



U8 PRACTICE 3 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- 2v2 to Small Goals (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- 2v1 to Goal - 10 minutes
- 3v2 to Goal - 10 minutes
- One-Touch Finish - 10 minutes
- Scrimmage - 20 minutes

Description

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

OVERVIEW

Who doesn't like to score goals? Introduce the concept of [shooting](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=30kgCqxqFPBZFqqjIWFsB8S) to your players.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Players learning [proper shooting technique](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=30kgCqxqFPBZFqqjIWFsB8S)
- Emphasize that coordination and balance are the foundation of a great shooting form
- Players recognize openings to shoot or pass to create chances

WHAT TO SAY

__If you see an opening in front of you, where should you go?__

Play forward to goal whenever possible

__Why is it challenging to score goals?__

There is another team on the field who is trying to stop you and score in your goal.

__How can you beat them?__

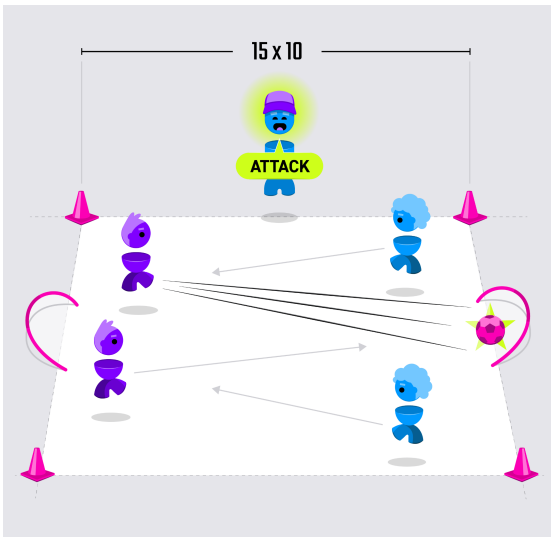
Go to goal when you can. If you can't go to goal, find a teammate who can.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Soccer 101: [How to Shoot with the Laces and Inside of the Foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=30kgCxqFPBZFqqjIWFsB8S)
- Watch: [The Importance of Positive Feedback](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=6SD08JOkE8fDQ0BtDihcUH)

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

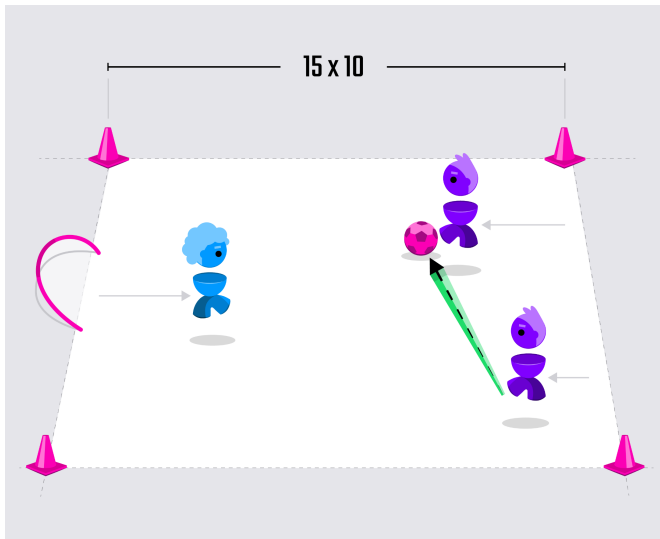
You can add 1 more small goal or pair of cones to each endline and move goals to the corners so players have twice as many opportunities to score, but cannot score in the center.

DO IT AT HOME

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

2v1 to Goal

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Teamwork makes the dream work. This activity teaches players to work with a teammate to get around a defender.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 15 yards long x 10 yards wide.
- Place a small goal on one endline, or use 2 cones placed arms-length apart.
- Divide your players into two teams, one on each endline, and give one team pinnies. On the goal side, 1 player enters as a defender and is met by 2 attackers entering from the

- other side.
- Play starts when the attacking team initiates play by passing the ball to each other and trying to score on the goal. If a defender steals or intercepts the ball, they can also score by dribbling the ball over the attackers' endline with the ball within a hula hoop's distance of the body.
- If a player scores or the ball goes out of bounds, new players rotate in and a new round begins. (After a few rounds, rotate players between endlines so both sides get turns attacking and defending.)
- If you have enough players for 2 grids, position yourself in the middle and run both at the same time so players get more touches on the ball.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Expect attacking pairs to run next to each other instead of 1 running ahead. Remind attackers to spread out and stagger their positions.

