



AYSO RETURN TO PLAY COACHING ACTIVITIES **AGES 13+**

Ready! Set!



PLAYSOCCER®



AYSO National Office
19750 S. Vermont Ave., Suite #200
Torrance, CA 9050

Ready! Set! PLAYSOCCKER!

Please find enclosed a collection of age-appropriate activities that we have specifically selected in conjunction with The Coaching Manual to support your coaching in what is likely a modified environment.

Not every topic is covered since we prioritized increasing distance while reducing contact. Generally speaking, passing and receiving, spatial awareness, technique in isolation are all applicable to our new reality. Other activities will also work if you modify them through this new lens.

At times of challenge, we are forced to provide creative solutions; therefore, please modify the included activities to maximize success with your players in your environment under your local guidelines. Adjusting *Speed, Space, Opposition will help with modifications but pay particular notice to Space! Reducing player numbers is also an easy solution but be careful to engage players who may not be active.

Regardless of the activity, one thing to keep in mind is to make sure every child in your session is comfortable and willing to participate (depending on personal circumstances, there is likely a spectrum). Remember, for many this has been a very scary time.

On behalf of everyone at AYSO, thank you for hanging in there and helping us get kicking again.

Sincerely,

Scott Snyder
Director of Sport and Development

Paul Bright
AYSO Technical Director

AYSO Coach Council

* Changing the physical SPACE available to players (increasing/ decreasing size of playing area).

Varying the SPEED of the play (adding time constraints or number of touches).

Introducing and varying the amount of OPPOSITION (numbers up or down, opposition/defenders are bunnies and can only hop, etc.).

NOTE: As stay-at-home orders and business restrictions are loosened, we know that there is a desire to return to play as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. **To be clear, this document does not constitute permission to return to the fields.**

Please follow specific rules and regulations set forth by your local public health authorities. Also, check the AYSO Return to Play microsite for updates to this document and other timely information to keep everyone as safe as possible in your Region.



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A Graduated Approach Based on Federal, State and Local Guidelines

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released guidelines for returning to youth sports.](#)

General Guidance

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) offers recommendations on how members of the public can limit the spread of the coronavirus. They currently include:

- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment (including balls).
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from non-household members. *Note: research is ongoing on appropriate physical distance for bodies in motion.*
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay at home if you are sick.

Overall – Standard Practice

- **Healthy Participants Only:** Any players, coaches, spectators who are sick will not be allowed at practices or games.
- Parents, and family members will abide by social distancing regulations and are strongly encouraged to remain inside their vehicles during practice.



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Immediate recommendations upon return to practice/play

Region/Club:

- Identify strategies for working with public health officials to notify adult leaders, youth and their families if the organization becomes aware of a participant developing COVID-19 who came in contact with others during your activities. [Please click here for recommended reporting protocol.](#)
- Maintain participant confidentiality regarding health status.
- Sanction practices only when official parks and fields become available by local authority.
- Have an action plan in place, in case of notification of a positive test result.
- Provide coaches with a detailed explanation and training on these recommendations.
- Face masks recommended for coaches and volunteers.
- Schedule practices with ample space for physical distancing.
- Adhere to AYSO Safe Haven guidelines, i.e., 1:8 adult to child ratio; minimum of 2 adults present; no adult alone with children other than their own. Whenever possible, adult of same gender as players should be present.
- Support coaches with fitness and technique in isolation exercises, grid work and spatial awareness ([appropriate content can be found here](#)).
- Provide physical guides, such as signs and tape on playing fields, to help coaches and players remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Keep the same groups. Organize and schedule groups of players, i.e., by age or teams, and keep them consistent to avoid transmission.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents who may be uncomfortable with returning to play at this time.
- Avoid group events, such as games, competitions, or social gatherings, where spacing of at least 6 feet between people cannot be maintained.
- Limit nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible – especially with individuals not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
- Avoid activities and events such as off-site competitions or excursions.
- Communicate drop off, waiting and pick up protocols for parents to facilitate appropriate social distancing while providing for the safety of all participants.
- Create a communication plan for Region/Club to members and a communication pathway for parents to communicate their concerns or questions with Region/Club leadership (i.e.: BAND app).



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Coach*:

- Coaches will send pre-training communication to families ensuring that only healthy participants attend and reiterate expectations and guidelines.
- Coaches should maintain physical distancing requirements from players and family members.
- Wearing a face mask is recommended for the duration of the practice.
- Utilize technique in isolation exercises, grid work, fitness and spatial awareness to limit physical contact between players ([appropriate content can be found here](#)).
- Keep players together in small groups/cohorts with one coach and make sure that each group of players and coach avoid mixing with other groups as much as possible. Teams might consider having the same group of players stay with the same coach or having the same group of players rotate among coaches.
- Adhere to AYSO Safe Haven guidelines, i.e., 1:8 adult to child ratio; minimum of 2 adults present; no adult alone with children other than their own. Whenever possible, adult of same gender as players should be present.
- *Once regulations permit expanded numbers*, consider staging inner-squad scrimmages instead of games with other teams to minimize exposure among players and teams.
- Ensure all players have and handle their own labeled equipment (ball, water bottle, training disks, etc.).
- Coach should be the only person to handle coaching equipment (e.g.: cones, disks, etc.); do not let parents or attendees assist.
- Hand sanitizer or handwashing on arrival / mid-way and end of training session.
- No shared equipment in use (players will be provided with individual bibs/pinnies or can bring game jerseys as requested).
- No physical greeting of players (verbal acknowledgement is expected).
- Stay positive and create a fun environment in this new normal.
- Serve as focal point, or designate the Team Parent/Manager/Safety Director/CVPA, for notification from team families if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Complete and submit [AYSO's Incident Report](#) Form to the Region Safety Director immediately, including team roster.

**A designated volunteer or team parent can be added to help assist coach in accordance with the same health and safety guidance designated for the coach.*



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Team Parent:

- Assist Coach, as requested, with communications to families (including safeguard reminders, i.e., only healthy participants attend activities).
- As needed, serve as focal point for notification from team families if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Notify the Coach immediately.
- Maintain physical distancing requirements from coach, players and family members.
- Wearing a face mask is recommended for the duration of the practice/games.
- Support identified guidelines for coaches.
- Assist with hand sanitizer or other safety precautions like handwashing on arrival / mid-way and end of training session in support of the coach.
- Help team/teams adhere to AYSO Safe Haven supervision guidelines.



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Officials:

At all times:

- Stay at least 6 feet from anyone as much as possible.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Spitting or rinsing the mouth with water is to be avoided.
- Cough into elbow.
- Stay home if not feeling well and communicate to the Referee Administrator.

Pre-game:

- Prior to arrival, wash hands with soap or alcohol-based solution for at least 20 seconds.
- Arrival in full uniform is recommended.
- Maintain 6 feet distance from players, coaches, spectators and referee team for all administrative procedures.
- Mask is recommended for pre-game duties.
- No handshakes with coaches, players, or spectators.
- Coin toss options:
 - a. Modified. One player from each team; center official; no handshakes; physical distancing.
 - b. No coin toss. Home team selects the half of the field. Away team will take kick-off.

During play:

- Masks **are not** required for referees during active play.
- Assistant referees are *recommended* to wear breathable face coverings unless wearing a mask causes breathing problems.
- Referees are recommended to stay a minimum of 6 feet away from players, coaches, spectators, and the referee team during dynamic play and stationary play at all times.
- Avoid spitting.
- Cough into your elbow.
- Do not share whistles or, if possible, any other referee equipment.
- If not feeling well during the game at any time, go home immediately.

Post-game:

- After the game, applaud the players and coaches, but handshakes are not permitted; fist bumps/elbow bumps are not recommended.
- If shared, wipe down the handles of flags with an alcohol-based rub or wash with soap and water.
- Upon completion of the match, wash hands with soap or alcohol-based solution for at least 20 seconds.



