



U10 PRACTICE 5 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- 2v2 to Small Goals (Defending) - 10 minutes
- 4 Vs. 2 Keep-away - 10 minutes
- Outside the Box - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to 4 Goals (Defending) - 10 minutes
- Scrimmage - 20 minutes

Description

This practice is part of the __US Youth Soccer National Grassroots Curriculum__.

OVERVIEW

The focus of this practice is on [defending](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=2Fjzn7ikhh3n9XndY3U6rz). At U8, the focus was on the first defender recognizing when and how to [pressure](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=LFSVNRE7kisLSd7iv7vqK) an attacker.

At U10, it's important to build on that and also include other players. The second defender is called the [covering](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=1sFIN3PNHGmTVQjcbeFgRd) defender and helps support the person pressuring the ball.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Communication between players

- Closet player recognizes to [pressure](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=LFSVNRE7kisLSd7iv7vqK) the player with the ball
- Players sprint to the ball and then take smaller steps and get low when they get closer to the person with the ball
- Staggered stance (to force the person with the ball to one side)
- [Covering](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=1sFIN3PNHGmTVQjcbeFgRd) player adjusts position to support

WHAT TO SAY

__How should we approach the person with the ball?__

Players sprint to the ball and then take smaller steps and get low when they get closer to the person with the ball

__Why is it so important to have someone pressure the person with the ball?__

Limits where they can go and how fast they can move the ball forward

__Why is communication so important?__

Helps the team to know who is going to the ball

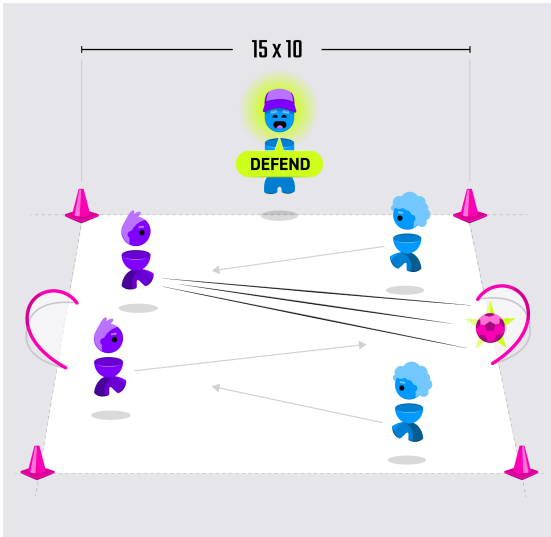
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Soccer 101: [Poke Tackling](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=5JVxEKWQa7NbBdKfusVXxP)

- Soccer 101: [What Is Cover?](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=1sFIN3PNHGmTVQjcbeFgRd)

2v2 to Small Goals (Defending)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Hold the door! Set up small goals and focus on defensive skills and strategy in this small-sided activity.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball
- 1 pinnie per 2 players
- 2 small goals

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of a grid for every 6-10 players, recommended size: 15 yards long x 10 yards wide.
- Place a small portable goal or pair of cones placed 6 feet apart on each endline.
- Divide players into 2 teams, one on each endline, and give one team pinnies.

- Play starts when 2 players enter from each endline and one team initiates play by passing the ball to each other and advancing towards their goal.
- Players scrimmage and score by shooting the ball into the goal or between the cones, below knee-height.
- If a player scores or the ball goes out of bounds, new players rotate in and a new round begins.
- If you have enough players for 2 grids, you can position yourself in the middle and run 2 activities at the same time so players get more touches on the ball.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Especially at younger ages, attacking players are still learning to dribble and pass, and may rush to the ball in their excitement and make errors that help defenders.

Expect both defenders to move to the ball. Remind them that only one needs to move to the ball and the other one helps behind them.

COACHING TIPS

A good rule of thumb for younger defenders: If you can't steal it, how do you make sure the other side doesn't score?

