

HOLDEN YOUTH SOCCER

** This curriculum is to be used as a guide and not required to be followed as different teams may have different needs.*

**Based on MYSA guidelines.*

**One of either activity 2 or 3 can be eliminated due to time constraints.*

**A session on goalkeeping is included at the end of the curriculum.*

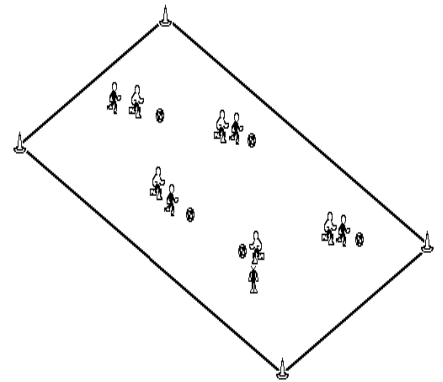
***EACH practice should end with a 20 minute scrimmage in a field of appropriate size (not included here in writing but essential).**

U12 Practice Week 1(dribbling)

Main Coaching Points: keep ball within 1 giant step, use arms for balance and to find out where opponents are, try to keep head up, bend knees, stay low, after a move need a burst of speed, need to perform moves at maximum pace with success, use outside of foot for speed dribbling, balance and body control are of great importance.

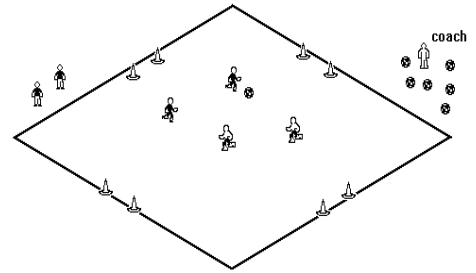
1) Free Dribble/Technical Box---use entire space, everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Practice two or three moves, coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. (12 minutes)

2) Shield-Steal---use entire space, half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. When coach yells freeze, those who do not have balls must do star jumps or donkey kicks. Go over technical points as a group at start of activity show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (12 minutes)



1 minute water break

3) 2 vs. 2 to Four Cross Goals---Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three, you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yd X 10yd. Have one team of 2 on deck, they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately. (15 minutes)



1 minute water break

4) 4v4 or 5v5 to goals---must shoot below knee height to count as a goal. (15 minutes)

5) Review---ask players to teach you the technical coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (3 minutes)

U12 Practice Week 2 (possession)

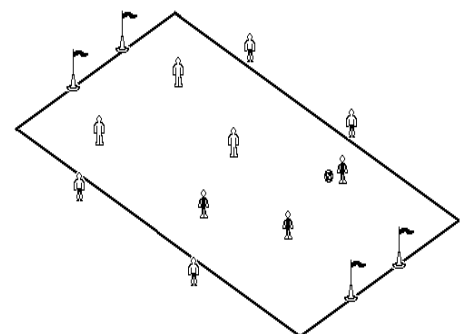
Main Coaching Points: passing – locked ankle, toe up (inside) or down and in (outside), follow thru to partner, strike ball solid thru the middle or a bit above to keep it down, knees bent, head down, placement foot pointed to target and parallel to ball, pay attention to proper weight and angle. Support – get to an angle at which passing lane is clear and have your hips open to the playing field, communicate, have head up, check to ball.

1) Technical Box / Pairs Passing---use entire space, half with balls and split groups into two with pinnies. Pass and move variations: 1-pass and move by passing to anyone, 2-pass and move by only passing to same team, 3-pass and move with wall pass, 4-pass and move with overlap, 5-pass and move with takeover, 6-receive pass and do a move, 7-receive pass and turn. (15 minutes)

1 minute water break

2) Colored Passing-- half of the players in red pinnies, half in blue. Teams playing together in the same space combine in the passing sequence blue-blue-red-red-blue-blue-red-red etc. etc. Ball can never stop, players can never stop moving, and ball cannot leave area of play. Coach can limit touch-count, mandate which foot to pass with or which side of foot to pass with as sees fit. When players can do first sequence adequately and without frequent errors change the sequence to blue-blue-blue-red-red-red-blue-blue-blue etc. etc. Stress communication and technical passing points throughout. Make this activity competitive by counting errors and setting goals by lowering allowed errors. (10 minutes)