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Parents

- Ensure your child is healthy. Test child's temperature before departing for soccer practice (if above 100.4, do not attend).
- Drop off and pick up players with special care given to the presence of children coming to and from the activity and receive verbal acknowledgement from the coach each time.
- Please wait in your car and/or adhere to social distance requirements, based on state and local health requirements and as requested by your coach or AYSO officials.
- Limit the use of carpools or van pools, and limit passengers to household members.
- Face masks are recommended.
- Wash your child's clothing after every training/activity (recommendation).
- Sanitize all equipment (ball, cleats, shin guards, etc.) before and after every practice.
- Clearly label your child's water bottle and personal items.
- Ensure your child has hand sanitizing products with them at every session.
- Notify your team/club immediately if your child or family member becomes ill for any reason.
- Do not assist coach with equipment before or after training.
- Check Region and Coach communication regularly.

Players

- Inform parent if feeling unwell.
- Wash hands before and after training.
- Responsible for cleaning all required equipment after each training sessions (ball, cleats, shin guards, etc.).
- Bring and use your own labeled hand sanitizer at every session.
- Do not touch or share anyone else's equipment.
- Practice physical distancing, place bags and equipment at least 6 feet apart.
- No sharing drinks or use of water fountains at facility (players should mark their own water bottles).
- No physical greetings with their teammates (verbal acknowledgement is expected, we are physical distancing not social.).

PLEASE NOTE: This is a live document and is subject to change. As state and local restrictions and guidelines are adjusted in your area with regards to youth sports, AYSO will communicate how to progress. PLEASE continue to check our [microsite](#) for updates.

5 Tips for Modifying Activities to Suit Your Environment and Stage of Reopening

1. Technique in Isolation

If you can only work with a small group, consider the Team-Teaching Grid as shown. Each colored grid can have one (or more) players and provide space and central positioning for you to coach. Remember with technique to try and add an applied outcome resembling the game.



2. Can you stagger your team into two groups at different times, i.e., 12 roster of 12: 2 x 6.
3. Restrict the participating numbers in the activity. Just make sure to keep the resting players active or engaged. Also, keep an eye on the time the working players play (fewer players require more rest).
4. Pending space, can you increase your coaching area/playing environment? Thus, providing more distance between players.
5. While it is not easy to replicate *game intensity* when there is no opposition, coaches may challenge their players to increase the competition and intensity of practice. Examples may include “how many can you perform in 60 seconds?” or first player/group/team to perform X.” Or, can you use equipment, i.e., mannequins, poles or tall cones to replace opposition?

Stuck with an activity you want to use but having trouble modifying? Drop us an email to programs@ayso.org and we will have our technical team take a look.

GOALKEEPING

AYSO 12U - Goalkeeper Technical Warm Up

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

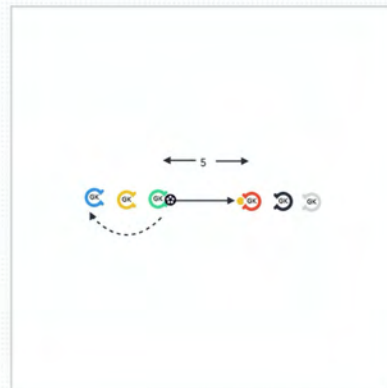


Set Up

🕒 10 mins 👤 6 players ⚽ 12 balls 🚧 2 cones 📏 5 area

Key Coaching Points

- Good GK Position: Knees slightly bent, body weight forward on the balls of their feet. Hands must be positioned in a central location, palms facing out, thumbs close together for ease of catch and movements.
- Soft hands, strong wrists when catching the ball.
- Firm 2 handed serve to cover distance.
- When moving a er serving ball (whether forward or backward) be aware of where the ball is. Never take your eyes of the ball during movement.



Set Up

2 cones, 5 yds. apart w/ 2-3 GKs lined up behind each cone facing each other in GK stance. 1st GK serves 2 handed to GK at front of other group retreats to the right joins back of line. Ball is passed back forth into GK hands each GK moves backwards to the right to join back of their group before edging to front again. GKs then change direction of their backwards movement to left. Starting GK serves 2 handed ball to GK in other group then shuffles to back of opposite line via right hand side of opposite group. The movement goes from a retreating backward shuffle to a forward movement opening the body and seeing the ball at all times. GKs can then move to the left to join the end of opposite group. Serve high balls for high catch.

AYSO Intermediate Goalkeeping - GK Angle Play and Starting Position



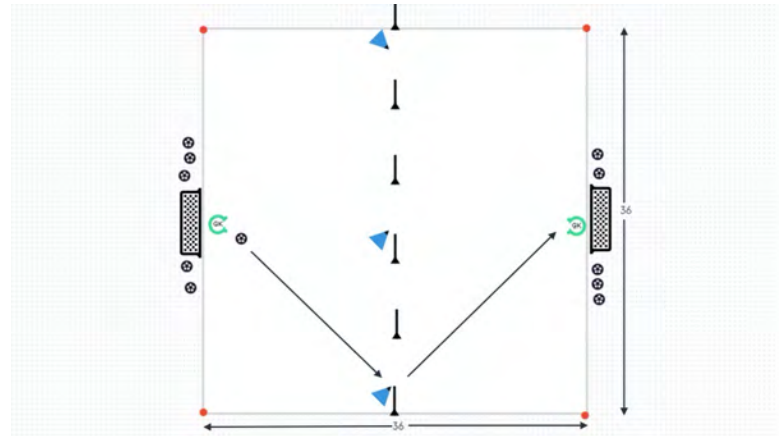
Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up

🕒 10 mins 👤 5 players ⚽ 11 balls 🚧 4 cones 🏟️ 36 X 36 area

Key Coaching Points

- Position in relation to the goal**
 Position body in the Ball Line (in line with the ball and the middle of goal)
- The distance of start position**
 Ensuring you are still in the Ball Line, you can come out as far as you feel you cannot be beaten at the near post (post nearest to the ball).
- GK Positioning in relation to the ball**
 Ensure the save is made in the Mini Goal (imaginary small goal created by having the GK positioned in line with ball and middle of goal. If a shot goes wide of the Mini Goal one can assume the ball will be wide of the real goal).
- Saving Technique**
 Correct saving techniques, ensuring any loose balls are away from danger.
- Goalkeeper Starting Position**
 Identify the 3 times a goalkeeper can start getting off the goal line: 1. When the ball is too far for you to get chipped. 2. When there is a defender in the way, so you can't get chipped. 3. When the forward is facing away from goal so you can't get chipped.



Set Up

The area size of 2 penalty areas (depending on age). Ideally, 2 goals. Cones or poles to create 3 gates.

Instructions

- GK distributes the ball to server 1, 2 or 3.
- Note: If all players are GKs, middle players must make the save before turning and shooting.
- The coach can work on different positioning by dictating how many touches servers have before shooting.
- Server must control the ball and take a heavy touch through their gate and shoot at opposite goal.

Variations/Progressions

- Add speed with Wide v Middle game: when GK distributes wide, the middle player can defend. When GK plays to the middle, both wide players defend.
- If the defender wins the ball then they attack the other goal.

13+

AYSO Advanced Coach - Goalkeeper Techniques When Dealing With Second Saves (Recovery Saves)



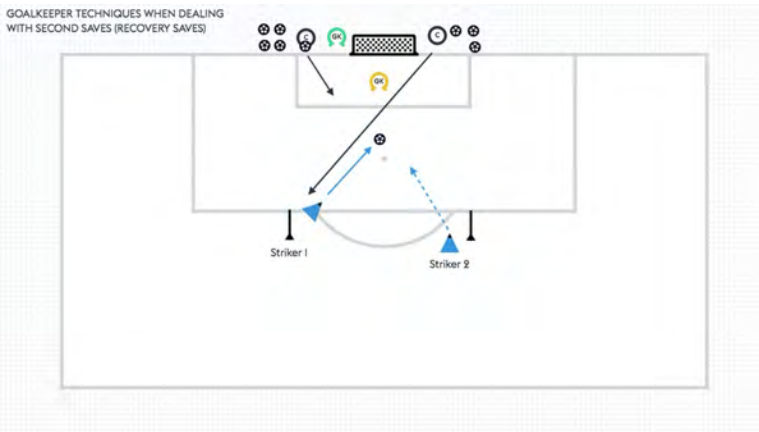
Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up

20 mins 6 players 8 balls 6 bibs 2 cones 18x44 area

Coaching Points

- Track pathway movement of the ball. Position appropriately for 1st save.
- After making 1st save reload*/recover to feet quickly.
- Track path movement of 2nd ball.
- Get in as effective a position as possible to attempt second save.
- Quickly prepare for 2nd save regardless of 1st collection (hold/parry/tip). If 1st save is collapse or dive, GK recovers to set position to maximize best chance of recovery save.



