

# Spencer Soccer Club

## Youth Development Program

### Weekend Session Plan Guidance

#### **Under 5**

**Focus:** Dribbling, Plus 1 Skills Pyramid

**Time:** Each weekend session lasts for 60 minutes

**Planning:**

- 1) Print out and read through Weekend Session Plan
- 2) Become familiar with the Plus 1 Skills triangle
- 3) Arrive at the field 15 minutes prior to scheduled start time
- 4) Set up pug nets and cones to facilitate a smooth session plan

**Each Session Plan consists of the following:**

- 1) Guidance (the page you are reading)
- 2) Plus 1 Skills Pyramid Diagram
- 3) Warm-Up Activity\*
- 4) Activity 1
- 5) Controlled Juggling
- 6) Activity 2
- 7) Small Sided Game

\*Session Plan #1 includes (4) additional sheets



**Session Structure:**

**Warm-Up Activity (12 Minutes):** Incorporate skills from the Plus 1 Skills triangle into the Warm-Up Activity. Skills Pyramid skills should be introduced one by one and no more than (3) per session. Work in succession of the pyramid and introduce all skills by weekend session #5. Skills introduced in the previous session should be reviewed in every subsequent warm-up activity. Session Plan #1 includes (4) additional sheets that provide additional warm up activity guidance and how to perform the step over and drag back escape turns. All skills should not be introduced in week one. This guidance is included to assist coaches throughout all sessions.

**Activity 1 (12 Minutes):** Activity 1 is a fun activity for the children. Incorporate the activity as described. Find ways that change the activity slightly so that you are not repeating the “exact” drill over and over. Adding skill moves (pull back) when collecting the ball or seeing which group can complete the activity first are ways to make the activities more interesting as they get later into the allowed timeframe.

**Snack/Water Break (4 Minutes)**

**Controlled Juggling (4 Minutes):** **Incorporate into every practice.** A few minutes only, players drop the ball to their thigh and foot and try to kick or bounce the ball back to their own hands (repeat). Concentrate more on foot juggling.

**Activity 2 (12 Minutes):** Same guidance given for Activity 1 above

**Small Sided game:** There are no substitutions. All players should play for a few minutes (3 to 5) and all players should rest. Games should be played across the field with pug nets with a maximum of 4v4. Additional fields should be set up to accommodate players. Coaches should pair players of like abilities in game play (e.g. your top three vs. their top three, etc.). Coaches should be stationed on the field to introduce a new ball into play when a ball exits the field or enters a goal; this is accomplished by throwing it up in the air or rolling it to a player who is hasn't had many touches on the ball. There should be no restarts. Only use kickoffs after a break or at the start of the game.



## PLUS I SKILLS CHALLENGE PYRAMID™

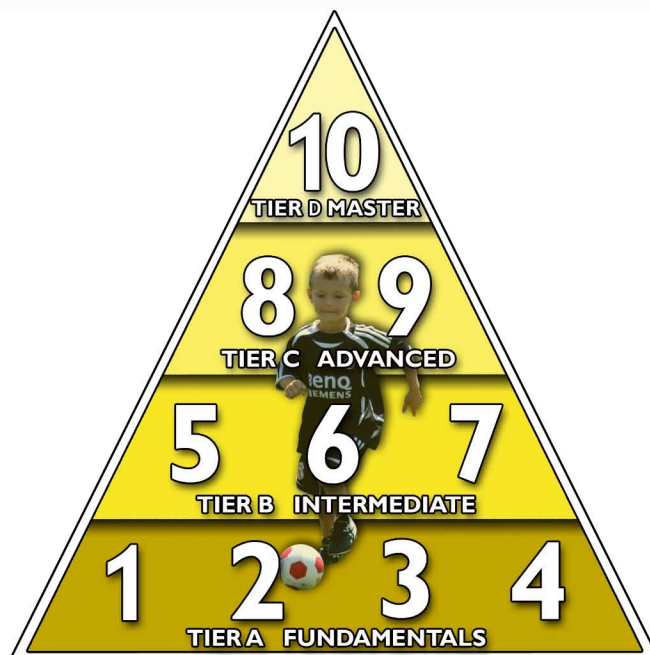
### TIER A

**1. Laces Dribble** – With the toes pointing down towards the ground push the ball forward with the laces, knee bent over ball on contact. After each touch step through with the opposite foot.