As players become more familiar and skilled, you can encourage the defender closest to the ball to get close enough to the attacker to "get their head down" so they are more focused on shielding the ball, which makes it difficult for the attacker to find their teammate to pass to.

The first defender can then take a slightly diagonal position so the attacker can only dribble left or right (but not both), to "push" that attacker towards the second defender. The second defender's job is to help their teammate protect the goal using the same strategy.

Remind defenders to advance towards an attacker quickly, approach slowly, then quickly get into position: "Quick-slow-low"

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the space larger makes it harder for defenders to stop the attack.

MAKE IT EASIER

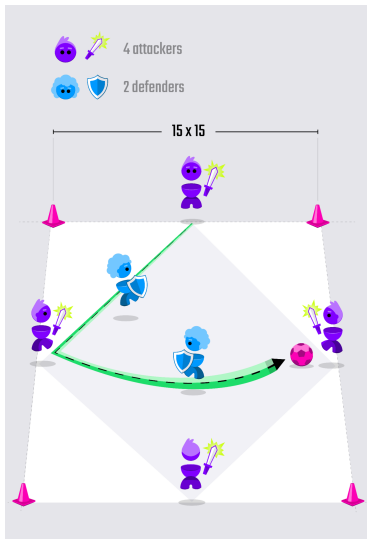
Making the space smaller makes it easier for defenders to stop the attack.

CHANGE IT UP

You can add one more small goal to each endline and put them in corners so players now have twice as many opportunities to score, but cannot score in the center. This makes the game more challenging for defenders and encourages them to use the sideline as an additional defender.

4 Vs. 2 Keep-away

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Shielding, passing and dribbling are developed while players learn how to support each other.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball per 6 players
- 1 pinnie per player

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 15 x 15 yards for every 6 players.
- Divide the group into 2 teams of 4 attackers and 2 defenders.
- The 4 attackers form a loose diamond within the perimeter of the grid and pass the ball, trying to keep it away from the 2 defenders, who play in the center. The goal is to see

- how many passes the attackers can make without losing possession of the ball.
- If a defender steals or intercepts the ball, they trade places with the attacker who last touched the ball. If an attacker knocks the ball out of bounds, they trade places with the player who has been defending longest.
- If turnovers are not happening naturally, rotate teams so all players get turns attacking and defending.
- If you have enough players for 2 grids, you can position yourself in the middle and run 2 games at the same time so players get more touches on the ball.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Sometimes players try to be supportive and get close to the player with the ball. Teach them that they should try to make the field as big as possible by spreading out, not crowding the ball. The bigger the space, the harder it is to defend.

Defenders may get discouraged. Make sure to rotate players if turnovers are not happening naturally so that everyone gets turns attacking and defending.

COACHING TIPS

The attackers must communicate constantly and always try to provide left, right and central support for their teammate who has the ball. This diamond shape is helpful as players will always know quickly where their teammates are so they can pass more quickly.

Encourage players to always keep their "hips open" to the field. This means they should always face the space so they can see their passing options when they receive the ball.

CHANGE IT UP

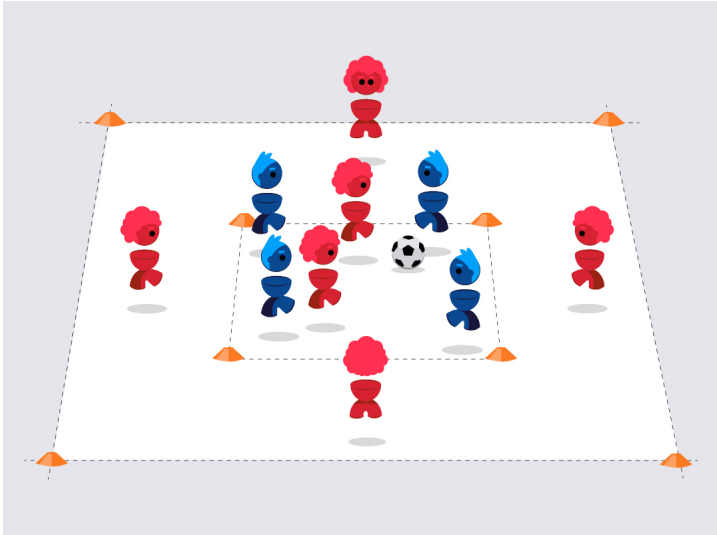
You can limit number of touches attackers can take when they receive the ball to 2 touches. This forces them to make their first touch proactive, towards their target, which is a valuable skill.

