

# Season Plan for 6- to 7-Year-Olds

Using a small number of players on a team with the 4 v 4 game allows players to have many tactical options without the pressure of large numbers of opponents. This makes it more likely that players will attempt to pass, dribble, or shoot as the need arises, rather than simply kicking the ball away as far as possible. Progressing from the four- to five-year-old age group, players can now revisit the tactical components of possession and attack while adding a closer look at defending.

## Overview of the Season Plan


The Season Plan on the next page provides a weekly guide and addresses tactical and skill components, and other activities that are fully detailed in the Practice Plans document. The Season Plan has five components:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the practice is your main focus.
- **Tactics and Skills:** Tactics are knowing what to do during the game (and when to do it), and they require an understanding of the problems faced by each team during the game and how those problems can be solved. Ways to maintain possession of the ball would be tactics. Skills are the physical skills traditionally taught, such as passing or shooting the ball or controlling the ball during play.
- **Rules and Traditions:** You will teach the rules of the sport to young children gradually, as part of playing games and learning skills. Traditions are those unwritten rules that players follow to be courteous and safe, such as raising your hand when you foul someone or playing cooperatively with the others on your team.
- **Fitness Concepts:** Even young children can understand some simple concepts about health and fitness, such as the idea that exercise strengthens your heart, so some of these are suggested as the focus for brief discussions during practice.
- **Character Development Concepts:** The four core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility—can all be related to many situations that arise while playing basketball. For example, playing cooperatively with teammates shows that you care about them. Again, we'll suggest some specific ideas for briefly discussing character development values.

## Six- to Seven-Year-Olds

Week	Purpose	Tactics and skills	Rules and traditions	Fitness concepts	Character development concepts
1	Playing the 4 v 4 game—boundaries, rules	Starting and restarting the games—kicking off, throwing in from out-of-bounds, restarting at corners Scoring into the goal	Rules—starts and restarts, corner kicks, goal kicks, throw-ins, scoring rules Modified boundaries	<b>General fitness</b> Participation in sport improves fitness.	<b>Four core values</b> The four core values are introduced.
2	Playing the 4 v 4 game as a team	Playing positional and support roles Passing in the game—partner and team practices, and under pressure	Rules—fouls, including no use of hands on the field	<b>Flexibility</b> Your muscles need to stretch.	<b>Responsibility</b> Learn the team motto: play hard, play fair, and have fun!
3	Keeping possession of the ball	Passing in the game Passing and receiving under pressure Passing and supporting		<b>Cardiorespiratory fitness</b> The heart is a special muscle that pumps blood.	<b>Responsibility</b> It's important to be a good sport.
4	Keeping possession of the ball in the game	Receiving under pressure Stopping the ball—using the inside and outside of the foot to set up play Receiving and passing, dribbling, shooting under control	Fouls—no hitting, kicking, tripping, pushing, charging or jumping at another player.	<b>Cardiorespiratory fitness</b> Your heartbeat increases with exercise.	<b>Honesty</b> Raise your hand when you foul.
5	Keeping possession of the ball and attacking as a team	Supporting teammates with the ball Depth in attack		<b>Cardiorespiratory fitness</b> Your heart gets stronger when you exercise and play.	<b>Responsibility</b> Mistakes are okay. Don't make excuses for your play.
6	Keeping possession and attacking in the game	Passing and receiving Dribbling under pressure Pushing and running		<b>Flexibility</b> Stretching muscles makes them flexible.	<b>Caring</b> Take turns with teammates.
7	Attacking the goal in the game	Shooting at the goal—good technique under pressure		<b>Muscular strength and endurance</b> Running and kicking give you strong legs.	<b>Responsibility</b> Keep control of yourself during practice and games.
8	Defending your own space in the game	Marking opposing players—where to stand, following the opponents	Marking means guarding your opponent.	<b>General fitness</b> We need to keep active every day, even days we have no practice.	<b>Responsibility to team</b> It's important to value teamwork.
9	Defending your own space and winning the ball in the game	Challenging for the ball—tackling	Tackling means taking the ball away from the ball carrier with your feet.	<b>General fitness</b> Healthy eating habits give you more energy.	<b>Caring</b> Forgive mistakes; they are part of the game.
10	Defending your own space and winning the ball in the game	Marking, pressuring, and tackling		<b>General fitness</b> Eat good foods rather than junk foods.	<b>Respect for game</b> Realize it takes years to master some skills.

# Practice Plans for Six- to Seven-Year-Olds

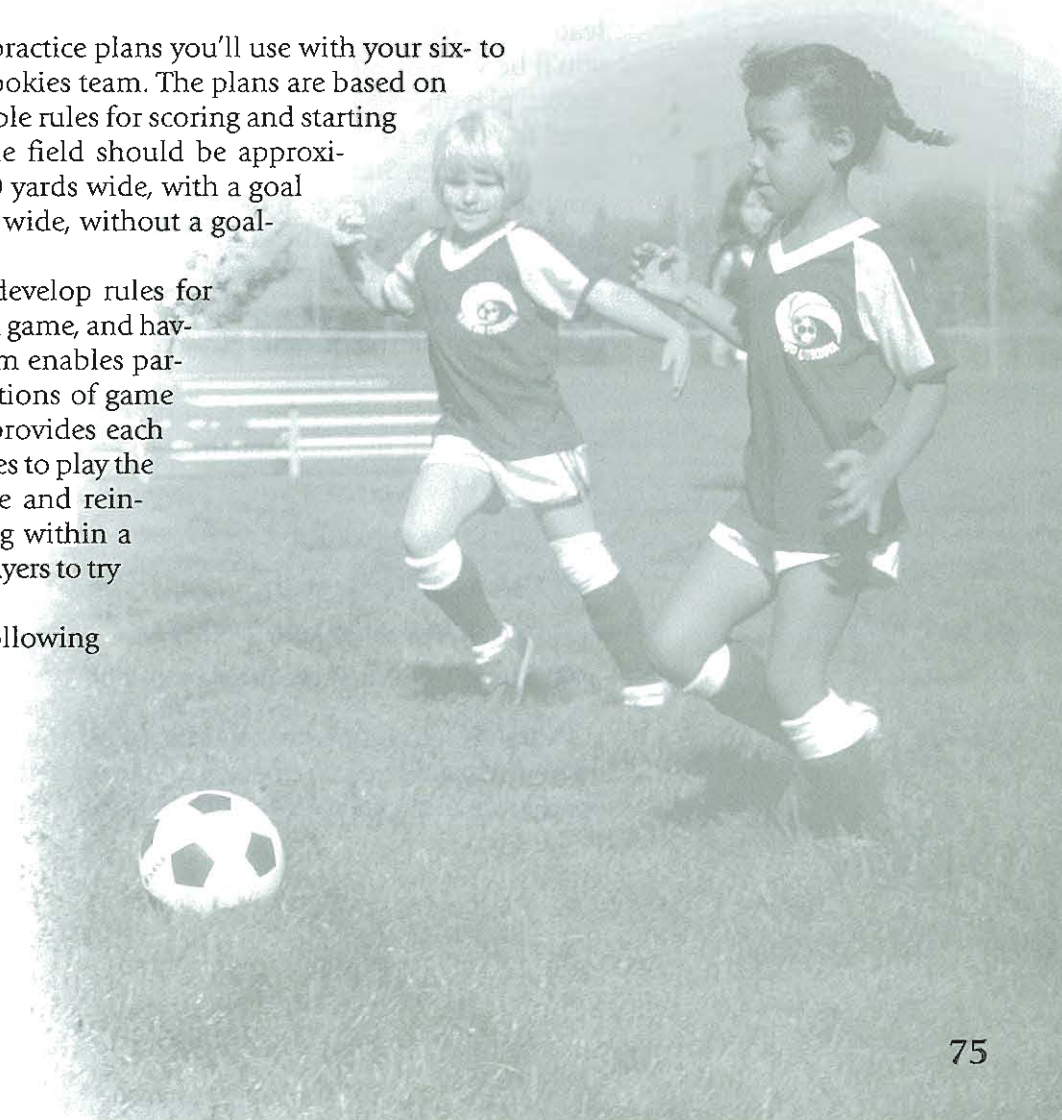


This chapter presents 10 practice plans you'll use with your six- to seven-year-old YMCA Rookies team. The plans are based on a 4 v 4 game, again with simple rules for scoring and starting and restarting the game. The field should be approximately 40 yards long and 30 yards wide, with a goal about 4 feet high and 8 feet wide, without a goal-keeper. Use a size 3 ball.

At this level, we further develop rules for restarting to resemble the real game, and having four players on each team enables participants to experience situations of game complexity. The game still provides each child with many opportunities to play the ball without undue pressure and reinforces the concept of playing within a boundary, thereby forcing players to try to control the ball.

Each plan contains the following sections:

- ⊙ Purpose
- ⊙ Equipment
- ⊙ Practice Plan
- ⊙ Coach's Points
- ⊙ Variations





*Purpose* focuses on what you want to teach your players during that practice; it is your main theme for the day. *Equipment* notes what you'll need on hand for that practice. We'll address *practice plan* in depth in just a moment. *Coach's points* are helpful reminders for you, points of emphasis to most effectively conduct the practice. Finally, *variations* provide ideas for making the game more or less difficult, to match the abilities of your players. We include variations to games at the end of each plan, providing you with modifications to keep skill practices and games fun and interesting and to help players of varying skill levels.

