble.

Running with the ball: Game 1: How Longs Left Coach

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30.
- Every player needs a ball.



Game

- Object of the game is for players to dribble to the coach.
- When the coach brings his hands to his ears players should shout 'How Longs Left Coach'.
- The coach will then turn around and shout a number.
- Players can only dribble as the coach is counting and not looking.
- When the coach stops counting and turns around players should freeze with their foot on top of the ball.
- Any players moving or without their ball must start again.
- Coach can also shout other commands: RED CARD, players should drop to their knees and beg not to be sent off. INJURY TIME, players should pretend to be injured. END OF PRACTICE, players must dribble back to the end line as the coach chases them back.

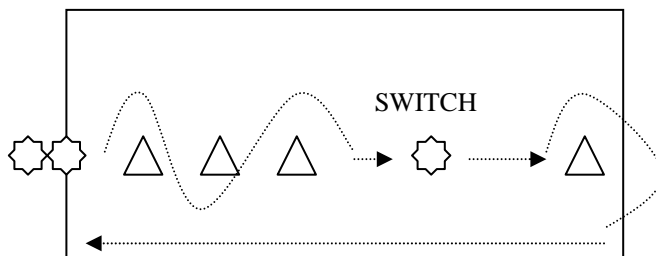
Coaching Points

- Use the inside and outside of foot to dribble.
- Close Control: Every time you take a stride, take a touch of the ball.
- Knees bent.
- Dribble at game speed.
- Head Up: Try to look up between touches.

Running with the ball: Game 2: Obstacle Course!

Organization

- Area: 10 x 20 for each team.
- Split players into teams of 3 one ball per team.
- Station cones and players as shown.



Game

- The first player in the group has to dribble around the cones, through their partner's legs, around the end cone and back to the group.
- Continue until both players are finished, first team back wins.
- Switch players and continue.

Progression

- Remove the player in the center of the grid.
- Add a gate at the end of the course.
- Instead of dribbling around the cone players must do a turn, drag back, at the gate and dribble back to their team.

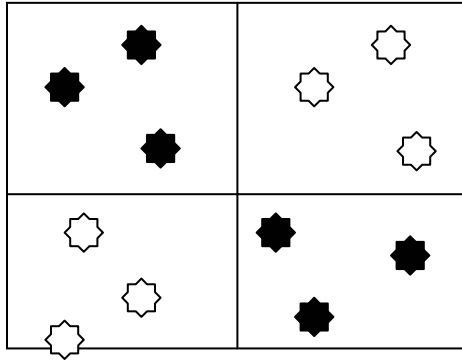
Coaching points

- Close control: Every time you take a stride, take a touch on the ball.
- Use the inside and outside of the foot to dribble.
- Knees bent.
- Dribble at game speed.
- Head Up: Try to look up between touches.
- Drag Back: Place the sole of the foot on the ball, role it behind you and turn 180.

Running with the ball: Game 3: Wacky Races!

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20 split into four.
- Place a team of three into each section.
- Each player needs a ball.



Game

- Players should start by dribbling around their area.
- When the coach shouts 'Wacky Races' players dribble to the next area. Start with clockwise then change.
- First team with all their members in the next section wins a point.
- Team with the most points wins the game.

Progression

- One ball per team.
- This time once a player dribbles into the next area they must turn and pass it back to their teammate so they can dribble in.
- Game ends when all players are in the area with their feet on the ball.

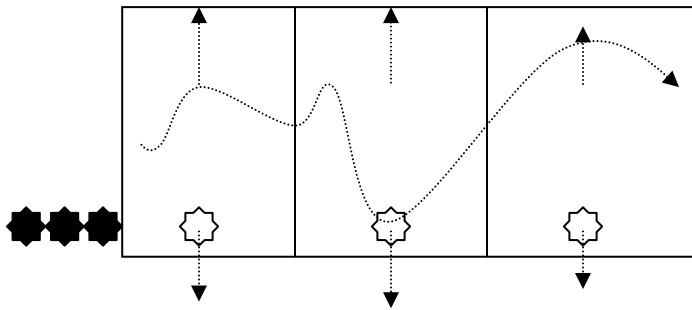
Coaching Points

- Close control when dribbling.
- Head Up when dribbling.
- Knees bent.
- Dribble at game speed.
- Use the **Outside Hook** to change direction.
- **Outside Hook:** Use the outside of the foot to knock the ball directly behind you. As you strike the ball turn 180.