Reload

- From diving position, GK should kick top leg forward, away from the body to provide momentum and lift upper body off of the ground.
- Chest, hands head face field of play.
- GK may use a fist to support their weight and help them push the body up into kneeling position (one knee in the ground and one up). From there the goalkeeper should stand and be in the set position, facing the field and ready for the next play.

Set Up

Penalty Area. Duplicate back to back goals if needed. 2 goalkeepers alternate activity. 2 servers on the goal line either side of the goal with balls. 2 strikers at different angles in and around the penalty area.

Instructions

Server 1 plays the ball to striker 1 approximately 18 yards from goal who takes a shot on goal (the first strike should be for GK to save). As the goalkeeper makes the first save, server 2 serves striker 2 allowing the goalkeeper me to recover, adjust and to make the second save. Once the double save is made, rotate with other Goalkeeper then repeat.

Make it more challenging:

1. Progress the activity by allowing a 2nd attacker out to create a 2 v 1 situation.

AYSO Advanced Coach - Goalkeeper's Dealing With Through Balls

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 6 players ⚽ 1 ball 🧢 1 bib 🚧 4 cones

Coaching Points

- Starting position - especially as it pertains to depth.
- Decisions on when to come and when to stay put because the trailing defender can deal with the situation.
- When coming, GK must also decide if they can get to the through ball before the attacker (in which case they must and get it) or if they must come part of the way then set and stay big to save the shot.

Set Up

The final third of the field. 1 large goal, various 10x10 grids for 3v1 keep-away. 3v1 + 1 possession to 2v1 to goal. There is no offside rule during this activity.

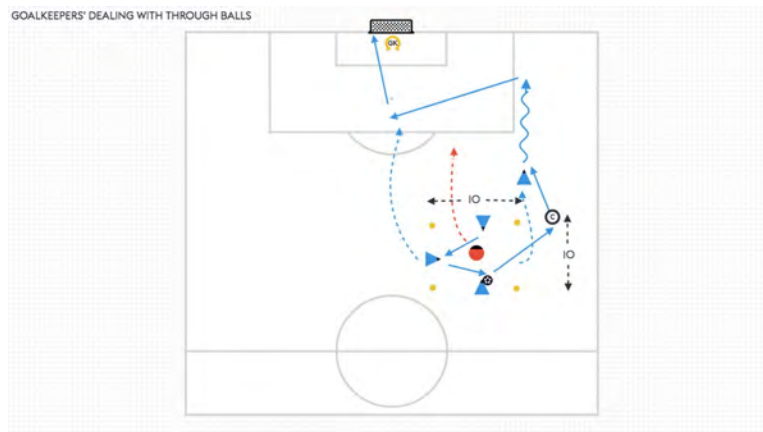
Instructions

3v1 possession game at various areas outside the penalty area. Attacking players in the grid must first complete at least 4 passes before passing to the coach (positioned outside grid). The player that passed the ball then takes it towards the goal (shown) and the coach plays a through ball to him.

The defender from inside the grid becomes recovering defender. GK now has to decide if they can come and collect the through ball. If they can't, the player must determine how far they can come to reduce the shooter's angle or possibly not come at all because the defender is in position to deal with the threat. (These decisions, as well as the GK starting position while awaiting the through ball, are areas that can be coached during this drill.)

Make it more challenging:

1. Progress the activity by allowing a 2nd attacker out to create a 2 v 1 situation.



PASSING/RECEIVING

13+

Passing and Receiving Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual

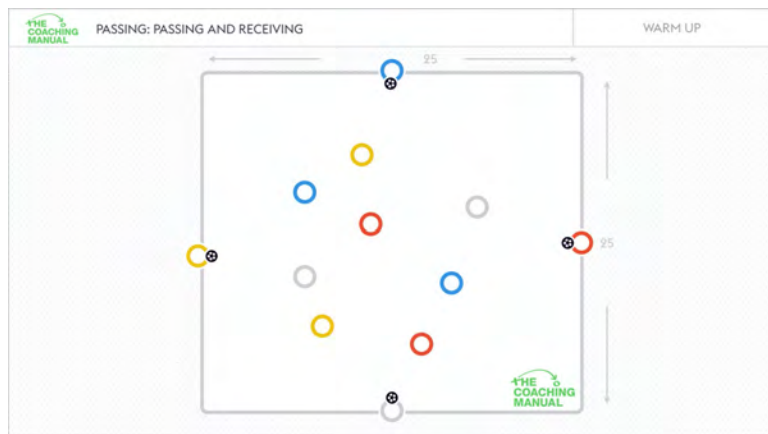


Set Up

10 mins 12 players 5 balls 12 bibs 10 cones 25x25 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Quality 1st touch and pass**
Passes from the outside players should be firm and on the ground, the combination play inside of the area should be cushioned so the receiving player can play back to the server 1st time.
- **Movement and angle to receive**
Working in pairs to move around the area to create passing lines. Encourage players to play at match speed to make the practice real. Players should now be anticipating the movement of their team mate and move into a position so they can combine effectively.
- **Combination play**
Encourage players to use their team mates movement to create angles to receive and combine.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Players in groups of 3, with 2 players working in square 1 player serving on outside. Server plays the ball to a player inside, who combines with a pass to team mate. Team mate then returns ball to the server the pair in the square find another server

Make it more challenging:

1. Players must make a combination around another player in the square

9-12

Receiving To Play Forward Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual

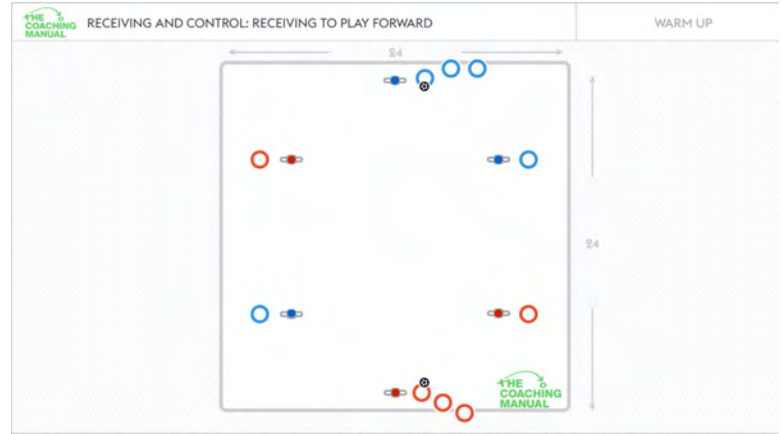


Set Up

- 10 mins 8 players 2 balls 24 cones 24x24 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Movement**
To receive the ball players must be on an angle with their body open whilst moving away from the mannequin as the ball is travelling to play forward.
- **Receiving skills**
Players to receive the ball on different feet, front foot or back foot depending on the flight and position of the ball to ideally play with 2 touches.
- **Awareness**
In order to play forward, attackers should be aware of the ball, space and team mates by keeping their head up and checking their shoulders.



Practice Animation

Setup

Area with 6 x mannequins and player on each mannequin. 2 x balls in play start at each player on end mannequin with receiving player moving to receive back foot and then pass diagonally. 2nd player to receive then plays in to player on opposite end mannequin. All players to follow their pass. Rotate direction of passes.

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in their hands

Make it more challenging:

1. Add defender
2. Players to receive in front of mannequin to perform a turn/skill and pass (front foot receiving)

13+

Passing and Combination Play Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

 15 mins  8 players  4 balls  8 bibs  4 cones  8x8 area



Key Coaching Points

- **Awareness and check shoulders**
Players should constantly scan to be aware of position of the ball, passing options from team mates, space to exploit and penetrate through and position of opposition players. This will then encourage decision making to secure possession.
- **Movement to receive and combine**
Short sharp movements to create a passing line to receive the ball. When combining with team mates one player may go short and the other player may go long to create space and forward passing options. Players on the outside area should recognise cues and movements to then play the pass.
- **Rotation**
Players can move freely around the area and interchange positions to create space to receive and combine.