The practice plan section outlines what you will do during each practice session. It consists of these elements:

- ⊙ Warm-Up
- ⊙ Fitness Circle
- ⊙ Game 1
- ⊙ Skill Practices or Games
- ⊙ Team Circle and Wrap-Up

You'll begin each session with 5- to 10-minute warm-up activities. (*Note:* All times given in the practice plans are approximate.) Follow this with 5 minutes of the fitness circle, during which you briefly talk with players and lead them in an activity that relates to health or fitness. Then, in game 1, you'll be working on the first two steps of the four-step process for teaching soccer: playing a modified soccer game and helping them discover what they need to do. We designed the game to focus players' attention on a particular aspect of soccer. Start the game but, when it's clear that the players are having trouble achieving the goal of the game, stop the game and ask questions and get answers similar to those shown in the plans. The questions and answers will help the players see what skills they need to solve tactical problems in the game. (Occasionally, when the question-and-answer section precedes the coach's cue, ask the questions *before* the players begin the game and use the cue during the game.)

The third part of the four-step process is teaching the skills identified in game 1 through the skill practices. In each skill practice you'll use the IDEA approach to

- ⊙ introduce the skill;
- ⊙ demonstrate the skill;
- ⊙ explain the skill; and
- ⊙ attend to players practicing the skill.

Chapter 8 contains descriptions of all the skills, so we will give a page reference to guide you to the appropriate description. The introduction, demonstration, and explanation should be brief, to fit young children's short at-

tention spans. Then, as the players practice, you will attend to individual children and guide them with coach's cues or further demonstration.









After the skill practices, you will finish the four-step process by having the children play another game. This lets them use the skills they just learned and develop their understanding of how to use those skills in the context of a game. Note that in game 1, when players are being introduced to a new tactic or skill, they usually will play an even-sided game (such as 3 v 3). This allows them to encounter the challenges they will face in executing the tactic or skill. Then, in most game 2s, they play lopsided games (such as 3 v 1 or 3 v 2) to increase their chances of experiencing success and beginning to master the new tactic or skill. However, if your players are showing proficiency with the new tactic or skill, you can use even-sided games in game 2. The choice is yours; for more on this issue, see chapter 4.

The practice plan section concludes with a team circle, which focuses on character development. You will take about five minutes to talk to your players and lead them in an activity that relates to one of the four core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Following this, you'll wrap up the practice with a reminder of the next practice day and time and a preview of what you will teach in the next practice session.

A note about fitness and team circles: these times are meant to be true discussions—not lectures in which you do all the talking and the players do all the listening. Ask the questions provided and wait for your players to respond. Don't feed them the answers that we provide; we intend these answers only to help you guide the discussion. Your role is as much to ask questions and get players to respond as it is to dole out information.

The plans in this chapter, combined with the information in the rest of this book, should give you what you need to lead practices. Just remember to be patient and caring as you work on skills. Different children will progress at different rates, and it's more important that they learn the sport in a positive way than that they learn quickly.

### Key to Diagrams

	=	Ball
	=	Cone
	=	Pass
	=	Run
	=	Dribble
	=	Shot
X	=	Field player
A	=	Attacker
D	=	Defender
C	=	Coach
FD	=	Feeder
R	=	Retriever
	=	Small goal
-----	=	Field boundaries
	=	Rolling the ball







# Practice 1

## PURPOSE

To play the 4 v 4 game, focusing on boundaries and rules. Players will be able to play a 4 v 4 game of soccer in a predetermined area while adhering to simple start and restart rules.

## Equipment

-  One soccer ball per player (if possible)
-  Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
-  One cone (or other marker) per player (if possible)
-  Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Begin each practice with 5 to 10 minutes of warm-up activities to get players loosened up and ready to go.

1. Players kick or dribble in space (one ball per child).
2. Players dribble or kick at targets spread out in space.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Following the warm-up, gather your players and briefly discuss the fitness concept for that practice.

### Key Idea: General fitness

Gather players into a group. "In soccer, running makes our hearts beat faster, and kicking helps strengthen our leg muscles so we can kick the ball farther. Spread out into your own space. Everyone run in place and I will pass the ball to some of you. If you get the ball, pass it back to me and keep running!" Continue for about 30 seconds. "Playing soccer improves our physical conditioning or fitness. We get better at running and kicking the ball, and can keep going longer before we get too tired. How can I keep from getting too tired when I'm running?" (Pacing themselves.) "How about kicking?" (Practicing at home.) "It's also important to take a rest when you need one and to drink water during practice and at home. We'll talk more about the different areas of fitness in our fitness circles throughout the season."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

Following the fitness circle, get the kids playing a game. After letting the players play for a while, interrupt the game for a time of questions and answers—with *you* asking the questions and your *players* providing the answers (about what the goal of the game was and what skills and tactics they needed to perform to succeed in the game). For many games, we provide diagrams or figures showing how to play the game. Also, we often provide coach's points for you to pass along to your players during the games.

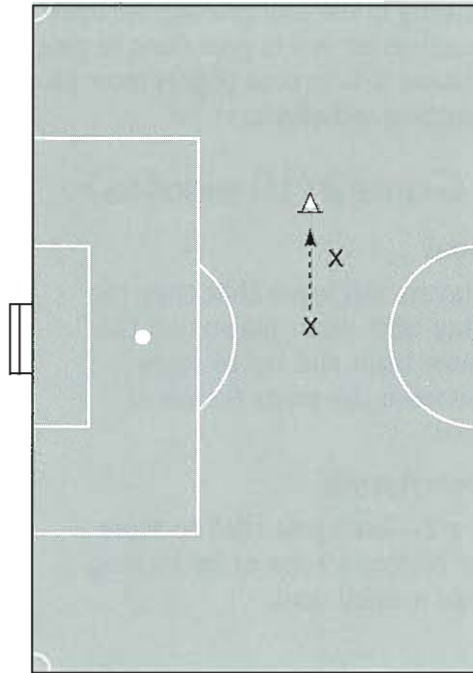
### Goal

Players will learn that they have to attack a goal (cone) to score in soccer. Each team attacks a different goal.

# Practice 1

## Description

1 v 1—Each player tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not hands. (No need for any other rules right now!)



When the question-and-answer section precedes the coach's cues, ask the questions before the players begin the game. Use the cues during the game.

Coach: Which way do you go when you get the ball?  
Players: Toward the cone.



"Go toward the cone."

In the first practice we don't include skill practices. However, after the first practice, you'll follow game 1 with a skill practice, during which you'll introduce, demonstrate, and explain a skill or tactic, then attend to your players as they practice it. The question-and-answer session, in which your players tell you what skills and tactics they needed to be successful in the game, leads






# Practice 1

(cont'd)



 In games 1 and 2, watch that players don't stray too far from their cones or goals and into other games. Just redirect them if they stray. Setting up the cones for play across the field at various points will minimize the likelihood that games will spill over into each other.



• directly to the skill practice. We often provide coach's points with the skill practices for you to pass along to your players. We also provide coach's cues—phrases to help your players focus on the task at hand—during many skill practices and games.

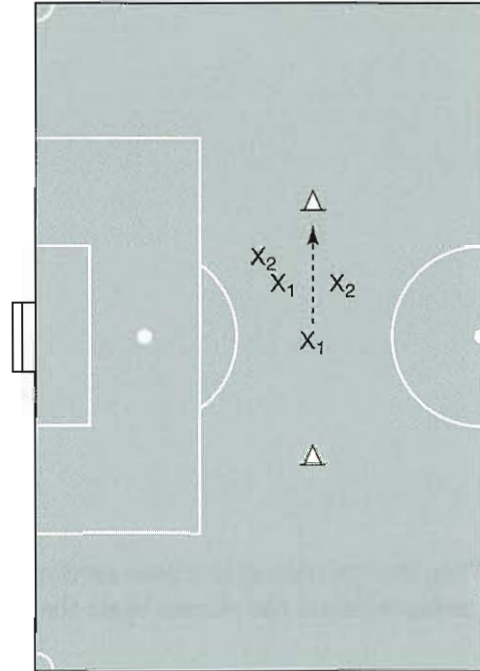
## Game 2 (10 minutes)

### Goal

• Players will learn that they can play with other players on the same team and try to score between the posts (cones or goal).

### Description

• 2 v 2—Each pair tries to score by hitting a cone or by kicking into a small goal.



Coach: Who is on your team?

Players: (Name of teammate)

Coach: Which goal are you trying to score in?

Players: That one. (Have them point.)

Coach: Where do you kick the ball to score?

Players: In the goal. (If they say "in there," have them show you.)

COACH'S cue



"Score in the goal."



# Practice 1

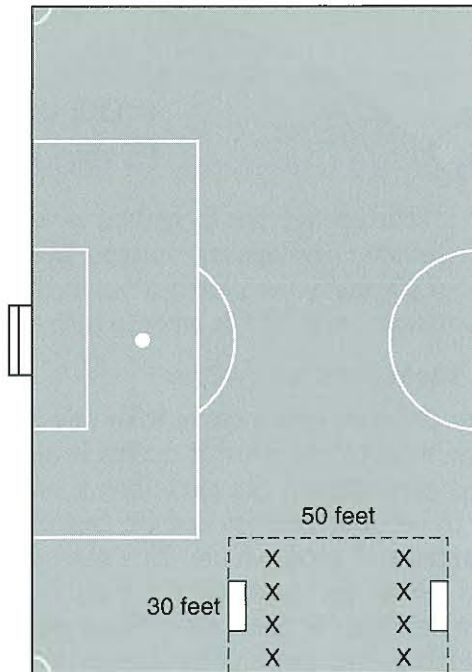
## Game 3 (20 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn appropriate ways of restarting the game when the ball goes out of play.

### Description

4 v 4—Each team of four tries to score into a small goal. For each pair of teams, mark a playing area no larger than 50 by 30 feet.



Coach: How do we start the game?

Players: With a kickoff at the center. The other team must go back into its own half.

Coach: What happens when the ball goes out-of-bounds at the side?

Players: It is a throw-in.\*

Coach: What happens when the ball goes out-of-bounds at the end?

