



U10 PRACTICE 3 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- 2v2 to Small Goals (Defending) - 10 minutes
- Team Knockout - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to Endlines (Defending) - 10 minutes
- Liverpool - 10 minutes
- Scrimmage - 20 minutes

Description

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

OVERVIEW

Today's session focuses on teaching the basics of [defending](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=2Fjzn7ikhh3n9XndY3U6rz). Focus on players recognizing when to [pressure](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=LFSVNRE7kisLSd7iv7vqK) the ball and how to approach the attacker.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Players recognize when to [pressure](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=LFSVNRE7kisLSd7iv7vqK) the ball
- Players are controlled in their approach to the ball to avoid stepping in and getting beat

WHAT TO SAY

__Who should [pressure](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=LFSVNRE7kisLSd7iv7vqK) the ball?__

The person closest to it

__How should you approach the ball carrier?__

Fast approach to the ball at angle to force the player one direction and then smaller steps as you get closer

__What is a good defense stance?__

Knees bent, staggered angle, with feet moving

__When should you try to steal the ball?__

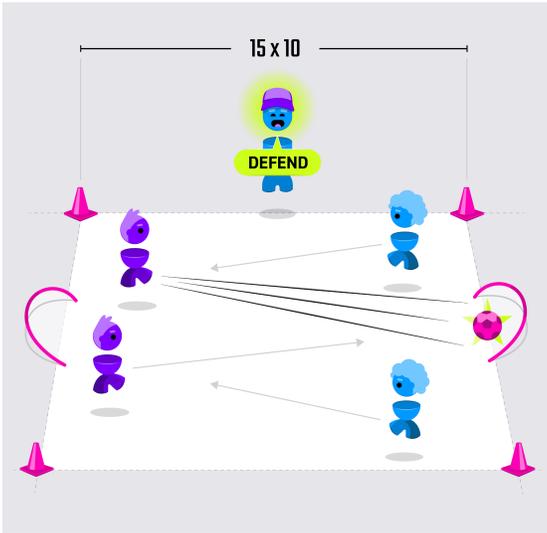
When the player takes a big touch or puts their head down

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Soccer 101: [What Is Pressure](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=LFSVNRE7kisLSd7iv7vqK)

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

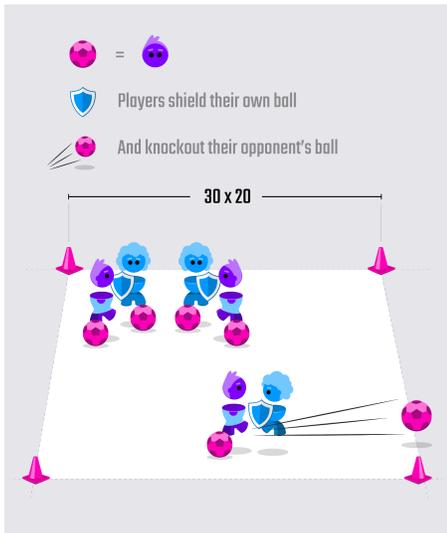
Making the space smaller makes it easier for defenders to stop the attack.

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.

Team Knockout

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This activity helps players develop shielding and ball possession skills.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 30 x 30 yards.
- Divide your players into 2 teams, one in pinnies.
- Every player has a ball.
- Both teams compete to kick the other teams' balls out of the grid and vice versa, while trying to shield their own balls.

- If a player's ball is kicked away, they help their teammates protect their balls, while continuing to try to knock the other team's balls away.
- Play several 60-second rounds. The team with the most balls at the end wins the round. Give players a break after the round to come up with a strategy to protect their balls during the next round.

WHAT TO EXPECT

More than 1 attacker may try to knock away a player's ball in a given moment. In these situations, encourage that player's teammates to get into a good position to support them.

Players might forget that they can pass in this game. Remind them that it's a helpful way to work together.

Some players may get carried away and get overly aggressive. Keep an eye on this to make sure it doesn't get out of control.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage players to protect their ball with their body to prevent their ball from getting kicked out.

Encourage teammates to work together to double-team opposing players.

If teams appear to be unevenly matched, rotate players between rounds to ensure a better balance.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the grid smaller makes it harder for players to protect their balls and easier for defenders to knock them away.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the grid larger makes it easier for players to protect their balls and harder for defenders to knock them away.

CHANGE IT UP

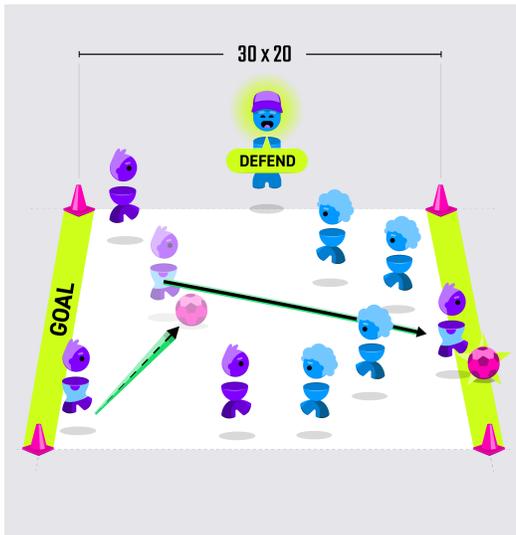
To encourage passing and teamwork, start this activity with fewer balls.

DO IT AT HOME

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

4v4 to Endlines (Defending)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Now it's time to defend. Focus on defensive skills with a scrimmage session that emphasizes working collectively to deny the opponent space.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of a grid for every 8-12 players, recommended size: 30 yards long x 20 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 4 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 endlines provide so much real estate 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 attacking team has less space to score.

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.

CHANGE IT UP

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

Liverpool

Duration: 10 minutes

DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game emphasizes defending and counter-attacking by awarding points according to where on the field a team wins the ball.

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 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3, 4 vs. 4 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.
- "Liverpool" rules: Teams earn 2 points per goal if they win the ball in their opponents' attacking half. All other goals are worth one point. This encourages players to try to win the ball back immediately with a strong counter-attack.
- 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 points at the end 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.

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+.