3) 3 vs 3 + 4 (Bread and Butter)---typical 3 vs 3 but with an additional 4 players who stand on outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets (with only 2 touches). If a team



gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yd area. Stress correct technique, receiving sideways on, and facing where they wish to play. May restrict the players to 2/3 touch to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive. (15 minutes)

1 minute water break

4) 4 vs 4 to goals---Round Robin Tournament---set up 25x40 yd fields and try to get each team three games of four minutes each. Play to small goals. (15 minutes)

5) Review---ask players to teach you the technical coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (3 minutes)

Please adjust numbers of players and size of fields accordingly

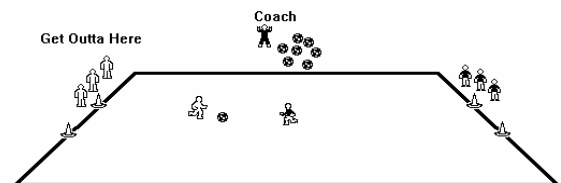
U12 Practice Week 3(shooting)

Main Coaching Points: ankle locked, hips over ball (with hip of shooting leg tilted a bit higher than other hip), head down, knee over, body slightly leaning over ball, plant foot beside ball and weight on ball of this foot, knees bent, follow through to target, strike center of ball, move through ball and land on shooting foot. Strike ball with laces so that ball strikes hard bone on top of foot.

1) Shoot Tag---players in pairs each have their own soccer ball. To start, player A passes his ball into space. Player B then strikes his ball with laces at player A's ball. Once player B's ball either hits or passes player A's ball, player A can use one touch to prep his ball and then must strike his ball at player B's ball. Once player A's ball either hits or passes player B's ball, player B does the same. Each time a player hits the other player's ball with their own, it counts as a point. Partners keep track of their score as this is a competition. (15 minutes)

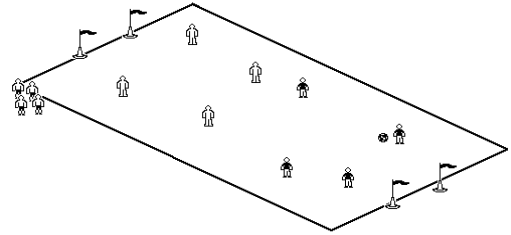
1 minute water break

2) Get Outta Here---place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15x10 yds. Place half of team behind each goal and coach stands at halfway line with all balls. When coach plays out a ball the first two players (one from each team) run out and try to score on each other's goal by dribbling through it. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta here" and plays in a new ball immediately for the next two players. *Version 2:* Coach can stop yelling "get outta here" after a while and see if players recognize when balls go out and are attentive. *Version 3:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 4:* Coach calls out 2 or 3 or 4 for amount of players from each team to come out. (20 minutes)



1 minute water break

3) 4 vs 4 + 4 on deck---two teams playing to one goal each. First team to two goals stays or if two minutes pass by, the longest team on gets off and new team comes on. Captains on each team keep score. (20 minutes)



4) Review---ask players to teach you the technical coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (3 minutes)

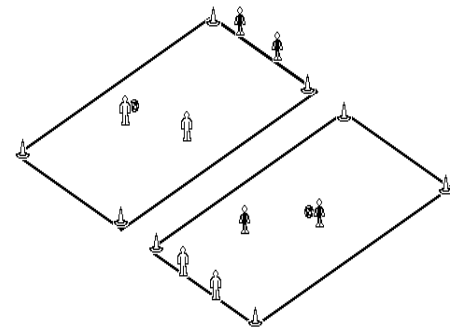
Please adjust numbers of players and size of fields accordingly

U12 Practice Week 4 (heading and receiving airballs)

Main Coaching Points (heading): keep eyes open and focused on the ball, mouth closed. Strike the ball, do not let the ball strike you. Surface of contact should be upper half of forehead. Players should snap neck and torso through ball for maximum power. Use arms for balance, protection and to create space.

