



U8 PRACTICE 4 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- 2v2 to Small Goals (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- 1v1 to Endline - 10 minutes
- 2v2 to Endlines (Defending) - 10 minutes
- 2v2 to Small Goals (Defending) - 10 minutes
- Scrimmage - 20 minutes

Description

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

OVERVIEW

Sometimes the best offense... is a good defense! Introduce the concept of [defending](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=2Fjzn7ikhh3n9XndY3U6rz) to your team.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Players recognize when to put [pressure](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=LFSVNRE7kisLSd7iv7vqK) on the player with the ball (attacker)
- Players are able to slow down when they get near the attacker with the ball (under control)

WHAT TO SAY

__How do you steal the ball from an opponent who is dribbling?__

By [tackling](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=5JVxEKWQa7NbBdKfusVXxP) or knocking the ball away

__What is a good moment to steal the ball?__

When the attacker lets the ball get too far away, or when the ball is not protected

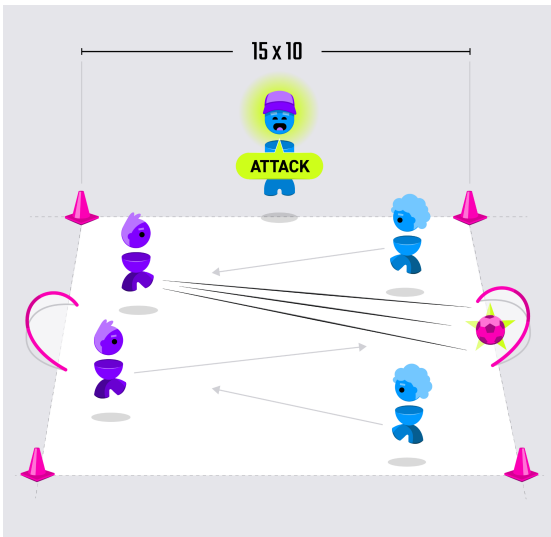
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Soccer 101: [What Is Defending?](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=2Fjzn7ikhh3n9XndY3U6rz)

- Watch: [How to Measure Success as a Coach](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=H89hHwY5MmSRfe0MxKhSS)

2v2 to Small Goals (Attacking)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Ready. Set. Attack! Set up small goals and help them develop good offensive attack strategies.

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

When players are on the attack, expect them to run parallel (instead of 1 running ahead). There will also likely be more dribbling than passing, depending on the players' experience.

Attackers may be so excited, they may burst out wildly and make mistakes- turnovers are common.

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 attackers to get past defenders.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the space larger makes it easier for attackers to get past defenders and score.

CHANGE IT UP

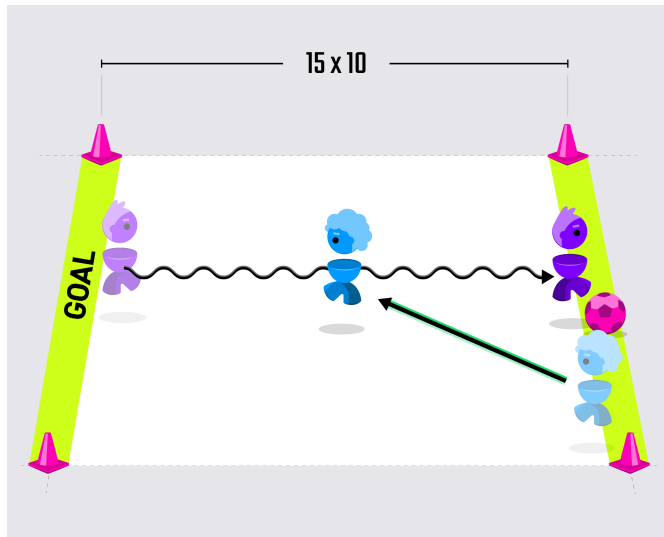
You can add 1 more small goal or pair of cones to each endline and move goals to the corners so players have twice as many opportunities to score, but cannot score in the center.

