

CONCORD CARLISLE YOUTH SOCCER CLUB

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SIX RULES FOR OUTSTANDING PRACTICES:

Rule #1: ORGANIZE A WRITTEN PRACTICE PLAN

Rule #2: SET UP BEFORE AND START PRACTICE ON TIME

Rule #3: MAKE PRACTICE COMPETITIVE AND FUN

Rule #4: KEEP PLAYERS CONSTANTLY MOVING AND TOUCHING A BALL.

Rule #5: PRACTICE WITH A POINT: FOCUS ON 1 OR 2 SKILLS / TACTICS

Rule #6: DESIGNATE SEGMENTS WHEN YOU “JUST LET THEM PLAY”

**Having a “practice plan” prior to practice is extremely important:

- Efficient flow to maximize touches and playing time
- Keeps kids engaged throughout the practice
- Maintains focus on specific skill(s) you’re teaching that day

FOUR PRACTICE SEGMENTS:

1. Individual ball handling (warm up / teaching session) and Dribbling Games

- Fast feet / supple touch / moves and feints
- Competitive and fun dribbling games
- Lots of individual ball touches

2. Small group skill exercises

- Groups of 2-4 players
- Focus on one or two skills
- Adjust time, space, pressure, rules, etc. accordingly

3. Team skill games

- Competitive and fun
- Focus on the same 1 or 2 skills from small group exercises
- Team oriented

4. Scrimmage with a point

- First half: scrimmage rules emphasize specific skill or tactic
- Second half: Just let them play. No restrictions. No or very limited coaching.

INDIVIDUAL BALL SKILLS AND TOUCH WARMUPS

Emphasize the “soccer player position” through all the below exercises: (1) knees bent (2) arms bent and out slightly to the side (3) continually bounce on the balls of feet (4) small quick steps touching the ball (5) soft touch with ball under control and within reach (6) all exercises done with both feet in both directions.

GENERAL TOUCH:

- start dribbling in fairly tight and defined area.
- Use instep (on the laces just above the toes). Touch the ball with every step.
- Use only inside of feet to turn ball (use inside of toes not ankle area to contact ball)
- Reverse the ball with ball of foot, turning toward ball, and take away with the other foot. Emphasize technique over speed in the beginning.
- Use only outside of feet to turn ball
- Use only the underside of foot (ball of foot) to turn ball
- Fast fee. Touch the ball as many times as you can. Bend knees in natural running position. Don't swing legs at hips.
- Sharp cutbacks
- Pull-push-push Triangle exercise.
- Draw back ball with ball of foot ten times, switch feet
- Draw back ball with ball of foot and take away with instep of same foot

LATERAL MOVEMENT

- inside and outside of same foot, zigzagging, touching ball with every step
- inside of one foot, outside of the other foot, and back in other direction
- same exercise but cut the ball back sharply with the instep
- roll ball with the underside of foot (towards other foot), stop with other foot, repeat going laterally across the field
- toss the ball straight up to yourself . Just as it hits the ground, sweep it away in the lateral direction you're moving. Use inside and outside of both feet.

FAKES AND FEINTS

- side-step (stutter step and throw arm in one direction, take ball away quickly the other direction using the outside of the other foot.
- scissors
- step over
- fake shot
- fake pass

JUGGLING

- By themselves or with a partner. Ball can bounce once or not. Pair or individual juggling

DRIBBLING GAMES IN A SQUARE

Shadow Dribble or Hounds and Hares

Setup: Pair each player with a teammate. Each player has a ball.

Rules: Players dribble randomly throughout the area, one partner leading and the other closely following. The trailing player tries to imitate, or shadow, the dribbling movements of the leader. Players change positions every 45-60 seconds.

Scoring: “Freeze” players at end of time. See which following player is closest to his leading partner at each switch. Or have leading player open legs to form a “goal”.

Following player tries to pass ball through the “goal” to earn a point. See who earns the most points.

Tips: Dribblers should keep heads up as much as possible. Try fakes and quick changes of direction.

Wickets

Setup: Half the players hold their ball in their hands and spread their legs to form a “wicket”.

Rules: “Wickets” run and spread out over the area of the square. The other players dribble around, pushing their ball through the wicket formed by their teammates legs. After 45-60 seconds players change roles.

Scoring: Player who dribble through the most wickets wins the round.

Tips: Ball must be kept close to dribbling player when passing through the wickets.

Dribblers should keep heads up to see other dribblers and locate open wickets.

Moving Target

Setup: All players in square with ball at their feet

Rules: You, the coach, dribble a ball around the square. All the kids try to catch up with you and hit your ball with their ball.

Scoring: None or challenge them to see how many times they can hit your ball.

Tips: Speed up or slow down based on the skill/age of the kids. Let every kid hit your ball.

Knockout or Pac Man

Setup: Designate 2-3 players as “it” or “pac men” and position them without balls outside the square. All other players are in the square with a ball at their feet.

Rules: Players begin dribbling within the square. On command, the “pac men” enter the square and attempt to kick players balls outside of the square. Switch pac men after 45 seconds to a minute.