DO IT AT HOME

Players can keep working on their skills at home with a game we call [The Corner](#), only available with MOJO+.

Outside the Box

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

In this FC Barcelona activity, a classic rondo turns into an all-out possession game.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball
- 1 pinnie per 2 players

SETUP

- Use 4 cones to create a large square space, recommended size: 15 x 15 yards. Use 4 more cones to create a small square in the center, recommended size: 5 x 5 yards.
- Divide players into teams of 6 and 4, shown here in red and blue.
- The 4 blue players stand around the small square with the ball, and 2 red players inside. The rest of the red team

- stands around the larger square, one to a side.
- On your call, the blue team begins a rondo—the classic passing and possession game made famous by FC Barcelona. For every 10 passes in a row, the blue team gets 1 point. They try to keep the ball away from the red team who is trying to recover possession.
- Once the red team recovers, they score a point, and the rondo is over. The red player with the ball must find an open teammate around the large square to pass to.
- This begins a 6v4 possession game, as the red team tries to keep the ball away from blue for as long as they can.
- Red scores a point for every 10 passes they make in the larger square.
- Play for 1 minute, then switch roles and play again.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The goal of this game should be recovering the ball as quickly as possible.

In the actual game, when a player recovers the ball in a crowded space, sending the ball to an open teammate is the best way to maintain possession.

Here, the red team is incentivized to do just that every time they recover the ball in the rondo.

COACHING TIPS

Players must remember to spread out and to create clear passing lines for their teammates. The closer together you all are, the more likely you'll be pressured.

Encourage your offensive players to team up in order to break the opposing press. And make sure they don't advance until they're all on the same page. "Are we positioned to break the press, or do we need to retreat first?"

The more players vary their passes, the more likely they are to keep the defense off balance.

MAKE IT EASIER

Remove a defender in the center square, and add that player to the outside border of the larger space.

Instead of 10 successful passes, 5 passes will earn a point.

MAKE IT HARDER

Limit touches for all players in the center square.

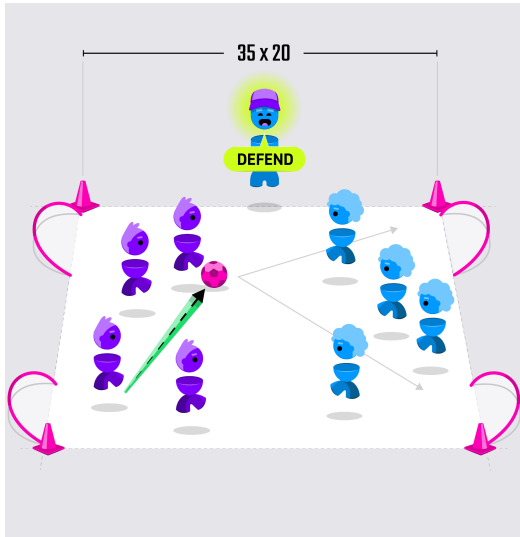
Two players on the outside borders become neutrals, who can be utilized by either team.

DO IT AT HOME

Players can keep working on their skills at home with a game we call [Cone Zones](#), only available with MOJO+.

