



U8- WEEK 8

Date:

4/6/23 @ 5:45 PM

Duration:

60 minutes

Overview:

- Criss Cross - 10 minutes
- 4v4 to Endlines (Defending) - 10 minutes
- Half-Court Soccer - 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: Pressure the ball, Steal the ball

KEY QUALITIES: Read & understand the game, Take initiative

MOMENT: Defending

SKILL ACQUISITION:

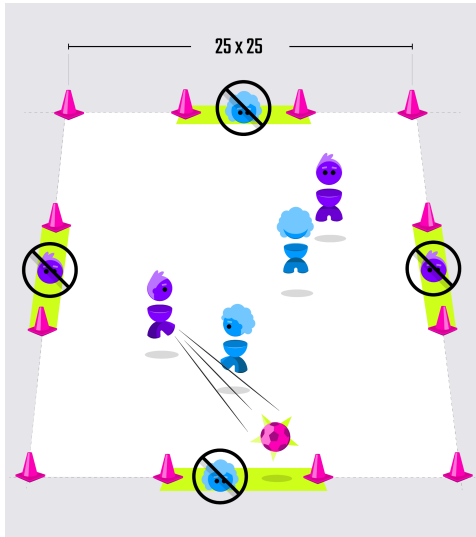
Pressure: Angle, speed, distance of approach, footwork

Types of Tackles: Poke, Block, intercept

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

Criss Cross

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This small-sided game helps players learn to change the point of attack and transition quickly from attacking to defending.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of your grid, recommended size: 25 x 25 yards 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.
- “Criss Cross” rules: Using small goals or pairs of cones placed arms-length apart, place one goal at the center of each endline and each touchline, 4 goals in all. One team can only score on the touchline goals and the other team can only score on the endline goals. Players score by passing or shooting the ball into the goal or between the cones below knee-height.
- 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 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.

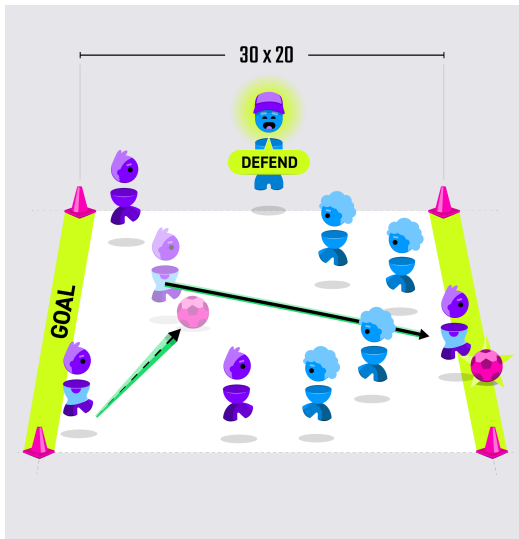
It’s also great to just observe your players and let them play here. Observing enables you to see what’s working and where to focus in future sessions.

DO IT AT HOME

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

4v4 to Endlines (Defending)

Duration: 10 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Now it's time to defend. Focus on defensive skills with a scrimmage session that emphasizes working collectively to deny the opponent space.

WHAT YOU NEED

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

SETUP

- Place 4 cones to mark the corners of a grid for every 8-12 players, recommended size: 30 yards long x 20 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 4 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

Because the endlines provide so much real estate on which to score, this game can be difficult for defenders. If they're consistently getting frustrated, you can narrow the width of the field so the attacking team has less space to score.

Expect some defenders to mistime their approach and miss the ball when trying to poke it away. They may come in too fast, which enables the attacker to just dribble around them. While they want to get to the attacker quickly, remind them to then get low and slow as they approach.

COACHING TIPS

The defenders should work together to try to get the attackers to pass the ball sideways or back and take away time and space. Taking away time means getting pressure to the ball and slowing the attacker down. Taking away space means staying connected and compact, preventing attackers from getting down the field.

If individual defending is good, can the group of defenders come together and get compact? This also helps overcome individual defending mistakes. The first defender provides pressure, the next provides cover, and the other defenders provide balance. As a group, can they be like a fist? Nothing gets through the fingers.

MAKE IT HARDER

Making the space larger makes it harder for defenders to stop attackers.

MAKE IT EASIER

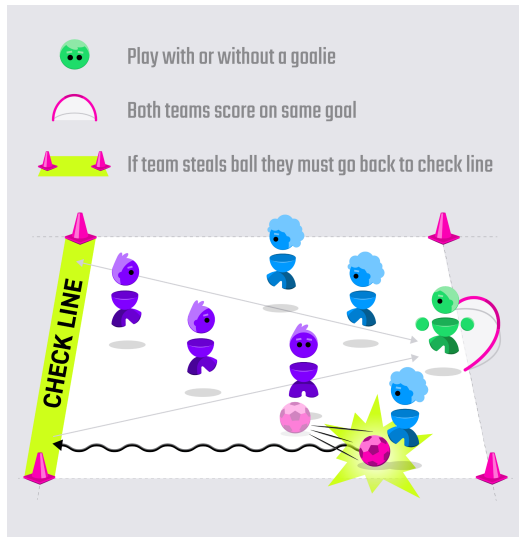
Making the space smaller makes it easier for defenders to beat attackers.

CHANGE IT UP

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

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+.

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+.