Running with the ball: Game 4: Attack of the Clones

Organization

- Area: 10 x 30 split into three equal areas.
- Place a player into two teams.
- One team must place a player in each area, in the crab position.
- The other team forms a line at one end.



Game

- Object of the game is for each player, Anakin Skywalker, to dribble past the robots and to safety which scores a point.
- Robots are allowed to move on their hands and feet to kick the ball out of the area.
- If a player loses the ball they start again, each player has 2 lives.
- The team with the most points wins.

Progression

- Defending players can now stand up.
- Players receive points for every defender they dribble past.

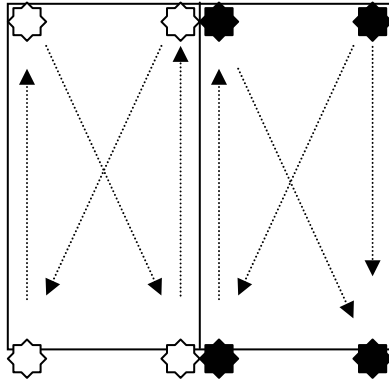
Coaching Points

- Close Control when dribbling.
- Head Up to see defenders.
- Knees bent.
- Dribble at game speed.
- Change direction to avoid defenders.
- Use the **Matthews Fake** to beat defenders.
- **Matthews Fake:** Step to the side of the ball with your weakest foot, bending your and shifting your body weight to that side. Come out of the move the other way taking the ball with the outside of your strongest foot.

Dribbling: Game 1: Station Switch!

Organization

- Area: 10 x 20 per team.
- Split players into teams of four.
- Place a player in each corner and give them a number.



Game

- The object of the game is for each player to dribble to the next number and give them the ball.
- First team to have all their players' back in their original positions wins.

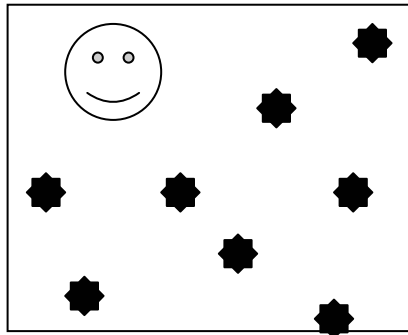
Coaching Points

- Running with the ball: Players keep the ball 2 - 3 feet in front of them.
- Use the inside and outside of the foot to strike the ball.
- Push the ball out of your feet, but not too far.
- Head Up: In between touches take a look up.
- Knees bent.
- Run at game speed.
- Communication: Players must shout to each other so that they know where to dribble next.

Dribbling: Game 2: Soccer Tag

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20.
- Every player needs a ball.
- Give every player a pinnie.



Game

- Players must spread out in the area and dribble around.
- Coach starts as the tagger.
- When the coach tags a player they remove their pinnie and become a tagger.
- The last person remaining becomes the next tagger.

Progression

- Split players into two teams.
- Once players have been tagged they must remove their pinnie and sit down until released by a teammate.
- Players are released when a teammate picks up their pinnie and returns it to them.

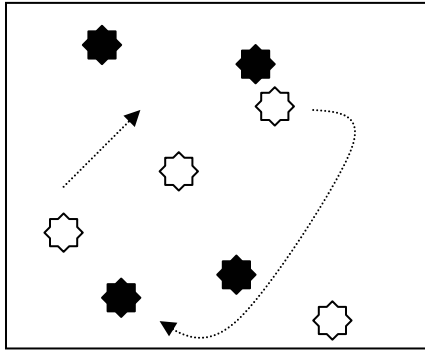
Coaching Points

- Running with the ball: Keep the ball within 2 - 3 feet in front of you.
- Use the inside and outside of the foot to strike the ball.
- Push the ball out of your feet but keep it under control.
- Head up while dribbling.
- Knees bent.
- Game speed.

Dribbling: Game 3: Spider Man

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20.
- Group players into pairs.
- Spiderman (dark) stands behind Hobgoblin (light).
- Hobgoblin is in possession of the ball.



Game

- The object of the game is for the Hobgoblin to lose Spiderman.
- When the coach shouts 'FREEZE' all players stop.
- The hobgoblin now has to try and pass the ball through Spiderman's legs to score a point.
- Rotate.

