



U8 PRACTICE 9 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- 2v2 to Endlines (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- Gates Passing - 10 minutes
- Hot Box - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to Small Goals (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- Advanced Scrimmage - 20 minutes

Description

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

OVERVIEW

Players will work on [passing skills](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=1rJ7ZFi9dbyh5sRwGEN8ZN) today, as well as finding another teammate. At this age, players may still be developing spatial awareness, so it may take them some time to have success in the game __Hot Box__.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Communication (verbal and non-verbal) between attacking players
- The weight of the pass (i.e. how hard the players hit the ball). Can they adjust it to help a teammate?
- Players without the ball are moving to create openings

WHAT TO SAY

__What can we do to let players know that we are in an opening?__

Communicate, tell them or show them with a hand gesture

__Where can a teammate be to help the player on the ball?__

In back, to the side or in front

__What is the best shape when there are four field players?__

A diamond, with one player in front, two on the sides, and one in back

__How should we [pass the ball with the inside of our foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=4hPvYvNgU3Bd1MdFOXKJ14)?__

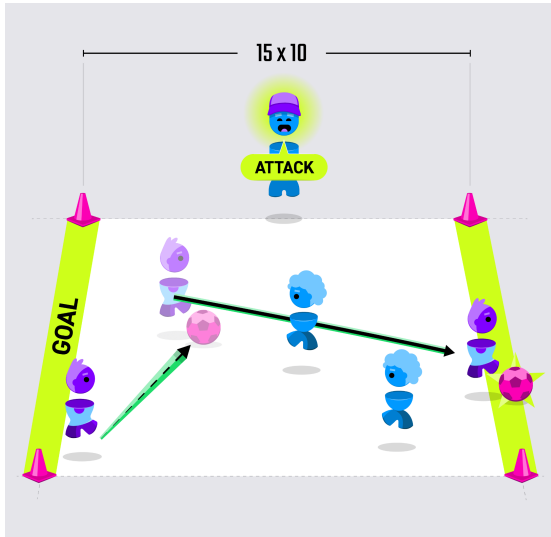
Toe up, ankle locked, plant foot points to target

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Soccer 101: [How to Pass with the Outside of the Foot on the Run](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=1V121kV9i29CZ2TUQmBlmj)
- Soccer 101: [How to Pass with the Inside of the Foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=4hPvYvNgU3Bd1MdFOXKJ14)

2v2 to Endlines (Attacking)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Focus on the forward attack. Players work on dribbling, passing and ball control to score in this activity.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball per 4 players
- 1 pinnie per 2 players

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of a grid for every 8-12 players, recommended size: 15 yards long x 10 yards wide. Note: Younger players may need bigger "endzones" marked with 4 cones.
- Divide players into 2 teams, one in pinnies, and place them on opposite endlines.
- Play starts when 2 players enter from each team and one

- team initiates play by passing the ball to each other and advancing towards the endline they're attacking.
- Players scrimmage and score by dribbling over the endline with the ball under control – within a hula hoop's distance of their body. No wild toe-bashing here!
- 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

When players are on the attack, expect them to run parallel to one another instead of spreading out. There will also likely be more dribbling than passing, depending on the experience of the players.

Attackers may be so excited, they may burst out wildly and make mistakes. Expect lots of turnovers.

COACHING TIPS

When they gain possession of the ball, encourage players to create chances to score by immediately looking for open space and taking the ball somewhere new and closer to their goal. Ask players, "How can you and your teammate get around the 2 defenders?" It's simple: Try to pass around them. Hey hey, now we're playing soccer!

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the space smaller makes it harder for the attacking team.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the space larger makes it easier for the attacking team.

CHANGE IT UP

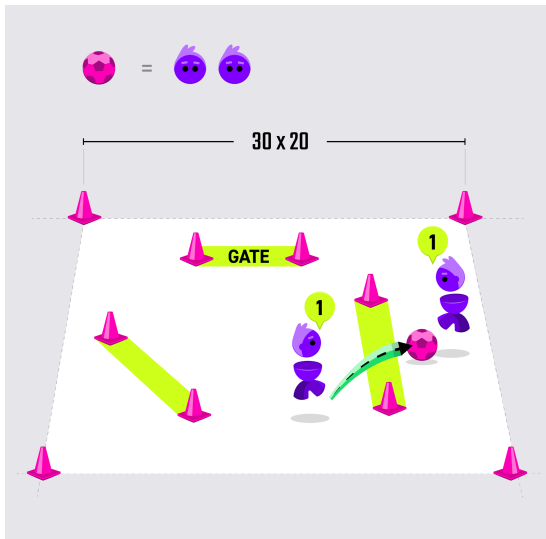
It is a natural progression to start playing this game to endlines and progress to small goals.