Players: It is a goal kick or a corner kick.\*\*

Coach: What happens after a goal is scored?

Players: A kickoff at the center. The team that scored must go back into its own half.



### COACH'S cues



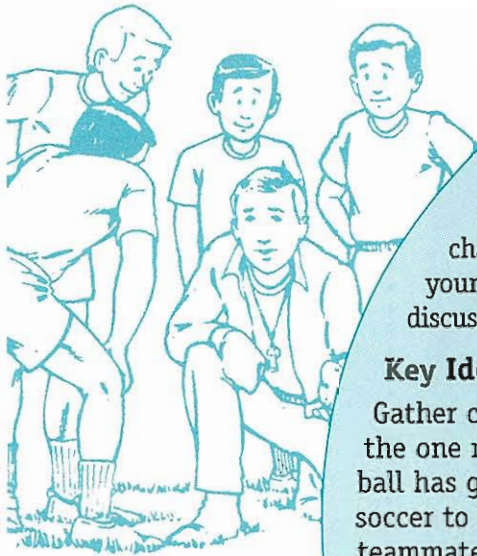
"Have both feet behind the line."

"Hold the ball back overhead with two hands."

"Throw to your teammate, keeping both feet on the ground."

\* It might be worth stopping the game for five minutes so all players can practice taking throw-ins (see page 136). You can do this quickly by having pairs of players do throw-ins to each other (one ball per pair).

\*\* You can set up and practice goal kicks and corner kicks (see pages 135–136) during the game.



## Team Circle (5 minutes)

Conclude practice by gathering your players and discussing a character development concept. These aren't lectures; you want your players' active participation in these discussions. Following the discussions, wrap up the practice with a few comments.

### **Key Idea:** Four core values

Gather children into a circle with one ball. "Everyone hand the ball to the one next to you until it makes it around the whole circle." After the ball has gone around the circle one time, have it passed to you. "We play soccer to be more healthy and fit, but it also teaches us to become good teammates and good people. This season we will talk about four qualities of a good person and teammate: *caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility*. Our team needs to have all of these qualities in our practices and games. Remember that we can't be a team without each of you doing your part. Let's pass the ball to each other and say one of the core values before you pass. This will help you remember to use all four of the qualities so we can work together."

### **Wrap-Up**

Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice: playing as a team.

## Variations

- Have enough balls and cones so all players get plenty of touches and chances to score. This is the point of the warm-up and the 1 v 1 game. If the number of balls and cones available is limited, have players pair off and pass the ball to each other before hitting a cone.
- As always, you cannot be certain how many players will show up for each session, so you may not always have an even number of players for 2 v 2 or 4 v 4. To use extra players in games, you can place one player as a permanent attacker, always playing for whichever team has the ball. That way 2 v 2 becomes 2 v 2 + 1.



# Practice 2

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Have pairs of players pass and move in a small area. Tell them to call for the ball from their partners.

### Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea:** Flexibility

Bring a rubber band and show it to children. "This rubber band is like our muscles. Can you tell me why?" Listen for children's responses (stretches when pulled, goes back to original shape, etc.). Demonstrate how the rubber band stretches. "Your muscles work the same way as this rubber band. When you reach and stretch, your muscles stretch just like the rubber band. When your body comes back, your muscles go back to their original shape. Everyone reach down to the ground with your arms slowly and then bring your arms back up." Have children repeat three times. "Your leg muscles need to stretch because we use them the most in soccer. It makes them more flexible. When muscles are flexible, it keeps them from getting hurt and makes the muscles feel good."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

**Goals**

Players will learn to spread out down the field so they can receive a pass.

**Description**

4 v 4—Review the rules, including starts and restarts, fouls, no use of hands, throw-ins, corner kicks (direct only), and goal kicks (see chapter 9). Encourage players to spread out.

 **PURPOSE**

To play the 4 v 4 game as a team, focusing on positional and support play. Players will be able to effectively support teammates who have the ball in a 4 v 4 game of soccer.

**Equipment**

- One soccer ball per pair
- Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams
- A rubber band



COACH'S cue



"Be in a space where someone can pass to you."



Coach: What is the fastest way to get the ball down the field (pass or dribble)?

Players: Pass.

Coach: For Katie to pass down the field, where does Matthew need to go so she can pass to him?

Players: Down the field.

COACH'S point



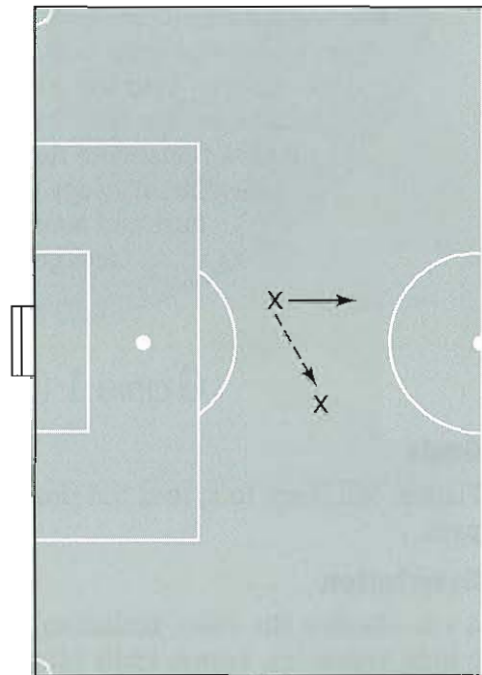
Remember that when you ask young children questions you may not get the answers you are hoping for. Young children are unpredictable. You may need to probe by asking "What else?" or to get to an answer by offering them a forced choice ("Do you think it is this or that?").

## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move forward to support teammates (see pages 121–122).
2. Practice moving forward to support teammates.

### Description

Pairs—Each pair passes the ball and moves up and down the field.



COACH'S cue



"Move downfield (toward the goal) to support your teammate."

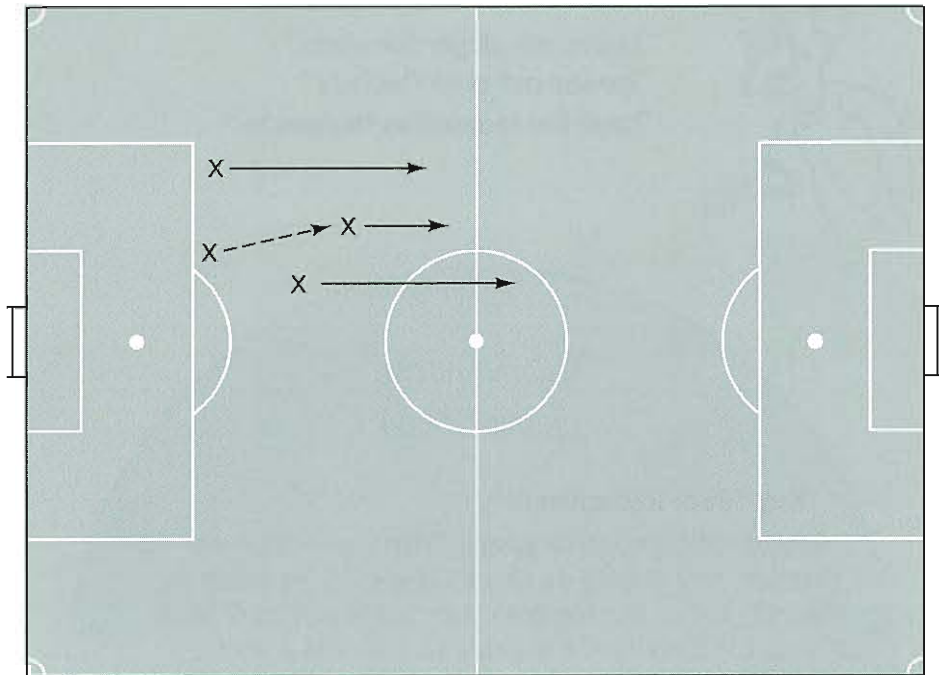
# Practice 2

## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to spread out as a team to move the ball downfield (see pages 123–124).
2. Practice spreading out as a team to move the ball downfield.

### Description

Groups of four—Each group passes the ball and moves up and down the field. The object is to get the ball down the field as quickly as possible. Each player must receive at least one pass.



COACH'S cue



"Spread out forward and sideways."

# Practice 2

(cont'd)

## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to spread out the length and width of the field.

### Description

4 v 4—Each team leaves one player forward.

### COACH'S point

In game 2, make it a condition that teams leave one player forward. This will ensure some depth to the attack. Freeze the game occasionally to show them where to move to be in the best position to receive a pass.

### COACH'S cues



"Leave one player forward."

"Spread out over the field."

"Look for teammates to pass to."

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather children into a group. "When you come to practice, you should do three things: (1) Be ready to play. (2) Learn and improve your skills and work with others. (3) Have fun. I'm going to give you a way to remember these three things. It's called a 'team motto.' Our team motto is *Play hard, play fair, and have fun!* Let's say it together loudly. That's great. Be sure to remember our team motto and put it into practice."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice.

Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice—supporting your teammates.

## Variations

In skill practice 2, provide some light opposition for the better teams, so they must get the ball past you before getting to the other end of the field.

