

# Spencer Soccer Club

## Youth Development Program

### Weekend Session Plan Guidance

#### **Under 7**

**Focus:** Dribbling Mastery, Intro to Defending, Attacking, Passing, & Shooting, Plus 1 & 2 Skills Pyramids

**Time:** Each weekend session lasts for 45 minutes followed by a 30 minute 5 v 5 match

#### **Planning:**

- 1) Print out and read through Weekend Session Plan
- 2) Become familiar with the Plus 1 Skills and Plus 2 triangles
- 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 or Plus 2 Skills Pyramid Diagram
- 3) Warm-Up Activity\*
- 4) Specific Skill
- 5) Activity 1
- 6) Controlled Juggling
- 7) Activity 2
- 8) Match 5 vs. 5



\*Warm Up Activity consists of Individual Ball Warm Up 1 and Individual Ball Warm Up 2 (to be used as guidance for coaches)

#### **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 Plus 1 Skills by session #5. Introduce Plus 2 skills after session #5. Skills introduced in the previous session should be reviewed in every subsequent warm-up activity.

Each week a specific skill is introduced and should be concentrated on by the coaches. The specific skill is the page immediately following Individual Ball Warm-up 2. Specific skills relating to dribbling, Sessions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10, should be demonstrated and included in your Warm-Up Activity. Warm-up activities should be cut-down to account for time needed to coach non-dribbling specific skills in Sessions 2, 3 & 4.

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.

**Note:** Session #2 focuses on defensive tackles; the first activity has been replaced with specific skills to allow coaches to have the time necessary to introduce this concept to players.

#### 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 as stated above in Activity 1

Match 5 vs. 5: All players play, there are no substitutions. Games will be played against opposing teams as per the schedule. 2 games will run at the same time to accommodate all players from both teams. Games should be played using the full field with a maximum of 6 vs. 6. Games are officiated by older Spencer Soccer players. If an official does not arrive or is unavailable be prepared to have a coach, assistant coach, or parent referee the game (watch and whistle required). Quarters are 6 minutes long. Goalkeepers are used; all goalkeepers must throw the ball back into play, punts and drop-kicks are not allowed. Throw-ins, Corner Kicks, Goal Kicks, and fouls will be called; there are no offside. Coaches should pair players of like abilities in game play (e.g. your top five vs. their top five, etc.).



## PLUS | SKILLS CHALLENGE PYRAMID™

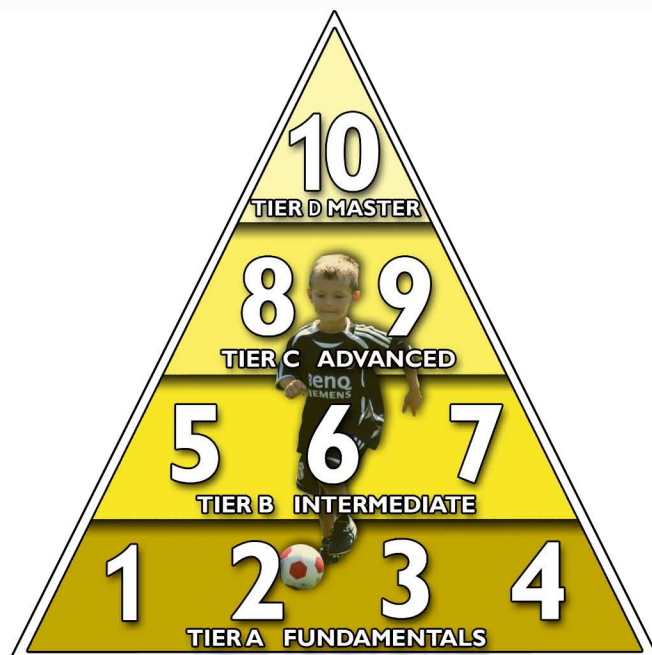
## TIER A

**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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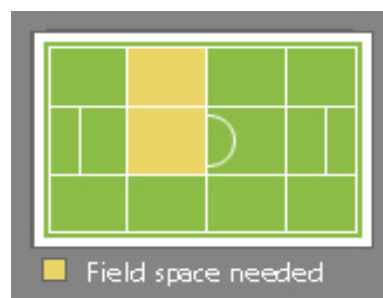
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## Materials Needed



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

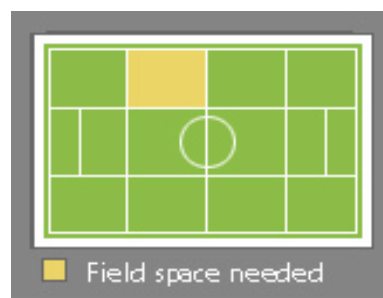
- Keep the ball moving at all times
- Soft touches and keep head up
- Move into the open space

