



U8- WEEK 2

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- Minions - 10 minutes
- Space Wars - 10 minutes
- 1v1 to Small Goals - 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.

Opening Scrimmage:

Set up two small fields right next to each other with a 5 yard space in between. can be 10x20, but feel free to work with the space that you have. Place a small goal on each end line to create two mini-fields (Note: If you don't have small goals, it's OK to use cones, water bottles or bags to create small goals or targets).

As soon as the first two players arrive for practice, have them start playing a game. The game starts 1v1. As players arrive, the game

becomes 2v1, then 2v2 up to 3v3. Once 1 field is at 3v3, start a second game on the field next to it.

Key words to instruct them are phrases like "Go to goal" and "keep the ball."

GUIDED QUESTIONS TO ASK:

When do you go straight to the opponent's goal? What can you do if someone is blocking your path to the goal?

ANSWERS:

If you see an opening to the goal, go straight to the goal. You can dribble around them or pass to a teammate.

Encourage players to dribble to goal. At the first break, ask questions which generate thoughts about when to dribble. Second break, elicit answers from the same questions to determine the level of understanding from the players.

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass or dribble forward, Create passing options

KEY QUALITIES: Take initiative, Be pro-active

MOMENT: Attacking

SKILL ACQUISITION:

Dribbling: Surface of the foot and ball, quality of the touch

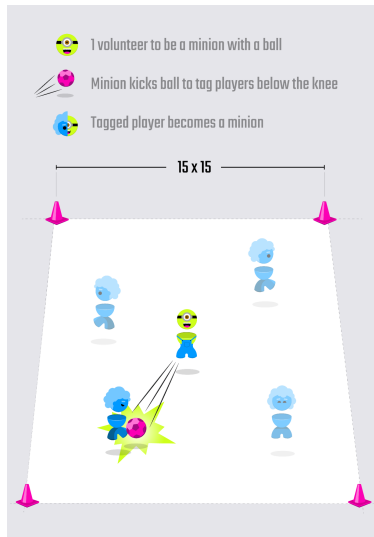
Passing- Surface of the foot and ball, Pace and accuracy

Receiving- Body, position, surface of the foot and ball, first touch

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

Minions

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Bello! Time to work on developing players' shooting and dribbling skills—all while going bananas.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball per player

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 15 x 15 yards.
- Ask for a volunteer to be the Minion.
- While other players jog around the space, the Minion has a ball and tries to hit other players below the knee to turn them into Minions.
- If a player is hit, they get a ball and become a Minion and try to hit others too.

- The activity continues until all of the players have become Minions.
- Optional: Cue up the “Banana Song” for some hilarious and energizing background music.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Everyone will want to be the Minion. Who wouldn't? If you have 6 or more players, start with 2 Minions so everyone gets a turn as "it."

It might take the first 1-2 Minions a while to hit a player below the knee. If you need to, you can jump in to help them along.

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 Minions to get as close as they can to others before striking. It's OK that they're using their toes to kick. Don't correct it. Instead, you can ask them another way to kick the ball or whether there's another part of the foot they can use.

CHANGE IT UP

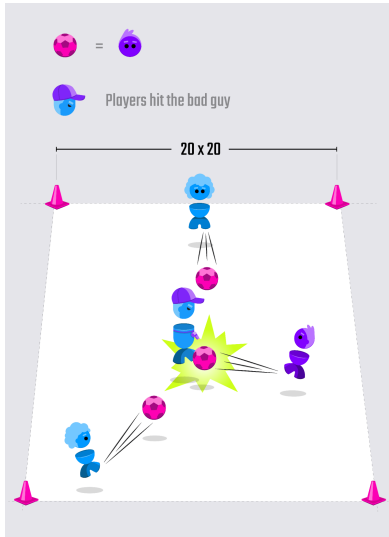
Suddenly announce that it's time for a dance party—they're Minions after all! The coach can also become Gru and command his Minions to do funny dance moves with the ball.

