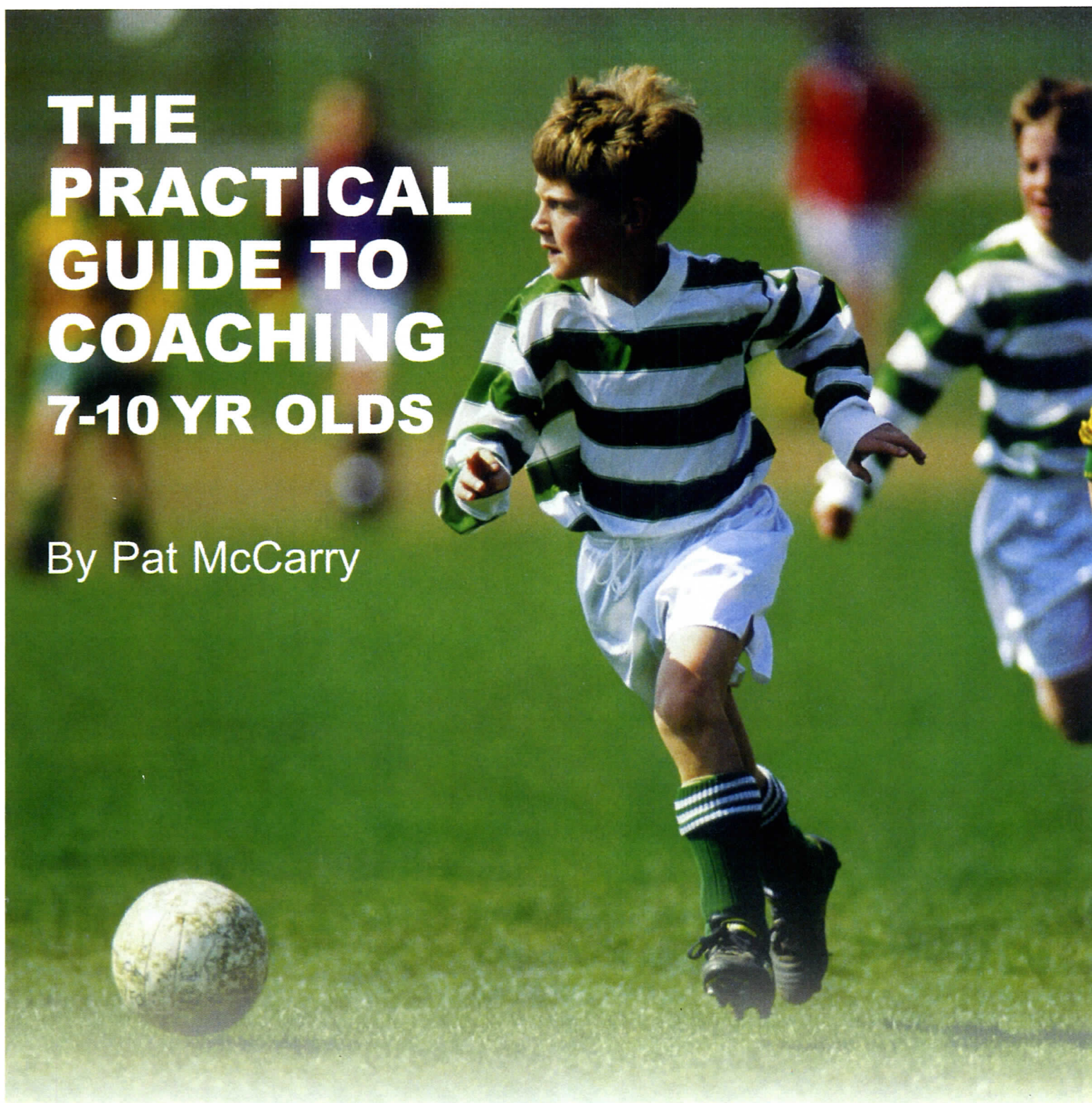


THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COACHING 7-10 YR OLDS

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Part of the U.K. Elite Soccer STEPS2SUCCESS™ series



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INTRODUCTION

There are numerous soccer books on the market, full of useful practices and drills to use with your children. Unfortunately, such books invariably contain only what the title suggests-lists of activities. Very little practical information is given as to the aspect of using the practices.

The purpose of this guide is to give such help and advice to coaches and parents. It aims to answer some typical questions, which inevitably arise:

- How can I combine activities to produce the most effective session?
- How can I maximize activity levels and make the session fun?
- How can I adapt the sessions if they are not working?
- How can I combine sessions to create a coherent season long plan?

This guide lays out some basic but invaluable guidelines for planning and organizing practices, and for developing and progressing them, thus ensuring that they positively impact the performance level of the individuals and team.

In addition, it contains a pack of twenty session plans which have been carefully created so as to cover the essential skills and principles of play for this age group. Each session is not only explained but important questions are answered:

- What are the main objectives of the session?
- Which coaching points should I stress during each activity?
- How can I develop a system of scoring to motivate the players and make it fun?
- How can I progress smoothly to the next activity?
- How can I make the activities more complex?

In summary, everything in this guide is geared to ensuring that every game you play with your children represents an exciting and effective learning experience.



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WHY YOUNG CHILDREN PLAY SOCCER

When coaching young children it is important to consider the reasons for their participation. It is equally important to look at our own motivating factors in choosing to coach, and to consider if they are appropriate for the age group we are working with.

The vast majority of young children will participate for the following reasons:

- To Have Fun

There can be little doubt that at this age the main aim for the child is to have fun. If they are having fun they will be motivated to listen and to learn. If they are not having fun they will simply not wish to be part of the program. This has clear implications for the style of session that we deliver for the children. Surely our primary aim is to keep the children interested for as many years as possible and to impart a love of the game. We do this through exciting, stimulating practices and realistic expectations.

- To Be With Friends

The social benefits of soccer cannot be overestimated. In the right environment the children make new friends and can develop their relationship with established friends through a common interest. Often the presence of friends and the opportunity to interact is more important than the game itself. This is sometimes difficult for adults to remember despite the fact that games such as golf often provide a similar outlet.

- The Excitement of Competition

There are many exciting activities in this book for the children to enjoy. There is an element of competition in each of them, which will without doubt motivate the children to participate enthusiastically. However, the coach will play a very important role in shaping the childrens' attitude towards competition. An important lesson for children to learn is how to cope with winning and losing. Therefore, the way the coach reacts to the winners and losers of different activities will be noticed and absorbed by the children.

- To Learn and Improve Skills

This might not be the initial factor that motivates the children to play. However, within a short period of time some of the players may even take enough interest to start practicing various skills at home. They will take pleasure in mastering skills that they have been taught so that they can show their family, coach and friends a level of competence. The positive reinforcement that follows improvement further encourages this development.

It is crucial that the coach considers these factors when working with a team. If the children are improving, having fun and keep coming back to play soccer then the coach must be succeeding. This should be our yardstick!

So why do some children drop out of soccer? The answers to this question must be that the soccer program they are currently participating in is no longer satisfying their motivational needs. At this point they are:

- Not having fun
- Not being with their friends
- Not experiencing the excitement that healthy competition provides
- Failing to learn and improve new skills

As coaches we have a responsibility to ensure that this does not happen!

CREATING A FUN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Soccer is a great game, which should be fun for everyone who plays. When young children play soccer one can see the fun they are having by the energy and enthusiasm they put into their game. Unfortunately, the same energy and enthusiasm does not always carry over into practice. Too often children appear disinterested or unmotivated when working in practice situations, largely because they see the activities as pointless or boring.

There are a number of factors to consider when trying to create such an environment. The following 'Rules of Thumb' help to ensure that the children enjoy and look forward to their practices, and gain maximum benefits from them.

1. THE COACH MUST HAVE FUN

There is a saying: 'Enthusiasm is caught, not taught'. This is especially true of coaching. Children are quick to pick up on the coach's mood so your performance in practice will be reflected in the performance of your children. An enthusiastic, motivated coach will tend to have enthusiastic, motivated children to work with. The following are things to consider:

- a) Tone of voice: Much of your enthusiasm is conveyed by your tone of voice. Excitement is infectious, and if you sound enthused and energetic, your mood tends to be caught by the children.
- b) Share a joke: Children love to laugh and joke so encourage and instigate this at the right times. This way the children have fun, get the laughter out of their systems, and are ready to concentrate when you need their attention to make a coaching point.
- c) Join in: No matter how limited your soccer skills, the children love to see their coach join in (be careful not to hurt them or yourself!). It gives them a chance to get their revenge, and brings you down to their level for a change. It can also be a timely reminder of the difficulty of some of the skills you are asking them to perform!

2. ALWAYS GIVE POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Making mistakes is an integral part of the learning process, providing that the child then receives positive feedback as to how to correct that mistake the next time. Therefore it is important that the children are willing to try things and have no fear of being incorrect. Criticism such as: 'That was a terrible shot' is not only very discouraging; it has no value in terms of learning. Avoid criticizing errors and instead begin with a positive statement before adding your coaching point, for example: 'you struck that ball well. If you can follow through with your foot you will get a lot more power. Keep up the good work.' This is known as the 'Feedback Sandwich' where the feedback is preceded and followed by positive statements.

3. AIM TO ENSURE SUCCESS

Whatever your practice, set targets and goals so that all the children can have initial success. For example:

- Shooting: There should initially be no pressure on the players thus allowing them to focus on their technique. The goal should be large enough to promote success and to make the practice realistic.
- Passing: Ensure that there are initially numbers up on one of the teams e.g. 4 v 2 keep away so that they are able to successfully keep possession. Gradually even up the teams during the session to increase pressure.
- Defending: Consider the size of area when running a 1 v 1 exercise. It should initially be quite small thus favoring the defender.

The child's initial reaction must be 'Hey, I can do this'. Children who successfully meet a given challenge will readily attack a tougher challenge, whereas children who immediately experience

failure will simply opt out. The level of difficulty can then be progressively increased for the children who are consistently achieving success, thus moving each child on within his or her capabilities.

4. INTRODUCE COMPETITION

It is only natural that children want to compete with one another. Not only is competition exciting to children, it is a sure way of holding their attention. Even an activity such as keep away will be more fun if a certain number of passes equals one goal.

