



U8- WEEK 4

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- Space Wars - 10 minutes
- Primetime - 10 minutes
- 2v2 to Small Goals (Attacking) - 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.

Start the opening scrimmage the same way we did in previous weeks, with players being added to the game as they arrive

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass or dribble forward

KEY QUALITIES: Take initiative, Be pro-active

MOMENT: Attacking

SKILL ACQUISITION:

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

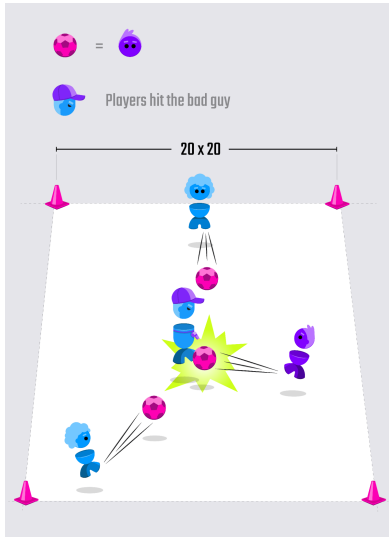
Passing: Surface of the foot and ball, Pace and accuracy

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

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

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+.

Primetime

Duration: 10 minutes

DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game emphasizes attacking and shooting as players try to recreate their favorite World Cup goals.

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 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3, 4 vs. 4 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.
- “Primetime” rules: Teams separate and decide on a well-known World Cup goal they’ll each try to recreate on the field. Players scrimmage, with each team trying to guess the other team’s goal after both teams have been successful. Keeping score is optional, celebration dances a must.
- 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. The attacking team should use each possession to try to pull off their World Cup reenactment until they are successful.
- There are no corners, throw-ins or goalies. If a ball goes out of bounds, it's a kick-in.
- Play short rounds or until each team has achieved their goal, then allow players to try to guess the other's goal. Switch up teams, encourage them to strategize new goals, and play again.
- 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.

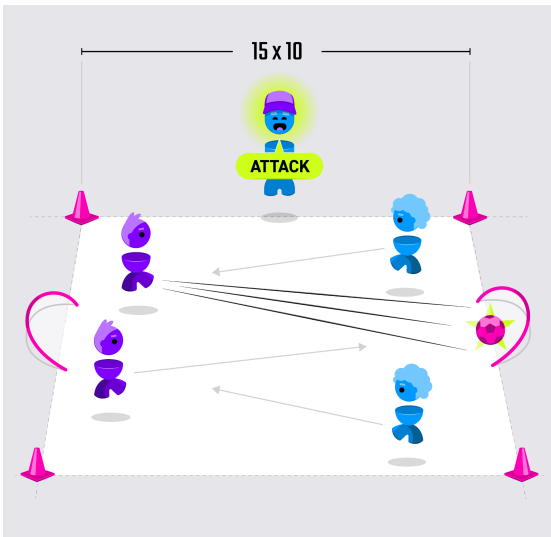
It’s also great to just observe your players and let them play here. Observing enables you to see what’s working and where to focus in future sessions.

DO IT AT HOME

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

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+.

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+.