Practice Animation

Setup

2 x teams of 4 players with 2 players in middle area and 2 players on opposite end lines. Ball is played from player on end line into players in the middle to combine and pass out to opposite end line player.

Make it more challenging:

1. End players can play pass to opposite end players
2. Middle players can rotate with end players
3. 2 touch maximum

13+

Passing and Receiving Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

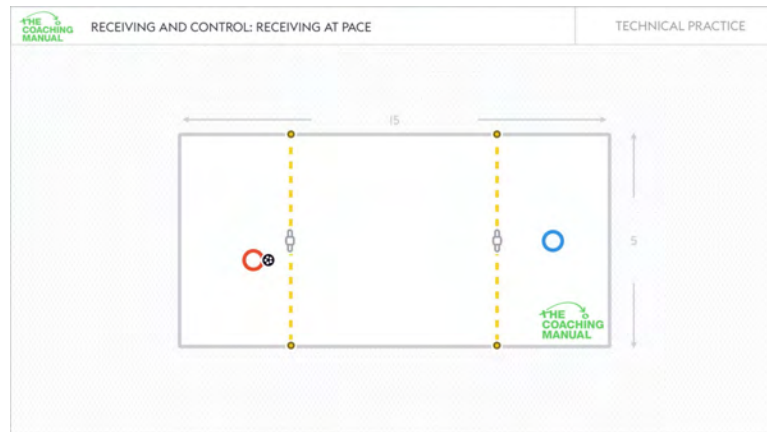


Set Up

2 players 10 cones 15x5 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Firm passes**
For the players to test their touch, passers must pass the ball with strong weight and speed with accuracy to the receivers feet.
- **Receiving**
To improve the quality of the first touch, players need to focus on receiving the ball on different sides of their body and also different areas of the foot.
- **Awareness**
Players to be aware of the space and mannequin to receive the ball and pass the ball in a limited amount of touches to practice game realism (mannequin is a defender).



Practice Animation

Set Up

2 small boxes of 4x5 with a central area of 7x5, with a mannequin or pole to represent a defender. This can be increased or decreased depending on the type of passes you want to receive and pass (long or short). Two players pass to each and receive within the small boxes they are given, to then move around the mannequin/pole to pass to the opposite player.

Make it easier:

1. Make the space bigger
2. Increase the number of touches

Make it more challenging:

1. Decrease size of playing area
2. Challenge players individually
3. Change passing types
4. Receive in front of the mannequin
5. Competition

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Support Play Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

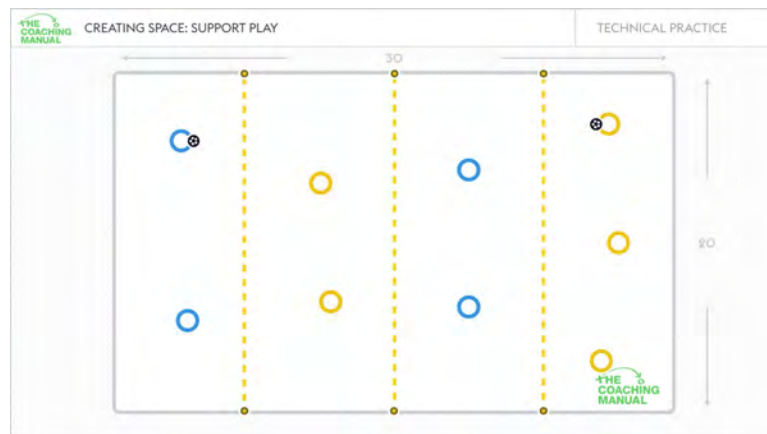


Set Up

15 mins 9 players 4 balls 8 bibs 16 cones 25 x 25 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Quality of pass**
Using a variety of passes, players should focus on the weight, disguise and accuracy of the pass.
- **Create angles**
To support and receive the ball players should communicate verbally and non-verbally whilst using creative movement to create angles whilst be aware of the ball, space and team mates.
- **Support**
When on the ball, attackers should support in front, behind, at an angle whilst constantly communicating with team mates.



Practice Animation

Setup

Players stay in their channel and 1 ball between each team. Blue's pass to Blue's and Orange's pass to Orange's through the channels.

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in the hands
2. Make the area bigger

Make it more challenging:

1. Make the area smaller
2. Limit touches
3. Add defender to put pressure on the players. If defender intercepts or wins the ball give possession to opposition.

13+

Receiving on the Back Foot to Play Forward Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

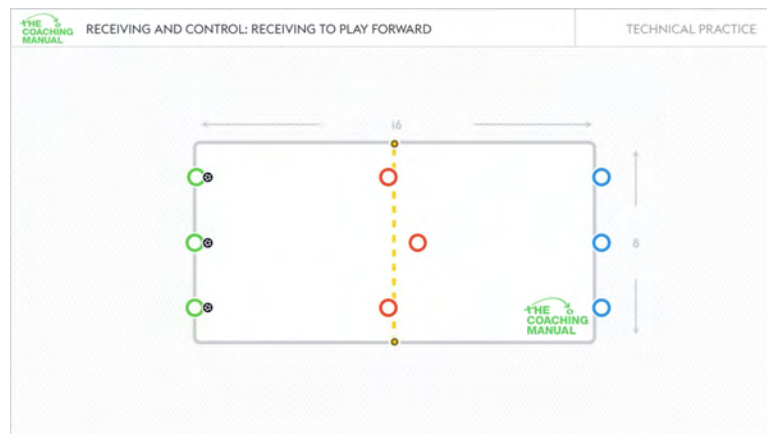


Set Up

15 mins 9 players 1 ball 9 bibs 12 cones 8x16 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Movement**
To receive the ball players must be on an angle with their body open whilst using short sharp creative movement as the ball is travelling to play forward.
- **Receiving skills**
Players to receive the ball on different feet, front foot or back foot depending on the flight and position of the ball to ideally play with 2 touches.
- **Awareness**
In order to play forward, attackers should be aware of the ball, space and team mates by keeping their head up and checking their shoulders.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Area with 3 x players at each end and 3 x players receiving and passing in the middle. Middle players pass to any end player then make a movement to receive from same player, open out and play to another player on opposite end line. Players to stay with own ball. Rotate roles of players

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in their hands
2. Make the area bigger

Make it more challenging:

1. Add defender
2. Make the area bigger

13+

Possession Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

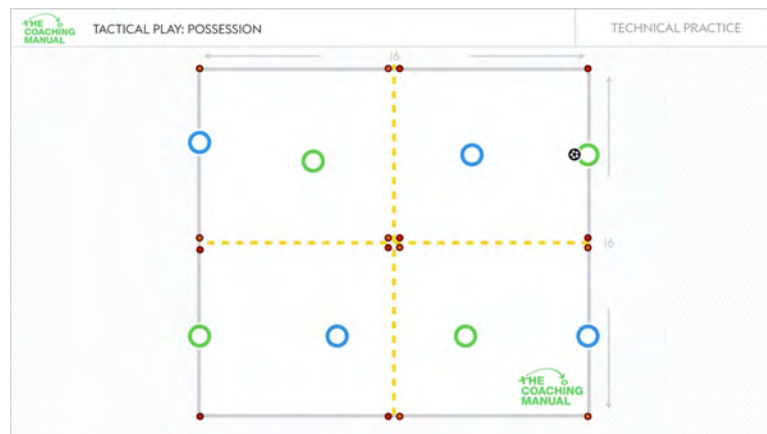
Set Up

 15 mins  8 players  4 balls  8 bibs  14 cones  16x16 area



Key Coaching Points

- **Awareness**
Players should perform 3 checks (before they move, as they move, before they receive) to be aware of the surroundings and move as the ball travels to receive in a position to secure possession and play forwards.
- **Positioning**
Players should use the grids as reference points and move to diagonal/opposite grids from their team mate. This creates diagonal and forward passing lines to receive and combine. Rotation may also occur to swap positions and receive.
- **Body shape to receive**
Play forward whilst seeing both targets and attempt to receive on back foot, when possible, so that play can go forwards.



Practice Animation

Set Up

2 x teams of 4 players with 2 players in middle area and 2 players on opposite end lines. 1 x Ball is played from player on end line into players in the middle to combine and pass out to opposite end line player. End player then transfers to end player on opposite team who plays inside the area for their team to combine.