Similarly in a shooting activity you can ask:

- Who is the first to score five goals?
- Who can score the most goals in the next five minutes?

Inevitably, technique will break down a little given the element of competition, but more importantly you will have injected fun and excitement into the practice. You can always take time to go back over technique and reinforce coaching points without the competition, before returning to the game again.

5. MAINTAIN COMPETITION

It is important that each child or group has a feasible chance of winning if you are to maintain their enthusiasm. Using a simple handicapping system can attain this goal as long as it is deemed to be fair. This may include a player being required to score with his/her weaker foot or only being allowed to have two touches before passing.

Another 'tactic' could be to subtly change partners to pair some weaker children with some stronger children. Not only does this tend to even up the competition, but also it may help to introduce an element of co-operative learning. Children learn from watching and working with others who are more competent, especially when they are friends and teammates. The key here is knowing your children!

6. COACH THROUGH GAMES

Fun games and activities are a proven medium for ensuring maximum attention to a task. Repetitious drills at this age/level will turn the players off the game, especially if they are inactive for long periods of time. There are countless soccer activities which can be utilized to teach valuable skills while the children are having fun. With attention to the following points, you can ensure that the learning process continues at the same time:

- a) During the game, take individuals aside for a few seconds to give them specific feedback. The remainder of the players are still having fun and learning as they continue playing.
- b) Freeze the game to highlight important coaching points or to correct a mistake. It is important that the players stop in exactly the same positions as they were in, otherwise your coaching point will be inaccurate. Be firm with this! After stopping play, first *rehearse* the action to show good practice, *recreate* it exactly as it happened and then *replay* thus allowing the players to have an opportunity to perform it successfully. The use of the three R's (Rehearse, Recreate, Replay) ensures that they 'see' exactly what you are saying! Remember 'a picture paints a thousand words.'
- c) Use scoring and time keeping to add to the excitement!
- d) Build up the children's' enthusiasm and interest by asking questions and issuing challenges:
'Which team will be the first to five goals?'
'Who will score the winning goal?'

WHAT A COACH CAN EXPECT FROM PLAYERS AT 7-8 YEARS

Children at this age play a very different game to adults. They also play a different game to older youth players and as such our expectations need to be realistic. They are restricted by their physical and cognitive development and can only perform within these parameters. The main motivation for them will undoubtedly be fun and social interaction.

Approach to the game

- Children *begin* to co-operate
- They will understand the concept of scoring, keeping score, winning and losing
- They will understand the object of the game is to win

Rules

- Rules become increasingly important to the children. They appear to thrive on firm boundaries and adherence to them

This is important to remember when setting rules for activities and scrimmages. If the coach is inconsistent with his / her application of the rules then the players will be confused and often distressed. This is magnified by the fact that winning is now more important to the children.

Possessing the ball

- Children will begin to look up when in possession but will be inclined to kick the ball away when under pressure as opposed to settling it and making an informed decision.
- They will *begin* to select from available options rather than always driving straight ahead. They will consider passing to a teammate if they think that player is in a better position to penetrate.
- Players are very unlikely to pass the ball backwards or sideways in order to possess

Some players will begin to position themselves to receive a pass in space whilst others will still be attracted to the immediate area of the ball carrier making team possession difficult. The movement off the ball is still predominantly in straight lines up the field as opposed to providing angles to the side and behind the ball carrier.

Defending

- Children will often recover in transition by chasing an opponent as opposed to getting goal side and defending the line to goal. They also experience difficulty in delaying an opponent who is traveling at speed, as there is a strong inclination to go right at the ball.

Techniques

- Receiving The Ball: Better tracking of the ball. Players move to prepare their body in anticipation of receiving the ball on the ground.
- Dribbling: Players are more aware of keeping the ball close to the body. They begin to change speed and to a lesser degree direction, in order to beat an opponent.
- Sending The Ball: Players will attempt to pass the ball over small distances on the ground and some will be able to lift the ball over the heads of the opponents. Many will continue to run around the ball if it is on their weaker foot and will back up if it is close to their feet.

Activities at this level should promote maximum activity and ball contact. Techniques will develop in individual and small group activities. Scrimmages should be 4 v 4 and 5 v 5 in training sessions and the coaching points made should be at the right level for the children. They will not grasp tactics outside the 4 v 4 game and will not respond well to the strict enforcement of playing positions. However, they will develop a positional sense with appropriate guidance.

WHAT A COACH CAN EXPECT FROM PLAYERS AT 9-10 YRS

The players will continue to develop physically, tactically and psychologically. This phase will see more cooperation between teammates as opposed to the very individualized game played at the younger ages.

Approach to the game

- Children will co-operate more readily as a team
- They will compete against each other to measure their own competencies
- They are more able to assess themselves and others

Whilst it is important to correct mistakes the emphasis should be on celebrating what the children can do as opposed to what they cannot do!

Rules

- Children will begin to understand the purpose of rules, i.e. for fair and enjoyable play

They will have a good understanding of rules in relation to restarts but will not fully grasp the technicalities of foul play

Possessing the ball

- Children will be able to consider additional options when in possession, including passing sideways and backwards
- Players will begin to switch attention from the ball to space and back to the ball. They will have difficulty directing attention to the ball, space and the movement of other players. Simply put, they do not see what we as coaches see! This sometimes appears as if they have tunnel vision

The players will begin to move away from the ball and opponents and into available space when their team is in possession. They will begin to realize when to provide support behind or to the side of the ball because of pressure in front of the ball. Therefore the support runs that were previously restricted to going straight up the field will now become more sophisticated.

Defending

- Children will understand the importance of recovering goal-side of the ball
- They will attempt to intercept forward passes
- Players will attempt to 'time' their challenge for the ball as opposed to 'charging' towards it
- The concept of marking is very difficult at this age because of the advanced scanning skills involved.

Techniques

- Receiving the ball: Players prepare their bodies to receive the ball along the ground and occasionally out of the air
- Traveling with the ball: Players begin to develop their 'favorite move'. They attempt to change direction as well as speed. Some players use their upper body to 'fake' the opponent.
- Sending the ball: Players pass more accurately along the ground and occasionally in the air. Some players will attempt to head the ball thus coaching the correct technique is very important at this stage.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING A PRACTICE

Most coaches have relatively little time to work with their team. Therefore, it is important that each practice is planned and organized in such a way as to ensure maximum productivity within that time. The quality of your practice is vital because unfortunately the old adage, 'Practice makes perfect' is a myth. 'Practice, in fact, makes permanent!' If a child continually practices using a poor technique, it follows that the child will simply 'learn' that poor technique. However, a well-planned, high quality practice, where players are shown and encouraged to use correct techniques, will lead to children learning those correct techniques.

Careful attention must be paid to the following factors to ensure that you get the most from your practice:

1. EQUIPMENT

In order to meet the aims and objectives of your practice, you need to have the appropriate equipment available to you.

- a) **Balls (size 4):** Try to have a ball per child or pair of children where possible. The more time children spend with a ball at their feet, the more comfortable and confident they will feel with it. It is important to point out here that the ball should be the appropriate size for the age group. Having one ball per child or pair allows even warm-up activities to enhance the child's soccer skills. For example, why run laps of the field when dribbling a ball in different directions in confined space serves the same physical warm-up purpose and simultaneously improves ball control? A warm up with the ball has the added psychological benefit of focusing the children on the tasks to come.
- b) **Cones:** These are extremely useful for marking out your practice areas. Large cones can be useful for making extra goals, making targets, marking corners of areas etc. While small cones are useful for sub-dividing fields and areas.
- c) **Pinnies / Scrimmage vests:** These are useful not only for scrimmaging but for any activity involving opposition e.g. 4 v 2 keep away.

2. THEME

Try to choose one theme for your practice. This allows the children to concentrate and focus their attention on what is being taught. Trying to cover too much in one session (an inevitable temptation!) tends to result in confusion and a lack of retention on the children's part. For example, a theme for your practice may be 'dribbling with the ball'. It could progress as follows:

- Warm up: Dribbling activity with no / limited pressure
- Dribbling activities with pressure e.g. 1 v 1
- Conditioned scrimmage to reinforce theme
- Scrimmage

During the entire session avoid making comments or coaching points related to anything other than dribbling, unless it is essential. This enables the children to stay focused throughout.

3. AREA

Time taken to mark out areas with cones or other markers is time well spent. Children find it hard to visualize area and space without physical boundaries. If you simply ask them to stay in an area about 10 yards square it will rapidly turn into a 20 or 30 yard triangle! Not only does this cause confusion and interference between groups, it will ultimately detract from the aim of your practice. For example if they are playing 'Keep away' in too small an area then the children will have problems maintaining control of their ball. Always be aware of the possible need to adjust the size of your areas. In the example given above the lack of success by the players may

indicate the need to make their area larger (giving them more time and space to control the ball). Similarly, at some point, the area may need to be made smaller to increase the difficulty of the practice.

4. ADAPTABILITY

It is inevitable that some practices or games you plan will be pitched at a level, which is too high or too low. Similarly, within a practice some individuals will master a skill or technique far quicker than others. Therefore it is important that you are able to adapt. Be prepared to move on or increase the difficulty of the task for groups or individuals who are no longer being challenged. For example you may restrict your best striker to using his/her weaker foot for a period of time. At the same time a step backward may be needed if a task proves too much of a challenge and success is not being achieved.

5. MAXIMUM ACTIVITY

Children must receive maximum exposure to a task if they are to master it. Therefore, always try to create a learning environment where children have as many attempts at a task as possible ensuring the constant repetition of the desired technique. This can be achieved by:

- a) Avoiding long lines. Why have a line of twelve children, all waiting to shoot into one goal? Why not instead set up two extra goals using cones, and have three groups of four, maximizing each child's contact with the ball.
- b) Avoid long lectures. The players 'switch off' after a period of time, as their attention span is relatively short, especially on a school day! Keep all interventions and explanations short and simple (K.I.S.S) and make your coaching as visual as possible.
- c) Use all the techniques discussed earlier to make your practices fun. This will ensure that the children want to be active throughout the practice. Without doubt, children learn most effectively during activities that they enjoy doing.

