



U14 PRACTICE 5 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:00 PM

Duration:

90 minutes

Overview:

- Scrimmage - 25 minutes
- Flying Numbers - 10 minutes
- 2v2 to Cross Goals - 10 minutes
- Half-Court Soccer - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to 4 Goals (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- Fcb Scrimmage - 25 minutes

Description

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

OVERVIEW

Every player loves to score. Players can try to score on their own or create combinations with other players to create openings for shots.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Movement off the ball to create openings to shoot
- When [shooting with the laces](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=30kgCxqFPBZFqqjIWFsB8S), is a player's head over the ball, toe pointing down and ankle locked?
- Players recognize openings to shoot or pass to create chances

WHAT TO SAY

__When near the goal, which surface of the foot should you use to be more accurate?__

Inside of the foot and use the plant foot to aim at the target

__What can you do if there is not an opening to shoot?__

Pass the ball to another player

__How can we create a combination play?__

Dribble at a defender to create a 2v1

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Soccer 101: [How to Strike a Soccer Ball](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=6X1NybiZTsSUWt4LxSWslx)

- Soccer 101: [How to Shoot with the Laces and Inside of the Foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=30kgCxqFPBZFqqjIWFsB8S)

- Soccer 101: [Common Shooting Mistakes](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=3mYKHp8tGZDhPff8nFOomH)

Scrimmage

Duration: 25 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.

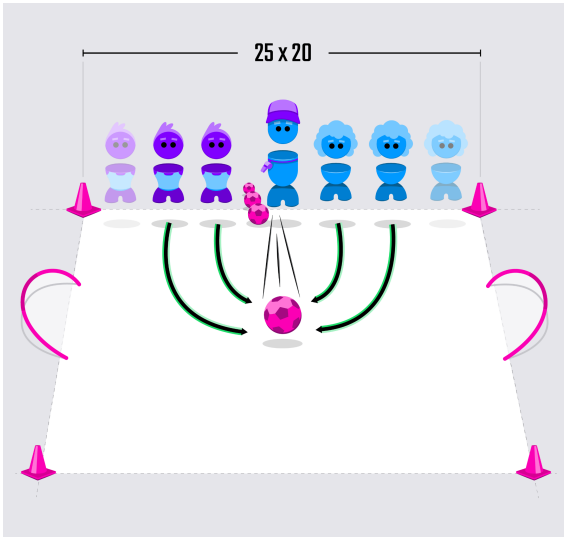
DO IT AT HOME

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

[1v1](#), only available with MOJO+.

Flying Numbers

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This fun activity alternates between 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 and 4v4 opportunities for players.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 8 cones
- 1 ball per 2 players
- 1 pinnie per 2 players
- 2 goals

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 25 yards long x 20 yards wide. Divide players into 2 teams, one on each endline, and give one team pinnies.
- Place a small goal or pair of cones placed arms-length apart on each endline. Players score by passing or

- shooting the ball into the goal or between the cones, below knee-height.
- As coach, you stand at the midline, with many soccer balls.
- One team lines up to the left of the coach and the other to the right.
- Play out a ball and call out a number combination to indicate how many players each team sends in (1v1, 2v2, 3v3) to scrimmage and try to score, changing up the number of players you call each round. Players enter from the front of the line.
- You can also call a different number of players from each team to give one team an extra attacker. (Make sure players know you're doing it so they don't view it as unfair.)
- Each time a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds, players return to the end of their team's line and a new round begins.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Players may receive the ball from the coach and immediately shoot. While this is important when the goal is open, some players may always shoot and never pass—even when they have a better opportunity to score by passing. If this happens consistently, encourage them to look for a teammate first before shooting or add a rule that players must pass the ball at least once before they can take a shot.

COACHING TIPS

Ask players, “When you get the ball, can you shoot? And if not, can you get it to a teammate who can?” to remind them that working together can produce results.

If some players are dominating, try to match them with players of similar ability, or play the ball towards a less-skilled player to ensure everyone gets plenty of touches on the ball.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the grid smaller makes it more difficult for the attacking

team.

MAKE IT EASIER

Making the grid larger makes it easier for the attacking team.