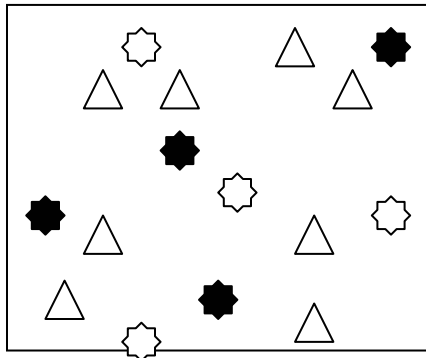
Coaching Points

- Running with the ball technique.
- Use the inside and outside of the foot to dribble.
- Head up when dribbling.
- Knees bent.
- Use turns to change direction and lose partners: Drag Back and Outside Hook.

Dribbling: Game 4: Spider Man 2

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20.
- Place small goals around the area.
- Group players into pairs, one is Spiderman and the other is Hobgoblin.
- Each player has a ball.



Game

- Hobgoblin (light player) must dribble through as many goals as possible in a specified time limit.
- Every goal he dribbles through he gets a point.
- Spiderman (dark player) must try to shadow Hobgoblin around the area.
- Every time Spiderman can kick Hobgoblins ball, he loses a point.
- Switch.

Progression

- Have 8 Hobgoblins and 4 Spiderman.
- Players still have to try and win the ball.

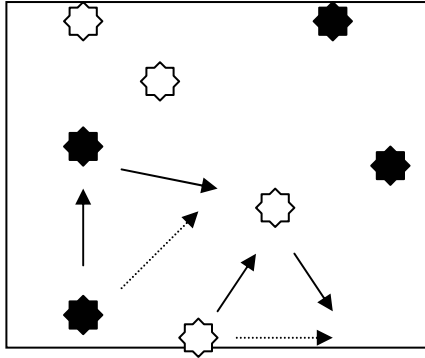
Coaching Points

- Running with the Ball Technique.
- Use the inside and outside of the foot to dribble.
- Head Up when dribbling.
- Knees bent.
- Use turns to change direction: Drag Back and Outside Hook.

Passing: Game 1: Partner Passing

Organization

- Area 30 x 30.
- Place players into pairs, one ball between two.



Game

- Players must find a space and pass back and forth to each other.
- Next players should try passing and moving inside the area.
- If the ball or a player goes outside the area both players must do a fun punishment. For example, Australian push-ups (players lay on the ground and wave their hands and legs in the air), Frog jumps, etc.

Progression

1. Coach becomes a defender, players now have to keep the ball away from the defender by passing and moving.
2. Instead of the coach use 2 players as defenders.

Passing Technique

- Look at your partner.
- Place your non-kicking foot next to the ball toe pointing at your target.
- Bend knees - keeps ball on the ground.
- Use the inside of foot to pass - NO TOES.
- Follow through should be towards partner.

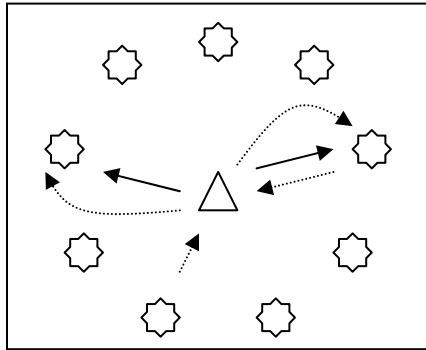
Control Coaching Points

- You should be facing your partner when receiving the ball.
- Receive the ball with the inside of your foot.
- Cushion the ball, foot slightly off the floor toes pointing up.

Passing: Game 2: Circle Passing

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20.
- Place players in a circle with a cone in the center.
- Use one ball to start.



Game

- Players must dribble into the center, pass to a teammate and then follow the pass to exchange places.
- Continue until every player has had a turn.

Progression

- Add more soccer balls.
- One soccer ball for every two players.

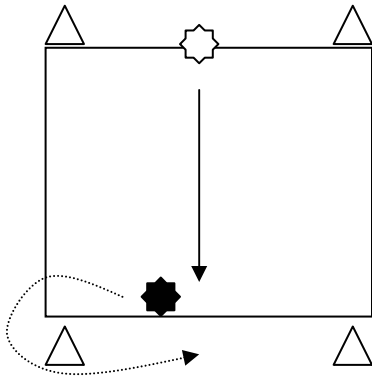
Coaching Points

- Passing technique.
- Control technique.
- Dribbling technique.
- First touch should push the ball out in front of a player to set them up for what they want to do next.
- Communication - players should call for the ball.

Passing: Game 3: World Cup Masters

Organization

- Area: 10 x 10.
- Place cones at each corner.
- Place players in pairs.
- One ball per pair.



