



U8- WEEK 10

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- Shield-Steal - 10 minutes
- Shrinking Field - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to Endlines (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, Take initiative

MOMENT: Defending

SKILL ACQUISITION:

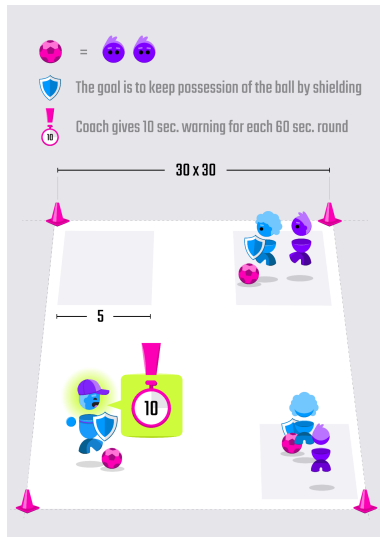
Pressure: Angle, speed, distance of approach, footwork

Types of Tackles: Poke, Block, intercept

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

Shield-Steal

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Behold, the almighty shield. This activity develops players' shielding and ball control skills.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Divide players into pairs and use 4 cones to create a small grid for each pair, recommended size: 5 x 5 feet.
- Give each pair a ball.
- One player in each pair starts with the ball and tries to maintain possession, while the other player tries to steal the ball. Tell players the goal is to have possession of the ball when you call time.
- Before they begin, instruct the players on how to [how to](#)

- [shield the ball](#) (see Coaching Tips).
- Play several 60-second rounds, giving players 10-second warnings before calling time, then play more rounds, alternating roles so all players get several turns both shielding and stealing.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Younger players may have a more difficult time grasping this concept. That's OK. This is a skill worth introducing, and will develop with time and repetition. It can take several years to master shielding.

Some players may be especially competitive. Ooh-rah! If you see certain players dominating, try to match players according to ability or size.

COACHING TIPS

[How to shield the ball](#): explain to players that they want to make their bodies wide and hold the arm closest to their opponent up “as if holding a shield” while keeping the ball on the foot furthest from their opponent. Shielding is more about holding on to your own space than taking the competitor's space.

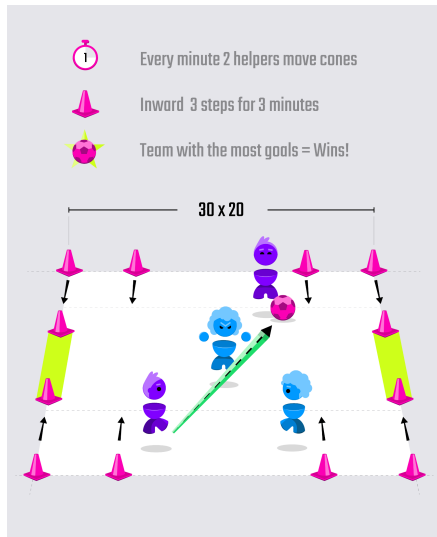
To keep their body between the ball and their opponent, the shielding player should pivot slightly whenever the other player tries to move, using their body to shield the ball instead of running away and being chased and the sole of their foot to control and move the ball. If you start to see players running away instead of making an effort to shield, add a rule that no running is allowed.

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+.

Shrinking Field

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game becomes progressively more challenging for the attacking team.

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: 30 yards long x 20 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.
- 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.
- “Shrinking Field” rules: Every minute, move the cones to reduce the width of each endline by 3 steps each side (approximately 2 yards). Continue to shrink the endlines every minute of play.
- There are no corners, throw-ins or goalies. If a ball goes out of bounds, it's a kick-in.
- Play 3-minute 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.

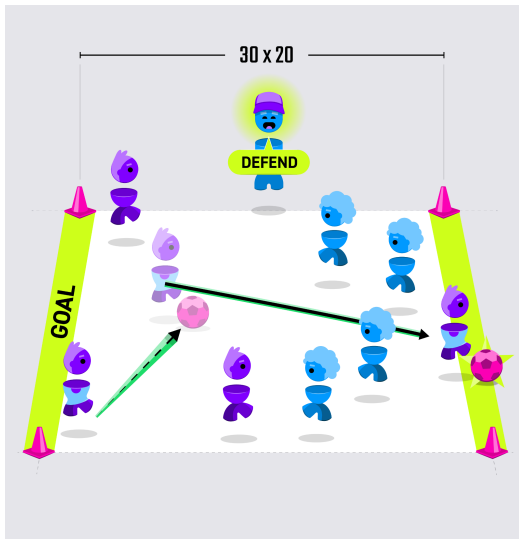
DO IT AT HOME

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

[1-2 Punch](#), 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.

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+.