Make it more challenging:

1. If blue's have possession, then 2 x green's in the middle can defend and attempt win possession. Defenders are restricted to 2 x grids and attackers can move anywhere in the area. If defenders win possession they pass to their end player and become attackers

13+

Passing: Short And Long Passing Technical Practice (13+)

Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

 15 mins  10 players  1 ball  25x20 area



Key Coaching Points

- **Quality of the pass**
In order to execute the passing sequence, players should focus on the disguise, weight, speed and accuracy of their passes using both their feet. Encourage players to communicate to their team mates.
- **Receiving skills**
Players to focus on their receiving skills by ideally receiving the ball on their back foot to move the ball quickly.
- **Movement**
In order to receive the ball, players need to practice the timing of movements whilst being awareness of the next pass by communicating and watching the passing of their teammates.



Practice Animation

Setup

Cones in each corner and 2 x cones in the middle. Player on each cone and ensure more than 1 player on the cone where the ball starts.

Players pass the ball around the sequence and follow their pass. Passes 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12 are long and passes 2, 5, 6 and 8 are short passes.

The movement of players following their passes requires awareness, communication and timing to be able to continually pass and receive around the sequence.

Change direction of the exercise.

Make it more challenging:

1. Introduce multiple balls
2. 1 or 2 touches maximum

AYSO Intermediate Midfielders - Decisive Passing: Gate Ball

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

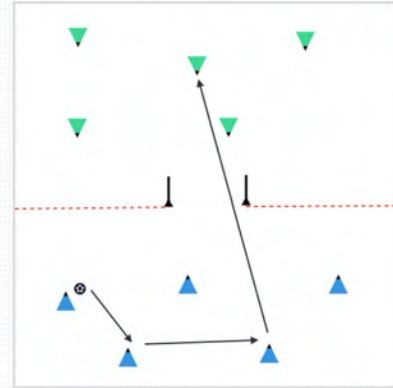


Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 10 players ⚽ 1 ball 🧥 5 bibs 🚧 2 cones

Key Coaching Points

- **Consistent Quality With the First Touch**
Encourage players to focus on their first touch efficiency.
- **Quality and Tempo**
Encourage quality but quick tempo.
- **Creating Passing Lines**
Players will naturally work their body around the ball and adjust their vision in order to see and play the ball to their teammate.
- **Movement and Final Pass**
Encourage players to play the final ball towards the gate to play their teammate into the gate.
- **Communication**
Players will begin to communicate in order to call for the ball; determine who is left to play the ball to; where they would like the ball played to themselves, etc.
- **Unpredictable and Creative**
Encourage different strategies of play (playing a deep ball, playing a ball softly through the gate, playing wide balls through the gate, etc)



Set Up

Mark a gate 5 yards apart using cones or poles in an open area of play. 2 teams (5v5 to maintain a high tempo. Set 2 grids as needed.)

Instructions

- Teams are split and each team plays on one side of the gate.
- The ball is served by one team through the gate to the opposing team.
- The team receiving the ball must play the ball back through the gate, but only after each player has played the ball only once each.
- The ball must remain in motion and not come to a stop.
- The final player to touch the ball must play the ball through the gate.
- If any of the steps are not followed, i.e., they miss a player, the other team gets the point.

Variations/Progressions

1. Start with a maximum of 2 touches per player and progress to 1 touch.
2. If tempo is too slow, the player on the ball must play through the gates on Coach command or add a time restraint.
3. Play with multiple balls in play. Each team serves a ball to the other team at the same time to start play.
4. Add a defender on each side.

AYSO Intermediate Midfielders - Passing and Receiving Within Combination Play 1

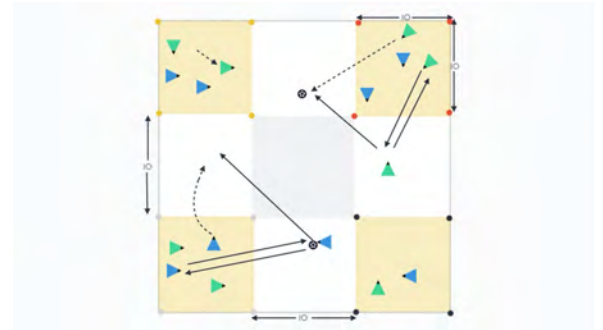


Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

15 mins 16 players 2 balls 8 bibs
16 cones 30 x 30 area

Key Coaching Points

- Awareness
- Quality
- Quality Technique
- Tempo
- Player Engagement
- Timing
- Communication



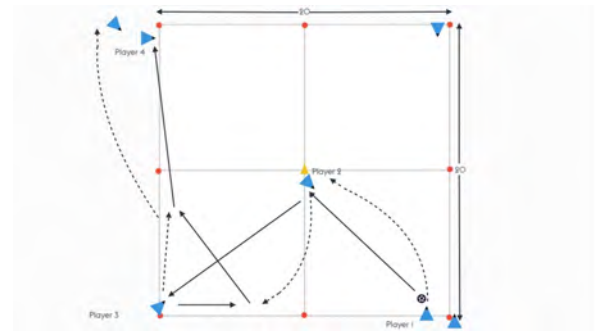
AYSO Intermediate Midfielders - Passing and Receiving Within Combination Play 2

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

20 mins 8 players 1 ball 9 cones 30 x 30 area

Key Coaching Points

- Body Position
- Quality
- Timing
- Communication
- Tempo



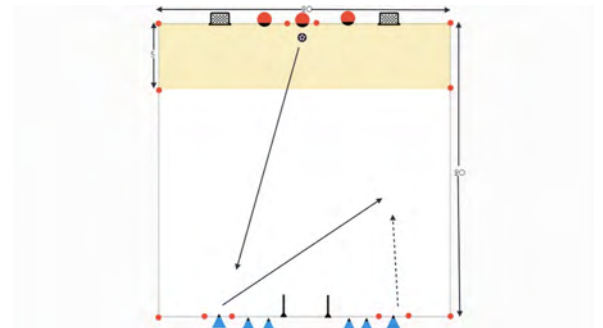
AYSO Intermediate Midfielders - Passing and Receiving Within Combination Play 3

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

20 mins 9 players 1 ball 3 bibs 12 cones
20 x 20 area

Key Coaching Points

- Attackers: First Touch
- Attackers: Control
- Attackers: Decision Making
- Attackers: Agility
- Attackers: Creativity



- Attackers: Communication
- Defenders: Passing
- Defenders: Decision Making
- Defenders: Body Shape
- Defenders:
- Defenders: Timing

AYSO Intermediate Midfielders - Passing and Receiving Within Combination play 4

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

20 mins 14 players 1 ball 7 bibs 60 x 40 area

Key Coaching Points

- Formations
- Play!



13+ Passing, Receiving And Awareness Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

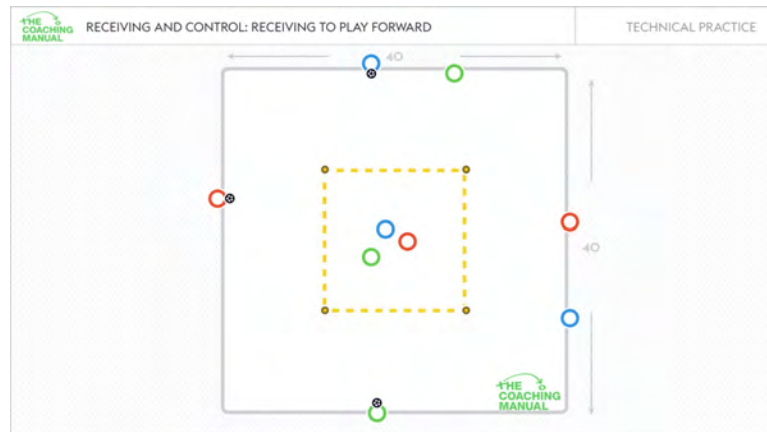


Set Up

20 mins 10 players 4 balls 10 bibs 16 cones 40x40 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Movement**
To receive the ball players must be on an angle with their body open whilst using short sharp creative movement as the ball is travelling to play forward.
- **Receiving skills**
Players to receive the ball on different feet, front foot or back foot depending on the flight and position of the ball to ideally play with 2 touches.
- **Awareness**
In order to play forward, attackers should be aware of the ball, space and team mates by keeping their head up and checking their shoulders.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Players work in groups of 3, with 1 player in middle square and 2 team mates anywhere on outside of large area. Player in the middle to receive from team mate, open out and pass to other team mate to receive back. Players to stay with own ball. Rotate roles of players