Game

- To become a World Cup Master you must pass the ball across the end line without your partner stopping it.
- To start, the dark player must pass the ball to the light player.
- The dark player must then run around the cone and back to the center to try and stop the ball.
- Once the light player receives the ball they try to pass the ball across the area and over the end line.
- A goal is scored if the ball crosses the end line.
- Continue.

Progression

- Move the cones in to make passing over the end line more difficult.

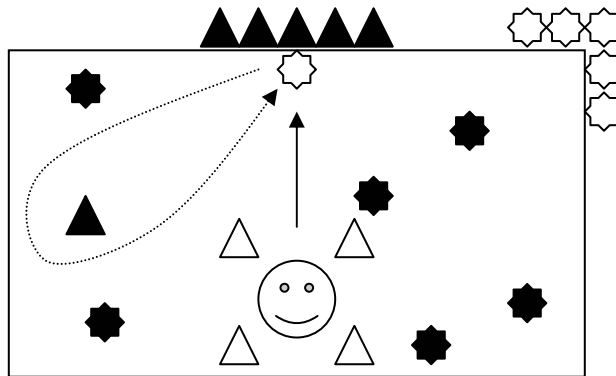
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Control Technique.
- Accuracy of passing.
- Power of the pass.
- To control the ball, move in line with the ball as early as possible.
- Your initial pass should always start your run.

Passing: Game 4: Nearly Baseball

Organization

- Area: 40 x 40.
- Split players into two teams.
- Place a 5 x 5 pitchers mound 10-yards from the wickets (5 cones in a row).
- Coach is the pitcher.
- Place one cone 10 yards from the wicket.



Game

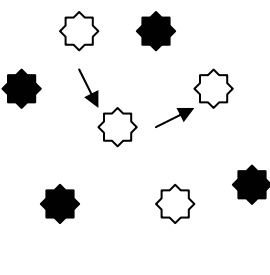
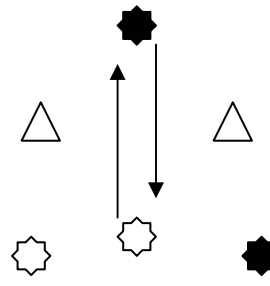
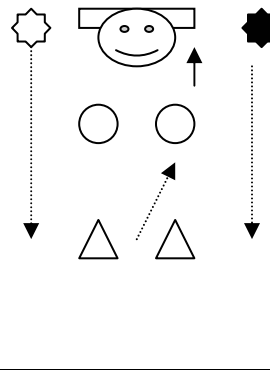
- Coach passes the ball towards the batter.
- The batter must kick the ball and run around the cone.
- The batter must be ready to kick the ball as soon as it is passed, which is done as soon as the coach receives the ball from fielders.
- The batter continues to bat until passed out.
- Players must field the ball with their hands at first and then progress to feet.
- Continue until the team is out.

Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Control Technique.
- Accuracy of passes into the pitcher and the outfield.
- Power of the passes.
- Use laces for power.
- Use inside of foot for accuracy.
- To keep the ball low, put your head and knee over the ball.

SESSION PLAN EXAMPLE 2: FOCUS SHOOTING AND GOALKEEPING

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| Warm Up | Soccer Basketball. |
| Technique | Shooting. |
| Main Activity | World Cup Strikers. |
| Progression | Shooting and Goalkeeping. |

| Description | Organization | Coaching Points |
|--|---|---|
|  | <p>Area: 20 x 20. Split players into two teams. Rules: A player may carry the ball for 3 steps before passing. 3 passes scores a goal.</p> | <p>Movement: Try to keep kids constantly moving. Pass and Move. Head Up: can you see a player before passing to them.</p> |
|  | <p>Area: 10 x 15. Place players into pairs. One ball per pair. Players strike the ball back and forth. Progress to adding a goalkeeper. Alternate keepers.</p> | <p>Shooting technique.</p> |
|  | <p>Area: 20 x 20 with a gate at the top. Split players into two teams. Place a team in each corner. Number players. Coach acts as a server and GK. Look at drill for rules.</p> | <p>Shooting Technique. Speed around cones. Shoot as early as possible. Follow in for rebounds.</p> |
| <p>SMALL-SIDED GAME: SHOOTING AND GOALKEEPING! (Always finish a training session with a small-sided game)</p> | <p>Area: 40 x 30. 4 goals. 2 teams. Teams can score in any goal. If a team scores in every goal they get 10 points. Progress to 2 goals and goalkeepers.</p> | <p>Shooting Technique. Goalkeeping. Spread out. Don't Bunch. Dribble into space. Shoot on sight.</p> |