### 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:

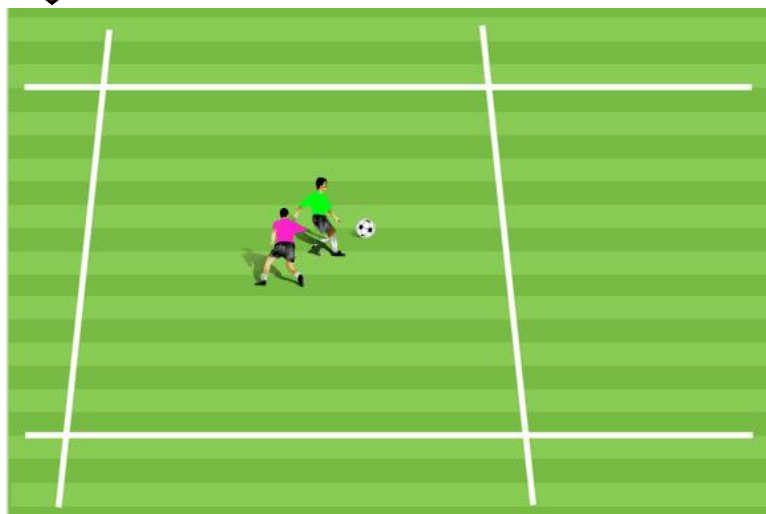
Each player has a ball and dribbles around the inside of the square. The coach challenges the players to complete a variety of tasks within 30 seconds. For example 1) Travel to all 4 sides of the box in any order, 2) How many touches on the ball can you get with your right foot or left foot?, 3) How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

### Coaching Points

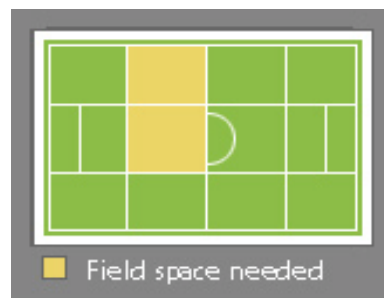
- Keep the ball moving at all times
- Keep your head up
- Move into the open space

### 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 Moves - The 'V' (Dribbling, Creating Space)

### Description:

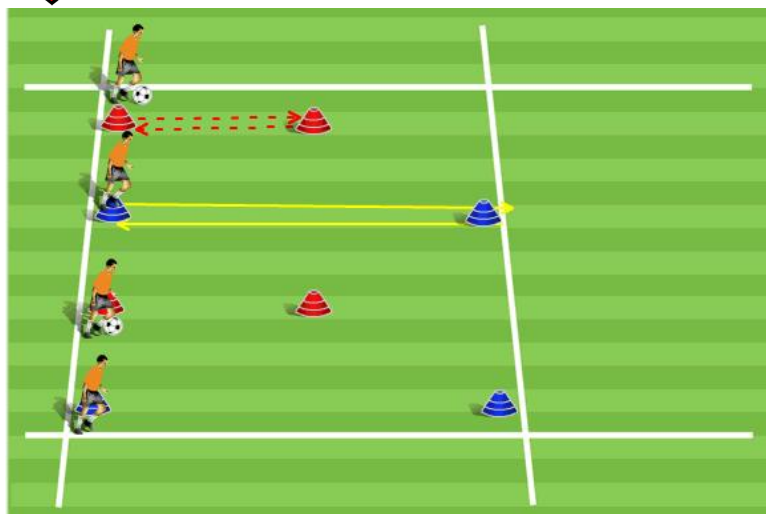
One ball per player in an open grid to begin. Isolate the skill by performing on-the-spot. The 'V' is performed by dragging the ball away from a defender with the sole of the foot (back towards the attacker) and then pushing the ball forward past the defender on the other side. The movement pattern 'draws' a V in the grass. 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

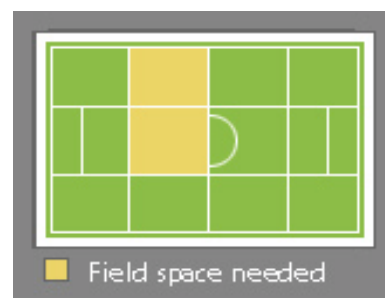
- Start in stationary position - not a dribble
- Quick transfer of the ball from one foot to the other
- Accelerate away leaving defender behind

### 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, but 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 20 yds

- Balls
- Cones
- Training Vests

## Speed Dribble # 1 (Dribbling)

### Description:

Players work in pairs with one ball between them. The partner with the ball stands by the red cone with their partner without a ball standing by the blue cone. On coaches command all players work at the same time - players with a ball dribbling to the near cone and back and the players without a ball running around the far cone and back. All balls must be stopped within one yard of the starting cone on returning. Players swap roles every time with their partner. 1) Step on turn, 2) Drag back. This is a competition between the partners to see who returns to the start line quickest with a point awarded for good technique or speed and a bonus point awarded for the first player back at the starting cone.

