

Youth Soccer

Practice Activities - U6/U8

These activities are based on my philosophy in soccer and getting as “many touches” on the ball at a young age in a fun and engaging way for the players. These are just suggestions based on my experience and research. There are other session plans through Massachusetts Youth Soccer that provide other session plans and ideas. Feel free to use and differentiate activities as needed.

What rhymes with “Toe” - “No Toe!”

Warm-up (2-3 minutes)

1. Back to coach
 - a. players pick up their ball and the coach gives a direction to bring the ball back in their hands by jogging, skipping, bunny hop, one leg hop, shuffle, etc.
 - b. Last two or three have the players dribble the ball back to coach (U6 dribble any way, U8 - specific inside foot only, outside foot only, right only, left only, etc.)
2. Coaches ball
 - a. Coach dribbles around the grid for 2-3 minutes and the players try to knock their ball into the coach's ball keeping track of the number of times the knock it. Coach should change directions and move into different corners
3. Body Part
 - a. Players dribble around the grid and the coach yells out a body part. Players stop dribbling and put that body part on the ball. Examples are foot, knee, head, elbow

Red, Light, Green (5 minutes)

1. Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light (I personally do this activity every week for about 5 minutes)
 - a. Red Light - Stop and put foot on top of the ball (see if players can use right foot once, then left foot a different time)
 - b. Yellow Light - Slow dribble (Laces, inside of the foot, outside of the foot (outside of the foot for U8) - I say “little touches” often during yellow light
 - c. Green Light - players dribble as fast as they can and stay in the grid
 - d. Pump the gas - Players put right foot and then left foot on top of the ball switching back and forth several times (Toe Taps). If players have a strong sense of balance they can do this quicker and by hopping as they change feet
 - e. Windshield wipers - Players tap the ball with the insides of their feet back and forth several times (Foundations) - Players should get quicker and start to be on their toes as they kick the ball between their legs
 - f. U Turn - During Yellow Light or Green Light of dribbling the ball, when U-Turn is yelled out, players use the inside of their foot to turn the ball and change directions. Try to get players to use their other foot the next time. (U8 - make players start U-turning by using the outside of their feet)
 - g. E Brake - Players put their foot on top of the ball (as if in Red Light) and pull the ball backwards and then turn around and continue to dribble.

Suggested Progression

U6 - Week 1 (Red, Yellow, Pump the Gas), Week 2 (Red, Yellow, Pump the Gas, Green Light), Week 3 (Red, Yellow, Pump the Gas, Green Light, Windshield Wipers), Week 4 - Start adding U Turn and E Brake if your team feels good with the directions

U8 - Week 1 (Red, Yellow, Pump the Gas, Windshield Wipers), Week 2 (Red, Yellow, Pump, Wipers, Green), Week 3 (Red, Yellow, Pump, Wipers, Green, U Turn), Week 4 (Red, Yellow, Green, Pump, Wipers, U Turn, E Brake), Week 5 (U Turn with outside of the feet) Start making the commands quicker and quick

Activities (10-15 minutes)

1. Snake Tag - Players dribble around the grid with one coach/player as the snake. If the snake tags a player they link arms or hands to make a long snake/chain and go tag another player. Make links no more than 3-4 players together, just make a different snake.
2. Hunters and Foxes - Each player puts a pinnie (Fox Tail) on the side of their shorts letting it hang out and starts dribbling around the grid. The hunter chases the players and pulls the fox tail out. The fox becomes a hunter if their tail is pulled out leaving their ball behind.
3. Wreck It Ralph - Spread all the cones around the grid, try to spread them out. The players dribble around and knock over the cones using their ball only (pass into it or dribble into it). One or two players must run around and pick up all of the

cones standing them back up. Do this 30 seconds to 1 minute. Count the cones knocked over and then try again. (Coach picks them up the first time, then pick other players)

4. Pirates and Treasure - Line up all the cones on one side of the grid spread out. Players line up on the opposite side of the grid and dribble their ball and pick up ONE cone and bring it back to the assistant coach or a side area. If a pirate tags a player, make the player do 5 toe taps or 5 foundations in order to move again and get the treasure. Game ends when all of the treasure is stolen from the pirate
5. Hungry Hungry Hippo - Two players or coaches link arms and try to tag the players as they cross the river. Players line up on one end and dribble across to the other side. If a player gets tagged they become a hippo. Only two hippos linked as a time. U8 (Instead of just tagging the player, make them kick the ball out of bounds to get the player out)
6. Alien Invasion - Set up a small circle with cones and one/two players stand inside the spaceship and try to protect it. All the other players stand outside the grid and kick the balls inside the spaceship. Aliens in the middle try to kick the ball out and as far as they can. Players just grab any ball (doesn't need to be theirs) and kicks it back inside. Play for about 30-1 minute and switch
7. Stuck in the mud - one player is it and runs around tagging all of the players. Players that get tagged pick up the ball over their head and open up their legs. In order to get unstuck out of the mud a teammate must pass between their legs and then continue. Get the kids back into play quickly so they are dribbling more by having the coaches unstuck players or coaches can just tag a player back into the game if you don't feel comfortable dribbling the ball.
8. Police Patrol - Players dribble around the grid and the police officer dribbles around the grid and knocks their ball into the other players in order to give them a ticket for speeding. Players that get a ticket must do 5 toe taps or foundations to get back in.
9. Mr. Wolf What Time is it? - Players yell out "Mr. Wolf What time is it?" and the wolf says 5 o'clock, 8 o'clock, etc and players dribble that many times. Say "Laces only, Inside foot only, outside foot only" at different times. If the Wolf says "Dinner Time" they have to run back to the starting line before getting tagged. If they get tagged they become a wolf also (Game is better for U6 than U8)
10. Guardian of the Galaxy - Set up 5-8 Triangles around the playing grid. Players dribble and stop the ball as many times in different galaxies in 1 minute. Second time allow a player or coach to "Defend" the galaxy by standing in the middle, the runs to defend a different galaxy

U8 Soccer - Last 30 minutes of practice (15-20 minutes of practice)

1. Game scenarios (Divide teams evenly on the sideline and pass out pinnies) and gather all the balls
 - a. Start with 1v1 - ball goes in the goal or out of bounds play ends
 - b. Play 2v1 a few times - try to get everyone as the defender once (Talk and push for players to pass often to their teammates)
 - c. 3v1 (Passing, Passing, Passing - Praise great passing (If a player scores, give praise to the person who passed the ball and not so much the person who scored the goal.
 - d. 3v2 (To finish)

*As the coach roll the ball into different spots on the field - Right in the middle at times, but also in the different corners, maybe throw the ball into the air a bit so the ball is bouncing so players have to control it. Other times specifically roll it to a player. Give the single player in a 2v1 the ball to start.

2. End each practice with a 4v4 scrimmage

If you have any question please feel free to e-mail me at NorthCentralFC@gmail.com

Thanks,
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