DO IT AT HOME

Players can keep working on their skills at home with a game we call [Crazy 8s](#), only available with MOJO+.

Space Wars

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

In a galaxy far, far away, players hone their dribbling and shooting skills on a moving target. (Spoiler: It's you!)

WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 cones
- 1 ball per player

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 20 x 20 yards.
- Every player has a ball.
- Tell players they are brave space fighters who have to stop a bad guy (think: Darth Vader) in outer space.
- While the bad guy (a.k.a. you, the coach) cruises around the galaxy, the players dribble and try to kick their balls to hit you below the knee.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Players may try to shoot from wherever they are standing, even if it's 10 feet away. To encourage both accuracy and safety, tell players they can only take shots at close range.

Players may also get disappointed if they fail to hit you, so consider letting them each hit you at least once. Trust us—at the younger ages, they can't kick too hard, and since they're also shooting from close range, this shouldn't hurt.

Changing direction will be a challenge for them—they may run to the other side of the ball to change direction instead of turning the ball with their foot. That's fine, since at this age it's to about getting comfortable with the ball. The skill will come in time.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage players to dribble to get as close to you as they can before striking the ball. Really exaggerate when they hit you with the ball by saying "Ouch!"

MAKE IT HARDER

Make the space a bit bigger, but not too much, since it's important to keep kicking distances small to avoid injuries.

MAKE IT EASIER

Channel your inner Jabba the Hutt and move more slooowly.

CHANGE IT UP

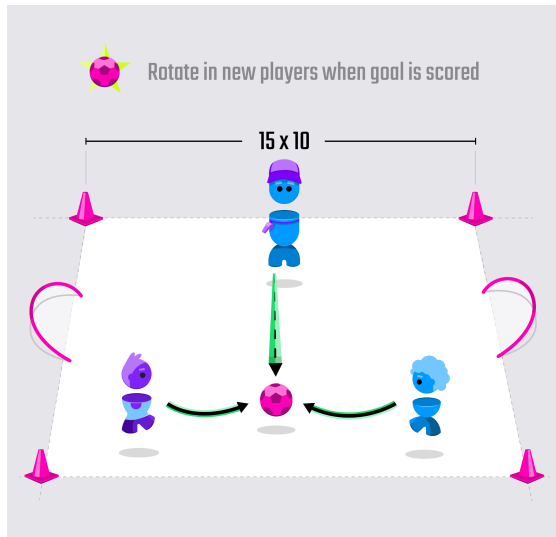
Zombies. Monsters. Bears. Change up the bad guy and call the ball something else (a magic potion, an acorn, rocks, etc.) to keep players' imaginations humming along.

DO IT AT HOME

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

1v1 to Small Goals

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Goooooal! This game helps players develop individual attacking and defending skills.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball

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.
- Place a small goal on each endline using 6 ft. portable goals or 2 cones placed arms-length apart.
- Divide players into two teams, on one each endline. Play starts when 1 player enters from each endline.
- Players scrimmage and score by passing or shooting the ball into the goal (below knee-height to avoid injuries).

- 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 both 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. Stacking each endline with at least 1 other player enables players to alternate and take a break between rounds.

Depending on how players are paired up, some can dominate others, so switch up pairings frequently—or try to match players according to ability.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage attacking players to use their speed when dribbling and to try simple moves they can do that do not slow them down. Also teach players to always look at the goal first when they win the ball back, to see if they can shoot right away.

Defending players need to make sure they block the shooting opportunity at all times. Encourage them 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](#) (if the attacker has exposed the ball) and hopefully make their own attack.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the goals smaller makes the game harder for the attacking player and easier for the defending player.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the goals larger makes this game easier for the attacking player and harder for the defending player.

CHANGE IT UP

You can introduce a change in 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 [1v1](#), only available with MOJO+.

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+.