1) Heading Progression---a) seated--have one player sit on their behind with legs out in front and have partner gently toss ball from a foot or two away. Seated player must head back to partner. The focus of this is to make sure players are using the proper part of their head and to quell any fears. b) cobra--one partner lays on stomach and arches back up with elbows. When partner throws ball from a short distance the cobra snaps its' neck and heads the ball back. Do not use arms to prop self up. c) crab--one partner gets on all fours in a crab position. When other partner tosses ball from a short distance, the crab thrusts its' hips down and backwards and throws its' torso forward to head the ball back. Crab must also snap neck while doing this. d) knees--one partner on knees. When ball is tossed player snaps torso and neck forward to head ball. Challenge players to see if they can knock over partner. e) standing--standing still with left foot forward, partner heads ball back to tosser with power and accuracy using all aforementioned techniques. Switch to right foot forward. (14 minutes)

2) 2 vs 2 Heading to goals---in a 10x10 yd area with 4 cones outlining space (and used as goals), two players with ball in hand, pass back and forth to each other to get to other end. They then try to head ball between two cones and two players. Can self toss or toss to partner to head in. The two defending must only defend on their goal line (can use hands) or the attacking team gets the ball again. If the attacking team drops the ball at any point the other team picks it up from where it was dropped. *Note:* quick transition-find the space and the opportunities. (14 minutes)



1 minute water break

Main Coaching Points (receiving in air): be on toes, get body behind ball, move to the ball (do not wait for it), try to drop ball, using one touch, a bit in front of body so it's in your control but not under you. When using thigh (not knee), lift thigh up to meet ball, once ball touches thigh, drop your leg down to cushion the ball in. Make sure you push ball slightly in front of you so you can handle it easily. Ball should not pop up. Make sure players use quadriceps to cushion balls. When using chest, bend knees with feet staggered and slightly arch back while using arms for

balance. Cushion ball (collapse chest) as it hits your chest and guide it to your feet. Do not push out chest to pop the ball out too far in front of you.

3) Pairs moving reception---in pairs with server moving backward and receiver moving forward, have server toss ball to receivers thigh (both legs) and have receiver settle balls and play back to server---go all the way across the floor and back. Switch server and receiver. Repeat. Do the same thing with service going to chest. Keep score of how many clean receptions each player makes. Bad receptions (pop ball up, multiple touches, too far away from body, tripping over ball) do not count. (14 minutes)

1 minute water break

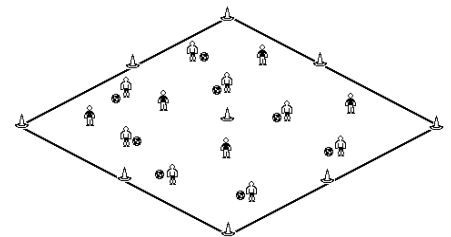
4) Team Handball---2 teams play by tossing ball (with hands) to teammates to work ball up field and scoring on the goal only with a header or a volley. Players cannot take more than 3 steps with the ball when they have it in hands. If ball drops on ground, it goes to other team. (14 minutes)

5) Review---ask players to teach you the technical coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (2 minutes)

U12 Practice Week 5 (2v1 attacking)

Coaching Points: Players need to be able to “play with” or “link with” other players, by using verbal and non-verbal communication. With combination plays (wall pass, overlap, and takeover) players must read each others non-verbal cues to predict what a team mate is looking to do next. Additionally, the 1st attacker (player with the ball) needs to make a decision on whether to combine with the 2nd attacker or attack the space themselves. This decision is based on where the defender is in relation to the field, the goal, the first attacker, and the second attacker.

1) Combination Square---Make a grid about 25x25 yards and break it into quarters. Place 4 or 5 players in vests and have them roam around the entire grid in order to give support to the other players. Players in vests do not have balls, all other players do. Players with balls look to dribble around the grid and try to connect with the vested players to perform wall-passes. However, in order for this to happen the player on the ball must pass to a vested player in a different quarter than him and the pass back from the vested player must go into a quarter that neither he or player who passed the ball is in. The player initiating this wall pass needs to play a firm pass, sprint to an open space in a different quarter, receive the ball, and burst again with speed once receiving the ball. The vested player must show themselves to others constantly in order to give support and look to play balls to the front foot of the runner. (12 minutes)