Players on both sides may get discouraged. If attackers are not succeeding, you can add a third attacker. Make sure that the defender knows this is meant to challenge them, not as punishment!

COACHING TIPS

The first attacker to reach the ball should dribble straight at the defender with the ball, which draws the defender in and opens up space for the other attacker. The other attacker supports the first attacker by moving to the left or right of the first attacker and getting as far up the field as possible without going past the defender so that they can receive a pass.

When the defender is a few feet away, the attacker can now pass to their teammate, who goes to score. Keep repeating this simple sequence to players to reinforce how easy it can be to take advantage of an extra attacker.

MAKE IT HARDER

Limiting the number of touches per player (such as a 2-touch

maximum), and/or making the space smaller makes it more difficult for the attacking team.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the space larger to make it easier for the attacking team.

CHANGE IT UP

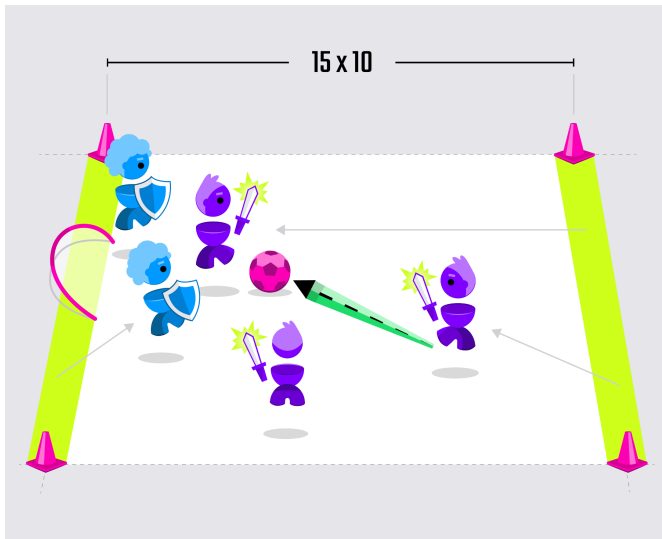
Change the starting location of the defender such as on a sideline near the corner of the defender's endline. This can make it more challenging for attackers by changing how they might initiate their attack. With older players, the game can start with an attacker tossing the ball to the other attacker, who has to control the ball out of the air.

DO IT AT HOME

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

3v2 to Goal

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

There's strength in numbers. Teach players how to use an extra attacker to get around defenders and score.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 15 yards long x 10 yards wide.
- Place a small goal on one endline, or use 2 cones placed arms-length apart.
- Divide your players into two teams, one on each endline, and give one team pinnies. On the goal side, 2 players enter as defenders and are met by 3 attackers entering from the

- other side.
- Play starts when the attacking team initiates play by passing the ball to each other and trying to score on the goal. If a defender steals or intercepts the ball, they can also score by dribbling over the attackers' endline with the ball within a hula hoop's distance of the body.
- If a player scores or the ball goes out of bounds, new players rotate in and a new round begins. (After a few rounds, rotate players between endlines so both sides get turns attacking and defending.)
- 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

At the younger ages, both defenders may go towards the ball, while the 3 attackers may clump together instead of spreading out. Encourage defenders to stagger their positions so the second defender can provide support if the first defender is beaten. Attackers should spread out to create passing opportunities when the attacker with the ball encounters pressure.

Because this activity strongly favors attackers, defenders can get discouraged. Remind them that it's meant to be challenging, and make sure to rotate players between endlines so everyone gets turns both attacking and defending.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage the attacker with the ball to attack the goal with speed and try to score. If a defender gets in the way, the attacker should try to find an open teammate and pass the ball. Attackers must work together to make sure they find positions to receive a pass and take a shot.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the grid smaller makes it harder for attackers to beat defenders. You can also limit the number of touches per player (such

as a 2-touch maximum).

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the grid larger makes it easier for attackers to beat defenders.

CHANGE IT UP

Use your normal full-size goals (depending on your age group) and add a third player to the defending team to act as goalkeeper. If the goalkeeper makes a save, they can distribute the ball to their defenders who try to score by dribbling the ball across their endline. Between rounds, rotate players to ensure everyone has a turn at goalkeeping, defending, and attacking.

DO IT AT HOME

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

One-Touch Finish

Duration: 10 minutes

DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game helps players develop their striking and passing skills, with an emphasis on finishing with one touch.

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 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.
- "One-Touch Finish" rules: Goals only count if scored with a one-touch finish. Players must score from an assist from a teammate- they cannot drop the ball to themselves.
- 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 goals wins the round.
- If you have enough players for two 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 [The Mirror](#), 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+.