6. BE IN CHARGE

Children need to know whom they should be listening to and why. The ability to listen is an important and underdeveloped skill among children. However, they can only process a limited amount of information at one time. Practices become confusing to them and lose their purpose when too much (sometimes conflicting!) information is given by too many people. For example in shooting exercises the main coaching points might be to strike through the center of the ball with the laces and to aim for the corner of the goal.

Helpful parents are invaluable assistants, as long as they remain just that.... assistants! Set up your practice emphasizing one or two coaching points, and then ask your assistants to circulate reinforcing those points. This helps to keep the children on-task and can ensure that fair play is prevailing!

DEVELOPING A PRACTICE

"Progression is the key!"

Equally important as the planning of your practice is the progression or development once it is underway. Your practice should follow a logical pattern or sequence, which allows the children to learn and develop skills in a cumulative fashion, through tasks, which become increasingly demanding. This section is aimed at demonstrating exactly how to develop your practice in this manner.

1. WARM-UP

A warm-up can be defined as 'any activity which prepares the body and mind for further exertion'. There are no hard and fast rules as to what should be included, only the common sense rule of beginning slowly and gently, and gradually increasing the intensity of a given activity.

Coaching manuals will tell you that a warm-up activity should include any or all of the following: walking; jogging; running; striding; stretching-both static and dynamic. While this is entirely true, as a coach of children it is important to remember two key factors:

- First, you are coaching young children with short attention spans who are easily bored.
- Second, you are coaching soccer!

Every warm-up activity can be adapted to incorporate a ball. With a little thought and preparation, every warm-up activity can be related to the theme you have chosen for your practice, however, most of the warm-ups in this book include ball each activities to suit the age of the players.

2. INTRODUCE THEME

As you head into your main theme, explain why particular movements or activities were encouraged in the warm-up. At this point, try to demonstrate exactly the kind of technique you are looking for in the practice. You can always use one of the 'better' children to demonstrate if you are not confident of your own technique. Remember to select only one or two key coaching points to stress. For example, with passing you may choose:

- Eyes fixed on the ball, strike it with the inside of your foot.

For dribbling, your points to stress may be:

- Use a soft touch and dribble into a space

Points such as this have great impact, and are easier to focus on than a whole speech about what you are looking for! If needs be, further coaching points can be added to correct individual technique.

3. DON'T DIGRESS

Once you have made your key points, concentrate on coaching only those points. Practices become confusing to the children and lose their purpose if you digress and make random coaching points. For example, when coaching passing, avoid the temptation to give coaching points or criticism as to why a shot was missed. You can work on shooting on another day.

Also, try not to labor the point. If an error is common to the whole group, stop the practice, quickly make your point, and restart. If, however, the error is only with one or two individuals, try to take them aside for a quiet word. The game can continue with your assistants supervising.

4. DEVELOP YOUR THEME

Whatever your theme, try to use practices in a logical sequence so that the theme is gradually being developed. A technique is learned most effectively in a no pressure situation. It becomes a skill when it can be performed on a regular basis, under pressure, and at the right time.

Therefore aim to progress from basic technique practices through to 'game type' skill practices. Let us take the example of improving the children's passing over short distances:

- a) Begin by allowing the children to practice the technique with no pressure at all e.g. pass and move in groups of four. Once they have achieved some success, start to introduce a little pressure such as a time limit or a number target.
- b) Progress further by introducing some real pressure by adding some defenders. Now the children must start to think not only about their technique, but also how and when to apply it: 'In which direction should I take the ball on receiving it? When shall I pass?' This differentiates a technique from a skill!
- c) Play a scrimmage, but with certain conditions enforced to encourage use of the right technique at the right time, thus developing the technique into a skill.
- d) Regular scrimmage.

5. CONDITIONED SCRIMMAGES

Conditioning a scrimmage enables the creation of a game situation while still encouraging or enforcing a particular skill. To continue the theme of passing, a number of conditions can be placed on the scrimmage to encourage the children to pass:

- Insist on at least three passes per team before shooting.
- Award an extra goal if a team can make three passes without losing possession.

With thought, scrimmages can be conditioned to encourage the use of any particular skill you have been working on. However, the coach must select criteria carefully so that the children are challenged but not frustrated because the task is too difficult! Simply put; Are the players *successfully* implementing the theme of the day in this scrimmage?

6. REGULAR SCRIMMAGE

The final stage of skill development is to remove all conditions. Not only does this allow you to see how much has been learned, it also allows the children to enjoy some unrestricted play. This is the part of the session that all the players look forward to and therefore should never be omitted. It is also the most accurate tool for measuring their true development as soccer players.

PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

Season Planning or troubleshooting?

There are two main approaches to planning training sessions:

- Season Planning

This is the method proposed in this book because of the young age of the players. They are inexperienced in all area of the game and their soccer education needs to be well rounded. It is recommended that these young players follow a clearly defined curriculum (as they would in school) that is balanced, broad and flexible in its nature. In this book you are provided with a curriculum that ensures continuity and progression within each session and across the season. Therefore, we always begin with simple concepts and progress to more complex game related themes. This is the most effective way for children of this age to learn.

It may be tempting to 'remedy' their 'shooting' after a 0-0 tie and then return to your defending theme for the next session, however, this is confusing for young players. It also rarely works! Remember our primary aim for these young children is continual development for the future, not exclusively winning.

- Trouble Shooting

At an older age and higher standard, 'troubleshooting' weaknesses identified in the previous game is more appropriate because the coach is fine-tuning. For example, the coach may wish to focus on the shape of the defense because they were constantly 'pulled' out of position in the previous game.

Techniques / Skills v Tactics?

At this young age the players are relatively deficient in every area of the game, technical and tactical. The main focus for the coach is undoubtedly technical and skill based and should involve activities that maximize contact with the ball and promote fun. It is not appropriate to spend time on complex formations and rigid positions. The players are not ready to understand large scale tactics and do not have the interest or attention span for drawn out discussions. Let them play!

Small sided games which incorporate 1 v 1, 2 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 2, 3 v 3 and 4 v 4 will develop technique and encourage small scale tactical thinking on the part of the players. By consistently modifying these small-sided games (e.g. 4 v 4 to two wide goals) the children will be challenged to 'solve different problems' thus developing their tactical thinking.

What should I coach first?

A recommended season coaching plan is included in this book, however, different coaches have their own preferences as to which unit should be coached first e.g. some coaches would rather begin the season by coaching defending. The plan basically includes units on possession (individual and group), attacking and defending. Sessions on team specifics such as corners, throw ins and free kicks can be included at the coach's discretion.

The length of each unit will depend on factors such as how many coaching sessions the team has each week. This program can be repeated in the following season with variations as needed. Although there are twenty session plans in this guide it can be assumed that inclement weather will probably reduce the number of sessions to sixteen a season (based on two sessions a week).

A Suggested Season Plan

Sessions	Theme / Unit
1-3	Individual Technique
4	Combination Play
5-6	Control
7-11	Possession 1
12-14	Attacking
15-17	Defending
18-20	Possession 2

Which sessions should I use for my team?

Some of the sessions in this book are far more complex than others, thus ensuring that there is a sufficient range to cover the 7-10 year old group. Therefore, it is important to select the sessions that are most suited to your players. Some of the sessions will definitely be more suited to the more advanced nine and ten year old players rather than the seven and eight year olds. At this older age the players are generally physically stronger, more experienced and have a better tactical awareness. It should be noted that this is not always the case. Ultimately it comes down to the ability of the group rather than the specific age. The remainder of the sessions are suitable for all ages in this book and can be adapted to suit much older youth players. For example the 1 v 1 activities are great training for any player.

The range of complexity has clear implications for planning your season and your individual sessions. It is well worth spending some time putting together the most appropriate curriculum for your team thus maximizing the benefit of your training.

The following sessions are more appropriate for 9-10 year old players:

Session	Page
Organizing The Defensive Three	34
Long Passing	35
Transition	36
Playing With Width	37
Switching The Play	38

Our Season Plan

	Session 1	Session 2		Session 1	Session 2
Week 1			Week 13		
Week 2			Week 14		
Week 3			Week 15		
Week 4			Week 16		
Week 5			Week 17		
Week 6			Week 18		
Week 7			Week 19		
Week 8			Week 20		
Week 9			Week 21		
Week 10			Week 22		
Week 11			Week 23		
Week 12			Week 24		

Enter The Theme For Each Coaching Session

CONDUCTING THE WARM UP

The Warm up at this age should involve plenty of contact with the ball, should build in intensity and incorporate some stretching. The majority of sessions in this guide incorporate a ball each dribbling activity designed to improve individual touch and technique. There are a range of such exercises that can precede the main focus of the session and some examples are included below (See 'A Practical Guide To Teaching Soccer To 4-6 Year Olds' for an extensive selection of suitable activities).

These exercises are not in any particular sequence and the list is not meant to be exhaustive. Customize the warm up to suit your group. For instance, if you have a 'lively' group you may wish to have a fairly intensive warm up from the very beginning of the session. The warm up should have pace regardless of the nature of the team and the practice should begin when the first child arrives. This player can be given a juggling challenge or given a move to practice. This sets the tone for the players who follow and ensures their immediate focus. It is important to remember that the warm-up should not extend beyond fifteen minutes otherwise the main activities of the session will be rushed. As the players get older the coach may choose to use a theme related warm up so as to immediately focus the players on the desired outcomes of the session.

Toe Taps: Each player starts with the left foot on the ball and the right foot on the ground. He/she then jumps to place the right foot on the ball and the left foot on the ground. Repeat the process and build up speed.

Progression 1: Do this whilst looking up at the coach.

Progression 2: Do this in a forward or backward direction

Boxing: Players are on their toes and pass the ball between their left and right feet whilst remaining in the same place.

Progression 1: Do this whilst looking up at the coach

Progression 2: Do this in a forward or backward direction.

Juggling: Feet only to improve ball control. Players use their laces and do not impart spin on the ball.

Rolling: Players roll the ball using the sole of the foot. Take three touches to the left then three touches to the right. Use any other combinations.

Inside: Players dribble in the area using only the inside of their feet

Outside: Players dribble only using the outside of their feet

Left: Left foot dribbling only

Right: Right foot dribbling only

Tag ball: Players dribble around the area protecting their ball whilst trying to tag (with their hands) the other players in the area. Their ball must remain within playing distance. Incorporate a scoring system.