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in their hands

Make it more challenging:

1. Add defender
2. Make the area smaller
3. Player in middle square can rotate with team mates without the ball. Player in middle square can bounce ball back to move and receive
4. Limit touches

13+

Mark Warburton - Combination Play Masterclass: Technical Practice



Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

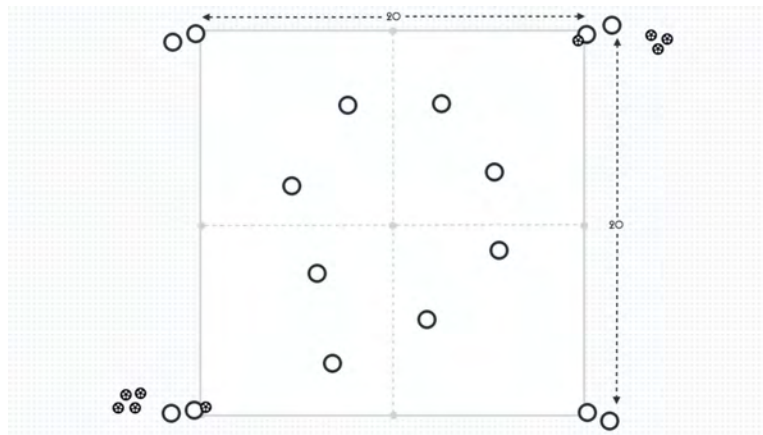
15 mins 16 players 9 balls 9 cones 20x20 area

Set up a 20x20 square which is sub-divided into 4 10x10 squares with 2 players inside each smaller square and 2 players on each corner.

Start with the balls evenly distributed on opposite corners of the square.

Players play different combinations in 4 different areas (watch the video and animation), using quick combinations to pass it around their space and then into the next grid. The play from box to box can move clockwise or counter clockwise.

The player who passes the ball leaves the grid but doesn't follow their pass to another grid. They go to the back of the line on the corner of their own grid.



Key Coaching Points

- **Quick Combinations**

When passing the ball, players must use short and sharp combinations (preferably 1 touch) focusing on accuracy and weight of pass to move the ball.

- **Body Shape**

When receiving the ball, players need to focus on their body shape with their shoulders and hips being open and side on so that they can combine quickly.

- **Movement to Receive**

Players should use creative movement to get into areas to receive the ball that make use of the whole area and which replicates playing on different lines in a game.

Practice Animation

13+ Passing: Combination Play Technical Practice (13+)

Written by The Coaching Manual



Set Up

15 mins 10 players 6 balls 8 cones 25 x 25 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Awareness**
Players should be aware of the space, ball, teammates and other players by checking their shoulder and playing with their head up to move the ball quickly.
- **Movement**
To create space to combine, players need to use creative movement to find space to combine whilst also being game realistic.
- **Combinations**
Attackers should use a variety of different passes with different lengths and speed to move the opposition and unbalance defenders.



Practice Animation

Setup

With players passing following pass around the outside of the area or looking to combine with either of the 2 players in the middle area.

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in their hands

Make it more challenging:

1. 1 x defender in the middle area with 2 attackers looking to move and combine to play out. Defender and attackers can move in either half. 3 attackers vs. 2 defenders in middle area. Defenders locked in their half and attackers free to move in either half.
2. Challenge players individually
3. Limit touches

AYSO Intermediate Midfielders - Sequence Possession

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

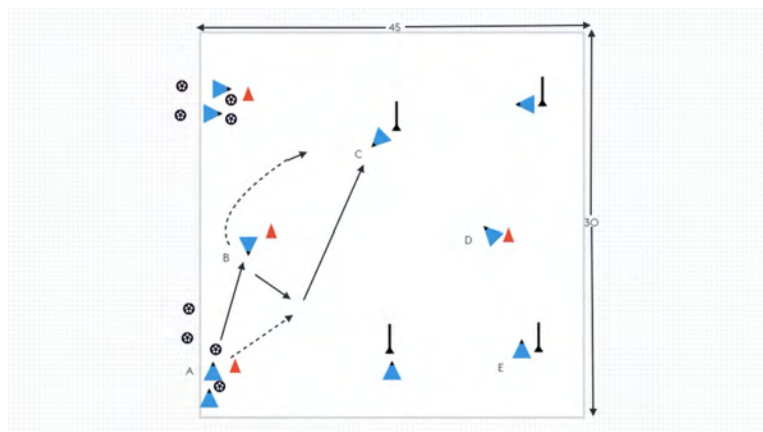


Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 12 players ⚽ 8 balls 🧥 7 bibs 🚩 8 cones 🏟️ 45 x 30 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Timing**
The timing of runs.
- **Turning**
Turning with the ball.
- **Movement**
Pulling away from the defender (flags) in order to create space to receive the ball.
- **Quality and Creativity**
Quality of the pass, touch, and the movements.



Set Up

45 x 30 grid(s). 10-11 players per grid. 2 groups working with slightly staggered start (to allow the 1st player to get to 2nd cone to receive first pass from the other side). Passing sequences with flags as defenders.

Instructions

- Player 1 passes to Player 2, who lays it back to Player 1 to play long to Player 3.
- Player 3 combines with Player 2 using a wall pass and then plays to Player 4 who lays it back to Player 3 to play long to Player 5.
- Player 5 wall passes with Player 4 and then Player 5 dribbles to the end of the line.
- Players always rotate by advancing one cone in the sequence.
- Players alternate which side they start from.

Variations/Progressions

1. Player 5 dribbles halfway and then passes to end of the line.
2. Player 5 drives the ball with laces to end of the line.
3. Vary the sequence.

13+

Technical Practice: Combinations to Create Chances to Shoot

Written by The Coaching Manual

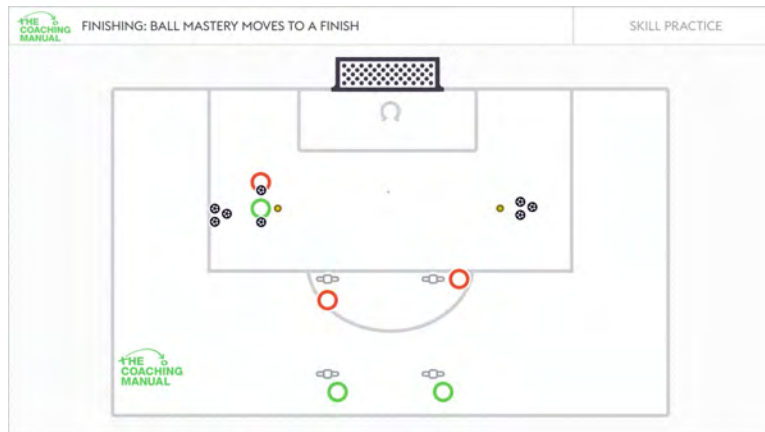


Set Up

20 mins 7 players 10 balls 7 bibs 10 cones 44x30 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Turns and skills**
Players to use turns and ball mastery skills to open out and play the ball to the striking player to shoot across goal.
- **Timing**
Attackers should look to time their movement to finish on goal, arriving at the correct time based up on their teammates position.
- **Quality of the shot**
With a pass in front of the striker, players should use a variety of different shots to score past the goalkeeper including power and placement shots.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mannequins positioned outside of the penalty area. Players are positioned on mannequins as the ball is passed and players move to combine and finish at goal.

13+

Switching Play "Wave Practice"

Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

 25 mins  20 players  40x30 area



Key Coaching Points

- **Movement off the ball**
Players should use all different movements to receive the ball out wide. Forwards movement in the box needs to be realistic. For example, player who is attacking the front post should make a late run from deep and get across the line of the front post.
- **Quality of cross or pass**
From wide areas, players should focus on the quality and variety of crosses by either providing driven, low or lofted balls into the final end zone.
- **Switch the play**
Attackers should concentrate on when they should switch play, waiting for the open space to the wing, passing as quickly as possible to move the defence out of position.