DO IT AT HOME

Players can keep working on their skills at home with a game we call [2-for-1 Dribbling](#), only available with MOJO+.

Gates Passing

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Send it on through! This activity helps players develop passing and receiving skills and improve their teamwork and communication.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 16 cones
- 1 ball per 2 players

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 35 yards long x 25 yards wide for every 6-10 players and divide players into pairs.
- Randomly place pairs of cones arms-length apart throughout your grid to create small goals- aka gates- about twice as many gates as you have pairs of players.
- Players dribble and pass the ball around the space and score when a player passes the ball through a gate to

- their partner. Pairs try to score as many goals as they can, keeping count, until you call time.
- After a couple minutes, call time and take a break. Then start a new round, encouraging players to try to make at least one more goal than they did the previous round.
- As coach, you can manipulate the game length to ensure they're successful.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Younger players will often dribble up to the gate and then pass to their teammate instead of making a long pass through the gate. Passing and receiving are still new to them. As players get older, they will get more comfortable making longer passes.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage pairs to talk and plan so the passer can move towards the next gate after they pass, where they get into position to receive the ball. Encourage the receiver to take their first touch towards the next gate upon receiving the ball.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the gates smaller or adding a gatekeeper (coach) who moves from gate to gate blocking passes makes it more challenging and pushes players to find solutions to obstacles.

MAKE IT EASIER

Adding more gates or making the gates wider makes the game easier.

CHANGE IT UP

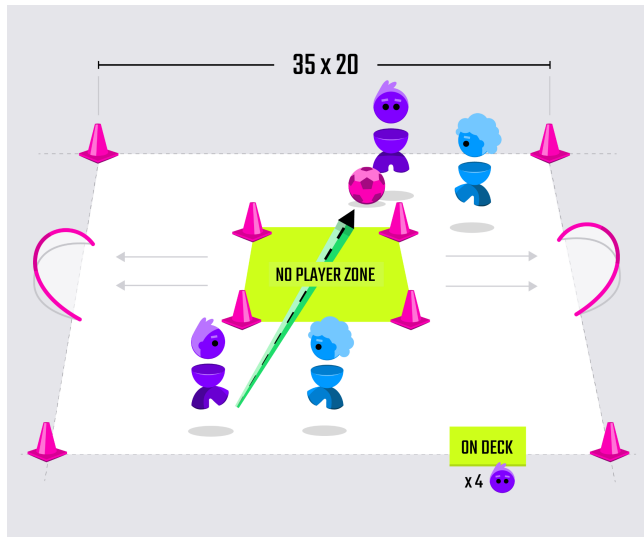
You can ask players to use only their left or right foot, or only inside touches or outside touches when dribbling or passing. If you have different colored cones, you can direct players to alternate gates by color. Or, add a step that players must pass the ball back to their teammate before going to a new gate.

DO IT AT HOME

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

Hot Box

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game helps players solve problems and switch the point of attack when faced with an obstacle.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 40 yards long x 30 yards wide for every 6-10 players. Divide players into 2 teams, one on each endline, and give one team pinnies.
- This game can be played 2v2, 3v3, 4v4 or more. If you have an odd number of players, you can give one team an extra

- attacker or add a neutral player who is all-time offense.
- Place a goal on each endline using 6 ft. portable goals or pairs of cones placed 6 feet apart. Players score by passing or shooting the ball into the goal or between the cones, below knee-height.
- “Hot Box” rules: Use 4 additional cones to create a square or rectangle in the middle of the field. Players must play around the box. The ball can pass through it, but players cannot enter.
- Play starts when players on one endline initiate play by passing the ball to each other and advancing towards their goal. At this point, either team can score. Both sides can attack, both sides will defend, so whoever has the ball is attacking when they have it.
- There are no corners, throw-ins or goalies. If a ball goes out of bounds, it's a kick-in.
- Play short rounds. The team with the most goals wins the round.
- If you have enough players for 2 grids, you can position yourself in the middle and run two games at the same time so players get more touches on the ball.

COACHING TIPS

Provide specific encouragement and recognition. Think: “Good job dribbling to open space” instead of just “Good job.”

During a scrimmage, continue to emphasize the coaching points you stressed during your practice. If you worked on maintaining possession, stress that in the scrimmage. If you worked on defensive teamwork in your practice, focus on that.

It’s also great to just observe your players and let them play here. Observing enables you to see what’s working and where to focus in future sessions.