Pokemon: As above but players try to poke other balls (with their feet) whilst protecting their own.

Gladiator: Players pair off with a ball each and face each other. Their aim is to touch their opponent's ball whilst shielding (protecting) their own. Incorporate scoring system. Switch partners. They must not leave their ball or run away!

Cone ball: Players have a ball each and circle ten cones as quickly as possible. Players can circle using their left or right foot only, inside or outside of feet only depending on the coach's instruction. As above but players perform a specific move at each cone (e.g. drag back turn). Ensure this is coached first before having a competition!

Progression: Add defenders.

CONDUCTING THE TECHNICAL PRACTICE / SKILL DEVELOPMENT

This part of the session focuses on the basic techniques integral to the game of soccer such as shooting, passing, dribbling, defending and shielding. It is very important to develop these at this young age. In the past the idea of technical training conjured up the notion of boring, repetitive drills with children standing in lines. This is often based on the personal experience of the coach. However, the art of coaching has progressed since then and whilst a degree of repetition is still essential to perfect a technique, other elements are also important:

- Variety
- Competition
- Relevance
- Intensity

If a player becomes bored during the practice then they will not execute the technique to the best of their ability and as we know 'practice makes permanent' and not necessarily perfect! This is often the problem with technical work that is completely isolated from the game.

Motivating The Players

The technical stage of the session encourages practice with minimal pressure from opponents. The pressure is imparted through scoring systems and time constraints as required. These can be used to motivate the players in activities that might otherwise seem bland, thus ensuring a high performance level. The key here is knowing your players. If they are highly motivated players then they will probably be more enthusiastic in participating in 'closed skill' practice (i.e. the repetition of an isolated skill) than your purely recreational player. For the recreational player it will probably need to take the form of some sort of game. Either way it is important to ensure that this part of the practice is intense and is conducted at as fast a pace as the players can sustain but without compromising quality! Breaks should be frequent and short. Scoring systems and a highly enthusiastic coach are essential factors ensuring that the players are so focused that there is no time for boredom!

Demonstrations Are Key!

Quality technical training requires that the coach clearly shows what he/she wants. Each new activity should be clearly demonstrated for the players with a concise explanation of the rules. The aim is to have the players practicing as soon as possible. The technical demonstrations throughout these activities should give the players a clear visual imprint to imitate, though the final result may be slightly different. Remember 'a picture paints a thousand words'. Once the players begin to practice it is important that the coach observes them carefully. This is not a passive exercise but one that requires great concentration if the coach is to improve the players. For example, during a 3 v1 keep away activity the coach may stop the whole group to make a comment which is relevant to all the players or may take an individual aside to provide *specific* feedback e.g. 'I like that your first touch was close to your body, Kate, but next time aim to direct it away from your opponent. Keep up the good work'. This 'individual coaching' is a vital aspect of technical training but is often neglected.

Technical v Skill Training

A 'technique' and a 'skill' have slightly different meanings in the context of sports, though the terms are often used interchangeably. A technique is regarded as an action performed in isolation whilst a skill involves the performance of a technique, at the right time, in a more game like setting. In the session plans in this book we are less concerned with rigid definitions but always ensure a clear progression from the 'technical practice' to the 'skill development' thus the activities move from simple to more complex. The same coaching philosophies apply; however, there will be more in the way of small-scale tactics to consider in the 'skill development' section.

CONDUCTING THE CONDITIONED GAMES AND SCRIMMAGE

The Conditioned Scrimmage as a Bridging Activity

In the past a youth training session has often comprised a warm up, a series of drills or activities (often unrelated and not progressive!) followed by a regular game. Even when the earlier activities have been related to a coherent theme there has often been little transference of those skills to the real game itself. The former activities lacked relevance in the eyes of the players and were seen as something to endure before playing a 'proper' game. At this point the players would revert to old habits and very little improvement and learning, in relation to the theme, would be witnessed in the game. The conditioned game as a 'bridging activity' provides this vital missing link.

Selecting The Condition

There are a variety of conditions that can be placed on any game depending on the aim of the practice. These can include:

- Limited touches
- Man to man marking
- Extra goal
- A modified playing area
- Extra balls
- The use of zones to encourage or restrict movement

Each condition is used to 'force' the players to repeat certain skills/patterns of movement (which they do not currently use appropriately) over and over again in a game like setting. The skill of the coach is in selecting which conditions to apply and then to adapt them if they are not working. If done successfully the coach will create many perfect opportunities to coach the theme of the day. It's as if he or she has 'fixed' the game to enable the coaching points to be made clearly in context.

Game Related Equals Fun

As well as being game related these activities are fun. The players are active, easily engaged and enthusiastic which means they are better able to learn and progress. In fact, a whole session can be conducted through the use of several conditioned games. This can be a useful strategy if you are working with a group of players who are attending practice for reasons other than a burning passion for the game of soccer.



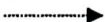


The Importance of The Scrimmage

It is important that the concluding game of the session is a regular scrimmage with 'free' play so that the tactical (decision making) aspect is focused on. This is the part of the session that allows us, as coaches, to assess learning and to see if the players are now executing the skill/pattern correctly and at the right time. At this point some players will revert to old habits in contrast to their performance in the earlier activities of the session. Others will adhere rigidly to the recently enforced skill/pattern even when it is an inappropriate option. This is where effective coaching takes place. The interventions should be timely and considered, as stopping the game too often will prevent flow and is sometimes unnecessary. Some errors are of an individual nature and should be addressed with a quiet word. An effective test of our coaching skills could simply be to observe the results of our work (simply put, are the players demonstrating the theme correctly and appropriately?).

PRACTICE SESSIONS

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Possession	35

KEY TO DIAGRAMS

	Cone
	Defined areas
	Dribbling with a ball
	Running without the ball
	Passing the ball
	Shooting the ball
GK	Goalkeeper
F	Feeder
T	Target Player

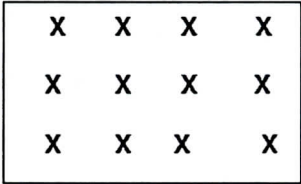
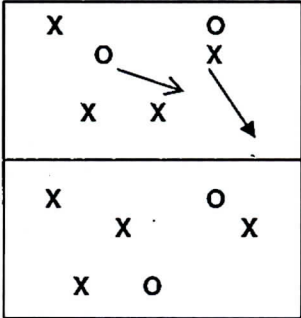
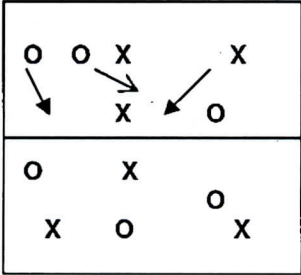
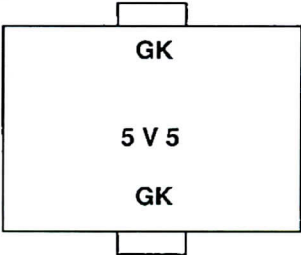
Session Title

Individual Possession

Objectives

To Develop 'Shielding' Technique

To Maintain Possession in Confined Areas

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm Up</p> <p>Ball each dribbling around the area. Use a range of commands to practice ball mastery. e.g. stop, go, change speed/direction, left / right foot dribbling. See P13</p>			<p>Close control of ball Use inside / outside of foot and laces to dribble</p> <p>Keep head up</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice: Possession</p> <p>X's dribble in the designated area (small). O's do not have a ball but aim to touch as many balls in their half as possible in one minute. Switch roles after thirty seconds. Ensure sufficient rest. Can Play 3 v 3 in each half. Scoring: Player in possession loses one of ten lives each time their ball is touched by an opponent or if the ball goes out of the area</p> <p>Progression 1: Defenders can steal the ball thus making the game continuous.</p>			<p>Keep body between ball and defender</p> <p>Stay sideways on when defender is close</p> <p>Turn away from pressure Emphasis on shielding not dribbling at speed</p> <p>Keep ball on furthest foot from defender</p> <p>Composure</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>3 (X's) v 3 (O's) keep away. Can pass to team-mates or dribble in the area. Each team begins with one ball. Aim is to possess your ball and steal the other teams' ball. Scoring: Point is scored for each ball that your team possesses after one minute.</p>			<p>Keep ball close 'Feel the ball and see the field'</p> <p>Accelerate into space Awareness of other players</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Game</p> <p>Players must take minimum of three touches on the ball before passing to a teammate. Can begin with 2 balls to maximize ball contact.</p>			<p>Decision: Pass or dribble to keep possession Turn away from pressure</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

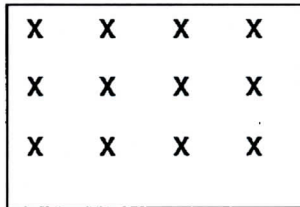
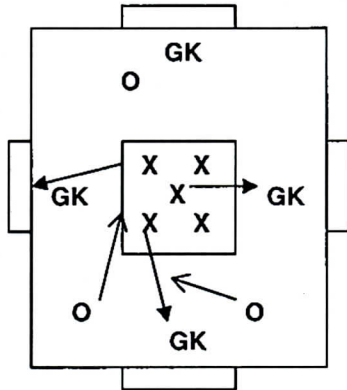
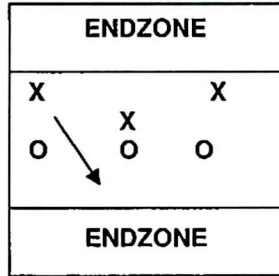
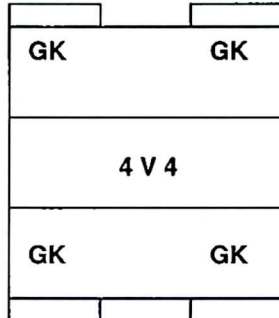
Session Title