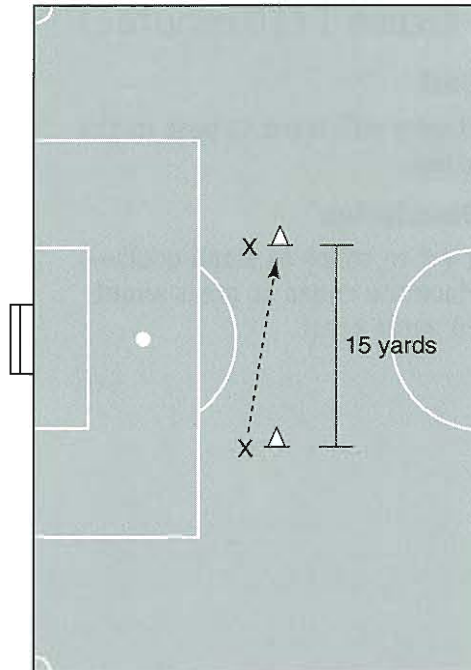




# Practice 3

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Players pair up. Each player has a cone, and each pair has a ball. The cones are about 10 yards apart. Each player tries to hit the opponent's cone with the ball.



## 👉 PURPOSE

To keep possession of the ball, focusing on passing in the game. The object is for players to be able to pass the ball under pressure during the 4 v 4 game.

## Equipment

- ✓ One soccer ball per pair
- ✓ Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- ✓ One cone (or other marker) per player (if possible)
- ✓ Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory fitness

Children gather in a group. "Everyone hold one hand up and make a fist. Squeeze your fist tightly, then let go. Keep tightening and letting go." Children continue for 10 counts. "Your heart is a special muscle that tightens and relaxes just like your fist is doing. Your heart is about the size of your fist. Every time it tightens, or beats, it pumps blood all over your body. When you play soccer, your heart beats faster and you breathe faster. Run in place with high knees. Feel your lungs and feel your heart beating by placing your hands over your chest. Count how many times your heart beats." Time for 15 seconds. Ask players the number they counted. "Running helps you improve your cardiorespiratory fitness—the heart and lungs working together to get blood to your whole body."

# Practice 3

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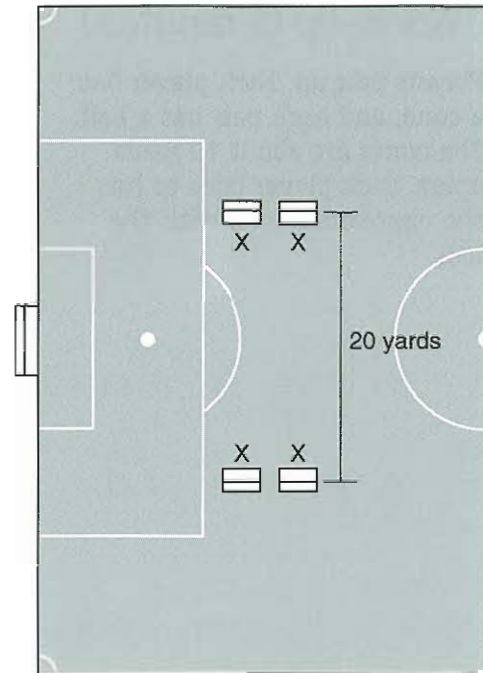
## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to pass in the game.

### Description

2 v 2 to cones or small goals—  
Place the cones or goals about  
20 yards apart.



COACH'S cue



"Play as a team."



Coach: How can you best play as a team?  
Players: Pass the ball to each other.

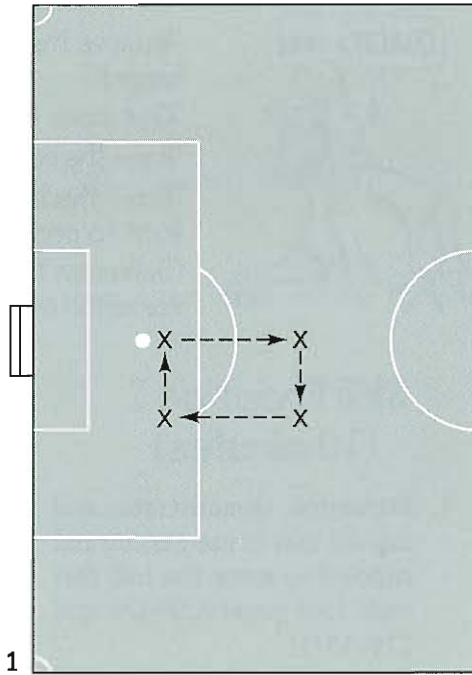
# Practice 3

## Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

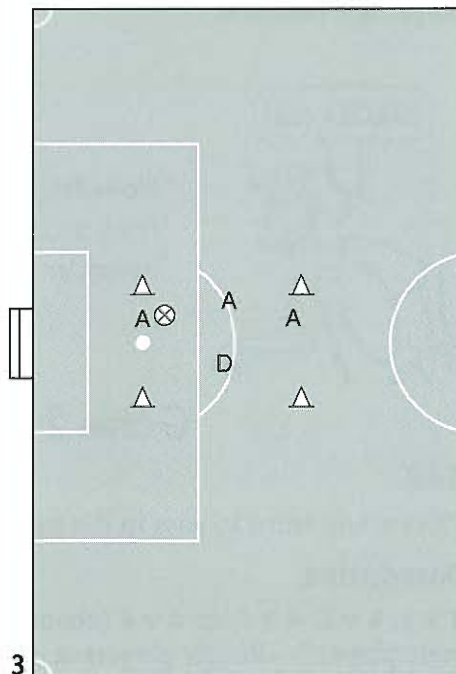
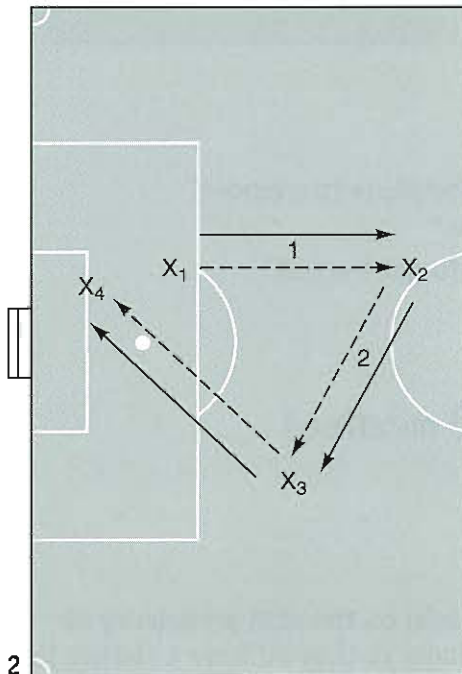
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pass a moving ball under pressure (see page 125).
2. Practice passing a moving ball under pressure.

### Description

Groups of four—Form groups of four by telling the pairs of players from game 1 to join to make groups of four. Practice team passing using one or more of these three variations, depending on the abilities of your players (see variations):



1. Pass the ball in a square, stopping the ball before passing.
2. Keep passing the moving ball in a continuous relay (pass and follow the ball).
3. Mark square areas with cones. Have three players in each square try to keep the ball away from one defender. Switch who plays the defender every six passes or three minutes.





**COACH'S cues**



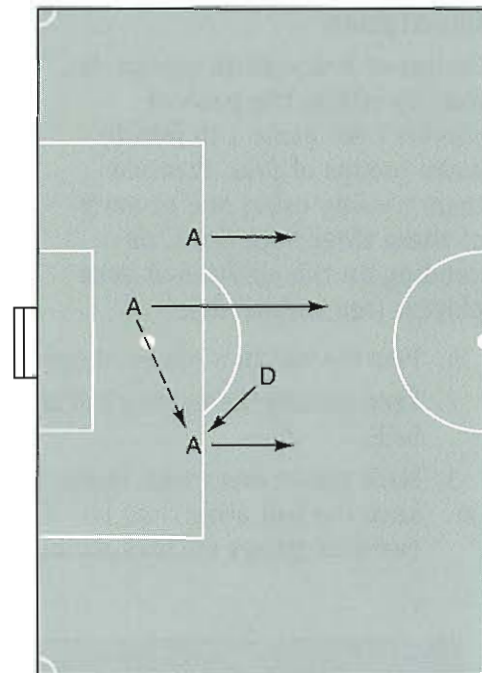
- “Receive the pass and push it toward your target.”
- “Get close to the ball.”
- “Face the receiver.”
- “Point the toe outward.” (Use the inside of the foot to pass.)
- “Defender, try to get the ball.” (Use in the third variation of skill practice 1 only.)

## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use passing and support to move the ball forward (see pages 123–124 and 125–127).
2. Practice combining passing and support to move the ball forward.

**Description**

3 v 1—Each team of three gets the ball from one end of the field to the other without running with the ball (by passing). One player is a defender.



**COACH'S cues**



- “Move to a good place to support.”
- “Pass and move.”
- “Defender, try to get the ball.”

## Game 2 (10 minutes)

**Goal**

Players will learn to pass in the game.

**Description**

4 v 1, 4 v 2, 4 v 3, or 4 v 4 (choose based on the skill proficiency of your players)—Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense. (See chapter 4 for more on the use of lopsided games.) Teams try to pass often.

# Practice 3

COACH'S cue



"Pass and support."

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather children into a group between two cones about 10 feet apart. Stand in the middle of the circle with a ball. "I'm going to show you two different ways to handle the same situation. Think about which is the best way to handle this." Choose a player to receive a pass from you. Make a bad pass and then stomp angrily away from the group. Retrieve the ball and make another bad pass. This time, run to get the ball and make a pass that goes directly to the player. "If you think the first response is the way to handle making a bad pass, stand next to this cone. If you think the second way is better, stand next to this one." Ask players to explain their choices. "It's important to be a good sport in soccer." Highlight how and why. "That's being responsible to your teammates."

