



U12 PRACTICE 1 – USYS CURRICULUM

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

90 minutes

Overview:

- Scrimmage - 25 minutes
- Gates Passing - 10 minutes
- Side Effects - 10 minutes
- Half-Court Soccer - 10 minutes
- Barcelona - 10 minutes
- Fcb Scrimmage - 25 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 U12 sessions will follow US Soccer's [play-practice-play model](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=17QeiOkq8TQM3FeLcRAVFM). Each session begins with a fun 2v2, 3v3 or 4v4 game, then has three or four activities before a final scrimmage.

Sessions are 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.

In today's session, you still are looking to build players' individual skills, but this age is when small group [attacking](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=3BqaDWUMfONDnh1ekMRXvR) can truly be developed. Players are learning to combine with one or two other players and understand team attacking concepts.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Players look to play forward or possess
- Players spread out to make the field big and create openings
- Players move off of the ball to create openings for passes and combinations

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 time and space*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Read: [How Are You Going to Remember Their Names?](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=6SDJ4sOSedqcr5JpTNUqYU)
- Soccer 101: [What Is Attacking?](yougotmojo://content/post?postId=3BqaDWUMfONDnh1ekMRXvR)
- 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)

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.

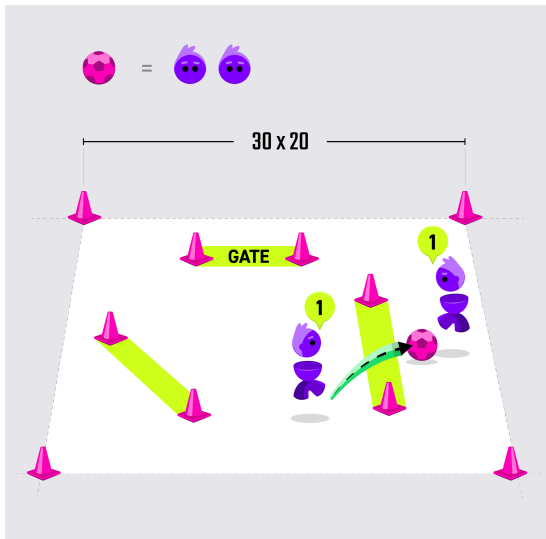
DO IT AT HOME

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

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

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

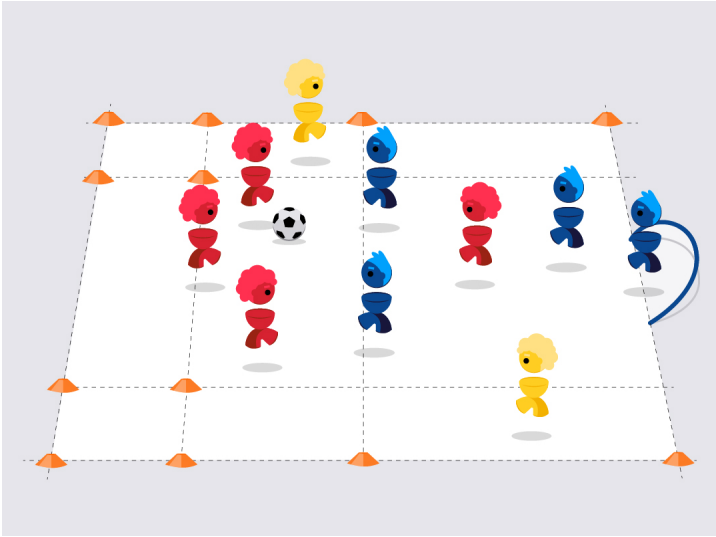
You can ask players to use only their left or right foot, or only inside touches or outside touches when dribbling or passing. If you have different colored cones, you can direct players to alternate gates by color. Or, add a step that players must pass the ball back to their teammate before going to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

Side Effects

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Players get an assist from the wings in this game from FC Barcelona.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Use 4 cones to make a rectangular space, recommended size: 20 yards long x 15 yards wide. Use 4 more cones to divide the space into 3 lanes—a middle lane and two narrower lanes on the sides. Then use 2 more cones to divide the space in half.
- Place a goal on one end and use 6 cones to create 3 scoring zones on the other end, one for each lane.

- Divide players into two teams of 4—shown here in blue and red—plus two jokers (or neutral players), each assigned to one of the outer lanes.
- The blue team includes a goalkeeper and 3 attackers who range throughout the space. With the jokers' help, they try to move the ball into one of the scoring zones, which have different point values.
- The red team, meanwhile, tries to recover the ball and score on the goal. But they can only have one player in the goal half. They can press the jokers, but only one red player can press at a time.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This game is set up to give the blue team an advantage—if they can send the ball to the proper area of the field.