Dribbling

Objectives

To Improve Technical Dribbling Skills

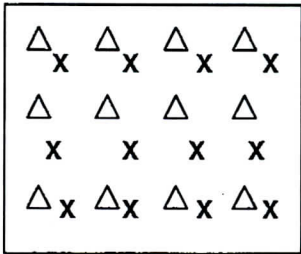
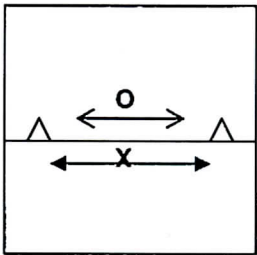
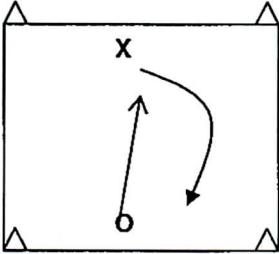
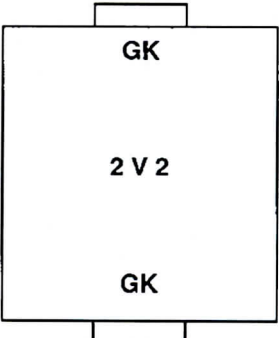
To Exploit Space Through Dribbling

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm Up</p> <p>Individual ball work with turns, change of speed, fakes etc. Coach a specific move to beat an opponent See P13 for variations on the theme.</p>			<p>Keep ball close</p> <p>Head up</p> <p>Use of both feet and different surfaces</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>X's begin with all the balls in the center of the field. The defenders (O's) operate outside this central area. The X's attempt to break out, attack space and shoot on goal. They then return to the central area to pick up another ball to attack with.</p> <p><i>Scoring: X's gain a point each time they score on goal. O's score by stealing the ball and taking it back to the central area.</i></p>			<p>Attack space</p> <p>Awareness of defenders</p> <p>Soft touches to maintain close control</p>
<p>3. Skill Development: 3 v 3</p> <p>Begin with each team in possession of one ball. The aim is to score by dribbling into the opponents' End zone. If the ball goes out of play then restart with a dribble. After a goal the team that conceded a goal collect a ball from behind their End zone and attack the opposition.</p> <p><i>Scoring: The team with the fewest balls behind their End zone at the end of the game are the winners.</i></p>			<p>Accelerate into a gap</p> <p>Awareness of defenders and teammates</p> <p>Positive attitude</p> <p>Decision: Pass or dribble?</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Game</p> <p>4 v 4 to two goals. Game always restarts with the coach playing into the central zone. Eight players compete in this area and attempt to break out into the attacking zone. Players must penetrate by dribbling, not by passing.</p>			<p>Quick decision-making</p> <p>Group shape to open space</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

Session Title 1 v 1 Attacking

Objectives To Dribble With Close Control

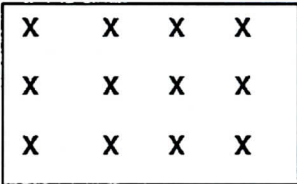
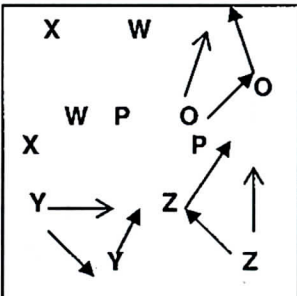
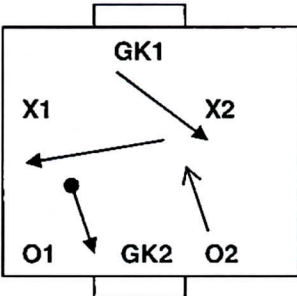
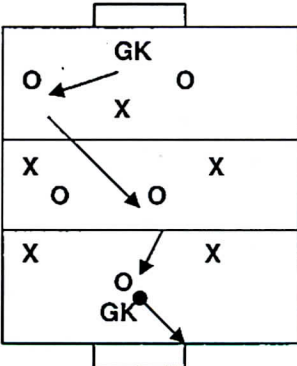
To Beat An Opponent

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm Up</p> <p>Players dribble around the area with a ball each and respond to a range of commands.e.g. left / right foot, stop, go, toe taps, box ball, circle the cones, beat the cones Coach a move at a cone (e.g. Scissors).</p>			<p>Close control Use both feet and different surfaces: Inside / outside /laces</p> <p>Head up!</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice: 1 v 1</p> <p>X must 'fake out' O and dribble the ball to either cone (left or right) before O (without ball) can get there. Alternate attacker and defender. <i>Scoring: One point for the player who gets to the cone first</i> Switch partners after five minutes.</p>			<p>Change of speed and direction</p> <p>Use a clearly defined 'fake' Use of hips and shoulders to 'fake' defender</p>
<p>3. Skill Development: 1 v 1</p> <p>X begins with the ball on his/her End line with O poised on the other End line without a ball. On X's first touch O can move forward to defend. <i>Scoring: X scores by stopping the ball on O's line. O scores by stealing the ball and counterattacking to X's line.</i> Alternate attacker and defender. Switch partners after five minutes</p>			<p>Approach with pace but close control</p> <p>Be positive Accelerate into space behind defender</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage: 2 v 2</p> <p>Condition: Man to man marking. On receiving the ball a player MUST attempt to beat the first defender. If ball goes off the sideline then game restarts with a dribble. After each goal the scoring team must run to their own goal before advancing to defend the ball thus giving time for the other team to 'break out'. <i>First pass from the GK is always free.</i></p>			<p>Head up to see the space Be positive and aggressive</p> <p>All the above Decision: Pass / dribble or shoot</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

Session Title 2 v 1 Attacking

Objectives To Improve Passing Technique

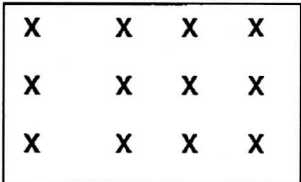
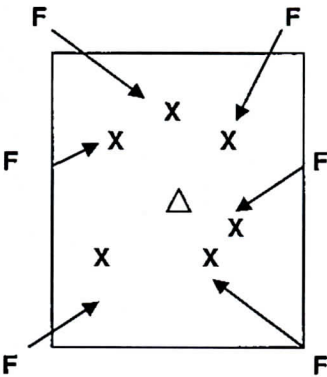
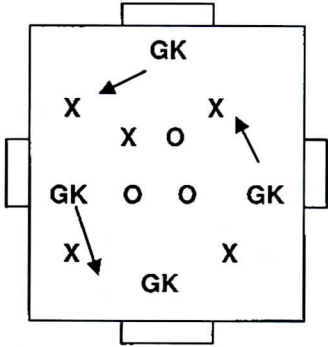
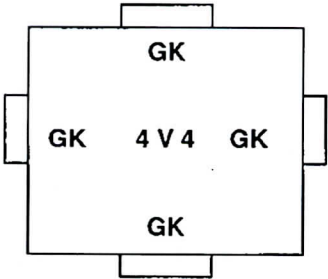
To Improve 2 v 1 Combination Play

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Ball each warm up. Players execute turns, changes of direction and speed, toe taps, ball boxes etc. See P13.</p>			<p>Close control Keep head up</p> <p>Use both feet Dribble to space</p>
<p>2. Technical Development</p> <p>Players get into pairs. They pass and move between each other in the designated area.</p> <p>Progression: Add two defenders (in pinnies) to the game who attempt to get as many touches on the different balls as possible. Change defenders.</p> <p>Scoring: Each pair starts with ten lives and loses a life if their ball is touched by any other player (or ball) or if it goes out of area.</p>			<p>Communication Quality of receiving touch</p> <p>Look up before passing the ball</p> <p>Use inside of foot with ankle locked</p> <p>Non-kicking foot points toward target Timing of the pass</p>
<p>3. Skill Development: 2 v 1</p> <p>GK1 rolls ball out to X1 or X2. On X's first touch O1 or O2 can come forward from their goal to challenge for the ball. If ball goes out of play then restart with GK2 playing into O's who attack X's goal (X1 or X2 defending).</p> <p>Scoring: Team in possession aims to combine and score on goal. Defending player aims to steal the ball and counterattack to opposition goal.</p>			<p>Awareness of defender</p> <p>Angle and distance of support</p> <p>Decision: Dribble or pass</p> <p>Be positive</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage: Zones</p> <p>Players must remain in their designated zones. Game is constantly restarted with the coach feeding the ball into different players. Rotate pairs of players to different zones.</p> <p>Progression: Player can penetrate the next zone with a dribble but must return on transition</p>			<p>All the above</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

Session Title **Receiving The Ball Along The Ground**

Objectives **To Receive The Ball Close To The Body**

To Direct The Ball Away From Pressure

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Dribbling warm up with turns, fakes, moves etc. Ensure players use both feet and different surfaces. See P13</p>			<p>Soft touch on the ball Keep ball close Head up</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>X's run towards and receives a ball from F, control and pass back. X's then returns to the center cone and then goes to a different feeder.</p> <p><i>Scoring: The first X to make five passes is the winner. Must be two touches.</i></p> <p>Progression: As above but receive the ball towards a different feeder. Play a double pass and then go to a different feeder.</p>			<p>Lateral movement to get in line with the ball</p> <p>Move towards the ball</p> <p>Set body to receive the ball</p> <p>Weight and direction of the controlling touch</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>Each GK and the coach start with a ball. Pass into X's who turn away to attack one of the other goals. If O wins the ball they attack any goal. GK then feeds into another player in space.</p> <p><i>Scoring: A point is awarded each time a goal is scored. First player to five goals is the winner. Rotate positions.</i></p>			<p>Head up on receiving the ball</p> <p>Awareness of defenders</p> <p>Awareness of the goal</p> <p>Receive ball towards goal if possible but away from pressure</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Game</p> <p>As above but with two equal teams and only two balls being fed in from the coach at any one time. Players can pass to team-mates and can score on any goal</p>			<p>Select the controlling surface</p> <p>Communication</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

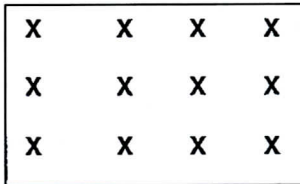
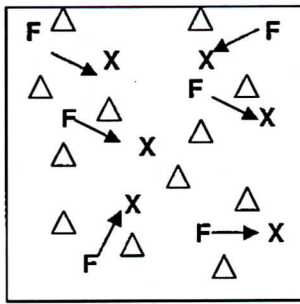
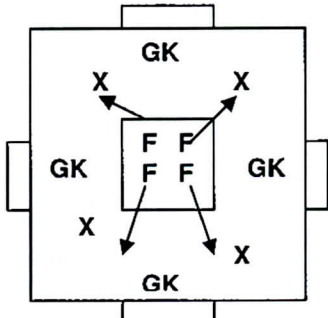
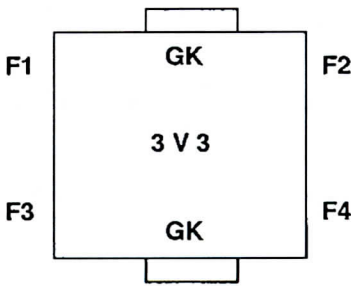
Session Title