### Wrap-Up

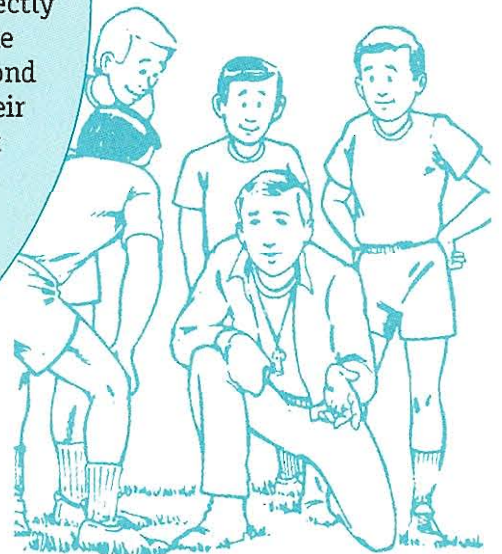
Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice: trapping the ball.

## Variations

Skill practice 1 has three levels of difficulty. You may choose to do all three in sequence, begin with level 2, go straight to level 3, or skip level 2. This will, of course, depend on the abilities of your players. If you use all three levels, you may not have time for skill practice 2.

COACH'S  
point

☞ The first touch, when the player first receives the ball, is extremely important when passing and receiving a ball under pressure. Encourage players to use the inside or the outside of the foot with their first touch to set the ball rolling in the direction they want to pass next.





# Practice 4

## PURPOSE

To keep possession of the ball in the game, focusing on receiving in the game. The objective is to be able to receive the ball under pressure during the 4 v 4 game.

## Equipment

- One soccer ball per pair
- Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- One cone (or other marker) per player (if possible)
- Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Pairs—Partners practice passing (as in practice 2, skill practice 1), pass and move.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory fitness

Gather children into a group. "Everyone put your hand up in front of you and make a fist. What did we pretend our fist was at the last practice?" Wait for response (the heart). "What does our heart do?" Wait for response (pumps blood). "Everybody open and close your fist. Put your hands over your chest and feel what's happening. Now, let's run to the goal and back. Will our fist beat faster or slower?" Listen to responses (faster). "Put your hands over your chest. Is it faster or slower moving? When you run during soccer, your heart beats faster, just like the fist opening and closing, and your lungs breathe faster. They slow down when you slow down. Making your heart beat faster helps to improve your cardiorespiratory fitness."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to pass and support each other in the game.

### Description

4 v 4—Each team tries to pass frequently.

### COACH'S cue



"Pass and move."



# Practice 4

Coach: When the ball comes to you, what should you do?

Players: Stop it.

Coach: Then what?

Players: Dribble or get ready to pass or shoot.

Coach: If you want to pass to the right, where should your first touch move the ball?

Players: To the right.

Coach: What about if you want to pass or dribble to the left?

Players: The first touch should go left.



## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive the ball quickly and efficiently (see page 128).
2. Practice receiving the ball quickly and efficiently.

### Description

Pairs—Partners stay 5 to 10 yards apart and pass the ball back and forth.

#### COACH'S cues



"Get behind the ball."

"Use the inside (or outside) of the foot."

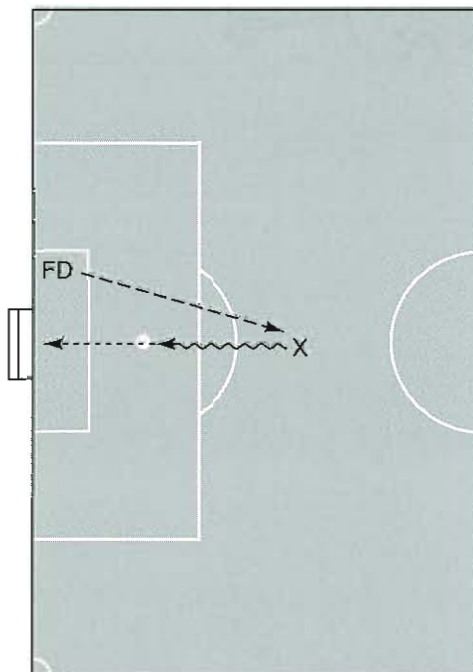
"Push the ball in the direction you want it to go."

## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a moving ball and direct it toward the goal (see page 129).
2. Practice receiving a moving ball and directing it toward the goal.

### Description

Pairs—One partner (or you) feeds the ball to the other player, who controls the moving ball, dribbles, and shoots into the goal.



# Practice 4

(cont'd)

## COACH'S cues



"Use the inside (or outside) of the foot."

"Push the ball toward the goal."

"Dribble and shoot."

## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to receive passes effectively under pressure in the game.

### Description

4 v 1, 4 v 2, 4 v 3, or 4 v 4 (choose based on the skill proficiency of your players)—Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense. Each team tries to pass frequently and to leave one player forward.

## COACH'S cue



"Control and pass."

# Practice 4

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Honesty

Gather children into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. "What is a foul?" Listen to their responses. Choose a player to help demonstrate responses (include hand balls, bumping players, and kicking or tripping). "Should you admit to a foul if no official sees it? Those who think yes, stand at this cone. Those who think no, stand at this one." Wait for children to choose. "When you know you've fouled, you should raise your hand. You should never take unfair advantage of other players. Can you think of other ways honesty is practiced on the field?" Listen to responses and discuss. "All of those show honesty."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice—attacking as a team.



## Variations

You can make skill practice 2 more difficult for better players by providing some mild pressure as players receive the ball. Then the player must beat you before shooting at the goal.



☞ Continue to emphasize good support of teammates by having teams designate a forward who stays in the attacking half of the field. This ensures that teams play with some depth, as otherwise it is common to see young players continually coming back to the ball. For now, it's best to encourage a forward player by saying, "Stay up there, because if you come back here there's no one to pass to up there." Remember to rotate the forward during game play.






# Practice 5

## PURPOSE

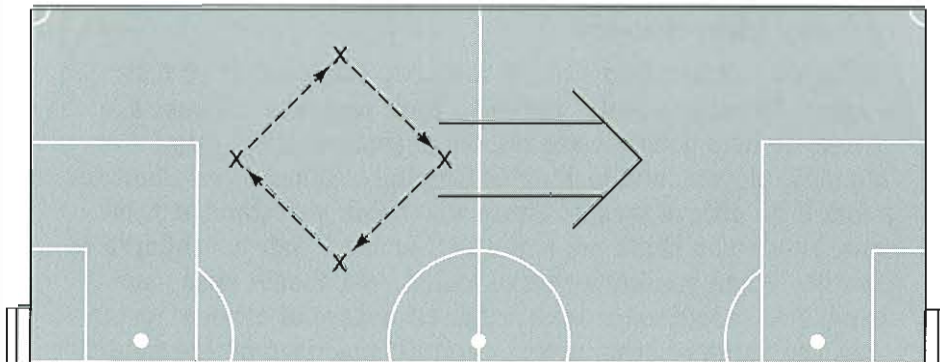
To keep possession of the ball and attack as a team, focusing on depth in attack. The objective is to be able to, as a team, keep the ball and attack the goal by passing and receiving and by supporting ahead of the ball during the 4 v 4 game.

## Equipment

-  One soccer ball per pair
-  Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
-  Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Pass and move in teams of four over the field. Each team of four stays close together and moves anywhere on the field, passing the ball among the team members.



### COACH'S cue



"Paint the field." (Pretend that the ball is a paint brush and paint the field by passing and moving all over the field.)

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory fitness

Gather children into a group. "Everyone find your own space. Put your fist up in front of you. We pretend our fist is our . . ." Wait for response (heart). "The heart does what things?" Wait for responses (pumps blood and beats faster when we run or move faster). "When I say, 'go,' everyone run in your own space and make your fist open and close faster at the same time. When I say 'stop,' stop as fast as you can." Begin. "When you run, your heart beats faster. Every time your heart beats faster, it gets stronger because it's a muscle. Muscles get stronger when you use them. Soccer is a great way to keep your heart healthy and strong and improve your cardiorespiratory fitness."

# Practice 5

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to spread out ahead of the ball.

### Description

4 v 4

Coach: If you don't have the ball, where can you go to help your team move toward the goal with the ball?

Players: Move forward.

Coach: Is it a good idea to leave a player forward?

Players: Yes.



### COACH'S cue



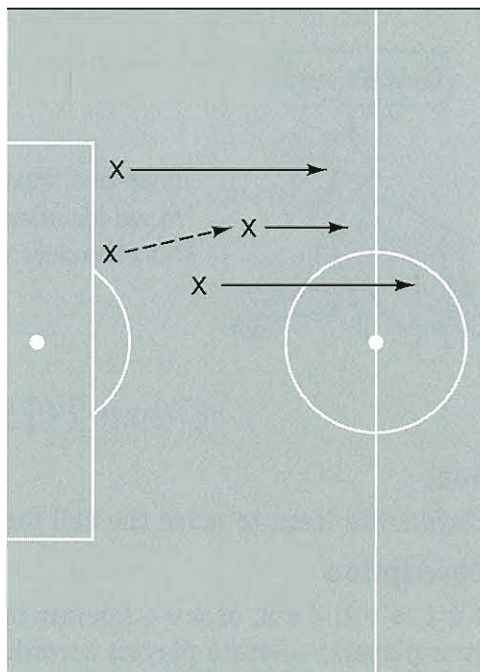
"Have a forward."

## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to support ahead of the ball (see pages 121–123).
2. Practice supporting ahead of the ball.


### Description

Teams of four, unopposed—Each team passes and moves to the end of the field. The team must make four passes before shooting.







 In skill practices 1 and 2 you might see two players go to the same place to receive a pass. Emphasize forming a diamond shape as a way of best using the available space to bring the ball forward. Freeze the practices occasionally to demonstrate.