DO IT AT HOME

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

1v1 to Endline

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Get ready for a showdown. This activity helps players develop individual attacking and defending skills.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball per player

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of a grid for every 4-5 players, recommended size: 15 yards long x 10 yards wide.
- Divide players into 2 teams, one on each endline. Note: Younger players may need bigger "endzones" marked with 4 cones.
- Play starts when 1 player enters from each endline and the coach plays in a ball.
- Players scrimmage and score by dribbling over their

- opponent's 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

Expect the ball to change possession quite a bit and for players to tire pretty quickly. It's a very demanding game, especially for younger players. Stacking each endline with at least 1 other player lets them get a round to air up.

Depending on how players are paired up, some may dominate others, so either switch up pairings frequently—or try to match players of similar ability.

COACHING TIPS

Teach attacking players to use their speed when dribbling. Encourage them to try simple moves they can do that do not slow them down.

Encourage defending players to first try to slow the attacker down (“don't dive in”), stay between the attacker and the goal (“protect the goal”) and then wait for a good time to [poke or steal the ball away](#) and hopefully make their own attack.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the endzones or grids narrower makes the game harder for the attacking player and easier for the defending player.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the endzones or grids wider makes this game easier for the attacking player and harder for the defending player.

CHANGE IT UP

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

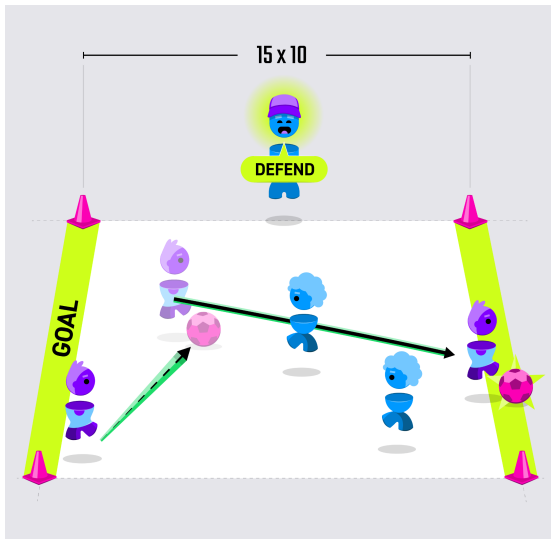
You can introduce a change in body position before the game begins. Have players pop-up from sitting or lying on their stomachs before initiating play. This adds an element of agility development to the game.

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+.

2v2 to Endlines (Defending)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

All about that defence! This time, coach your players on how to defend in a small-format 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

Because the endline provides so much area on which to score, this game can be difficult for defenders. If they're consistently getting frustrated, you can narrow the width of the field so the attackers have less room to score.

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.

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

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

Make the space larger makes it harder for the defending team.

MAKE IT EASIER

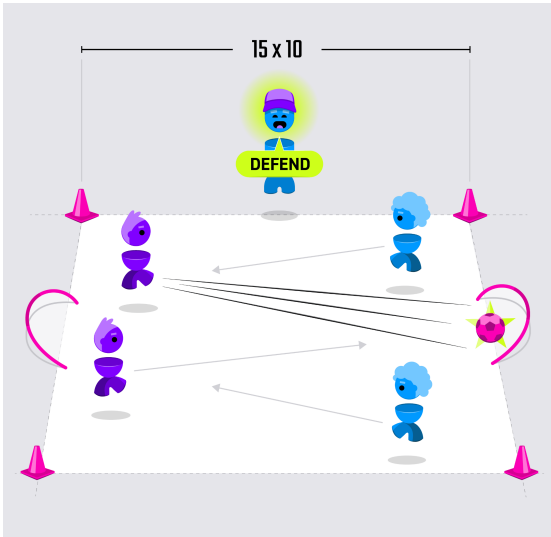
Making the space smaller makes it easier for the defending team.

CHANGE IT UP

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

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

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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

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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.

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+.