In the actual game, sending the ball up the wings and across to the center is one of the most efficient paths to a goal. Here, we're incentivizing the blue team to do the same by making the middle scoring zone worth more points—but that doesn't mean it's easy. With the right moves, the recovery team might just stop them in their tracks.

COACHING TIPS

Encourage players to spread out and control all of their available space.

During 1v1 battles, encourage players to use all of their dribbling and evasive moves.

MAKE IT EASIER

Remove a defender and play with 3 (and 3 neutrals).

MAKE IT HARDER

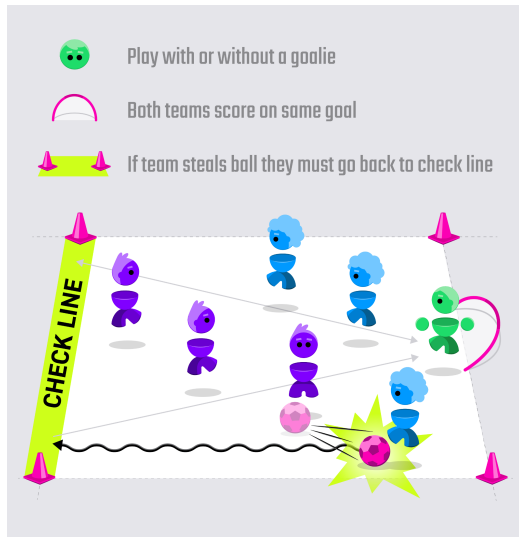
Increase the defense's ability to pressure, allowing either an extra defender in front of the goal or an extra defender in the side lanes.

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+.

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.

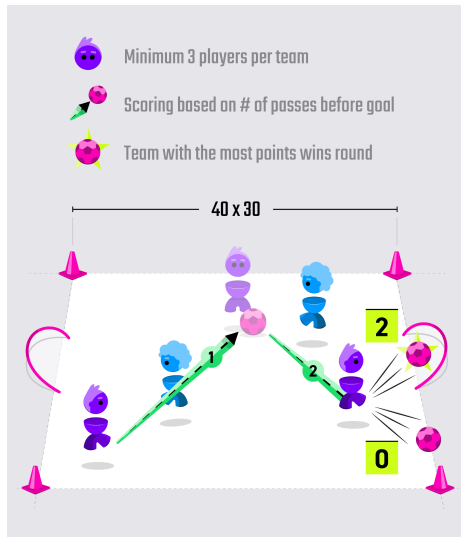
DO IT AT HOME

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

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

Barcelona

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game emphasizes passing by awarding points according to how many passes a team makes before they score.

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.
- “Barcelona” rules: Teams earn points according to how many passes they make before scoring. For example, if a team makes 6 passes and scores, they get 6 points. If they make 6 passes but don’t score, they get zero points.
- 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 points at the end 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.

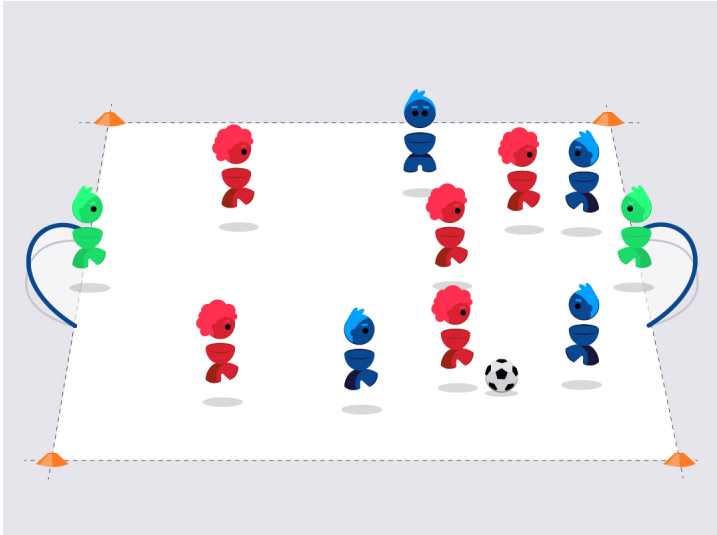
DO IT AT HOME

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

[Watch Your Back](#), only available with MOJO+.

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.