### COACH'S cue



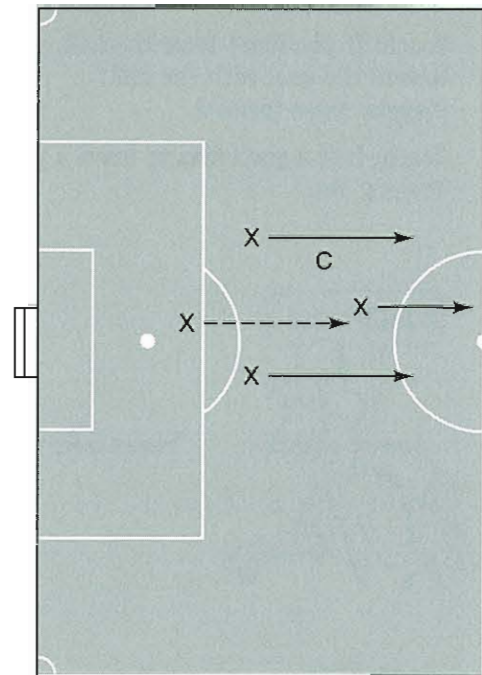
"Pass and move ahead."

## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move the ball forward under pressure (see pages 122–123).
2. Practice moving the ball forward under pressure.

### Description

Teams of four—Each team passes and moves to the end of the field as you oppose them. The team must make four passes before shooting.



### COACH'S cues



"Pass and move ahead."

"Move to where you can receive a pass" (away from the defender).

## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to move the ball forward as a team.

### Description

4 v 1, 4 v 2, 4 v 3, or 4 v 4 (choose based on the skill proficiency of your players)—Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.



# Practice 5

COACH'S cue



"Pass and move."

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather children into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. Choose two players to help role play. Set up a triangle of you and the two players. Let the children know you are role playing with them. All three of you take turns passing. When it's your turn, miss the pass and role play yourself as a player: "I couldn't get that pass! It was your fault—you made a bad pass!" Now as coach: "I want you to think about players who make excuses and blame others for their mistakes. Stand at this cone if you think it's okay to make excuses when you make mistakes. Stand at this cone if you think you should try to learn and work harder to improve." Ask players about their choices. "Not making excuses is taking responsibility for yourself."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice—dribbling under pressure.

## Variations

Again, apply greater pressure to the stronger players as they receive the ball.



# Practice 6

## PURPOSE

Keep possession of the ball and attack in the game, focusing on passing, receiving, dribbling under pressure, and pushing and running. (To push and run, the player with the ball kicks it past the defender—pushes—and runs after it. The defender will have to turn around, which slows him or her down.) The objective is for players to be able to pass, receive, and move the ball forward under pressure during the 4 v 4 game.

## Equipment

- One soccer ball per pair
- Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- One cone (or other marker) per player (if possible)
- Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams
- A rubber band

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Repeat the third variation of skill practice 1 from practice 3.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Flexibility

Gather children into a group. Show them a rubber band. "Let's pretend this rubber band is one of your muscles. See how it moves back and forth, stretching and moving. Let's move our bodies just like the rubber band. Reach and stretch up and down. It's important to stretch slowly without bouncing or jerking." Have them continue for one minute. "Our muscles help us to move and stretch. We need to stretch muscles to keep them flexible and able to move easily.

When muscles can move easily,  
they don't get injured."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to attack the goal with the ball.

### Description

4 v 4

### COACH'S cue



"Run past an opponent with the ball if you can."



# Practice 6

Coach: What are some ways to get past a defender with the ball?

Players: Dribble. Kick it past and run after it.



## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

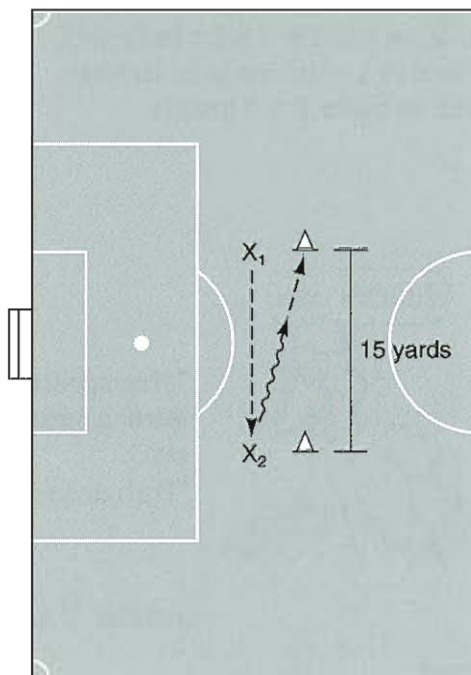
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to attack a goal under pressure (see pages 128–129).
2. Practice the skill.

### Goal

Players will learn to attack a goal under pressure.

### Description

1 v 1—Place cones about 15 yards apart. Each player attacks the other player's cone. Player 1 starts by passing the ball to player 2, who then becomes the attacker. Player 1 becomes the defender.



### COACH'S cues



"Receive and push the ball into space."

"Push and run past the defender."

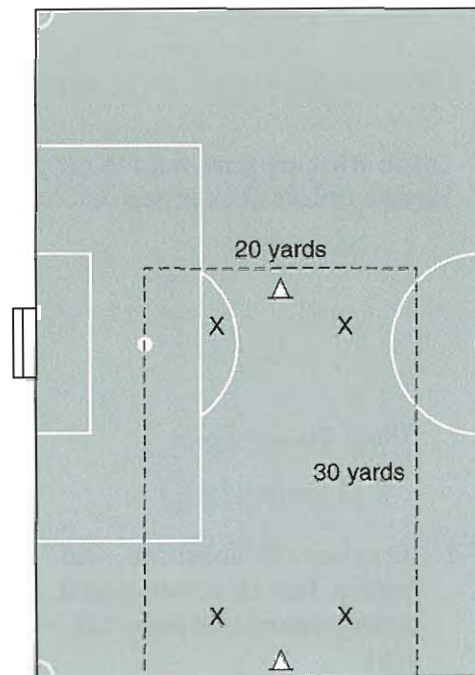


## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to attack with the ball (see pages 128–129).
2. Practice working together as a team to attack with the ball.

### Description

2 v 2 in 30 yards by 20 yards—  
Reposition the cones from game 1.  
1. Have the 1 v 1 pairs from skill practice 1 combine with another pair to make 2 v 2 groups.



### COACH'S cues



“Stay spread out.” (This isolates the defender, leaving space behind him or her for the push and run.)

“Push and run by the defender.”

## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn how to attack the goal with the ball under pressure.

### Description

4 v 1, 4 v 2, 4 v 3, or 4 v 4 (choose based on the skill proficiency of your players)—Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

### COACH'S cues



“Pass if you need to.”

“Look for space behind the defender.”

“Push and run.”



Game 2 focuses on getting players to make a good decision about whether to pass or dribble. Encourage them to pass if a teammate is open but to dribble if they get into a one-on-one situation. Novices have difficulty making these decisions, so be patient in your explanations and be prepared for poor decision making by some players.

# Practice 6

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Caring

Gather children into a circle. Stand in the middle of the circle with a ball. Choose two children to pass the ball with you. "We're going to work on our passing skills." Pass repeatedly to them and not the others. "Tell me how you felt to have only two players get the passes." Listen to their responses. "Sharing the ball and not distracting your teammates shows you care about them. What other things can you do to show you care about your teammates?" Their responses should include encouragement, positive comments for good play, forgiving players that make mistakes, and so on. "Good. Those are all ways you can show you care."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice—shooting at the goal.



## Variations

Encourage better players to use alternative ways, other than push and run, to beat the defender. These could include faking a shot or passing the ball to one side of the defender and running around the other side.



# Practice 7

## PURPOSE

To attack the goal in the game, focusing on shooting with good technique under pressure. The objective is for players to be able to shoot under pressure using appropriate technique during the 4 v 4 game.

## Equipment

- One soccer ball per pair
- Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- One cone (or other marker) per player (if possible)
- Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Repeat skill practice 1 from practice 6.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Muscular strength and endurance

Gather children into a group. "Okay, everyone get down on the ground and do the crab walk." Continue for 30 seconds to one minute. "Are your arms and legs getting tired? You used many of your arm and leg muscles to do the crab walk. What part of the body do you use the most for soccer? That's right—your legs. The more you practice soccer, the stronger your leg muscles will get. Then your legs can keep going much longer before they get too tired.

What things can we do to get our legs stronger for soccer?" Let them answer running and kicking.

"Right. Now pretend you have a soccer ball in front of you. Pretend to kick the ball in your spot." Have children kick for five counts.

"Practicing kicking helps make your legs stronger."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn the importance of having a shooting attitude. (If you don't shoot, you won't score!)

### Description

4 v 4

### COACH'S cue



"Shoot to score."

# Practice 7

Coach: What do you have to do if you want to score?

Players: Shoot.

Coach: Where should you shoot?

Players: At the goal. The whole goal is the target.

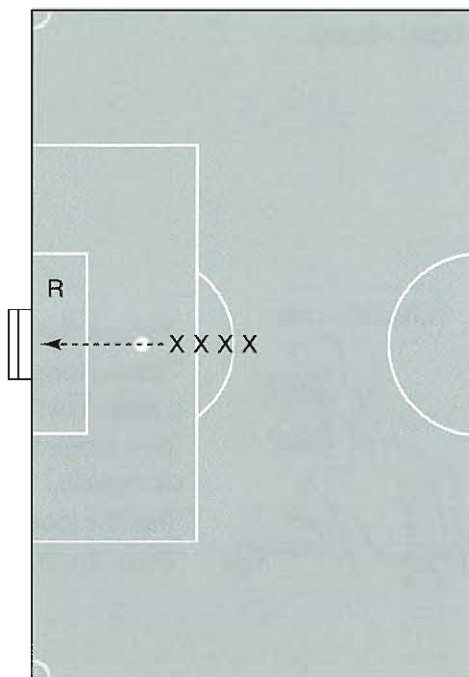


## Skill Practice 1 (5 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to shoot correctly (see pages 128–129).
2. Practice shooting with correct technique.