Receiving Air Balls

Objectives

To Direct The Ball Away From Pressure

To Receive the ball close to the body

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Players dribble around area performing a range of turns and moves. Incorporate the players throwing the ball in the air and controlling (cushioning) with their laces and thighs. See P13.</p>			<p>Head up Close control Laces: Bend knee with toes pointing up Cushion the ball</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>F throws the ball (underarm) to X who controls it and passes back to F. X then runs to a different feeder and repeats the above. The first player to visit five gates is the winner. Change the roles of the players.</p> <p>Progression: X's must receive the ball from the feeder and pass to a different feeder. Receive another ball and repeat the process. First player to five gates is the winner.</p>			<p>Movement to get in line with the ball Cushion the ball</p> <p>Vertical movement to take the ball out of the air</p> <p>Select and present surface</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>Each X receives a ball from F's and attempt to score on goal. They then return to the center to receive another ball from a different feeder. First player to score three goals is the winner. Rotate positions. The coach acts as a passive defender.</p>			<p>Quick movement towards point of control Settle yourself before presenting surface</p> <p>Body shape on receiving the ball Call for the ball Control towards 'open' goal</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Game</p> <p>Ball is fed in from the F that the coach calls out. The ball must be controlled out of the air and play ensues. If the ball goes out of play the coach calls another number. Rotate players. Feeder should throw the ball towards a player, not aimlessly. Coach may call two numbers.</p>			<p>Awareness of defenders Receive ball away from pressure and towards goal if possible Communication between players</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

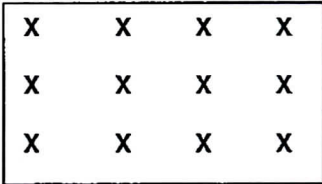
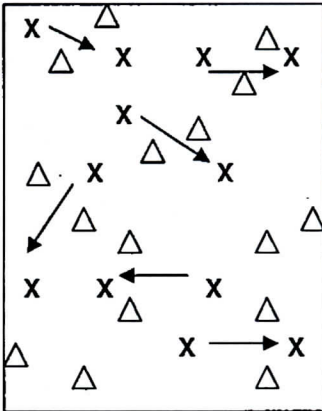
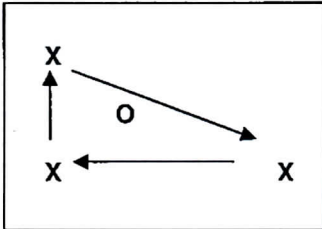
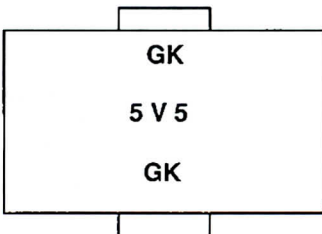
Session Title

Short Passing

Objectives

To Develop Technique Of The Push Pass

To Pass At The Right Time

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Players dribble around the area with a ball each and respond to a variety of commands from the coach. See P13.</p>			<p>Head up Close control Use of both feet and different surfaces</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice: Passing</p> <p>Players are in pairs with one ball between them. Players pass through the goal to each other using one touch to control and one pass to return the ball (practice for one minute). Competition: Players make five passes with their partner and then both run to a new gate and repeat. The first pair to five gates is the winner.</p> <p>Progression: Repeat the above but only make one pass through each gate. Introduce two defenders who move to block the gates but cannot steal the ball.</p>			<p>Change of speed and direction</p> <p>Use inside of foot with ankle locked to pass</p> <p>Non-kicking foot <i>alongside</i> ball and pointing towards target</p> <p>Step into pass for momentum</p> <p>Follow through to provide 'crispness' of pass</p> <p>Receive ball with the inside of foot</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>3 v 1 keep away in a square. Change the defender after 1 minute. <i>Scoring: Which group can make the largest number of consecutive passes in a minute without a mistake?</i></p> <p>Progression: 3 v1 to goals. GK1 plays into X's and after three passes they can score in either goal. Rotate. O can shoot immediately on winning the ball.</p>			<p>Communication</p> <p>Accuracy</p> <p>Strength of the pass</p> <p>Timing of the pass</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage: 6 v 6</p> <p>Must make three consecutive passes before team can score.</p>			
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

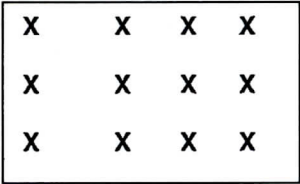
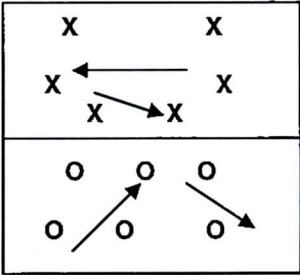
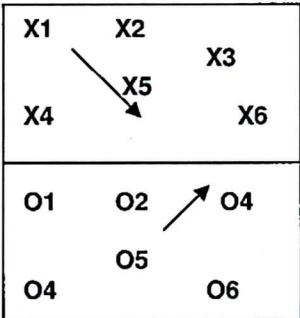
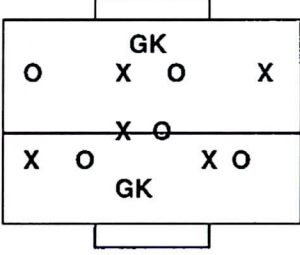
Session Title

Possession

Objectives

To Improve Technique Of Pass

To Improve Support Play

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm Up</p> <p>Individual ball skills and dribbling including toe taps, boxing the ball, fakes etc. See P13</p>			<p>Head up</p> <p>Close control</p> <p>Balance</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>Players pass and move in their area <i>Scoring: Start with five points and gain a point for each successful pass. Lose a point if the ball or any player stops moving. Lose a point if the ball goes out of area.</i> Progression: Add another ball to each group</p>			<p>Maintain shape / space</p> <p>Quality of pass</p> <p>Movement</p> <p>Communication</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>Number X's and O's one through six. When the coach shouts a number, that player runs to the other team to try to steal the ball. Coach has option to call more than one number <i>Scoring: Team that maintains possession for the longest gains a point. Restart.</i> Progression: As above but place a goal in the centre. Ball is fed to one team whilst the other team sends a defender across. After four passes the team may shoot on goal. Defender can shoot immediately on goal or pass to his/her team.</p>			<p>Quality of pass:</p> <p>Accuracy</p> <p>Weight</p> <p>Timing</p> <p>Gain eye contact before passing</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>5 v 5 + GK's. Team must make three consecutive passes before a goal can be scored. Two players from each team must remain in their half of the field. One player from each team can roam between the halves.</p>			<p>Awareness</p> <p>Quality of control</p> <p>Composure</p> <p>Shield if there is no available pass</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

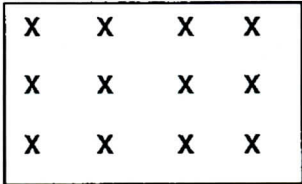
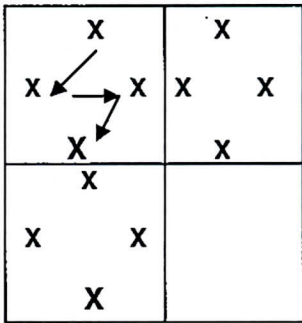
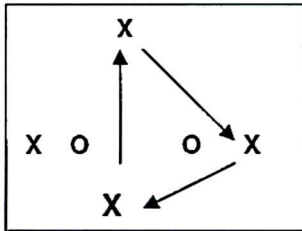
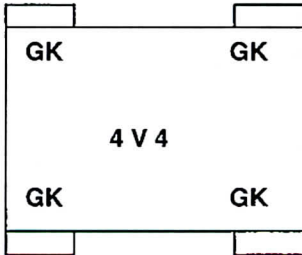
Session Title

Possession

Objectives

To Develop The Quality Of Pass

To Provide Angles Of Support

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm Up</p> <p>Ball each dribbling skills including change of speed and direction, use of left foot, right foot, toe taps in a forward and backwards direction, ball boxes in a forward and backward direction. See P13.</p>			<p>Close control Head up Use of both feet Awareness of space</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice: Passing</p> <p>In groups of four, players pass and move within their area maintaining a diamond shape. Must be two touches. <i>Scoring: How many consecutive passes without a mistake? Score returns to zero if the ball or any player stops still or if the ball goes out of the area.</i> Progression: As above but after five passes the group moves clockwise into the next quadrant and repeats <i>Scoring: The 1st team back to their starting position are the winners. Repeat.</i></p>			<p>Maintain shape: Length, width and depth Quality of pass Movement after pass Communication Quality of receiving touch</p>
<p>3. Skill Development: 4 v 2(or 1)</p> <p>Four players in the area aim to possess the ball. Two players try to steal the ball from the four. <i>Scoring: How many consecutive passes can the four players make before losing possession? Two defenders score by stealing the ball and dribbling out of any safe side of the area.</i></p>			<p>Angle and distance of support Accuracy of pass Strength of pass Timing of pass Maintain 'diamond' shape</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage: 4 v 4</p> <p>4 v 4 scrimmage to two wide goals. After five minutes the four GK's come out to form a team whilst one of the outfield teams becomes GK's.</p>			<p>All the above</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