CHANGE IT UP

You can have players line up and enter from the endline instead of the midline—or place 1 team at an endline and 1 at the midline—this changes the teams' starting position.

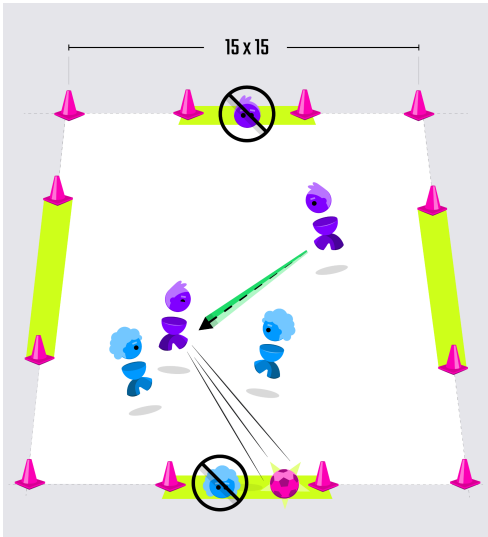
You can also assign players a number within each team (both red and blue players numbered from 1-7 and up) and call out specific numbers ("2 and 5," "1, 3 and 7") instead of lining up players. This enables you to more evenly match players according to ability.

DO IT AT HOME

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

2v2 to Cross Goals

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Glory. Heart. Excitement. This activity forces defenders never to give up and attackers to go for the goal!

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 15 x 15 yards for every 8-12 players.
- Divide players into 2 teams, one on each endline, and give one team pinnies.
- Create 4 small goals using small portable cones or pairs of cones placed 6 feet apart at the center of each endline and each touchline (Think: North, South, East and West).

- Tell each team they can score on every goal except the one behind them.
- Play starts when 2 players enter from each endline and one team initiates play by passing the ball to each other and advancing towards any of their 3 goals. (As coach, you can play the ball out to the middle of the grid if you prefer.)
- At this point, it's a goal-scoring frenzy! Both sides attack and defend.
- Teams score by kicking the ball into their goal or between the cones, below knee height.
- When 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 games at the same time so players get more touches on the ball.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Expect a lot of turnover, since both teams are attacking two of the same goals in a smaller space. If players get too discouraged by this, you can add a rule that attacking teams must score on a different goal each time to limit their scoring options.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage players to immediately look for an open goal on receiving the ball, and then get there with speed. Support attackers should move into positions that enable them to attack a goal immediately if the ball is passed to them.

MAKE IT HARDER

Adding a rule to limit each player to 2 touches on the ball per turn makes it harder for attackers.

MAKE IT EASIER

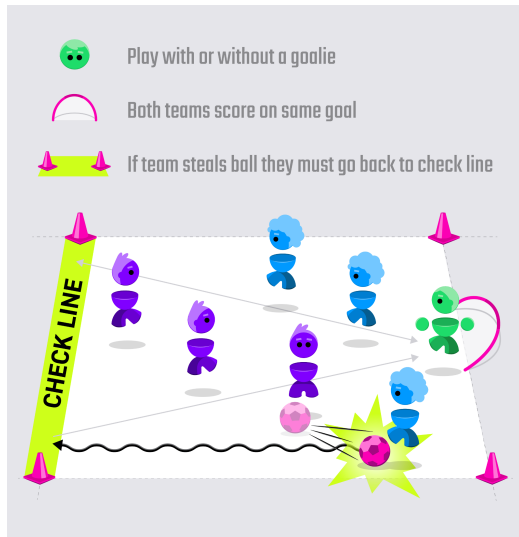
Making the grid larger makes it easier for attackers.

DO IT AT HOME

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Half-Court Soccer

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game helps players develop their attacking and defending skills while squeezing the game into half the space.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 20 yards long x 30 yards wide for every 6-10 players. Divide players into two teams, one in pinnies.
- This game can be played 2v2, 3v3, 4v4 or more, with an optional additional player as goalkeeper. 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 the endline using a 6 ft. portable goal or pair of cones placed arms-length apart. Players score by shooting the ball into the goal or through the cones below knee height. Add cones along the other endline to mark the “check line”.
- “Half-Court Soccer” rules: Teams scrimmage on one half of the field, and both score on the same goal. If a player steals the ball from an opponent, they must “clear” the ball by taking it across the checkline before they can try to score.
- Play starts when you play the ball onto the field from a touchline. 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 3-5 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.

