



U8 PRACTICE 6 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- 2v2 to Small Goals (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- Mosquitoes - 10 minutes
- Gates Passing - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to 4 Goals (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- Scrimmage - 20 minutes

Description

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

OVERVIEW

When a team has possession of the ball in their defensive half, they need to move the ball forward into the opponent's half.

[Passing](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=1rJ7ZFi9dbyh5sRwGEN8ZN) is a quick way to move the ball forward, but requires the player on the ball to see an opening. The players without the ball also need to move to create openings and help communicate to the player on the ball. These next activities are a fun way to reinforce passing technique and also finding open space to play a teammate.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Players open their body to [pass the ball with the inside of their foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=4hPvYvNgU3Bd1MdFOXKJ14) (if they use inside toe the ball may pop up)
- Plant foot points to where they want to pass
- Players are communicating during __Gates Passing__
- Players are passing and moving

WHAT TO SAY

__Where should our plant foot point when we are passing?__

Toward our target

__What can we do during Gates Passing to have success?__

Communicate with partner, receive the ball toward the space you want to go

__How can we move the ball quickly through an opening?__

[Pass with the inside of our foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=4hPvYvNgU3Bd1MdFOXKJ14)

__What can players off the ball do to create an opening?__

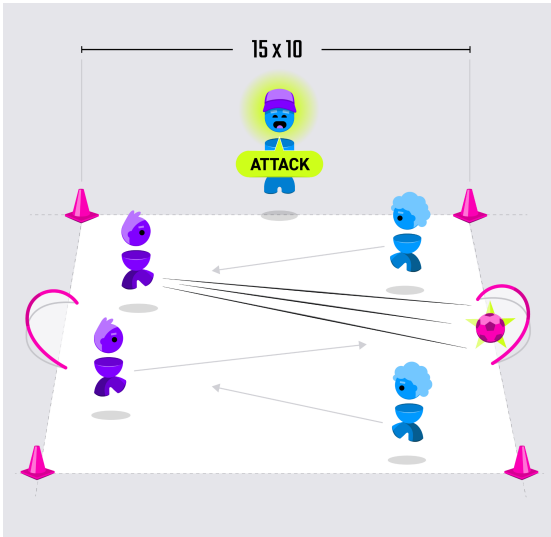
Move into space, and spread out

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Watch: [Drills vs. Activities](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=17vuuhV2IWLYhMvDIwScYA)
- Soccer 101: [What Is Attacking?](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=3BqaDWUMfONDnh1ekMRXvR)
- Soccer 101: [What Is Passing?](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=1rJ7ZFi9dbyh5sRwGEN8ZN)
- Soccer 101: [Receiving with Different Parts of the Foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=31dQzzj0txgcdq7auTxHqV)
- Soccer 101: [Passing with the Inside of the Foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=4hPvYvNgU3Bd1MdFOXKJ14)

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

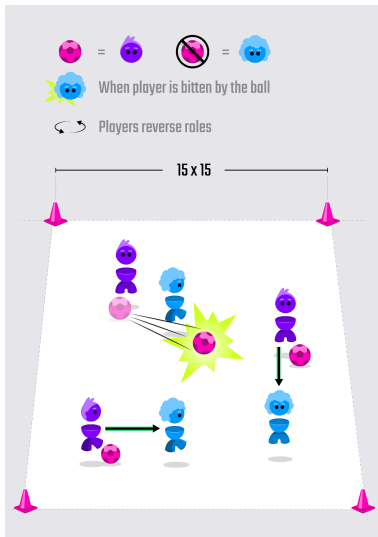
You can add 1 more small goal or pair of cones to each endline and move goals to the corners so players have twice as many opportunities to score, but cannot score in the center.

DO IT AT HOME

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

Mosquitoes

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Mosquito attack at Camp MOJO! Dribblers get a taste offense, and learn to strike (a.k.a. sting)!