**2. Foundations** – using the inside of both feet push the ball from one foot to the other. On the spot initially then moving forward and back when comfortable

**3. Toe Taps Forward** – Using the toe end of the sole, tap the top of the ball - alternating left and right feet. On the spot initially, with a slow rhythm and then hopping. Once competent in a stationary position, move forwards.

**4. Toe Taps Backward** – Using the toe end of the sole, tap the top of the ball - alternating left and right feet. On the spot initially, with a slow rhythm and then hopping. Once competent in a stationary position, move backwards.



### TIER B

**5. Step-On Turn** – Dribble forward, place the sole of one foot on the ball to stop momentum, step beyond the ball with both feet leaving the ball, turn to face the ball and dribble back. Repeat several times using both feet.

**6. Drag Back Turn** – Dribble forward, stop forward momentum of the ball by reaching forward with one foot and placing the sole of the foot on top of the ball, drag (roll) the ball back down the side of the body away from the defender and accelerate into a dribble.

**7. Back Heel** – Dribble forward, step beyond the ball, make contact with the heel of one foot sending the ball backwards, turn and accelerate into a dribble.

### TIER C

**8. Inside Cut** – Dribble forward, stop forward momentum of the ball by reaching forward with inside of one foot and 'cutting' the ball back down the inside of the body (away from the defender) in one movement and accelerate into a dribble.

**9. Ball Rolls** – Using the inside, outside and sole of one foot, roll the ball side to side, backwards and forwards and keeping contact with the ball at all times. Both feet.

### TIER D

**10. Outside Cut** – Dribble forward, stop forward momentum of the ball by reaching forward

### LEARN MORE:

To learn how Skill of the Week™ and Skills Challenge Pyramid™ can be incorporated into a comprehensive approach to Player and Coach Development, please contact David Newbery, [dave@soccerplus.org](mailto:dave@soccerplus.org), tel: 860-501-1165.

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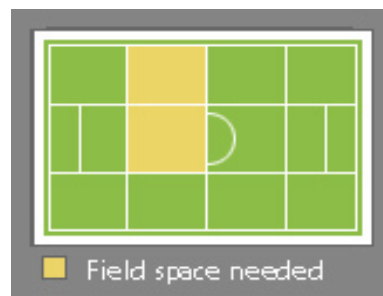
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## Materials Needed



Area 20 x 20 yds

- Ball per player
- Cones

## Individual Ball Warm Up 1 (Dribbling)

### Description:

Players have a ball each. Set the players tasks - don't let the ball stop moving! Don't let the ball go outside the area. Progress to having the players react to the coach's commands. Toe taps, boxes, stop and go, change balls, etc.

### Coaching Points

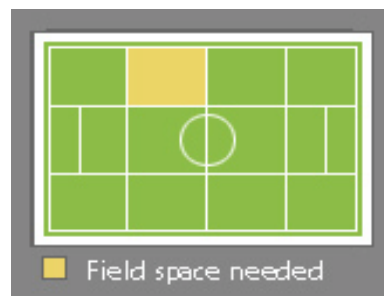
- Keep the ball moving at all times
- Soft touches and keep head up
- Move into the open space

### Progressions:

Each time you play add a different movement, turn and mastery skill. For example: Movement sequence: 1) **Dribble with laces** - slow down and push the ball lightly with the laces (left, right and both) 2) **Boxes** – push the ball from side-to-side, right to the left foot and back again, 3) **Toe taps** – hopping from one foot to the other touching the top of the ball with the opposite foot each time. Ball stays does not move. 4) **Sole drag back** – hopping between feet, move backwards dragging the ball back alternating between the sole of the shoes, 5) **Sole push** – push the ball forward with the sole of the shoes, 6) **Laterals** – move to the left by dragging the right foot over the top of the ball (rolling the foot over the top of the ball). Move right with the left foot. Turns: It is anticipated players at the end of this stage of development will be able to perform the following turns 1) **Inside of the foot**, 2) **Outside of the foot**, 3) **Drag back**, 4) **Step over**, 5) **Back heel**. Add others! This is also an excellent opportunity to bring in fundamental movements such as running, skipping, galloping, balancing, dodging etc. As this is your warm up ensure you inject the enthusiasm and excitement with the players.



