

Holden Youth Soccer

U8 Practice Week 1

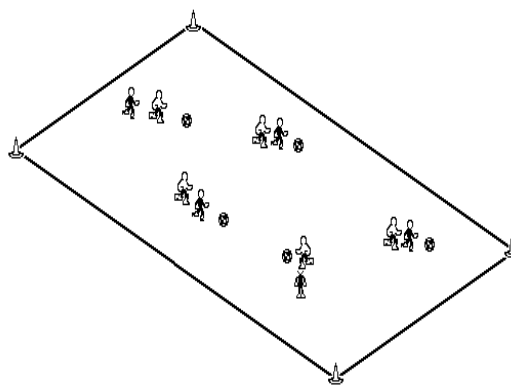
**Based on MYSA guidelines*

At the U8 level the practices will now include a theme. That is there will be a training focus i.e dribbling, passing, receiving etc. This focus however will be hidden or only the person designing and running the session will know about it. The focus of the first week will be dribbling skills.

1)Free Dribble---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot), and perform moves. Coach calls out moves (giving each move the name of a female or male U.S. National Team member is quite effective) or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. *Version 3:* Moves can be combined so that players are doing 3-4 moves in sequence. Then the sequence can be done with the non-dominant foot. Again, the coach can challenge the players by saying “I’m going to pick out two of you to demonstrate for the group.” Then ask the other players to watch the player closest to them. Each week, one or two more moves can be added in. (10 minutes)

2)Knock Out---In same space as previous activity have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player’s balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times). (10 minutes)

3)Shield-Steal---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. Teach players the technical points of shielding 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. Make it fun by having those who do not have a ball when you yell freeze do a silly thing (star jumps or donkey kicks) and then play again. (10 minutes)

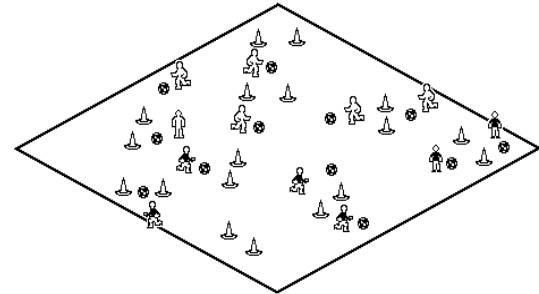


4) 1v1 to Endlines---In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yds) each player defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player’s endline. (10 min)

U8 Practice Week 2

During this second week, we will ask the players to review the dribbling moves they worked on last week, and build upon those moves by adding some new moves in touching on passing. The first two games will be similar to last week, so as to maximize the players' time on learning new skills rather than new games. Game three includes a lot of dribbling and begins to incorporate passing as well.

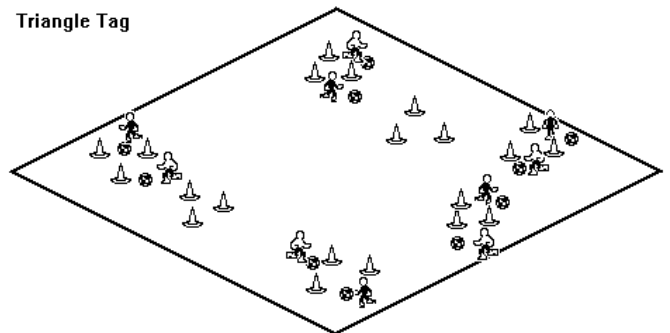
1)Fast Footwork Gates---Randomly place many pair of cones making small goals (1 yard) in a large space (30 x 20 yards) and have players dribble their balls through the goals for a point. When they get through the goal, they must perform a skill before they move onto the next goal. Skill number one is 10 "inside touches" from one foot to the other. Skill number two is 10 toe touches. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible. Have players count up their total points in the time you provide them. After doing once, ask them to improve their score by 2 and play the game again. Challenge each child individually. *Version 2:* Players can only dribble through goals with their right foot or their left foot. Note: You may need to make a rule disallowing players from dribbling back and forth in one goal or just two goals. (10 minutes)