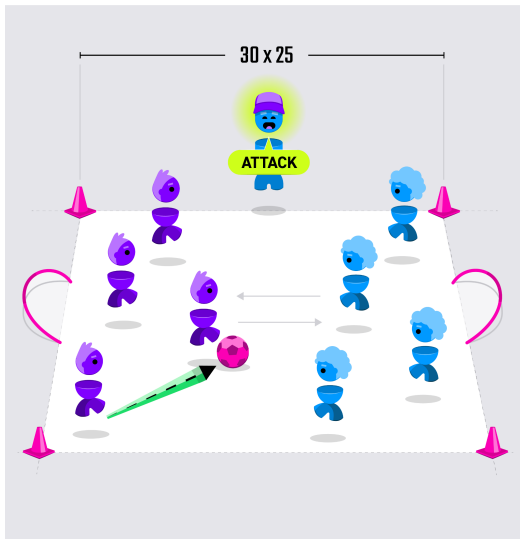
DO IT AT HOME

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

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

4v4 to Small Goals (Attacking)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Players work on team attacking, passing and shooting skills while scrimmaging 4v4.

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 8-12 players, recommended size: 30 yards long x 25 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 4 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

Younger players will often run parallel when they are attacking instead of spreading out to create width and depth. Encourage them to spread out (like an open hand instead of a fist).

Older players may start using moves and fakes to get to the goal. At younger ages, players will primarily use changes of speed and direction to get around defenders.

Attackers may be so excited, they may burst out wildly and make mistakes, enabling turnovers.

COACHING TIPS

When they gain possession of the ball, encourage players to create chances to score by immediately looking for open space and taking the ball somewhere new and closer to their goal.

If blocked by a defender, an attacker's first thought should be, "Can I get around this player by dribbling? If not, can I get it to a teammate who can?" If going around the opponent to the right, they should use their right foot. If going around to the left, use the left foot. This keeps the ball on the foot furthest from the defender.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the space smaller makes it harder for attackers to beat defenders.

MAKE IT EASIER

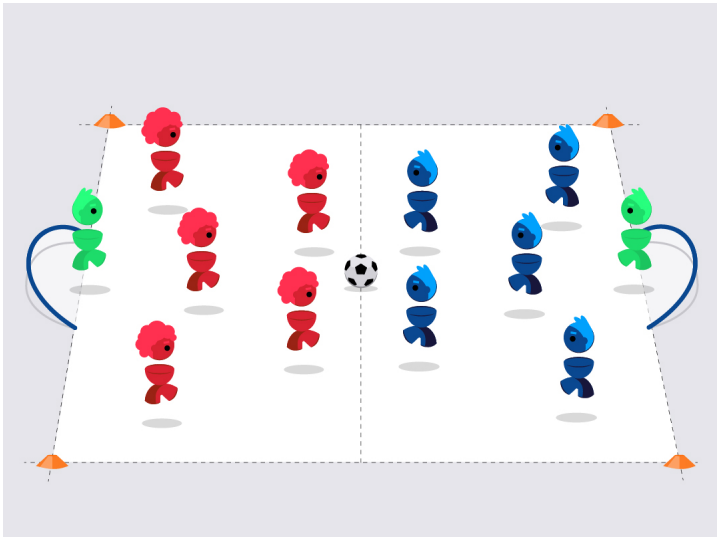
Making the space larger makes it easier for attackers to beat defenders.

DO IT AT HOME

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

Advanced Scrimmage

Duration: 20 minutes



DESCRIPTION

It's time to practice what it's like to play a match at full speed. This is an advanced scrimmage, FC Barcelona-style.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball
- 1 pinnie per player
- 2 goals

SETUP

- Use 4 cones to make a rectangular space, recommended size: 20 yards long x 15 yards wide. Place goals at each end.
- Divide players into 2 teams, and get ready to play at full speed. That means with all the rules and regulations of an actual game.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Scrimmage is every player's favorite part of practice—and now, we're taking it to the next level.

Here, we're playing in a 3-2 formation, but you can use whatever tactics you want.

Players should have as much fun as possible, while still learning the flow of what it's like to play a full match.

COACHING TIPS

Engage players in discussion about their play. Feel free to ask them questions about their decision making.

Encourage players to think about how to move without the ball and create space or passing lines for their teammates.

Stay positive and remember to praise players when using the Barça style—passing the ball, finding space for their teammates, and having fun.

MAKE IT EASIER

Remove a defender every time the ball switches sides and create an inherent advantage.

MAKE IT HARDER

Expand to a full-size playing field. Game on.

DO IT AT HOME

Players can keep working on their skills at home with a game we call [1v1](#), only available with MOJO+.