### Coaching Points

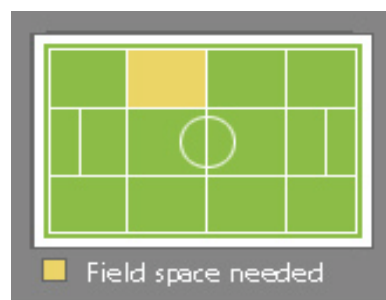
- Minimal touches of the ball to turn
- Controlled pace into the turn and accelerate away
- Focus on technique before speed

### Progressions:

- 1) Player with the ball to perform 3 turns so dribbling to cone and back four times whilst partner runs four lengths
- 2) After each round everyone gets a new partner so we get an overall winner of the competition



## Materials Needed



Open area

- One ball per player

## Controlled Juggling (Relaxation)

### Description:

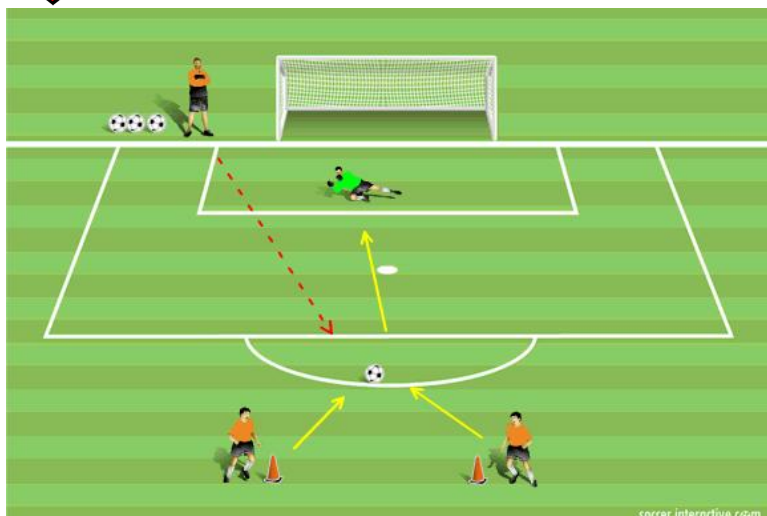
Players start with the soccer ball in their hands. They drop the ball on their thigh (juggle it once), and catch it. As they get better at it, they can try juggling the ball from one thigh to the other thigh and then catch it.

### 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.



## 1 v 1 to Goal (Attacking)

### Description:

Two players start side by side 25 yards from goal. The server (standing to one side of the goal) plays a ball into the area and shouts "GO". Players must turn and compete for the ball and attempt a shot at goal.

### Coaching Points

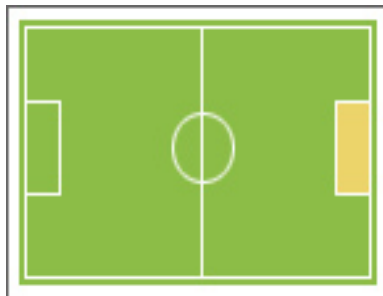
- Speed of reaction
- First touch towards goal but away from defender

- Awareness of keepers and defenders positions

### Progressions:

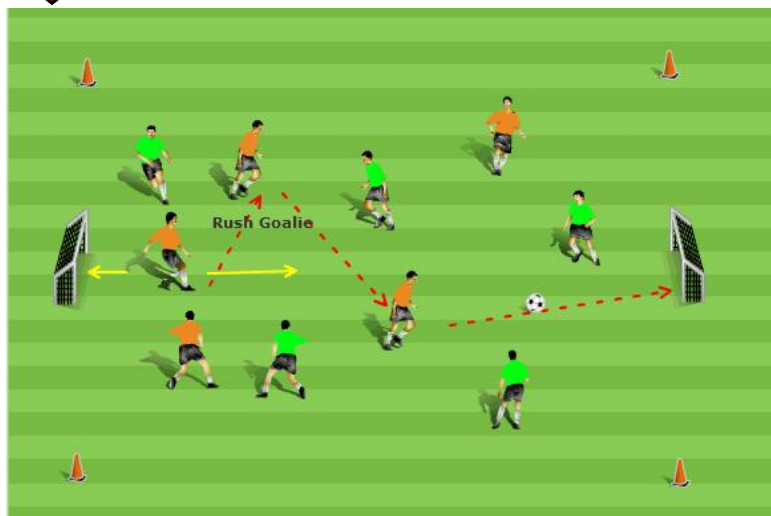
Add a time limit on the attack.

### Materials Needed

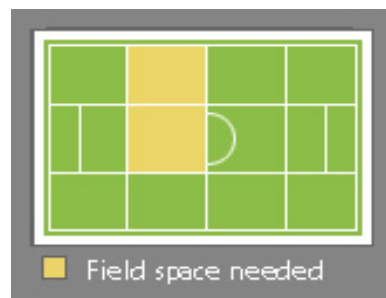


Area 25 x 25 yds

- Balls
- Cones
- Training Vests



## Materials Needed



40x20

- Balls
- Cones
- Training Vests
- Small Goals

## Match 5v5 (Game)

### Description:

Small sided games (5v5) are good to finish a practice session. Let the players play with little or no coaching - 15-20 minutes at the end of the session.

### Coaching Points

- Stop the game occasionally to coach
- 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)