2)Free Dribble & Fast Footwork---In the same space, everyone has a ball. Review inside, outside, and sole of the foot from last week. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction ("spin in" with inside of foot and "spin out" with outside of foot), and perform moves. This week's new moves are: "stop and go" (where the players momentarily stop the ball with the bottom of their foot before accelerating away from a pretend opponent, using their laces), and "Cruyff" (where each player rolls the ball backwards to turn, using the bottom and then inside of one foot). Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session. *Version 2:* Moves can be combined so that players are doing 3-4 moves in sequence. Then the sequence can be done with the non-dominant foot. Again, the coach can challenge the players by saying "I'm going to pick out two of you to demonstrate for the group." Then ask the other players to watch the player closest to them. Point out to players which moves are for going past an opponent, and which are for turning away from an opponent that you couldn't beat that time. *Version 3:* Players work "in their own little glass box area" on "inside touches" and then are given 30 seconds to get as many touches as they can in 30 seconds. Then the coach can ask them to beat their previous score. Then the coach can have them make $\frac{1}{4}$ turns right or left at which point the players pull the ball with the bottom of their feet to that side as quick as they can, and continue. *Fun variation:* "All change" can be shouted out during any of the above activities. Each player stops what they are doing, stops their ball, and runs to a new ball. See who's first to a new ball. Then restart exercise. (8 minutes)

3)Triangle Tag---Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the tag game, one player is being chased and one is "it". However this time the player who is "it" tags the player by kicking her ball and hitting the other player's ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither player can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow the player being chased to go through the triangle. When in the triangle she is safe. However, after going through triangle, player must go completely around triangle before she can go through triangle again. She cannot stop inside the triangle. *Version 3:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). If two pairs are at the same triangle at the same time that is fine, but players only compete with their partner still. Note: To increase difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag. (12 minutes).

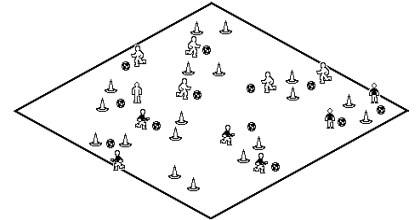
Triangle Tag



4) 2v1 Keepaway--- In a grid 10x15 yds, three players play 2v1 continuous keepaway. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attacker he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in. (10 min)

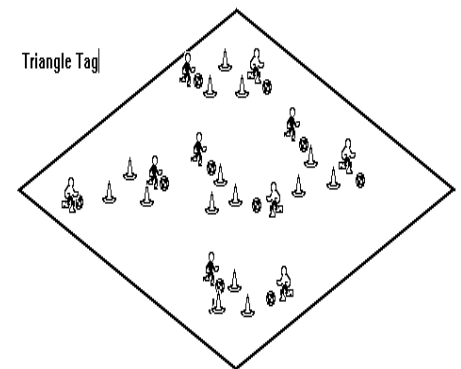
U8 Practice Week 3

1) Gates---Randomly place many pair of cones making small goals (1 yard) in a large space (30 x 20 yards) and have players dribble their balls through the goals for a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible. Have players count up their total points in the time you provide them. After doing once, ask them to improve their score by 2 and play the game again. Challenge each child individually. *Version 2:* Players can only dribble through goals with their right foot or their left foot. Note: You may need to make a rule disallowing players from dribbling back and forth in one goal or just two goals. (10 minutes)



2) Paired Tag---Pair players up, each pair has 2 balls. One player starts and is given a 2 second lead to get away from his/her partner. The chaser (“it”) dribbles after the first player and tries to tag him/her with his/her hand. If tagged, the roles reverse and the player who was previously “it” has two seconds to get away before their partner tries to tag them. Players must always dribble their soccer ball during this activity. (10 minutes)

3) Triangle Tag---Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the game tag, one player is being chased and one is “it”. However the player who is “it” tags the player by kicking her ball (using only the inside of the foot) and hitting the other player’s ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither player can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow the player being chased to go through the triangle.



When in the triangle she is safe. However, after going through triangle, player must go completely around triangle before she can go through triangle again. She cannot stop inside the triangle. *Version 3:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). If two pairs are at the same triangle at the same time that is fine, but players only compete with their partner still. Note: To increase difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag. (10 minutes)

4) 1v1 to Endlines---In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yds) each player defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player's endline. (10 min)

U8 Practice Week 4

1) Free Dribble---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction ("spin in" with inside of foot and "spin out" with outside of foot), and perform moves. Coach calls out moves (giving each move the name of a female or male U.S. National Team member is quite effective) or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. *Version 3:* Moves can be combined so that players are doing 3-4 moves in sequence. Then the sequence can be done with the non-dominant foot. Again, the coach can challenge the players by saying "I'm going to pick out two of you to demonstrate for the group." Then ask the other players to watch the player closest to them. Each week, one or two more moves can be added in. (10 minutes)

2) Ball Tag---In a space about 40yd X 30yd give every player a ball. Each player can pass (with the inside of their foot) their ball onto anyone else's ball for one point, and can hit the coach's ball for 3-5 points. *Version 2:* beat your score from last time by two points. *Version 3:* use your weaker foot. *Version 4:* Put people in pairs. One person is being chased while other does the chasing. Once the chaser hits the ball of the chase with their ball, the roles reverse. *Version 5:* make two teams to make more dynamic and see which team has the least chasers at the end. (10 minutes)