## Materials Needed



Area 20 x 20 yds

- Ball per player
- Cones

## Individual Ball Warm Up 2 (Dribbling)

### Description:

Each player has a ball and dribbles around the inside of the square. The coach challenges the players to complete a variety of tasks within 30 seconds. For example 1) Travel to all 4 sides of the box in any order, 2) How many touches on the ball can you get with your right foot or left foot?, 3) How many people can you tag?, 4) How many soccer balls dribbled by other players can you tag?

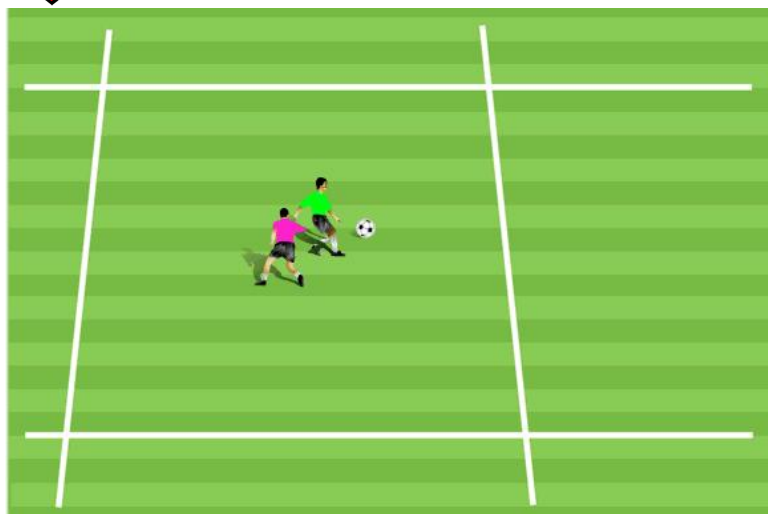
### Coaching Points

- Keep the ball moving at all times
- Keep your head up
- Move into the open space

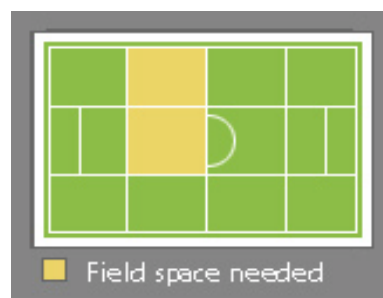
### Progressions:

As this is the warm up the coach must inject enthusiasm and energy into the players at this stage of the practice. Coaches can be creative with these small 30 second games. Introduce skills from the appropriate Skills Challenge Pyramid





## Materials Needed



Area 30 x 20 yds

- Ball per player
- Cones

## Escape Move - Drag Back (Dribbling, Creating Space)

### Description:

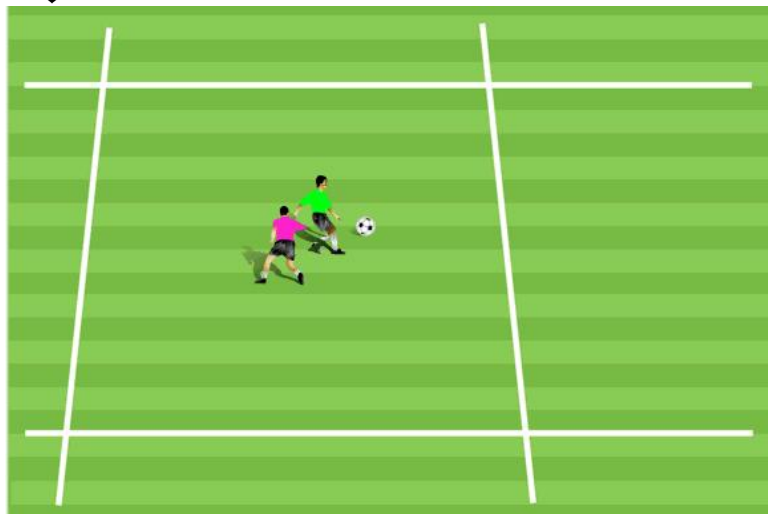
One ball per player in an open grid to begin. Isolate the skill by performing on-the-spot. Dribbling forward, stop the ball with the sole of the foot and roll the ball back down the side of the body then dribble back. Progress to: 1) Performing the skill on the move, 2) 1v1 passive defending, 3) 1v1 active defending 4) Game with gates, 5) Small sided game.