Scoring: See which pac men can get all the balls out of the square under the allotted time.

Tips: Emphasize shielding with the body and quick changes of direction and speed.

You can also play “All vs All where all players have a ball and try to kick other players ball out side of the square while maintaining possession of his or her ball.

Chain Tag

Setup: Designate 2 players as “it” and position them outside the square. All remaining players are in the square with a ball at their feet.

Rules: The 2 “It” players enter the square upon command and chase after and kick the ball of a free player out of the square. Those free players now joins hands with the “it” player and form a chain. The chains chase after other free players to kick their balls out of the square and join the “it” chain. 2 chains maximum. Game ends when all players are part of one of the 2 chains.

Scoring: None

Tips: “It” players in chain communicate and work together when chasing free players. Emphasize heads up dribbling, quick changes of speed and direction, shielding.

Relay Races

- Try to keep it to 3 players per line. 4 players max. If unequal number than one player goes twice. Just be sure the same players doesn't keep going twice.
- Focus on the skills you're concentrating on that practice. Example: dribble to a cone using the instep dribble, go around the cone using the outside of the foot for a tight 360 turn, go to next cone and reverse with sole of foot, back to first cone and dribble with outside of other foot for a tight 360 turn, pass to next player.

Body Part Dribble

Setup: All players in the square. Each player has a ball.

Rules: Players dribble to keep control while avoiding touching others. While they dribble, coach calls out a body part. Player immediately stops the ball with that body part. You can call “right elbow”, “chin”, “hair”, etc. Can also be played like “Simon Says”

Tips: Be silly!

Hospital Tag

Setup: All players in the square. Each player has a ball.

Rules: Each player dribbles within an area attempting to tag anyone while maintaining control of their ball. Each time a player is tagged, the spot that was touched is now “injured”. The player must hold that spot and continue dribbling. The second time they are touched, they hold that spot with the other hand. The third time they are touched, the player must go to the “hospital”. And now must do some minimum activity (juggle, fast feet, etc) to get healed and rejoin the game.

Tips: Make sure the “hospital” activity is somewhat challenging but something everyone can do.

Cross over

Setup: All players stand spaced evenly around the outside of the perimeter of the square. Each player has a ball.

Rules: Players dribble around the outside of the square. On the coach’s signal, the players attempt to cross through the circle or square without touching each other. Upon the coaches command, the players quickly dribble across the square as fast as they can while maintaining close control of the ball and without touching other players or their soccer balls.

Tips: While dribbling around the perimeter of the square, have them dribble with their instep on the straight sections and turn the ball sharply at a right angle with the outside of their foot. Change directions of the rotation.

SMALL GROUP PASSING IN A SQUARE **(OR TRIANGLE FOR GROUPS OF 3)**

Setup for all the small group passing exercises and games is a square approximately 10’ x 10’. 4 low cones (can’t use high cones because they will get in the way and kids will trip on them) - one cone in each corner.

Tips: Emphasis is on good first touch away from pressure and accurate pass with good pace. Passes should always be towards a cone, not between cones.

Pass around the perimeter

Just like it sounds. 2 touch emphasize good first touch to set up pass on second touch. Reverse directions.

Find the open man:

Setup: 3 players at cones and 1 player in the middle. 2 of the cone players have balls, one cone player and the player in the middle do not.

Rules: One cone player with ball passes to player in the middle, player receives ball with first touch and with second touch passes to cone player without ball, player with other ball passes to middle player, middle player receives ball with first touch and passes to cone player without ball. Keep going for approx 1 min then switch middle players so all players have a chance in the middle.

Tips: Cone players need to wait until middle player make eye contact before passing. Middle player must look before receiving ball so he/she knows where to pass to the player without the ball. Make sure middle player steps toward ball and doesn't wait for it.

Give and Go:

Setup: 4 players all standing at a corner cone. One ball.

Rules: Player with ball passes to next cone and follows pass. Receiving player one touches a return pass back to passing player and then runs toward next cone for a give-go pass. Same process repeats going around the square.

Tips: One touch passing whenever possible. Player going for give-go should hesitate and wait until receiving player is about to pass before making run.

3 v 1 in a square

Setup: 3 players stand at corner cones. One player in the middle of the square. One player on corner cone has a ball.

Rules: Player in the middle is "it". The 3 cone players cannot enter the square and play passes around the perimeter in either direction. Passes must be to cones. Cone players support the ball by moving to the free cone in order to keep the "V" shape and free passing lane. The "it" player can go in and out of the square to try to steal the ball. Once the "it" player gets the ball, cone player who caused the lose of possession (bad pass, poor first touch, didn't run to open cone to support play, etc) is now "it".

Tips: Emphasize quick player movement to the free cone to support the ball, quality first touch away from pressure, and accurate pass to cones.

SKILL GAMES IN A SQUARE

** The following are simple games that are fun and educational for U10 and older players of all ages and skill levels. Coaches vary the space (area of play), time (duration of play), and pressure (number of players or game restrictions) to make these games appropriate for Kindergarteners to elite club players.