3) Paired Shield-Steal---Break up the group into pairs. Half of pairs in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from a pair who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. Pairs need to work on shielding and passing together. (10 minutes)

4) 2v1 Keepaway--- In a grid 10x15 yds, three players play 2v1 continuous keepaway. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attacker he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in. (10 min)

U8 Practice Week 5

In week five the emphasis will remain on the technical aspects of passing. Players will have correct body positioning in preparation for the ball to arrive by; 1) bouncing on the balls of their feet, 2) their hips will face their target. When striking the ball, players will; 1) balance on one foot, 2) will use the inside of the foot as the correct surface that contacts the ball, 3) will point their kicking foot toe up and out at a 45 degree angle to the ball, while keeping the kicking leg knee bent, 4) will point their non-kicking foot in the direction they are passing the ball. Additionally, players will be able to; 1) contact the ball in the top half, 2) follow through in an upward direction before their kicking foot goes to ground. Players will also be able to receive the ball with the inside of the foot, with a first touch that moves the ball forwards and away from their body at a 45 degree angle to either side.

1) Juggling--- Everyone with a ball. Players practice keeping the ball in the air with feet, thighs, and head. Players count how many times they touch the ball before it drops to the ground.

2) Gates Passing---This game will start out as a review of dribbling. Dribble through as many gates as you can in an allotted amount of time. Then, a similar game will be played, where the players are now paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted.

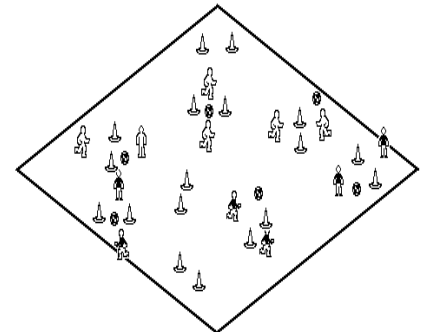
Version 2: Have players pass only with their left foot or right foot.

They can not go back through the same gate twice in a row.

Version 3: Have the players fake like they are going to receive the ball before it comes through the goal, and then let the ball run onto their back foot, or through their legs.

Version 4: Receive pass with outside of foot, and use both left and right.

Version 5: have players wall pass around goals as if they were defenders. (10 minutes)



3) Piggy in the Middle---In this game, two players are working together by playing two touch around a ball or cone that is placed between them. Each player should be at least 5 yards away from the object in between them. The goal is to have a positive first touch so that the passer, can see past the object in the middle and make a pass to their team mate without hitting the ball/cone in the middle. Their team mate then returns the ball in the same fashion with two touches and not hitting the object. The ball can go around either side of the object. Pairs count the number of passes without a mistake to compare to the other pairs. The pair with the highest number of consecutive passes gets to take on the coaches in front of the whole group. (10 minutes)

- 4) 2 vs. 1 keepaway---In a grid 10x15 yards, three players play 2 vs. 1 continuous keepaway. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attacker he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in. (10 minutes)

U8 Practice Week 6

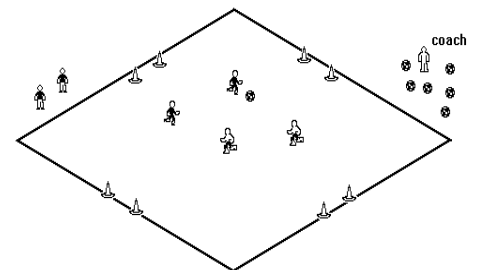
In week six, we will review dribbling to turn away from pressure, and dribbling to beat pressure. Players will be able to turn using the inside, outside and sole of the foot, and will also work on shielding the ball once they have turned away from pressure. Additionally, players will be able to take on a defender by feinting one way, and going the other. They will learn/review and practice three different moves to beat players.

1) Free Dribble---Everyone with a ball. Review “spin-in” using the inside of the foot to turn away from pressure, “spin-out” (outside of foot for same) and sole (named Mia Hamm) to pull the ball back and turn 180 degrees. Moves to beat people and are called Matthews (Christine Lilly), Rivaldo (Marin Meinert), Double Lollipop (Jenna Klugel). Matthews has the player touching the ball with the inside of one foot 2-3 times in one direction (to get the imaginary defender to lean that way), and then cutting the ball with the outside of the same foot in the other direction (to go past the defender). Rivaldo is similar with the player faking to dribble the ball with the outside of one foot, and then taking it with the outside of the other foot in the opposite direction. Double Lollipop is Rivaldo with two outside of the foot fakes, one with each foot, and then go the opposite direction from the last fake with the outside of the foot. 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. *Version 2:* players are asked to put 4 moves together in a sequence, then asked to do the sequence forwards and then in reverse order (move 4 is now first move) and then all moves are done with weaker foot, then with both feet for a total of 16 back to back moves. Coach selects players to demonstrate after each progression. If the group is doing particularly well, another move or two can be added to the sequence by players. (10 minutes)