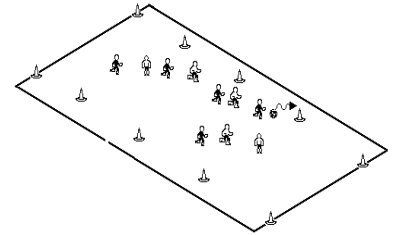
2) 2v1 to a line---In a 17x12 yard grid two teams of five stand on two opposite end lines. Attackers combine with a wall pass, overlapping run or take-over to beat the single defender to the opposite line. The defender passes the ball to the attackers from the opposite line, and must approach the attackers. If the defender intercepts the ball they can counter-attack to opposite end line for a point. The next service comes from the other end line, and the team that was defending last time now attacks 2v1. *Variation:* Attacking team can either combine for two points or person with the ball can make the decision to dribble over the line, under control, for one point. (14 minutes)

1 minute water break

3) 2v1+1 to goal---In a 17x12 yard grid add two 3 yard goals on each 12-yard side. The attacking team must set up an over-lap, take-over or wall pass before scoring. The defending team must have one player in the goal and one on the field. The goalkeeper must stay in the goal until the attacking team loses the ball. *Variation:* Attacking team can combine for two points or person with the ball can shoot, below knee height, for one point. (14 minutes)

1 minute water break

4) Endzone Game---Teams comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. The attacking team must combine with a wall pass, take-over or over-lap to get into the end zone (created with discs). Add a “plus” player who always plays for the attacking team if they can’t keep possession long enough to create a combination. *Variation:* Get two points for combining with a teammate in the end zone and get one point for dribbling into the end zone. (16 minutes)



5) Review---Ask players to teach you the coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (2 minutes)

U12 Practice Week 6 (2v1 defending)

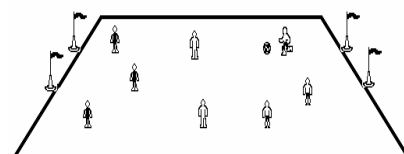
Coaching Points: Defenders need to have the correct stance: be on their toes, with knees bent, one foot forward, one back, trying to anticipate when to close down their opponent. Defender needs to bend run to “take away” (block the path to) the goal, or force the ball in the direction that eliminates the second attacker. The defender then needs to “approach fast, arrive slow”, bend run, have correct stance, try to win ball off first touch of opponent, delay progress of opponent by jockeying the player with the ball, and try to force them out of play (can force towards the sideline or try to create a 1v1 rather than a 2v1 situation by eliminating the second attacker). Once opponent goes where the defender wants them to go, they should tackle with front foot, not back foot.

1) Defensive stance---In two’s, pass the ball back and forth one touch from about 7 yds apart. When either of the players stops the ball with the bottom of their foot, their partner responds by making a bending run and closing down the player on the ball as a defender would. After arriving, the defender backs off, and the exercise continues. Variations: 1) Player stops ball with sole of foot, other player goes and circles opponent, backing away as a defender would. 2) If one player lets ball through their legs, they turn shield it and the other player goes to press the ball and does not let player 1 turn for a few seconds. 3) Add a second attacker. Two attackers pass back and forth (minimum 2 touch) and defender approaches first attacker (player with ball) at angle to cut off second attacker. (14 minutes)

2) 2v1 to line---15x10 yd grid. Defender passes ball down to two attackers, who then try to attack opposite line. If defender wins ball, they can attack opposite line. Focus on cutting off as many options for first attacker as possible (second attacker, open goal, etc.), by angle of approach, speed of approach, and using sideline as ‘second defender’. (12 minutes)

1 minute waterbreak

3) 2v1 to goal---15x15 yd grid with a small goal on each end. Defender passes ball down to two attackers, who then try to attack opposite goal. If defender wins ball, they can attack opposite goal. (14 minutes)



1 minute waterbreak

4) 3v3 + 2 game---Typical 3 versus 3 game to goals but with two neutral players who always play for the team with the ball, thus creating multiple 2v1 situations. Highlight 2v1 defensive situations and choices and rotate players through the neutral player role so all players have chance to play defense. (16 minutes)

5) Review---Ask players to teach you the coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (2 minutes)

U12 Practice Week 7 (2v2 attacking)

Coaching Points: Players need to be able to “play with” or “link with” other players, by using verbal and non-verbal communication. With combination plays (wall pass, overlap, and takeover) players must read each others non-verbal cues to predict what a team mate is looking to do next. Additionally, the 1st attacker (player with the ball) needs to make a decision on whether to combine with the 2nd attacker or attack the space themselves. This decision is based on where the 1st and 2nd defenders are in relation to the field, the goal, the 1st attacker, and the 2nd attacker. Should be looking for situations for the two attackers to combine or attack by selves in a way to reduce the number of defenders by their decisions and catch them ‘off guard’.

