



U8 PRACTICE 1 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- 2v2 to Small Goals (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- Gates Passing - 10 minutes
- Triangle Goal Game - 10 minutes
- 2v2 to Endlines (Attacking) - 10 minutes
- Scrimmage - 20 minutes

Description

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

OVERVIEW

Don't stress today! Your main goal is to [learn your players' names](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=6SDJ4sOSedqcr5JpTNUqYU), get them moving and keep them having fun.

The U8 sessions will follow US Soccer's [play-practice-play model](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=17QeiOkq8TQM3FeLcRAVFM). Each session begins with a fun 2v2 or 3v3 game, then has three activities before a final scrimmage.

The curriculum for this age group is divided into attacking and defending sessions, based on where your team is on the field and

whether you are attacking or defending in that area. This first practice focuses on [attacking](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=3BqaDWUMfONDnh1ekMRXvR).

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Spaced-out players to make the field big and create openings
- Players moving off of the ball to give teammates passes
- Passing and receiving to play forward

WHAT TO SAY

__How can we position ourselves to make the field big?__
Spread out sideways and longways

__What can you do to help your teammate with the ball?__
Move into an opening for a pass

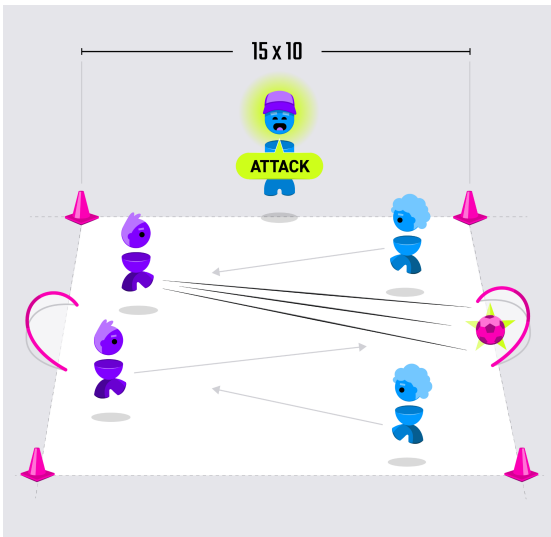
__When is the best time to pass? To dribble?__
*Pass when a teammate is in a better position
Dribble when there is space in front of me to attack*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Read: [How Are You Going to Remember Their Names?](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=6SDJ4sOSedqcr5JpTNUqYU)
- Soccer 101: [Passing with the Inside of the Foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=4hPvYvNgU3Bd1MdFOXKJ14)
- Soccer 101: [Receiving with Different Parts of the Foot](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=31dQzzj0txgcdq7auTxHqV)
- Read: [What You Need to Know about Play -Practice-Play](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=17QeiOkq8TQM3FeLcRAVFM)

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

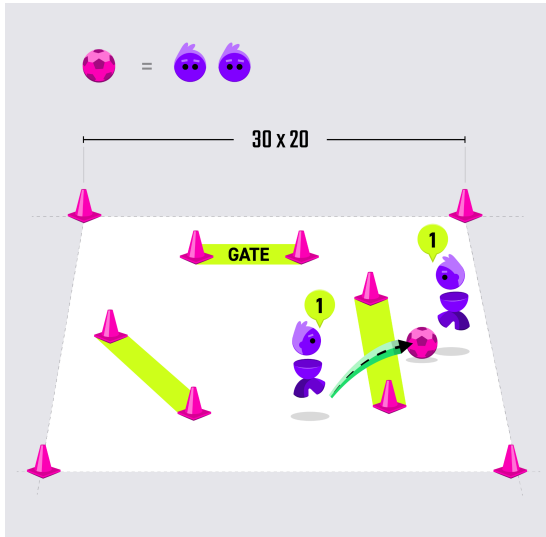
You can add 1 more small goal or pair of cones to each endline and move goals to the corners so players have twice as many opportunities to score, but cannot score in the center.