2) Triangle Tag---Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the game tag, one player is being chased and one is “it”. However the player who is “it” tags the player by kicking her ball and hitting the other player’s ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither player can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). Two pairs can be at the same triangle at the same time, but players only compete with their partner still. Note: For more difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag. (10 minutes)

3) Shield-Steal---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. You can teach players the technical points of shielding 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

- 4) 2 vs. 2 to Four 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. (10 minutes)



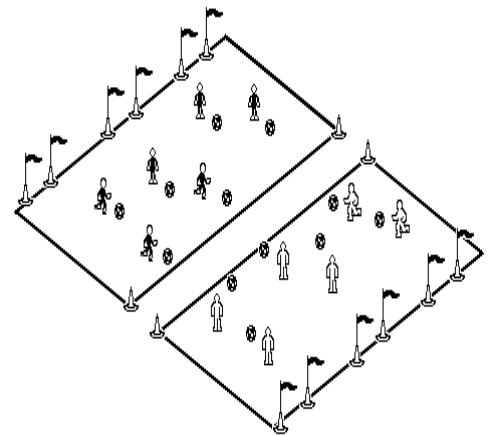
U8 Practice Week 7

During week seven, the players will be asked to review passing skills that they covered earlier in the program and to work on shooting as well.

1) Ball Tag---In a space about 40yd X 30yd give every player a ball. Each player can pass (with the inside of their foot) their ball onto anyone else's ball for one point, and can hit the coach's ball for 3-5 points. *Version 2:* beat your score from last time by two points. *Version 3:* use your weaker foot. *Version 4:* Put people in pairs. One person is being chased while other does the chasing. Once the chaser hits the ball of the chase with their ball, the roles reverse. *Version 5:* make two teams to make more dynamic and see which team has the least chasers at the end. (8 minutes)

2) Harpsichord---In pairs with one ball. Have partners face each other standing about 10 yards apart. Must strike ball to partner. If ball goes within one step left or right of partner, the player who shot the ball takes one step backwards. Receiver then shoots ball back and takes a step back if ball comes within one step left or right of partner. If ball does not come within one step of partner, shooter DOES NOT take a step back. See if players can make it all the way back to wall and then back towards each other with both feet. *Version 2:* Have players use opposite foot. *Version 3:* Have players move around while playing this game. (10 minutes)

3) Clean Your Backyard--- Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (2-3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at other team's goals in an attempt to score through anyone of the small goals (below knee height). Players cannot cross the buffer zone or go into the other half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense though no hands. Only shots with laces count as goals. (12 minutes)

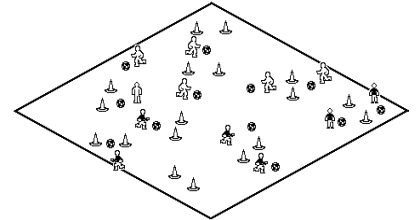


4) 2 vs. 2 to Four Goals---Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three, you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yd X 10yd. Have one team of 2 on deck, they come on

when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately. (10 minutes)

U8 Practice Week 8

1) Gates---Randomly place many pair of cones making small goals (1 yard) in a large space (30 x 20 yards) and have players dribble their balls through the goals for a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible. Have players count up their total points in the time you provide them. After doing once, ask them to improve their score by 2 and play the game again. Challenge each child individually. *Version 2:* Players can only dribble through goals with their right foot or their left foot. Note:



You may need to make a rule disallowing players from dribbling back and forth in one goal or just two goals. (10 minutes)

2) Ball Tag---In a space about 40yd X 30yd give every player a ball. Each player can pass (with the inside of their foot) their ball onto anyone else's ball for one point, and can hit the coach's ball for 3-5 points. *Version 2:* beat your score from last time by two points. *Version 3:* use your weaker foot. *Version 4:* Put people in pairs. One person is being chased while other does the chasing. Once the chaser hits the ball of the chase with their ball, the roles reverse. *Version 5:* make two teams to make more dynamic and see which team has the least chasers at the end. (10 minutes)

3) Knock Out---In same space as previous activity have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player's balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times). (10 minutes)

4) 2 vs. 1 keepaway---In a grid 10x15 yards, three players play 2 vs. 1 continuous keepaway. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attacker he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in. (10 minutes)