Practice Animation

Set Up

One goal GK along the end. Units of 4 set up in position as 2 x wide players 2 x central players. LCM passes to LM in wide position. LM back passes to LCM who then switches to RM. RM checks back plays to RCM who then switches to LM. When play enters final third, either wide player crosses whilst remaining players make movements to receive finish past the GK

Make it more challenging:

1. Add a defender in the box to defend the crosses

13+

René Meulensteen - Playing Through the Thirds Masterclass: Playing Through the Middle Dynamic Wave Practice



Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

20 mins 20 players 10 balls 24 bibs 18 cones 90x70 area

Set up the area as seen in the image above with 8 mannequins creating 2 banks of 4 in the middle of the field and also 2 lines 18 yards from each goal.

The play starts with the Goalkeeper who rolls it out to one of the players (replicating playing out from the back). The attacker then passes to one of the players in the centre (the link players replicate 2 Centre Midfielders), to then combine with each other.

As this is happening, the two attacking players overlap/underlap to receive the pass in the attacking area beyond the mannequins to then finish on goal, first time if possible.

Once this has happened, the other GK rolls the ball out to one of the attackers from next to the goal, to create a dynamic attacking wave practice.



Key Coaching Points

- **Timing of Passes**

To move through the areas quickly, players need to concentrate on their passing and especially the timing to make sure attackers are not offside. When playing the through pass, players need to receive the ball in front of them so they can arrive at the ball to be ready to shoot.

- **Movement to Support**

Players should use a variety of runs with good timing to support around the ball and ahead of the ball. Also, the link players in the middle shouldn't be positioned too far apart but should also concentrate on being on different lines to receive and combine.

- **Rhythm and Tempo of Passes**

When playing through the thirds, players need to focus on their rhythm of passes to 'catapult' each other through the field, moving from slow (to draw out the opponent) to quick (when spaces are found and the team is closer to the goal).

Practice Animation

Progressions 1 - Pass Between Defenders

Rather than passing directly to the link players, attackers now must play to the other attackers (simulating passing across to the other Centre Back).

As this happens, link players (Green bibs) must now change position to receive on different lines. The attackers then pass to the furthest link player who then passes to their partner (replicating Centre Midfielders combining). Attackers must make creative runs for the link player to pass through the mannequins and finish on goal.

Once this has happened the other GK rolls the ball out to one of the attackers from next to the goal, to create a dynamic attacking wave practice.

Practice Animation

DEFENDING

13+

AYSO Advanced Coach - Zonal Defending. Defensive Principles of Play and Roles (Individual and Small Group)



Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

Set Up

20 mins 8 players 1 ball 8 bibs 16 cones 50x60 area

Coaching Points

- Pressure must be put on the ball and ball carrier to make play predictable.
- Pressure must have the corresponding cover so that no defender is exclusively 1 vs. 1.
- Defender at the ball first defender.
- Covering defender second defender.
- All other defenders, third defenders must balance the threat of opponents and space.
- Defending players will switch responsibility and move as ball moves.
- Make up ground as the ball travels.
- Make play predictable.
- Communicate.
- Try to negate the threat of opponents of the ball by good positioning.
- Upon winning the ball look to transition forward.



Set Up

50 x 60 (expand the width to 75 yards as the defensive play develops). Six goals (three per team across the width of the field). Goals represent forward penetrating options.

Instructions

The coach introduces the ball at each restart. The team “out” of possession must prevent the opponent from playing the ball into any of their three goals. Successful defending that leads to ball winning can become an immediate counter-attack.

Make it more challenging:

1. Place a target player behind the defensive block that can be played to and who must then drop the ball back. (This stresses the defenders more requiring that they deny any ball behind them and if one is allowed they must track runners.)

13+

Playing Out From The Back Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual



Set Up

15 mins 14 players 6 balls 14 bibs 14 cones 25 x 25 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Movement**
Players should use inventive movement to create space and move off the mannequins to replicate playing out of the back and pass the ball forward.
- **Timing**
To receive the ball and replicate game realism, players should look to time their runs to receive the ball by not moving too early nor too late.
- **Midfield rotation**
To combined effectively, players should use rotation in the middle of the field to create space and passing lines to move the ball forward.



Practice Animation

Setup

Balls are worked down the left and right hand sides respectively and players stay in their position (may rotate with another player on same mannequin). Ball starts with GK, who plays to CB then plays to FB. Combination play through midfield with FB overlapping to receive and hit target player (T).

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in their hands

Make it more challenging:

1. Challenge players individually
2. CM"s from both sides can combine rotate to play out in down either side (left or right)

13+

Dean Smith - Playing Out From The Back Masterclass: Unopposed to Opposed Practice



Written by The Coaching Manual

Set Up

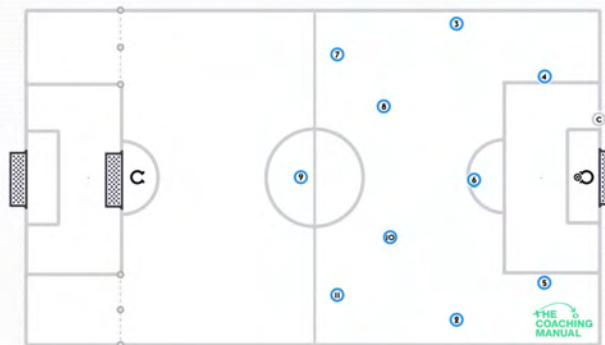
25 mins 18 players 1 ball 16 bibs 6 cones 90x65 area

Set up the field as seen in the above image.

The ball always starts with the Goalkeeper with the rest of team in position as they would be on a goal kick. The Goalkeeper then plays to one of their teammates to play out from the back.

Unopposed, the team passes the ball with sharp combinations to eventually finish on goal. Once a goal is scored, the ball starts with the Goalkeeper again and with the team in position.

Allow the team to practice 3-4 times.



Key Coaching Points

- **Positioning Around and Ahead of the Ball**
When playing out from the back, players need to be aware of the time, space, opposition, and teammates to provide support through triangle and diamond shapes to move forward whilst also moving the opposition horizontally to create space on the sides.
- **Draw In the Opposition to Create Space**
To create space in advanced positions, draw in the opposition with quick passes forwards and backward. Players also need to understand the principle of the spare player with the Goalkeeper being that player. If the Goalkeeper becomes marked, then there is a spare player in another area.
- **Speed of Play**
As units and a team, players should look to use quick combinations to move the ball quickly through and around the opposition to unbalance them.

Practice Animation

Progressions #1 - Add 2 Strikers to Defending from the Front

Add to Strikers to the practice to defend from the front and prevent the Goalkeeper and Defenders from playing out from the back. If the defenders win the ball they can score in the goal.

Practice Animation

Progressions #2 - Add an Extra Player to Make 3 Defenders

With adding an extra defender the attacking team now plays out against a front 3, creating a different scenario to play out from the back. If the opposition wins the ball, they can attack the goal.

Practice Animation

Progression #3 - Add an Extra Player to Create 2 Defensive Units

Playing against a 2-3 formation, the attacking team must now bypass two defensive units to attack the goal, primarily using the centre midfield players.

Practice Animation

Progression #4 - Add an Extra Player to Make it More Game Realistic

With the defensive team set up in a 3-3 formation, the attacking team now needs to break 2 defensive lines to attack the goal.

Practice Animation

ATTACKING/FINISHING

13+

Crossing And Finishing Technical Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual

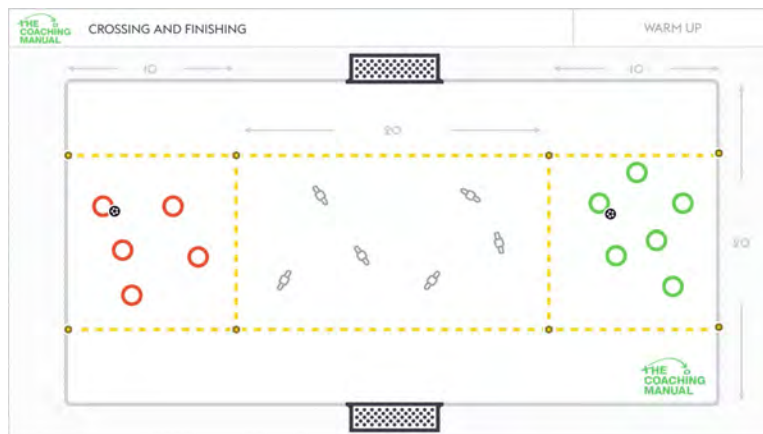


Set Up

15 mins 10 players 6 balls 8 bibs 12 cones 45x20 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Quality of cross**
When crossing the ball players should be hitting and area for their team mate to run onto.
- **Type of cross**
Encourage players to try all different types of crosses, lofted, driven, swerve/curl
- **Timing of runs to finish**
Start with slow movement into the box, when the players head goes down to cross the ball the forward should use explosive movements to attack the ball.