DO IT AT HOME

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

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

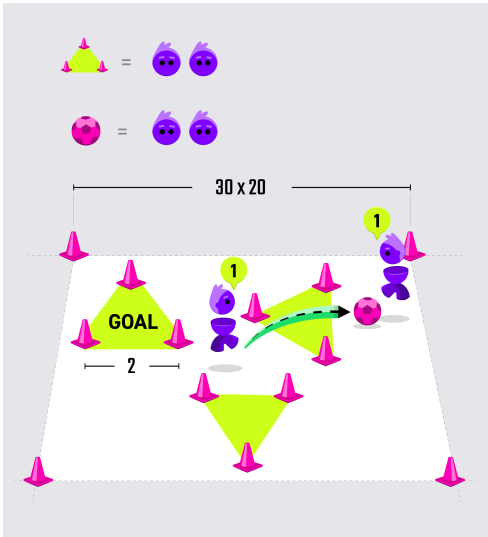
You can ask players to use only their left or right foot, or only inside touches or outside touches when dribbling or passing. If you have different colored cones, you can direct players to alternate gates by color. Or, add a step that players must pass the ball back to their teammate before going to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

Triangle Goal Game

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Twinning means winning. Help hone passing accuracy, communication skills and moving when they don't have a ball.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 12 cones
- 6 balls

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 30 x 30 yards.
- Set up 4 or more triangle-shaped goals, with 2 yard-long sides, randomly throughout the grid. Make at least as many goals as you have pairs of players.
- Divide your team into pairs, and give every pair a ball. (Make one 3-player group if you have an odd number.)
- Each pair works together to pass and dribble around the

- grid, trying to score as many goals as they can by passing the ball to each other through the triangle goals. Have pairs keep track of their goals.
- After a couple minutes, stop the game and encourage the pairs to try to beat their own score in the next round.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Players may still be figuring out how hard to pass the ball. They might leave the ball short or send it long.

Players may also get really close for their passes. They might come right up to the triangle and kick it through. Encourage them to try to pass from a longer distance.

Expect that initially players may get really close to the triangle when passing, or will come up to the triangle, stop, measure, then pass. What we're aiming for is a fluid pass upon approaching—"passing from the run" rather than a static pass.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage players to "take the ball somewhere new" when they receive the ball, meaning their first touch should be towards their next target. Partners should communicate so the passing partner can run ahead and move into position to receive the ball at the next target immediately after passing. Because of the constant motion and multiple moving pairs, this game adds the complexity of finding an open triangle.

Some players may figure out that they can stay at a single triangle and pass the ball repeatedly to score points. If a team does this, compliment their cleverness, then add the condition that they must score on every goal before scoring on the same goal twice. When kids break the system like this—finding loopholes in the rules—they're learning to problem-solve. This is fantastic.

MAKE IT HARDER

Add defenders to the triangles. Make sure there are fewer defenders

than there are triangles, so there will always be at least 2 triangles without a defender.

MAKE IT EASIER

Add additional triangle goals so players have less competition for open goals.

CHANGE IT UP

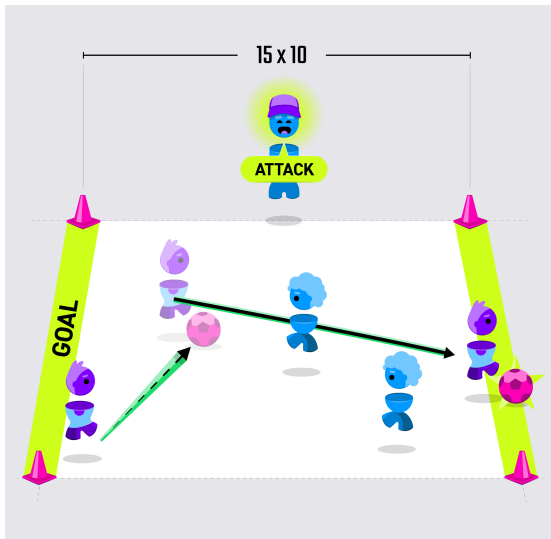
You can make this game more challenging by restricting players to only using the inside of their foot, outside of foot, or laces, or limit players to passing with just their left or right foot.

DO IT AT HOME

Players can keep working on their skills at home with a game we call [The Long and the Short Of It](#), only available with MOJO+.

2v2 to Endlines (Attacking)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Focus on the forward attack. Players work on dribbling, passing and ball control to score in this activity.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of a grid for every 8-12 players, recommended size: 15 yards long x 10 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 2 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

When players are on the attack, expect them to run parallel to one another instead of spreading out. 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. Expect lots of turnovers.

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 the attacking team.

MAKE IT EASIER

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

CHANGE IT UP

It is a natural progression to start playing this game to endlines and progress to small goals.

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+.

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+.