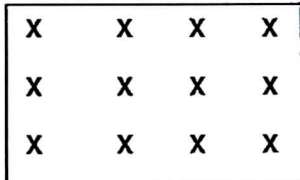
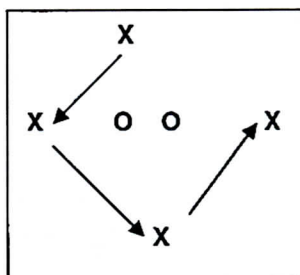
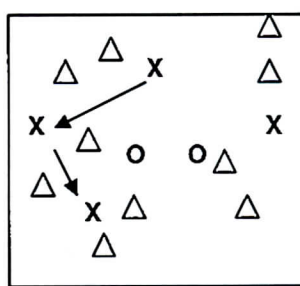
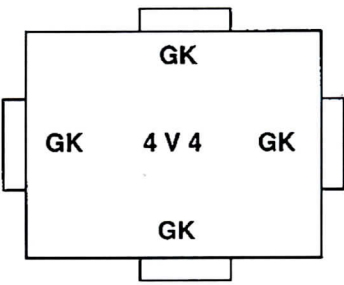
Session Title

Possession

Objectives

To Be Patient In Possession

To Improve Vision and Decision Making

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Ball each dribbling skills. Players perform moves, changes of speed and direction using left and right feet. See P13</p>			<p>Head up Close control Both feet Different surfaces</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>X's possess two balls between them. The O's attempt to steal the balls and dribble them to the outside of the area. This ball is now out of the game. X's then take another ball from the specified area and continue. <i>Scoring: Can the X's survive the time period without running out of balls?</i></p>			<p>Awareness of defenders and team-mates</p> <p>Composure</p> <p>Timing of the pass</p> <p>Shield if there is no pass available</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>4X's keep the ball away from the 2O's by dribbling, shielding and passing. <i>Scoring: X's score by dribbling the ball through one of the gates. O's score by stealing the ball and dribbling through a gate.</i></p> <p>Progression: X's must pass the ball through the gate to a team-mate to score.</p>			<p>Distance and angle of support</p> <p>Awareness of space to exploit</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Be positive</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>4 v 4 to four goals. Rotate GK's after five minutes. Set up as a tournament where each team plays the other two teams.</p>			<p>All the above</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

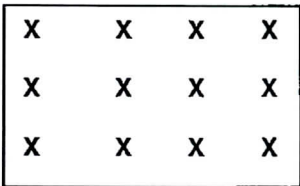
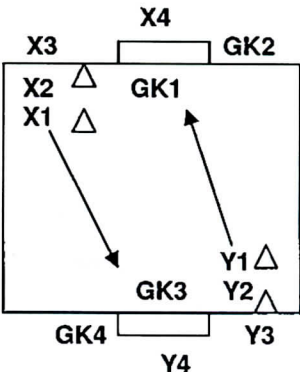
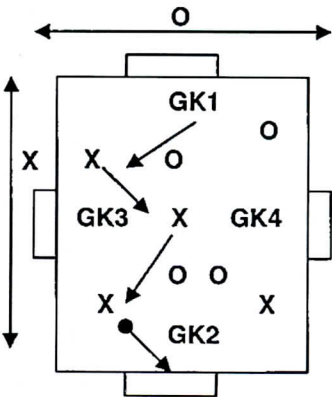
Session Title

Breakaways

Objectives

To Remain Composed When 1 v 1 with GK

To Remain Aware Of GK And Defenders Position

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Players move around the area with a ball each practising turns and moves on coach's commands. Introduce defenders who are trying to steal the balls. See P13.</p>			<p>Head up Close control Use of move to beat defender: Change speed and direction</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>X and Y attack opposite goals simultaneously and have five seconds to score. They then join the line the other side (initially as a retriever) of the goal to attack the other way. The two GK's on each side switch after each shot. Practice time, then competition. <i>Scoring: First player to three goals is the winner. Rotate GK's.</i></p>			<p>1st touch out of feet Awareness of GK in relation to goal</p> <p>If GK comes forward then beat GK with a move</p> <p>If GK stays on line then shoot to the corners Timing of shot</p> <p>Be aggressive to goal</p>
<p>3. Skill Development: Introduce defenders</p> <p>As above but players have starting positions indicated by cones. Once X1 has taken his/her first touch X2 may give chase. Switch roles when they attack the other way. X's and Y's go simultaneously. GK2 and GK4 act as retrievers. Rotate after first game. <i>Scoring: First player to get to three goals is the winner. No points if attacker is caught before shooting.</i></p>			<p>Awareness of defender Quality of dribbling touch</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>X's receive the ball from GK1 and attack towards GK2. If they score they then attack towards GK1. O's attempt to steal the ball and then attack towards GK3 or GK4. If they score they attack the other way. Thus X's are playing North-South and O's attack East-West.</p>			<p>Positive attitude to goal</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

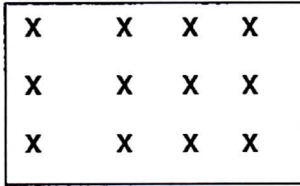
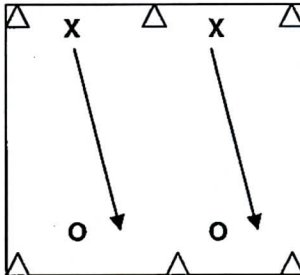
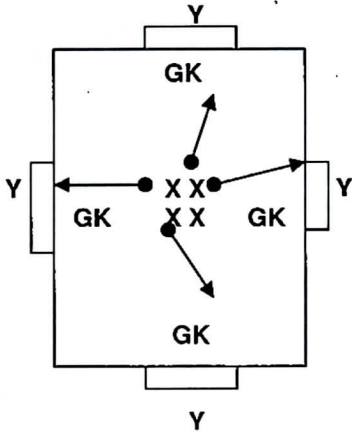
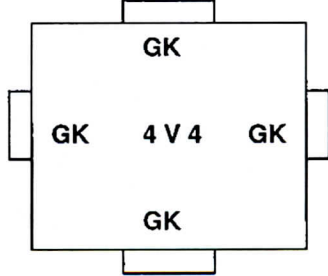
Session Title

Shooting

Objectives

To Develop Technique Of Shooting

To Encourage A Positive Attitude To Shooting

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Players dribble around the area with a ball each performing turns, moves etc. on the coaches commands. See P13.</p>			<p>Head Up Balance Use of both feet and different surfaces Close control</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>X stands in a goal and opposes O. X shoots at O's goal. After saving / retrieving the ball O rolls the ball forward and immediately shoots at Xs goal. Play is continuous for two minutes and speed of play is essential. Switch players to play against someone of similar ability. Play three or four games.</p>			<p>Strike the ball with the laces and ankle locked</p> <p>Strike the centre of the back of the ball</p> <p>Approach at an angle</p> <p>Non-kicking foot to the side of the ball and pointing towards target</p> <p>Weight over the ball</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>All balls are placed in the central area marked by cones. X's start in the central area, O's play as GK's and Y's behind the goal as second GK's / retrievers. X's dribble and shoot on any goal and then return to the centre to get another ball.</p> <p><i>Scoring: How many goals can Team X score in 1 minute? Rotate roles.</i></p> <p>Progression: As above but add defenders who aim to steal the balls and attack a different goal.</p> <p>Progression2: Y's act as feeders and pass the balls into X's.</p>			<p>4 A's</p> <p>Accuracy</p> <p>Aggression</p> <p>Attitude: Positive</p> <p>Awareness of GK position</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Game</p> <p>4 v 4 to four goals. Regular scrimmage but team can score on any of the four goals. GK then feeds in to any player who must attack a different goal.</p> <p>Variation: Use two balls</p>			
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

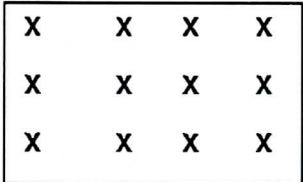
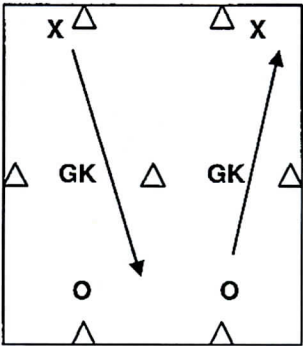
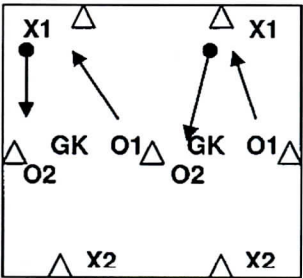
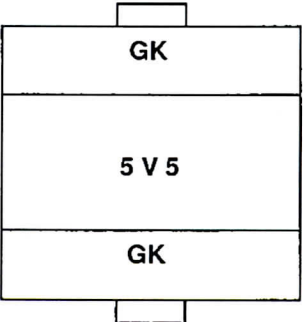
Session Title

Shooting

Objectives

To Improve Shooting Technique

To Improve Decision Making Near Goal

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Players move around area with a ball each, performing turns, fakes etc. on the coach's commands.</p>			<p>Head up</p> <p>Close control</p> <p>Balance</p> <p>Use of both feet</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>X and O's take it turns to take shots on goal. Alternate left and right feet. Ensure the player controls the ball and then looks to take the shot quickly. Rotate GK every 2 minutes.</p> <p>Progression: On receiving the ball the player takes the ball around the rear cone and shoots, as the ball is moving forward. Game speed. Rotate GK. Alternate left and right feet.</p> <p><i>Scoring: How many goals did X and O score as a team?</i></p>			<p>Strike with laces and ankle locked</p> <p>Non-kicking foot points towards target</p> <p>Step into the ball</p> <p>Follow through</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>Player O1 passes to X1 and then moves forward to defend. X1 can shoot directly on goal or beat O1 before shooting. If O1 wins the ball he/she dribbles to the cone. Repeat from other side with O2 and X2.</p> <p><i>Scoring: X1 and X2 combine goals. O1 and O2 combine goals. Rotate positions.</i></p>			<p>Good controlling touch to create space</p> <p>Head up on receiving the ball</p> <p>Decision: Shoot immediately or beat the defender</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage: 6 v 6</p> <p>Regular scrimmage but must shoot from outside the designated areas.</p>			
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