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball per 2 players

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 15 x 15 yards.
- Divide your players into 2 groups: Half of the players are Mosquitoes, and they each have a ball to dribble. The other half are the Campers, who don't have a ball.
- The Mosquitoes chase after the Campers while dribbling and try to strike their ball to hit the Campers below the knee. If a Camper is "stung" (or hit by the ball), they become

- a Mosquito and the Mosquito then becomes a Camper.
- The activity continues until you call time, with players constantly switching from Camper to Mosquito and vice versa.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Expect players to strike the ball with their toes, which is not unusual at this age. Don't correct them—at this age, it's about getting comfortable striking the ball. (During a break, you can ask them what some other ways to strike the ball might be.)

Players might not like being hit with the ball, but between shin guards and keeping the space small, you'll avoid injuries—they often can't kick the ball too far or hard in such a small area, and at this age.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage Mosquitoes to dribble as close to a Camper as they can before striking the ball.

Encourage Campers to keep their heads up to watch for approaching Mosquitoes.

CHANGE IT UP

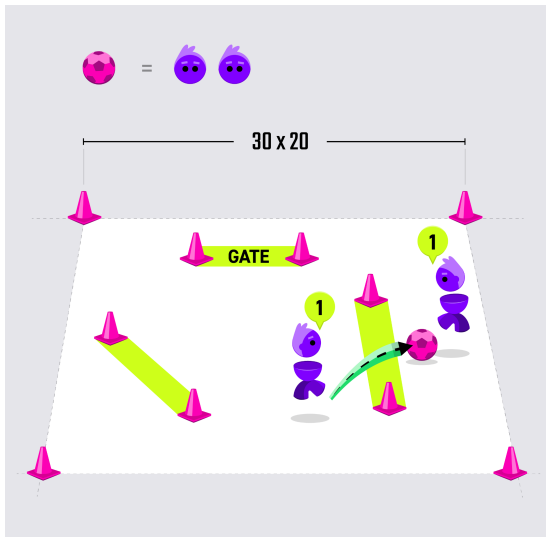
Lightning strikes? Wolf attacks? Can you use your team name to come up with new roles for Mosquitoes and Campers?

DO IT AT HOME

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

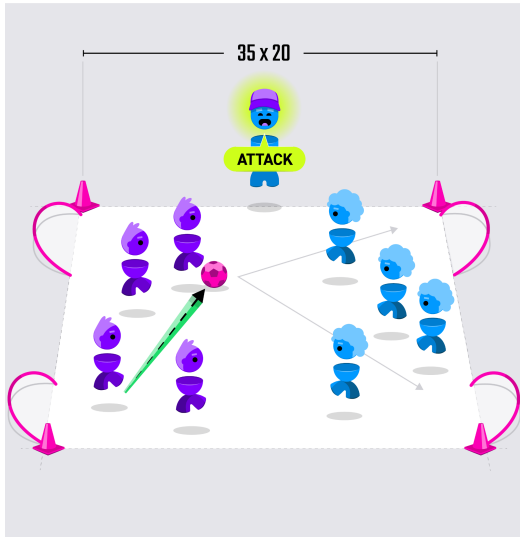
You can ask players to use only their left or right foot, or only inside touches or outside touches when dribbling or passing. If you have different colored cones, you can direct players to alternate gates by color. Or, add a step that players must pass the ball back to their teammate before going to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

4v4 to 4 Goals (Attacking)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

It's 2 goals—and twice the fun! This scrimmage develops attacking, passing and receiving skills.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball per 4 players
- 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

Expect younger players to run parallel when they are attacking (instead of one running ahead). 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, enabling turnovers.

COACHING TIPS

Placing the goals in the corners of the grid makes defenders work harder. As one attacker advances with the ball, their teammates (the attackers without the ball) should try to run between defenders so the attacker with the ball can pass them the ball to try to score.

Attackers should avoid staying close to each other and holding the ball or passing it slowly—this makes it easier for the defense.

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.

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. This makes it harder for attackers but does encourage them to dribble with speed when a goal is open.

DO IT AT HOME

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

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+.