1) Technical Box---players are passing and moving in pairs within grid. Every fourth pass must be a wall pass, overlap or takeover). Players need to alternate which combination they use and make sure the ball does not leave the grid. Coaches demonstrate coaching points on how to combine properly and can add light pressure as activity continues to make sure players pick their heads up. (10 minutes)

2) 2v2 to lines---In a 12x17 yard grid two teams of six stand on two opposite end lines. The defenders pass the ball to the attackers from the opposite line, and must approach the attackers. Attackers try to combine with a wall pass, over lapping run, take-over, or dribble by self to beat the two defenders to the opposite line. If the defenders intercept the ball they can counter-attack to opposite end line for a point. The next service comes from the other end line, and the team that was defending last time now attacks 2v2. (14 minutes)

1 minute water break

3) 2v2 to goals--- In a 12x17 yard grid with two 3 yard goals on each 12-yard side. The attacking team tries to set up an over-lap, take-over or wall pass before scoring (knee height or below). If the defenders intercept the ball they can counter-attack to opposite end line for a point. The next service comes from the other end line, and the team that was defending last time now attacks 2v2. (14 minutes)

1 minute water break

4) 2v2 to goal tournament---In 22x17 yard grids with two yd. goals. If space is too small, have team of four, with 2 on and 2 off, and switch every 2 minutes. Keep focus on attacking aspects! (18 minutes)

5) Review---Ask players to teach you the coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (2 minutes)

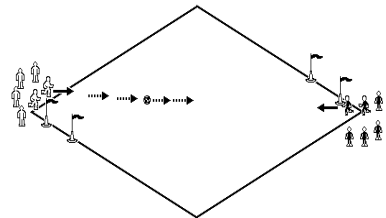
U12 Practice Week 8 (2v2 defending)

Coaching Points: 1st defender should bend run to “take away” (block the path to) the goal, or force the ball in the direction of the 2nd defender. The 1st defender should remember to “approach fast, arrive slow”, bend run, have correct stance, try to win ball off first touch of opponent, delay progress of opponent by jockeying the player with the ball, and try to force them out of play and in the direction of the 2nd defender. Once opponent goes where the defender wants them to go, they should tackle with front foot, not back foot.

1st defender says “I have ball”, second says keep it left/right. Make sure that the 1st defender “affects” the ball...gets the head of the 1st attacker down by getting close to the 1st attacker ASAP. 2nd defender needs to be at approximately a 30 degree backward angle to the 1st defender on the side that the first defender is showing the ball towards. 2nd defender tells 1st defender which way to push attacker and gets ready to step towards the second attacker. Once the ball is passed to the 2nd attacker, the defenders’ roles change, and the previous 1st defender needs to drop off and cover (now serving as 2nd defender).

1) Truck and Trail Warm-up---Balls are spread around the playing area. Players jog around in two’s and pressure (press) any ball, and their team-mate covers them. Then roles switch. Variation: cannot go to a ball that another pair is pressing. Variation: if another pair gets to the ball first, they can dribble at/past you and you play it live for 5 seconds. (10 minutes)

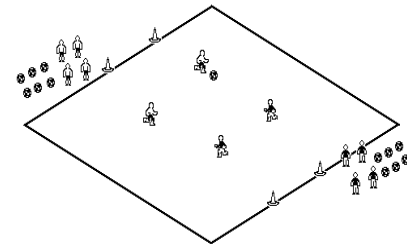
2) Soccer Golf---This game is played in a space 22x17 yards, with two 2 yard goals in diagonally opposite corners. Two teams of 6 players are at the adjacent corner of the grid from where they are defending their goal. The supply of balls is there too. Game starts by one team passing the ball to their opponents. Play 2v2 until the ball is out of play. If a team dribbles through the goal, they get three points, a pass through the goal equals two points, and a dribble over the rest of the end line is worth one point. (14 minutes)