### Coaching Points

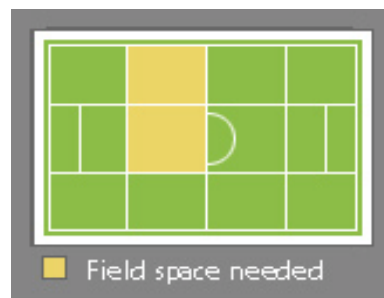
- Several touches on the ball with the sole
- Accelerate away after the move
- Sell the move to the defender

### Progressions:

The freedom to experiment and practice 'escape' skills against an opponent is critical to their development. The more proficient a player becomes at dribbling and creating space as a young player, the more confident they will become in a game situation and the more likely they are to perform the skill. Repetition is very important, but ensuring the technique is correct - the player must be able to 'sell' the opponent and escape. This activity is a good warm-up with the ball. The starting point will depend on the players proficiency - the skill can be progressed from performing on-the-spot to a small sided game. To emphasize the skill in a small sided game award points/goals to a player who escapes a defender.



## Materials Needed



Area 30 x 20 yds

- Ball per player
- Cones

## Escape Move - Step Over (Dribbling, Creating Space)

### Description:

One ball per player in an open grid to begin. Isolate the skill by performing on-the-spot. Dribbling forward, the attacker steps over the top of the ball with the foot furthest from the defender and quickly pivots 180 degrees (away from the defender). The attacker quickly turns and accelerates away.

Progress to: 1) Performing the skill on the move, 2) 1v1 passive defending, 3) 1v1 active defending 4) Game with gates, 5) Small sided game.

### Coaching Points

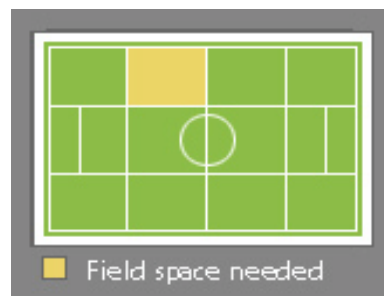
- Start in stationary position - not a dribble
- Repeat and repeat again
- Accelerate away leaving defender behind

### Progressions:

The freedom to experiment and practice 'escape' skills against an opponent is critical to their development. The more proficient a player becomes in dribbling and creating space as a young player, the more confident they will become in a game situation and the more likely they are to perform the skill. Repetition is very important and ensuring the technique is correct is essential (the players are able to 'sell' the opponent and escape). This activity is a good warm-up with the ball. The starting point will depend on the players' proficiency - the skill can be progressed from performing on one spot, to a small sided game. To emphasize the skill in a small sided game award points/goals to a player who escapes a defender.



## Materials Needed



Area 30 x 30 yds

- Cones
- Ball per player

## Traffic Lights (Dribbling Warm Up)

### Description:

Use the theme of the popular movie 'CARS'. Every player has a soccer ball. When the coach calls "Green light" the players must dribble their ball around the area. On the call of "Red light" the player must stop and place their foot on the ball. Other commands of "Mater" (tow truck) for dribbling slowly, and "Lightning McQueen" - dribble as fast as you can, "Car Wash" - ball rolls forward & back (both feet), "Wipers" - foundations back and forth, "Sheriff" - the coach gives a 'ticket' (5 toe taps) to runaway cars, and 'Rev the Engines' - foot on top of the ball and vibrate faster and faster and make revving noise.