Practice Animation

Setup

Players divided into 2 teams with each team in 20x10 area passing and moving. On coaches call, teams deliver and cross the ball from one area to another.

Make it easier:

1. Take away the mannequins in the middle and focus on the techniques
2. Get the players in pairs and work on crossing techniques

Make it more challenging:

1. Add a defender in to the finishing stage
2. Add an overlap in before the cross

13+

Counter Attacking Team Competition Warm Up

Written by The Coaching Manual



Set Up

10 mins 10 players 2 balls 10 bibs 24 cones 2x 20x10 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Change of direction**
At speed, players should look to move forward at pace to replicate counter attacking movements.
- **Get forward**
As quickly as possible, players should look to move forward as quickly as they can with explosive movements to create and find space.
- **ABC Movements**
Players should focus on their agility, balance and coordination through the central station.



Practice Animation

Set Up

2 x teams of 5 with one team in each area playing handball and passing and moving. On coaches call, teams have to leave there ball and move quickly through agility stations to opposite area. First team to area gets a point.

Make it more challenging:

1. Add defender
2. Ball is placed on floor and players pass and move

13+

Crossing and Finishing Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

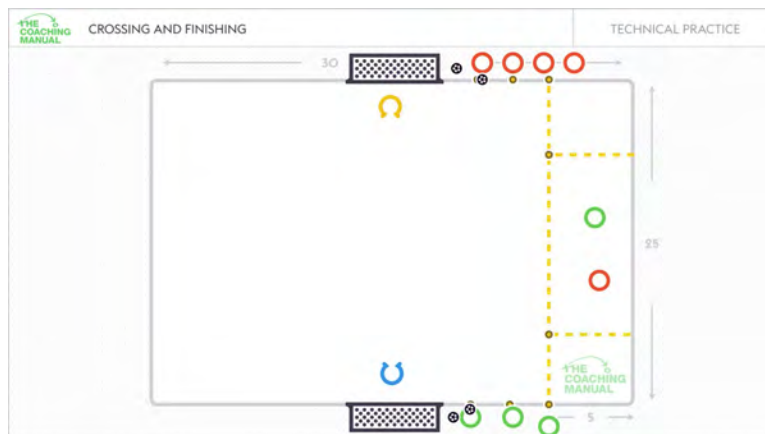


Set Up

15 mins 12 players 8 balls 12 bibs 10 cones 25x20 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Movement to receive the ball out wide**
Make it realistic to the game. Movement away from the ball to create space to come back into to receive.
- **Type of cross**
Crossing player now getting and understand of what type of cross in needed. This will change each time due to the defenders positioning, movement from team mates and understand your team mates qualities.
- **Timing of runs to finish**
Variation of movements. Speed of movement is important to loose the defenders. Start off slow then explode into a finishing position.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Ball is played to wide player and 2 x team mates make a run towards the goal to attempt to finish from wide players cross. Attacking player"s join back of the opposite goal and next pair play ball to the opposite wide player for finish in the opposite goal.

Make it easier:

1. Go through the drill unopposed and focus on the quality of the cross and movements of forwards

Make it more challenging:

1. Include 1 defender to create a 2v1 to finish.
2. Opposition wide player can pressure the wide player delivering the cross. 2 defenders and additional attacker to create a 3v2 to finish

13+

Finishing: From Wide and Central Areas Technical Practice

Written by The Coaching Manual

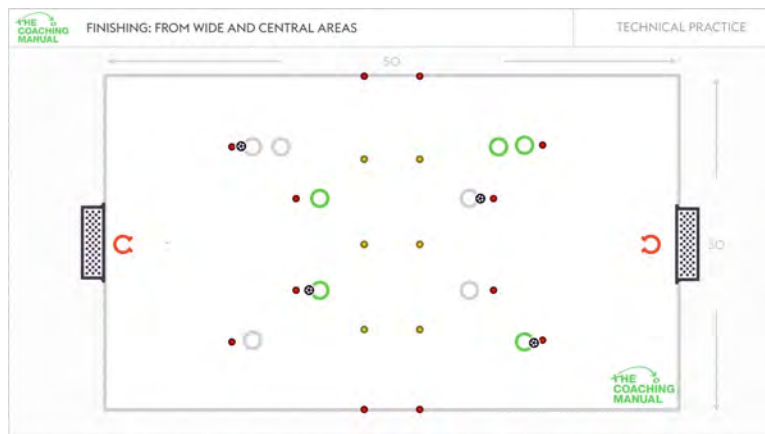


Set Up

🕒 15 mins 👤 12 players ⚽ 10 balls 🧥 12 bibs 📌 28 cones 🏟️ 50x30 area

Key Coaching Points

- **Technique to finish**
Players should focus on their technique to finish on goal. This may be with laces, inside of foot, outside of foot, header or by being creative in front of goal.
- **Movement to combine and finish**
Players should work together and develop verbal and non-verbal communication to move in relation with each other and combine to finish on goal.
- **Anticipation to finish rebounds**
Both players should be in a position to react to any rebounds or spills by the goalkeeper and finish on goal. The player who does not take the shot should read the cue from their team mate and begin to move towards goal as the ball is struck.



Practice Animation

Setup

Groups working in each half with 2 x players positioned on cones centrally who look to combine and finish with the team mate following up for rebounds. 2 x players positioned on wide cones as player with the ball either attacks wide and crosses for team mate or drives inside to shoot as team mate follows in for rebounds. Rotate starting point of players (centrally and wide).

Make it more challenging:

1. Introduce 1 x defender who can win the ball and dribble to middle zone for 1 point.

13+ Passing, Ball Mastery and Shooting In The Final Third

Written by The Coaching Manual

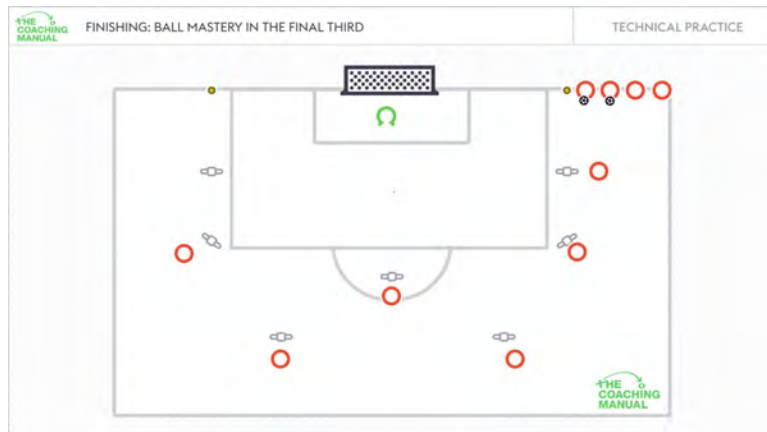
Set Up

 20 mins  10 players  10 balls  10 cones  50x30 area



Key Coaching Points

- **Quality of the passes**
Depending on the position within the sequence, players should apply appropriate weight, disguise and accuracy to pass to team mates.
- **Timing of movements**
Before receiving players need to create space away from the mannequin to replicate game a like situation of losing their marker.
- **Ball mastery skills**
To beat the mannequin, players can perform ball mastery moves to get into a position to shoot.



Practice Animation

Set Up

Mannequins are positioned around the penalty area with a player on each mannequin. Players pass the ball to each player positioned on a mannequin and then follow their pass. The player on the final mannequin makes a movement to receive and perform a ball mastery skill to then finish at goal. Repeat the exercise in the opposite direction.

Make it easier:

1. Start with the ball in hands

Make it more challenging:

1. Include a Defender in the penalty area who can challenge the player attempting to finish at goal.
2. Add a chasing defender
3. Challenge players individually