1 minute water break

3) 2v2 Flying Changes---Two goal game in grid 25x25 yards. Two groups of soccer balls, behind and off to the side of each goal. One pair of players brings ball out to play 2v2 against pair of players from opposite team. Team gets one point if shoot (knee height and below) and 3 points if dribble through goal. When one team scores, the team defending that end go off, and immediately the next two players come on for that team **with** a ball. The team scored stays on, and now must transition to defense. If the ball goes over a side line, it is an "all change", and the coach points to one of the two teams to say which team brings the next ball in. Keep game going at fast pace once players understand. (14 minutes)

1 minute water break



4) 2v2 to goal Tournament---In 22x17 yard grids with two yd. goals. If space is too small, have team of four, with 2 on and 2 off, and switch every 2 minutes. Keep focus on defending aspects! (18 minutes)

5) Review---Ask players to teach you the coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. (2 minutes)

Goalkeeping

Objectives: To help goalkeepers work on and improve the technical aspects of proper footwork, body position and handling the ball, through team training.

1) Dribbling / Hands Warm-Up (15 to 20 minutes):

One ball per player. All players, including goalkeepers, freely dribble with inside and outside of their feet. Change speed & direction, and perform moves. *Version 2:* The GK's in the group get rid of their soccer balls. The field players call out their names and pass the ball towards them so that the goalkeepers can begin to field the soccer balls with their hands (on the ground first, then change to service in air).

Coaching Points:

- Make sure when catching ball, the hands always lead, not the knees.
- Prior to catching the ball, get into a "Gorilla" shape...shoulders rounded, knees bent, feet square to body, arms out to sides and slightly forward with elbows slightly bent, palms facing forward.
- Always be on balls of the feet, moving while ball is moving, ready to come out to meet the ball or cut down the angle.
- Getting set when shooter plants non-kicking foot to shoot.
- "W" hand position for chest high and overhead balls. The "W" is formed by the thumbs and index fingers.
- Both palms of the hands must always be turned outwards to the ball. This means the body position will have to be adjusted to ensure that both palms get behind the ball. The object is to present the maximum amount of palm and fingers to the ball.
- Hands leading (bent elbows, giving a strong, shock-absorbing effect), shoulders square to the ball.
- Hands together, fingers pointed towards ground for low balls...shovel ball into body (scooping low and into body).

2) Shooting Warm – Up (15 to 20 minutes):

Set up two goals about 40 yards apart and the width of the penalty area, with GK's in each and have players partner up with a ball. Partners dribble and pass together around the area, call out the GK's name and then shoot on net (to warm them up). *Version 2:* Player with ball can play ball outside the area (into the flanks) to their partner to get a cross off. If GK makes save, can quickly throw ball out to player who crossed it. *Version 3:* Partners now try and dribble at GK with partner and try to score.

Coaching Points:

- Coach should be behind goalkeeper (if there is an assistant coach, he can coach another goalkeeper in the other goal) reinforcing coaching points listed in Activity #1

2) Shooting Stars (15-20 minutes):

Two goals set about 2 penalty boxes apart with cones separating field into two. Split team into two teams, yellow and blue. Blue has half of their team, with soccer balls, at one side of one goal, and the other half of their team at the other goal (on the opposite side), without soccer balls. Yellow will set up the same way. A blue player in the group with the soccer balls passes across to a blue player opposite them. The blue player receiving the pass tries to run onto it, receive it before the half way mark, and then has 1-2 touches to get a shot off by the halfway mark. Yellow is doing the same task at the same time. Have them switch sides; choose which foot they pass it to and which foot shooter shoots with. *Version 2:* Make it competitive and first team to 10 goals win.

Coaching Points:

- Coach should be behind goalkeeper (if there is an assistant coach to help, he can work with the goalkeeper in the other goal) reinforcing coaching points listed in Activity #1.

3) GK / Team Challenge (15 to 20 minutes):

Split teams into two (blue and yellow). Blue group is at one goal (on both sides of goal) and yellow is at the opposite goal (on both sides of goal). Have a server on the side with all of the soccer balls. Server calls out number of players they want from each team and plays ball into area (number can vary-2/3/4). Players try to score and must keep track of their goals. First team to 10 goals wins. Server can take a shot on a goalkeeper as well to keep them on their toes.

Coaching Points:

- Coach should again position themselves behind goalkeeper and reinforce coaching points listed in Activity #1