4v4 to 4 Goals (Defending)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This quick transition game forces players to both attack and defend immediately when the ball changes ownership.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball
- 1 pinnie per 2 players
- 4 small goals

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 35 yards long x 20 yards wide for every 8-12 players.
- Place a small portable goal or pair of cones placed 6 feet apart at each end of each endline, 4 goals in all.
- Divide players into two teams, one on each endline, and

- give one team pinnies.
- Play starts when 4 players enter from each endline and one team initiates play by passing the ball to each other and advancing towards their goals.
- Players scrimmage and score by kicking the ball into either of their goals or through the cones, below knee height.
- If a player scores or the ball goes out of bounds, new players rotate in and a new round begins.
- There are no goalies, corners or throw-ins. If a ball goes out of bounds, it's a kick-in.
- If you have enough players for 2 grids, you can position yourself in the middle and run 2 games at the same time so players get more touches on the ball.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Especially at younger ages, attacking players are still learning to dribble and pass, and may rush to the ball in their excitement, which can benefit defenders. However, with two goals to defend, defending players can still get frustrated. If turnovers are not happening naturally, rotate players so everyone gets turns attacking and defending.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage defenders to work together to try to get the attackers to pass the ball sideways or back and take away time and space. Taking away time means getting pressure to the ball and slowing the attacker down. Taking away space means staying connected and compact, preventing attackers from getting down the field.

If individual defending is good, can the group of defenders come together and get compact? This also helps overcome individual defending mistakes. The first defender provides pressure, the next provides cover, and the other defenders provide balance. As a group, can they be like a fist? Nothing gets through the fingers.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the space larger makes it harder for defenders.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the space smaller makes it easier for defenders.

CHANGE IT UP

To help players develop ball control and speed dribbling skills, you can adjust the game so that players must dribble through the goal in control of the ball in order to score.

Scrimmage

Duration: 20 minutes

DESCRIPTION

The best part of the practice, obviously.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball
- 2 goals

SETUP

- Set up a goal on each endline and divide your players into 2 teams with one team in pinnies (if you have them) to scrimmage. Use small goals, large goals or pairs of cones placed arms-length apart.
- Grid size should adjust to the age of players:
 - for 5 and under, recommended size: 30 yards long x 20 yards wide
 - for 7-8, recommended size: 35 yards long x 20 yards wide
 - for 9-10, recommended size: 60 yards long x 40 yards wide
 - for 11+, recommended size: 75 yards long x 50 yards wide But don't let grid size stop you from playing—you can scrimmage with whatever space you have.
- Goalies are optional for ages 9+. There are no [corner kicks](#) or [throw-ins](#). If a ball goes over the sideline, restart play with a kick-in. Keep it simple.
- Goal kicks are optional for balls that cross the endline but miss the goal. The team with possession should back up to midfield to receive it. Otherwise, the coach can play a new

- ball in to restart play.

WHAT TO EXPECT

For many players, scrimmage is the best part of practice, perhaps because it most closely resembles the real game—and they come to play. This is their time to shine, not the coach's time to [puppeteer](#). Pay attention to how they're putting concepts from the practice session into play while scrimmaging and during breaks, point out examples of players doing this well.

COACHING TIPS

Try to ensure players are evenly balanced—if you have a few strong players, make sure they're evenly split between teams. Provide more [specific encouragement and praise](#) than direction: “Good job dribbling to a new space,” for example, vs. just “Good job.” You can add rules to encourage players to do what you want them to do (ex: if a player is [keeping the ball too long](#), add a rule that players can only use 3-4 touches.)

MAKE IT HARDER

Increasing grid size makes it harder for defenders. Decreasing grid size makes it harder for attackers.

MAKE IT EASIER

Decreasing grid size makes it easier for defenders. Increasing grid size makes it easier for attackers.

CHANGE IT UP

You can put 2 goals on each endline instead of one goal per endline. More goals: more fun.

DO IT AT HOME

Players can keep working on their skills at home with a game we call

[1v1](#), only available with MOJO+.