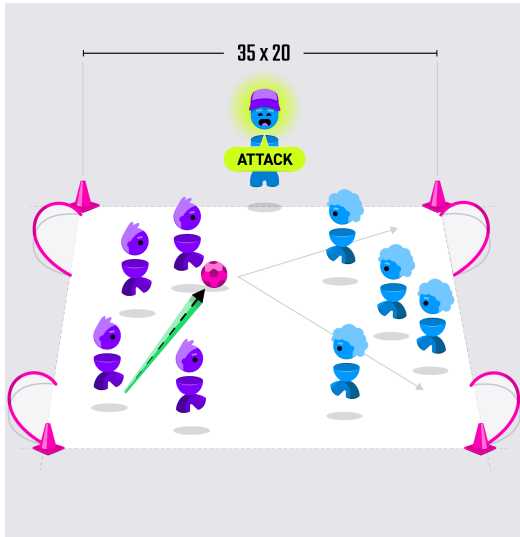
DO IT AT HOME

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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

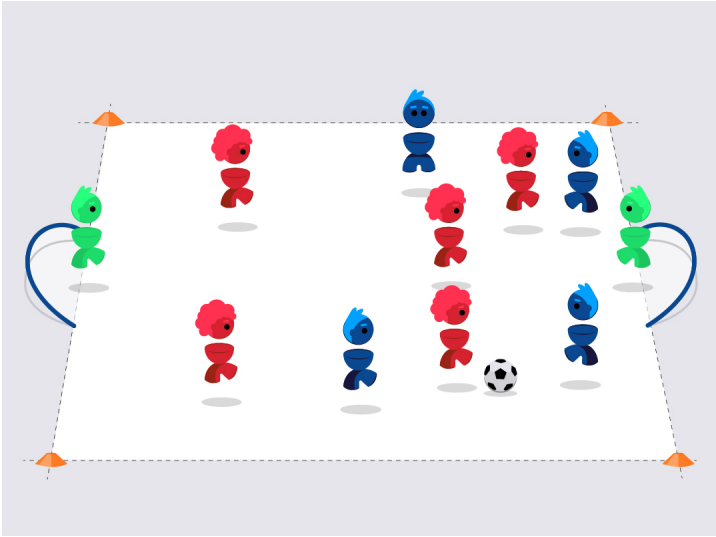
To help players develop ball control and speed dribbling skills, you can adjust the game so that players must dribble through the goal in control of the ball in order to score. This makes it harder for attackers but does encourage them to dribble with speed when a goal is open.

DO IT AT HOME

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Fcb Scrimmage

Duration: 25 minutes



DESCRIPTION

It's time to put everything you've practiced into action. This is scrimmage, FC Barcelona-style.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Use 4 cones to make a rectangular space, recommended size: 20 yards long x 15 yards wide. Place goals at each end.
- Try to play with teams of equal size. If you have an extra player, that's OK. Have them switch between teams so everyone can practice playing with an advantage or

- disadvantage.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Scrimmage is every player's favorite part of practice. Don't worry about whistles, offside, or corner kicks. Here, we want to emphasize the fundamentals of the game without losing sight of the fun.

COACHING TIPS

Feel free to give your players feedback and ask them about their strategy on the field.

Encourage players to spread out, no matter what zone they're in and whether they have possession. Make sure they know the value of moving constantly without the ball.

Players should ask themselves, "Where is the defense? What can I do to attract them so I can create space for my teammates?"

Encourage players to think about how to set up a finish. Where should they go? How should they coordinate a plan of attack?

Stay positive and remember to praise players when using the Barça style—passing the ball, finding space for their teammates and having fun.

MAKE IT EASIER

Remove a defender or two, to help your offense focus on finishing.

Restrict the defenders from pressing.

MAKE IT HARDER

Install side lanes and restrict movement of certain players.