



U8- WEEK 6

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- Knockout - 10 minutes
- Clean Your Backyard - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to Small Goals (Defending) - 10 minutes
- Scrimmage - 30 minutes

Description**GETTING STARTED WITH PRACTICE:**

These are set up in the play-practice-play format, which means you will open with a scrimmage as your kids are arriving, and close with a scrimmage after learning the skills included in the activities here. You will need to adjust your times accordingly.

Start the opening scrimmage the same way we did in previous weeks, with players being added to the game as they arrive

PLAYER ACTIONS: Protect the goal, Steal the ball

KEY QUALITIES: Read & understand the game, Focus

MOMENT: Defending

SKILL ACQUISITION:

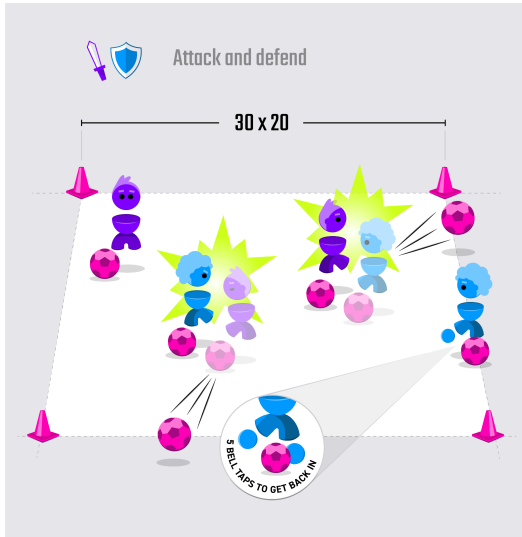
Pressure: Angle, speed, the distance of approach, footwork

Types of Tackles: Poke, Block, intercept

Thanks to our friends at Massachusetts Youth Soccer for this practice plan!

Knockout

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Players learn how to protect the ball and poke tackle their opponents' balls in an epic game of knockout.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball per player

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 30 yards long x 20 yards wide.
- Every player has a ball.
- Ding-ding, it's on! Players randomly dribble around the grid trying to protect their ball from being kicked outside the grid.
- At the same time they try to poke others' balls out of the grid.

- If a player's ball is kicked out, they have to retrieve their ball, do 5 toe taps on the ball, then re-enter play.
- After a minute, take a break, then play again. You can encourage players to keep track of their [poke tackles](#) and try to get one more the next round.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Kids may try to tackle the other player, not just the ball. (If kids get knocked over, they won't enjoy it.) Encourage them to try to [poke the ball away](#) away from the side or back, rather than stepping into the path of the dribbler.

COACHING TIPS

To be successful, players need to move quickly when trying to make poke tackles; otherwise, their own ball could get knocked out! Encourage them to look for open space and to be selective in trying to steal someone else's ball, while trying to keep their own ball within a hula hoop's distance of the body.

CHANGE IT UP

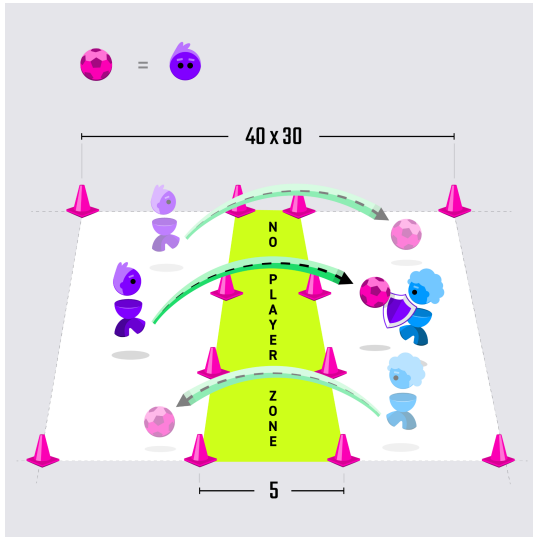
Switch up the skill needed to reenter the game when their ball is knocked out: [juggles](#), shuffles, hops over the ball, etc.

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+.

Clean Your Backyard

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

The neighbors have noticed! This activity helps players build teamwork and distance shooting skills.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball per player

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 40 yards long x 30 yards wide. Use 4 more cones to create a 5-7 yard wide "moat" in the center that runs from one sideline to the other.
- Divide your players into 2 teams and put one family on each side of the moat with as many balls as you have players.
- The goal for each is to clean their backyard by keeping the balls off their lawns, while their opponents do the exact

- same thing.
- No one enters the moat for safety reasons. If a ball stops in the moat, the coach removes it.
- After about a minute, call time. The team with the fewest balls in their yard wins the round. Then redistribute the balls, switch up the teams and play again.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Expect balls to fly everywhere- that's part of the fun. It's not every day players get to let loose and kick the ball as far and as long as they can.

At first, players may get close to the moat, but will eventually realize that balls are passing them and will start backing up.

They will still toe-bash. Ask them what other part of the foot they can use to kick.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage players to use their laces (or instep) when shooting. Their plant foot, or non-kicking foot, should be even with the ball and next to it. The ball should be under the hip of their kicking leg. Players should be leaning slightly forward, with head and shoulders over the ball and their toe down and ankle locked (tell them to “make a fist with your foot in your shoe”) when striking the ball. Follow through should be to their target. Encourage them to land on their kicking foot when shooting/striking, which allows them to get their whole body weight through the ball.

CHANGE IT UP

You can ask players to shoot with 1 foot or the other, or to alternate feet.

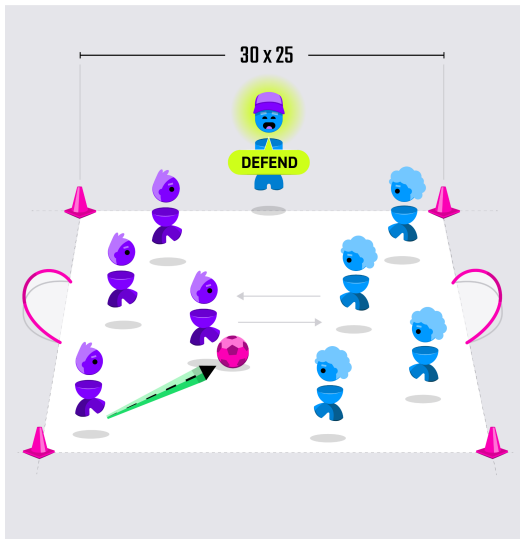
DO IT AT HOME

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

[Head On](#), only available with MOJO+.

4v4 to Small Goals (Defending)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Players work on group and individual defending skills in this 4v4 scrimmage with small goals.

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

Especially at younger ages, defenders can gain an advantage because attacking players are still learning to dribble and pass, and may rush to the ball in their excitement.

Expect some defenders to mistime their approach and miss the ball when trying to poke it away. They may come in too fast, which enables the attacker to just dribble around them. While they want to get to the attacker quickly, remind them to then get low and slow as they approach.

COACHING TIPS

The defenders should 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 to stop

attackers.

MAKE IT EASIER

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

Scrimmage

Duration: 30 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+.