### Description

Groups of four—Keep the same teams from game 1. Each player shoots in turn and retrieves his or her ball (or you can designate someone to retrieve the balls from behind the goal).



### COACH'S cues



“Take a long step to the ball.” (The step looks like a jump. This helps get the shooting leg back.)

“Get close to the ball.” (Keep the nonstriking foot alongside.)

“Use the laces of the shoe.” (This provides power.)

“Keep the toe down.” (This keeps the ball down.)

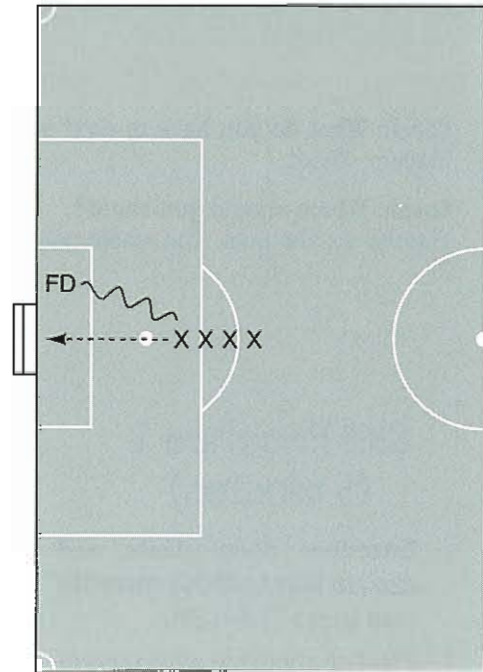


## Skill Practice 2 (5 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move onto a rolling ball and shoot (see pages 128–129).

### Description

Groups of four—Same as skill practice 1, but a player (or you) rolls the ball forward before each player shoots.



### COACH'S cues



"Attack the ball."

"Take a long step to the ball." (The step looks like a jump. This helps get the shooting leg back.)

"Get close to the ball." (Keep the nonstriking foot alongside.)

"Use the laces of the shoe." (This provides power.)

"Keep the toe down." (This keeps the ball down.)

# Practice 7

## Skill Practice 3 (10 minutes)

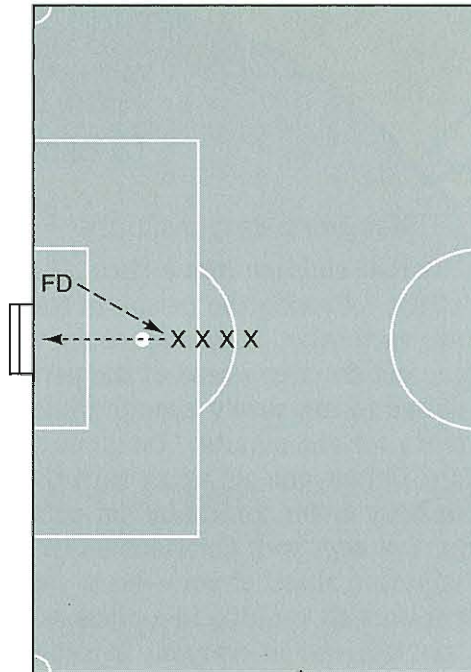
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a pass under control and shoot (see pages 128–129).
2. Practice the skill.

### Goal

Players will learn to receive a pass under control and shoot.

### Description

Groups of four—Same as skill practice 1, but a player (or you) passes the ball before each player shoots.



### COACH'S cues



"Good first touch." (You might have to explain again that they need to set up the shot with the first touch.)

"Control and shoot at the goal."

## Game 2 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to shoot under pressure in the game.

### Description

4 v 1, 4 v 2, 4 v 3, or 4 v 4 (choose based on the skill proficiency of your players)—Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

### COACH'S cues



"Control the ball."

"Shoot to score."





## COACH'S point

☞ Encourage players to think of the whole goal as the target, even though some players will try to shoot for the corners of the net. Shooting at the whole goal enables them to get more shots on target, giving them a greater likelihood of scoring.

☞ Players can perform skill practices 1 through 3 either with a portable goal or with cones set up in a line to create the required number of goals next to each other.

☞ Higher-ability players will be able to feed each other in skill practices 2 and 3, but you will have to feed the ball to many players. In skill practice 3, pass the ball so the receiver must change the ball's direction before shooting.

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather children into a circle. "I want everyone to run in a circle, following the person in front of you, without bumping into each other. Keep a space about as long as a bicycle between you, and don't go ahead of the person in front of you." Encourage children to run slowly enough to do all the directions. Continue activity for one minute. "Everyone stop. Did you bump into each other? Did anyone get upset with the person in front of you? You kept your body under control by not going ahead of the person in front of you. You kept your emotions under control by not getting upset with the person ahead of you—he or she couldn't move any faster since you were all running in a circle as a group. Everyone can stay safe and learn when everyone is responsible for himself or herself."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice—marking or guarding your opponents.

## Variations

- Have higher-ability players practice shooting with both feet. (Not all players will be capable of this.)
- Higher-ability players can adapt skill practice 3 by doing their own passing and then, having passed, becoming the defender who chases after the shooter. The shooter must shoot before the defender gets to him or her.

# Practice 8

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Players dribble and follow the leader in groups of two or four.

### Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea:** General fitness

Gather children into a circle. "What do our bodies need to do every day to keep going?" Wait for their responses. Discuss sleeping and resting, eating, and doing regular activities. "There's one more thing that's really important—being active and exercising. Let's pretend it's a day that you do not have soccer practice. Your body needs to move every day. With no soccer today, what should we do to move our bodies?" Wait for their responses. If a child suggests biking or swimming, have everyone act out that activity.

Act out three activities. "It's important to be active when you don't have soccer practice. Your body needs to move every day."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

**Goal**

Players will think about defending space and their goal.

**Description**

2 v 2 to small goal

Coach: How can you stop the other team from getting the ball? (You may need to set this up by saying "How can Katie make it harder for Matthew to get a pass from Michael?")

Players: Stay close to them, mark them. *Marking* means guarding your opponent.

### PURPOSE

To defend your space in the game, focusing on marking and pressure. The objective is for players to be able to defend space by marking an opponent during the 4 v 4 game.

### Equipment

- One soccer ball per team
- Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- One cone (or other marker) per pair
- Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams





## COACH'S point

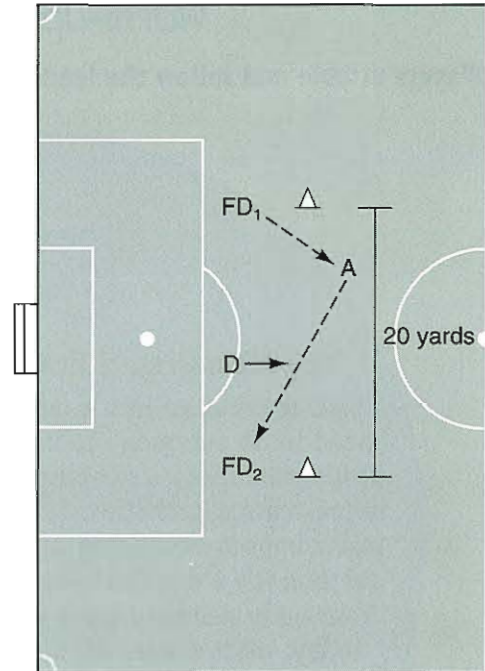
You may need to help weaker players by either feeding the ball to them yourself or feeding the ball instead of them. Rotate players in practice 1.

### Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to defend behind an opponent (see page 130).
2. Practice defending behind an opponent.

#### Description

1 v 1 with two feeders—One player is the attacker and one is the defender. The feeders are at two cones about 20 yards apart. Feeder 1 passes to the attacker, who must turn and pass to feeder 2. The defender has to stop this.



#### COACH'S cues



#### For the defender

- "Stay behind the attacker."
- "Stay close."

### Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to mark an opponent during game play (see page 130).
2. Practice marking an opponent during game play.

#### Description

2 v 2 to small goal

#### COACH'S cues



- "Pick a player to mark." (This is one-on-one marking.)
- "Stay with him or her."

# Practice 8

## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to mark an opponent and pressure the ball during game play.

### Description

4 v 4

#### COACH'S cues



"Pick a player to mark." (This is one-on-one marking.)  
"Stay with him or her."

### Team Circle (5 minutes)

#### Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather children into a circle. Stand in the center of the circle with a ball. Ask children to call to you and raise their hands if they are in a good position for a pass. Dribble the ball inside the circle, but do not pass to anyone. Continue for about one minute. "Did I share the ball with anyone?" Wait for their responses. "Do you think that is good teamwork? What is good teamwork?" Listen to their responses. Repeat the activity, but this time pass to players who call and raise their hands. "Teamwork is when all players are working together, not just keeping the ball to themselves. Responsible team members get in position to receive a good pass. They don't always pass to the same person. And they always work hard."

#### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice—tackling.



### Variations

Make it harder for better players to mark in practices 1 and 2 by extending the size of the playing area. This might mean grouping players of similar ability together during practices.



# Practice 9

## PURPOSE

To defend your space and win the ball in the game, focusing on pressure and tackling. The objective is for the players to be able to challenge the one with the ball and win the tackle during the 4 v 4 game.

## Equipment

- One soccer ball per pair
- Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- One cone (or other marker) each (if possible)
- Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Players play 1 v 1 to a small goal or cones.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather children into a circle. "Everyone is going to run in place. Let's start. Pretend that your body is going to run out of energy because you ate too many chips and drank a soda before practice. Start running slower and slower, and now stop! Now let's pretend that you ate a peanut butter sandwich and drank a glass of milk and a glass of water before practice. Let's run in place." Continue for 30 seconds. "See how you're able to run much longer and keep your energy? Eating healthy foods and drinking plenty of water are healthy habits for every day. You should drink water several times a day and drink even more when you're exercising. Also make sure to get enough sleep, exercise, brush your teeth, and say no to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Keep your body healthy!"