### Coaching Points

- Keep ball close and under control
- Keep head up
- Keep the ball moving

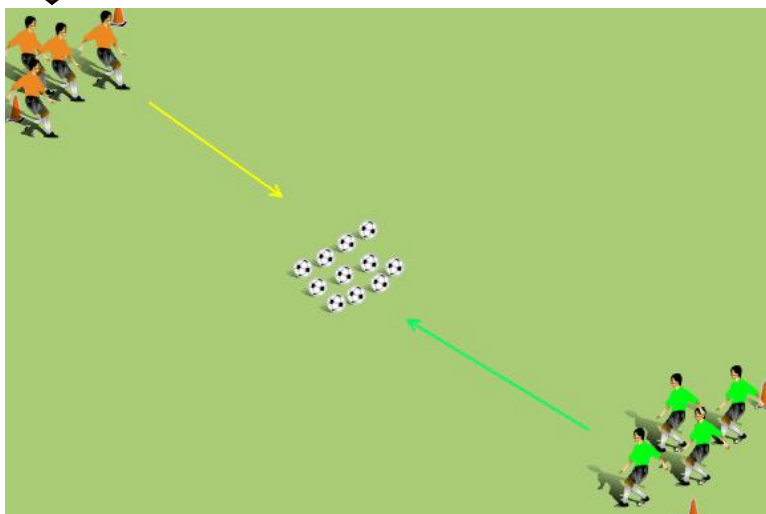
### Progressions:

This is a really good activity to coach and improve technique - dribbling, turning and ball mastery. Each time you play Traffic Lights add a different movement, turn and mastery skill. For example:

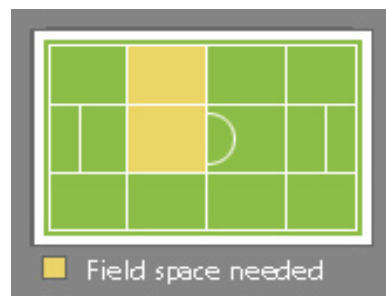
Movement sequence: 1) **Dribble with laces** - slow down and push the ball lightly with the laces (left, right and both) 2) **Boxes** - push the ball from side-to-side, right to the left foot and back again, 3) **Toe taps** - hopping from one foot to the other touching the top of the ball with the opposite foot each time. Ball stays - does not move. 4) **Sole drag back** - hopping between feet, move backwards dragging the ball back alternating between the sole of the shoes, 5) **Sole push** - push the ball forward with the sole of the shoes. 6) **Laterals** - move to the left by dragging the right foot over the top of the ball (rolling the foot over the top of the ball). Move right with the left foot.

Turns: It is anticipated players at the end of this stage of development will be able to perform the following turns 1) **Inside of the foot**, 2) **Outside of the foot**, 3) **Drag back**, 4) **Step over**, and 5) **Back heel**. Add others!

Also if you have a number of coaches or parents you could add toll bridges. Have coaches and parents stand with their legs apart. Every time a player sees an open toll bridge they must play the ball through the legs and collect it from the other side.



## Materials Needed



Area 20 x 20 yds

- Balls
- Cones

## Tree House (Dribbling)

### Description:

At either end of the area you have a tree house. At one end you have the 'Greedy Gorillas' and at the other end you have the 'Cheeky Chimps'. In the middle are all the soccer coconuts. On the call of "GO" the Chimps and Gorillas run to the middle and collect a coconut and return back to their tree house before going to collect another one.

### Coaching Points

- Keep ball moving
- Keep ball close

- Keep head up

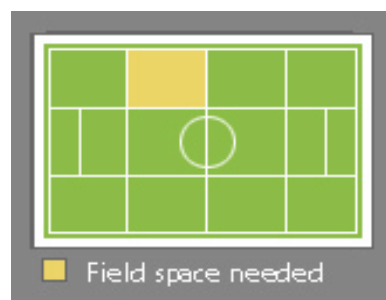
### Progressions:

Have the Chimps and Gorillas attack each others tree house. After one minute see who has the most coconuts.





## Materials Needed



Open area

- One ball per player

## Controlled Juggling (Relaxation)

### Description:

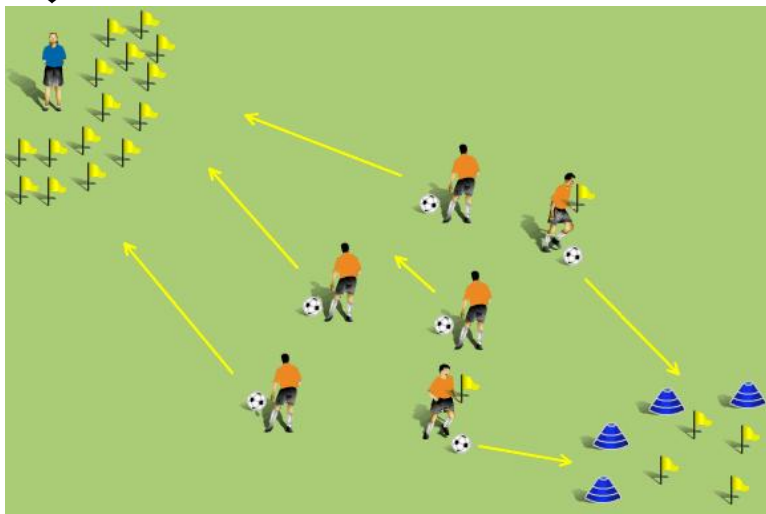
Players start with the soccer ball in their hands. They drop the ball on their thigh (juggle it once), and catch it. As they get better at it, they can try juggling the ball from one thigh to the other thigh and then catch it.