Team Keep Away

Setup: Organize players into 2 equal teams (or as equal as possible). One ball.

Rules: Teams pass and dribble the ball to keep away from the other team.

Scoring: 5 consecutive passes without the other team stealing the ball earns a point.

Tips: Make a second rule emphasizing the skill you're focusing on that day. (i.e. 3 touch, left foot only, etc.) Emphasize spreading out and support angles, changing direction of the ball, and pass and move.

Keep Away or Score

Setup: Organize players into 2 teams with one team having 2-3 players more than the other (i.e. 4v2, 5v3, 8v5, etc). Make 2 goals with cones at opposite sides of the square. One ball.

Rules: Team with more players plays keep away as described above. Short-handed team tries to steal ball and score by dribbling through either of the 2 goals.

Scoring: Short-handed scores by dribbling through either goal. Team with more players score by completing 5 consecutive passes without the short-handed team stealing the ball.

Tips: Emphasize running to open space and support angles, changing direction of the ball, and passing and moving.

Perimeter Passing Game

Setup: 3 players in the square are defenders. The rest of the players (up to 8 players) are positioned equally around the outside of the square as attackers. One ball with an attacker.

Rules: The attacking players work together to keep the ball from the defenders. The attackers may move side to side along the perimeter to support teammates or receive passes but must remain outside and close to the perimeter line. The attackers are also limited to three touches for receiving and passing the ball. Defenders may move about anywhere within the square. A defending player who steals the ball returns it immediately to an attacker to continue play. Players take turns rotating in groups of 3 as defenders.

Scoring: 5-10 consecutive passes (depending on number of attackers vs defenders) without a defender stealing the ball earns a point for the attackers. Stealing the ball earns a point for the defenders. "Splitting" the defenders can also earn a point.

Tips: Emphasize receiving skills and good first touch, firm and accurate passing.

Beat the Man

Setup: Pair players up and position them opposite each other on the perimeter of the square. Assign each pair a number. One player in each pair has a ball.

Rules: Call out numbers for two groups of pairs at the same time. The players with the ball try to dribble across the square and cross the line on the opposite side of the square. His paired player tries to stop him by stealing the ball before he crosses the line.

Scoring: Player dribbling across the opposite line without his paired player stealing the ball gets a point.

Tips: Calling out 2 numbers at once makes players keep their heads up and dribble through additional traffic. Emphasize trying certain moves to beat the man. Focus on feints and moves.

Score Through the Front Door or Back Door

Setup: Group players in 2 equal teams of 3-5 players. Using cones, setup two small goals facing each other well within the boundaries of the square. One ball.

Rules: Regular soccer rules apply, except that teams can score by kicking the ball through either side of either goal (through the “front door or back door”). Players must run around the goals, not through them.

Scoring: Team scoring the most goals wins.

Tips: Require teams to use man-to-man marking of opponents. Stress the importance of immediate transition between defense and attack upon change of possession. Add a third goal or make triangle goals for variation.

4-Goal Soccer

Setup: Setup 4 goals using cones on each side of the square. Two teams of 3-5 players. One ball.

Rules: Each team defends two goals and can score in two goals. Coach designates which goals each team defends and attacks. Teams score by shooting the ball through either of the opponent’s goals (ball must be below knee height). There are no goalkeepers.

Scoring: Team scoring the most goals wins.

Tips: Restrictions can be placed to make the game more challenging (i.e. limit of 3 touches, use only left foot, play with two balls, etc.)

Winger Game

Setup: Using cones, mark “winger zones” 3 yards wide on two opposite sides of the square extending the length of each side. Mark 2 goals using cones on the two other sides. Group players in two teams of 3-4 players each. Designate 2 additional players as neutral “wingers” who are stationed in the “winger zones”. One team has the ball.

Rules: Teams play against each other trying to score in one goal and defend the other. The “wingers” are neutral and play with the team that has the ball to create attacking a number advantage. Goals can be scored anytime AFTER a pass is made outside to the winger and received back by the attacking team. Neither the attacking nor defending team is allowed into the winger zone. The winger must receive and complete a pass back to the attacking team each change of possession in order for a goal to be scored.

Scoring: Team scoring the most goals wins.

Tips: This game teaches players to incorporate wing play into the attack and to “spread the ball wide”. Passing the ball into the outside winger zone often creates gaps in the defense and scoring opportunities.

Dribble Over the End Line

Setup: Organize players into 2 equal teams of 2-6 players. One ball.

Rules: Teams play against each other with players trying to dribble over the opponents end line while defending their own.

Scoring: Team scoring the most points by dribbling over the end line wins. Player must have control of ball when crossing end line.

Tips: Emphasize good dribbling skills (keep the ball close to you, try moves, etc) and passing to the open man

Scrimmage with a point:

- Ball has to go outside to a winger before allowed to score
- Left foot only
- 1,2, or 3 touch
- All players over half field to score
- Points for executing specific move
- Forwards must quickly transition to defense or a penalty kick or points awarded to the other team

** End each practice with a scrimmage session with no restrictions and no or limited coaching.