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn how to mark an opponent and how to apply pressure when that opponent gets the ball.

### Description

2 v 2

COACH'S cue



"Use one-on-one marking."

# Practice 9

**Coach:** When your opponent gets the ball, where should you move to?

**Players:** Closer to the opponent.

**Coach:** What should you then try to do?

**Players:** Win the ball or tackle. *Tackling* is taking the ball away from the ball carrier with your feet.

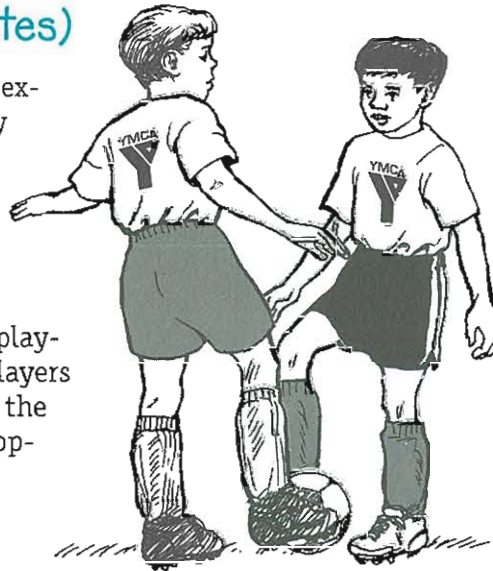


## Skill Practice 1 (5 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to tackle correctly (see pages 130–131).
2. Practice tackling using correct technique.

### Description

Pairs—Place a ball between two players. On the count of three, the players trap the ball between them with the insides of their feet. This is a cooperative tackling practice; both players use the same side of the foot to trap the ball.



### COACH'S cues



“Get close to the ball.”

“Point the toe out” (to use the inside of the foot).

“Keep the knee bent and the leg firm.”



☞ Skill practice 1 is a cooperative activity aimed at getting players used to timing a tackle. They work together to trap the ball between them. Skill practice 2 is more competitive. You can control the whole practice for the group by using your whistle to start each repetition when the ball is placed in the middle of each pair.

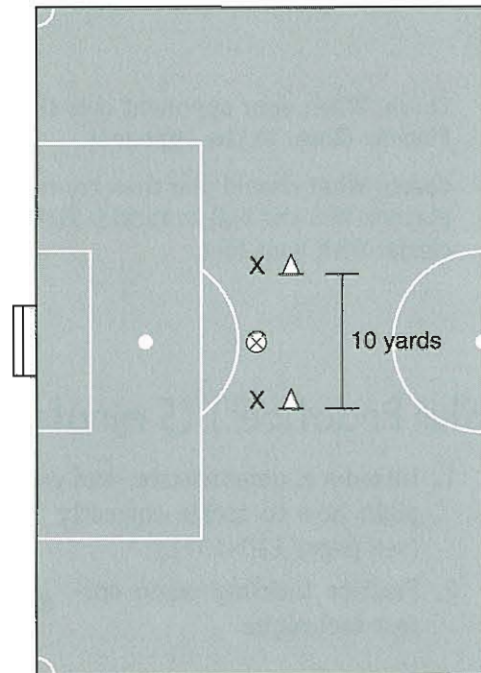


## Skill Practice 2 (5 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to tackle and to keep the ball (see pages 130–131).
2. Practice tackling and keeping the ball.

### Description

1 v 1—Set up two cones 10 yards apart. Place the ball between two players, each of whom is at a cone. On the whistle, the players attack the ball to see who can win the tackle and take the ball to the opponent's cone.



### COACH'S cues



- “Attack the ball.”
- “Get close to the ball.”
- “Point the toe out” (to use the inside of the foot).
- “Keep the knee bent and the leg firm.”
- “Control the ball.”

## Game 2 (20 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to mark, pressure, and tackle in the game.

### Description

4 v 4

### COACH'S cues



- “Mark.”
- “Pressure.”
- “Tackle.”

# Practice 9

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Caring

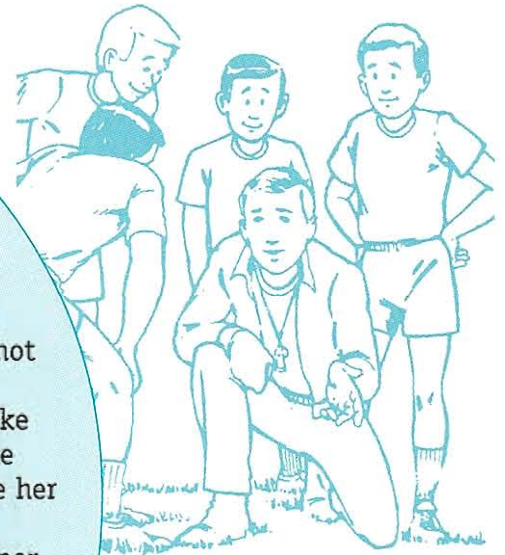
Gather children into a group near the goal. Have a ball ready. Ask a child in the group to pass to you. Shoot at the goal and miss completely. Retrieve the ball and make a bad pass. "That shot wasn't very good, was it? How about that pass? . . . Those were mistakes. What should you say to your teammates when they make mistakes?" Listen to their responses. "What could you say to make your teammate feel better? . . . What could you say to make her feel worse?" Listen to their responses. Have players change the nonsupportive, negative comments to positive ones. "It's very important to forgive mistakes and be understanding of others, just as you would want them to be of you. Making mistakes is part of learning. Saying something that makes your teammates feel better shows you care about them."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time, and give them a sneak preview of that practice—defense in a game.

## Variations

In skill practice 1, encourage stronger players to make a firm tackle. If both players time it well, they will hear and feel their feet on the ball. This gives them good feedback.





# Practice 10

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Players play 1 v 1 to a small goal or cones.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: General fitness

Gather children into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. Tell them that each cone represents a different food group. "This cone is healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, meats, milk, and breads. This other cone is special treat foods, like chips, soda, candy, and sweet snacks. What foods can you eat to keep your body healthy, with enough energy for soccer?" As they respond, have them stand near the cone they choose. "It is important to eat more healthy foods, they give you more energy for soccer and help you grow. Special treat foods should be eaten in small amounts. Can you tell me other examples of healthy foods and special treat foods?"

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to execute good one-on-one defense close to their own goal.

### Description

2 v 2 to a small goal or cones

### COACH'S cues



"Mark."  
"Pressure."  
"Tackle."

## PURPOSE

To defend your space and win the ball in the game, reviewing individual defense (marking, pressure, and tackling). The objective is for players to be able to defend space by marking an opponent and winning the ball during the 4 v 4 game.

## Equipment

- One soccer ball per pair
- Two portable goals (8 feet by 4 feet) or two pairs of cones per eight players
- One cone (or other marker) each (if possible)
- Different colored vests or shirts to differentiate teams

# Practice 10

**Coach:** What should you do when your opponent gets close to your goal?  
**Players:** Get close to the opponent so you can challenge for the ball.

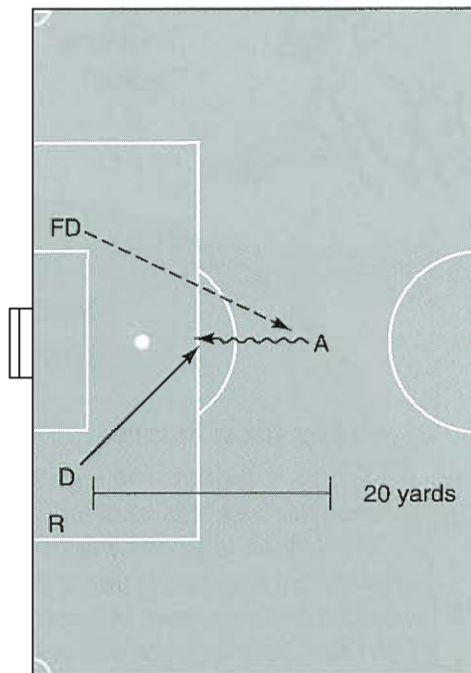


## Skill Practice (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pressure the ball and tackle when defending (see pages 130–131).
2. Practice pressuring the ball and tackling when defending.

### Description

1 v 1 (plus feeder and collector)—Use one player per team to retrieve balls and one player to feed balls. The defender starts on the goal line with an attacker about 20 yards away. The feeder passes to the attacker, who must try to control the ball before dribbling to the goal. The defender comes quickly off the line to pressure and tackle.



☞ Have the feeding done from the side so the feeder is not in the way of the other players. Emphasize that players should stay on their feet while trying to tackle. Some players may lose their footing if they are moving too fast.

### COACH'S cues



"Go quickly to your opponent."  
"Pressure."  
"Tackle."



## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will learn to mark, pressure, and tackle in the game.

### Description

4 v 4

#### COACH'S cues



"Mark."  
"Pressure."  
"Tackle."

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Respect

Gather children into a group. "What have you learned about soccer this season?" Listen to their responses. "What does respect have to do with playing soccer or any sport? It takes many years to master the game of soccer, so soccer deserves your respect. Every year there are new skills to learn and improve on; every year you play, you'll get better. That's why you need to come back next year! What examples of players showing respect have you seen this soccer season?" Listen to their responses and discuss.

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about what everyone learned over the season.  
Encourage players to come back next year!

## Variations

- In the skill practice, have more advanced players defend against two opponents. The extra player can either be the ball collector or the passer, who then joins in the practice.
- Again in the skill practice, give weaker players a shorter distance to go to reach the attacker.