### Coaching Points

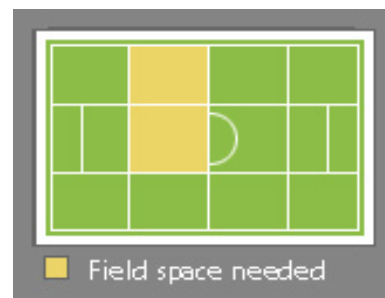
- Fun
- Thigh, foot - eye coordination
- Soft touches
- Preparation Touches

### Progressions:

The coach can suggest any combination that is reasonable for this age group. This is used to help develop your players confidence on the ball and develop their foot/thigh - eye coordination.



## Materials Needed



Area 20 x 20 yds

- Ball per player
- Cones
- Training Vests

## Sleeping Giant (Dribbling)

### Description:

The coach (sleepy giant) has stolen all the villager's treasure (training vests). The villagers have to send the giant off to sleep by singing his/her favourite song, for example Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. Once the giant is asleep then the villagers may dribble their ball towards the giant and the treasure. If the giant stirs the villagers must hide behind their ball so the giant can't see them. Once again the villagers must send the giant back to sleep by singing his/her favourite song. Now that the giant has gone back to sleep the villagers can dribble their ball closer to the giant. Once a villager gets all the way across to the giant they can take a piece of treasure and return to their village. The aim is to win back all the treasure.

### Coaching Points

- Keep your head up - be aware of the giants movement
- Keep ball close and under control
- Change of speed and direction when vest is won

### Progressions:

The giant has stolen all the villagers treasure in the middle of the night. The villagers know the giant always falls asleep when they hear their favorite song. The villagers come up with a sneaky plan to steal back the treasure by sending the giant into a deep sleep. Once the giant is asleep the villagers cross the swamp. "OH NO" the giant is awake. Once awake the villagers hide behind their balls so the giant can't see them. Before you can move again send the giant back into a deep sleep. Just remember the closer you get the softer those touches need to be. GOOD LUCK VILLAGERS!

Variations - Lay out the entire same color training vests, for example all Blue (Rubies). Once the villagers have stolen back the rubies then in round 2 lay out your entire yellow training vests (Gold). This exercise works well with 2 coaches one as a giant and one with the players (villagers). Try to get the parents involved by singing to create a fun atmosphere.



## Match 3 v 3 (Game)

### Description:

A small sided game 3v3 is a good way to finish a practice session. Use the opportunity to emphasize the theme of the session - award points for a particular move in addition to scoring a goal. Let the players play with little or no coaching - 15-20 minutes at the end of the session.

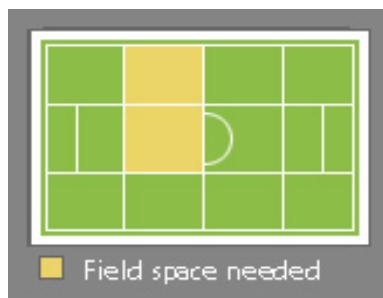
### Coaching Points

- Little or no coaching
- Encourage players to try skills practiced during the session

### Progressions:

The final activity of most practice sessions should focus on the theme of the session. Conditions can be added by the coach to emphasize the theme. For example, the coach can award a point (goal) if a player performs a turn learned during the session. Other conditions/progressions include: 1 or 2 touches, 1 touch finish, All players must touch the ball before scoring, Add a plus player (an extra player for the team in possession of the ball), 3 goals - one scored with the right foot, one with the left foot and one with the head (or any surface).

### Materials Needed



Area 30 x 15 yds

- Balls
- Cones
- Training Vests
- Small Goals