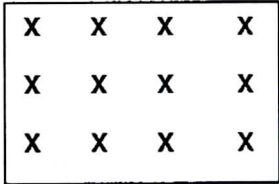
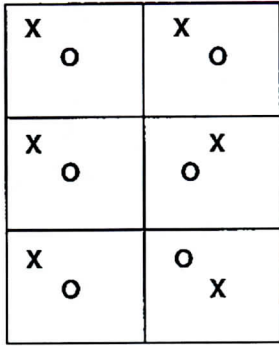
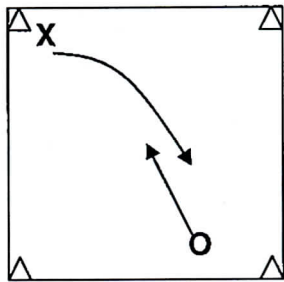
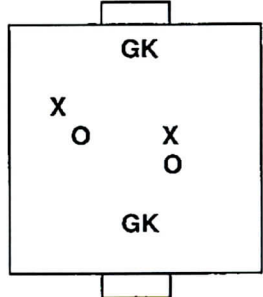
Session Title

Individual Defending

Objectives

To Apply Pressure To Opponent

To Use Correct Defensive Stance

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm-Up</p> <p>Individual ball work with turns, fakes, change of speed, ball rolls etc. See P13.</p> <p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>X dribbles in small area whilst O remains as close as possible. <i>Scoring: O gains a point if within touching distance when coach freezes play. Switch roles.</i></p> <p>As above but O attempts to win possession by stealing the ball. If the ball goes out of play then O begins with the ball in the center. <i>Scoring: Player in possession at the end of the minute is the winner.</i> As above but begin the game with a block tackle in the center.</p> <p>3. Skill Development: 1 v 1</p> <p>On X's first touch O may leave his / her cone to defend. <i>Scoring: X scores by stopping the ball at O's cone. O scores if the ball goes out of the area and two points for stealing the ball and counterattacking to X's cone</i> Alternate who starts with the ball. Progression: Players defends the End line instead of a cone</p> <p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>Regular soccer rules but players can only challenge their designated opponent (man to man marking). GK passes or rolls the ball to a player. <i>First pass from GK is free.</i> Variation: Play 5 v 5 (man to man marking) with two balls.</p> <p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>	   		<p>Close control Head Up Soft touches</p> <p>Apply pressure to opponent Stay touch tight</p> <p>Defend sideways on</p> <p>Poke ball away with the front foot</p> <p>Block Tackle: Non-kicking foot alongside the ball Weight over the ball Use inside of foot with ankle locked</p> <p>Pressure 'Surfing' position-sideways on Patience: Don't over commit</p> <p>Angle of approach</p> <p>Stay close to opponent Timing of challenge</p>

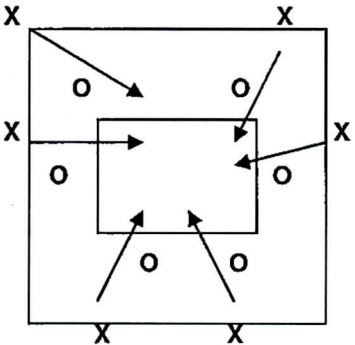
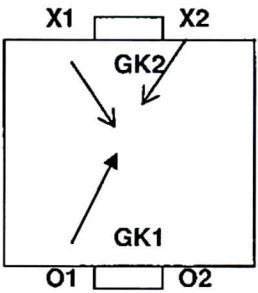
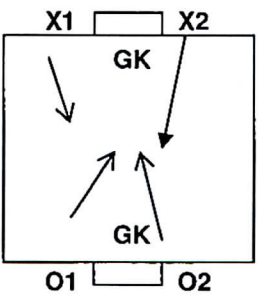
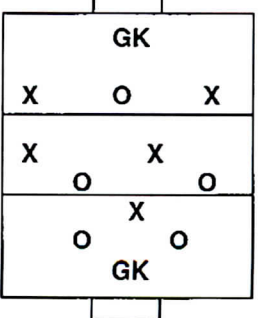
Session Title

Defending

Objectives

To Apply Pressure to 1st attacker

To Provide cover for 1st defender

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>X's begin on the outside of the large area whilst O's begin on the outside of the small central area. <i>Scoring: X scorers by beating his/her opponent and penetrating the inner area. O aims to prevent X's penetration and counterattack to outer line. Switch positions.</i></p>			<p>Pressure Patience Position</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice: 1 attacker v 2 defenders</p> <p>X1 and X2 begin alongside the goal and on O1's first touch come forward to defend the goal. Restart with GK2 playing into X's if ball goes out of play. <i>Scoring: O scores by shooting past GK into the net. X's score by counterattacking and shooting into X's O's goal.</i></p>			<p>Communication 1st Defender: Pressure 2nd Defender: Cover</p> <p>Distance and angle of cover Recovery run if beaten</p>
<p>3. 2 v 2 to Goal</p> <p>X's begin with the ball and attack O's goal. O1 and O2 move forward to defend as soon as X's have taken their first touch. If the ball goes out of play then begin with a player dribbling or passing onto the field. After a goal set up again with O's in possession. Rotate GK's regularly.</p>			<p>2nd defender covers 1st defender</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>Players must stay in designated zones creating 2 v 1 and 2 v 2 situations. Progression: One player from central zone can penetrate final third when attacking but must recover to central zone on loss of possession</p>			<p>Play goal side but step forward to intercept if possible Fast Recovery</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

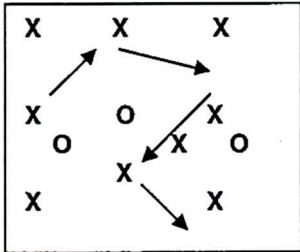
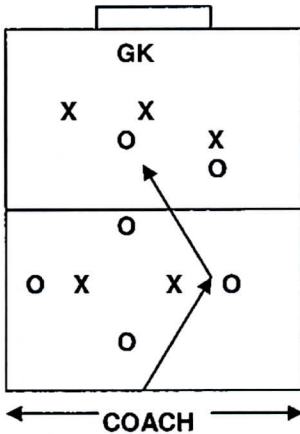
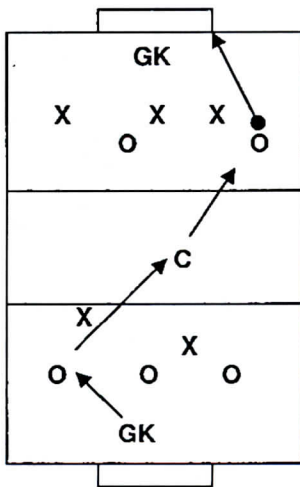
Session Title

Defending

Objectives

To Organize The Defensive Three

To Provide Pressure, Cover and Balance

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>9 v 3 keep away. Nine attackers possess the ball whilst three defenders try to steal it. The three defensive players carry pinnies in their hands and switch with the attacking player who gives away possession.</p>			<p>Pressure 'Surf' position</p> <p>Small steps and bent knees</p>
<p>2. Functional Practice</p> <p>Coach feeds a ball into the four O's in midfield who aim to pass into the two O's in offensive positions. The three defending X's attempt to steal the ball and pass up to the two X's in midfield who in turn attempt to pass to the coach.</p> <p>If ball is continuously lost in midfield then coach can feed directly into the offensive O's to increase frequency of practice.</p> <p>Progression: One O player can penetrate the offensive zone after the pass or by dribbling. Rotate positions.</p>			<p>1st Defender: Pressure 2nd Defender: Cover 3rd Defender: Balance</p> <p>Defenders get goal side of the ball</p> <p>Step in front of the attacker if feasible to win the ball</p> <p>Communication</p>
<p>3. Conditioned Game</p> <p>Coach begins by feeding the ball into the 2O's who attack goal. If X's win the ball they play into the coach, who attacks the other goal by playing into the X's or by penetrating. Defenders always play into the coach who goes with the flow of possession</p>			<p>Anticipation of pass</p> <p>Don't allow the defender to turn.</p>
<p>4. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

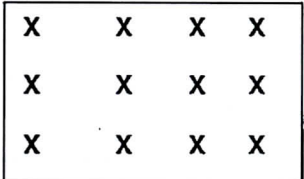
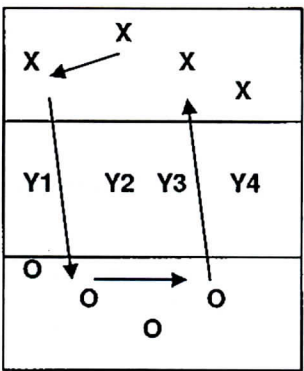
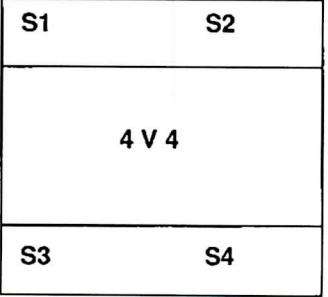
Session Title

Long Passing

Objectives

To Develop The Technique Of The Long Pass

To Decide When To Possess v Penetrate

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Ball each warm up following the commands of the coach. e.g. changes of direction /speed / surface etc. See P13.</p> <p>2. Technical Practice: Long Pass</p> <p>There are four players in each zone. X's and O's act as one team and attempt to play the ball across the central zone to each other. Y attempts to block the pass. Begin with four balls in play. A maximum of three passes can be made within a zone before making the long pass across</p> <p><i>Scoring: For what length of time can X's and O's possess the balls.. Rotate defending team.</i></p> <p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>As above but with one ball fed in from coach to X's. One Y can move into X's zone to steal the ball. X's can pass to each other but aim to deliver the ball across the zone to O's. If the ball reaches O's a new Y (Y2) moves into that zone whilst Y1 recovers to central zone.</p> <p><i>Scoring: X's and O's score by delivering the ball across the zone. Y's score by stealing the ball.</i></p> <p>4. Conditioned Game: 4 v 4 to End zone</p> <p>Coach starts the game by feeding into any player.</p> <p><i>Scoring: Goal for passing to one of the neutral support players on the opposite End zone. This player then feeds into the team that conceded a goal.</i></p> <p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>	  		<p>Close control Head up Awareness of other players</p> <p>Strike with laces and ankle locked.</p> <p>Touch the ball forward and to the side to allow a run up</p> <p>Step into the ball and follow through in the direction of the target</p> <p>Non kicking foot alongside the ball but not too close Point towards target</p> <p>Awareness of defender Awareness of space Importance of receiving touch</p> <p>Head up on receiving the ball Look to penetrate early</p>

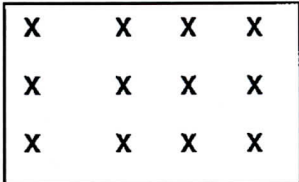
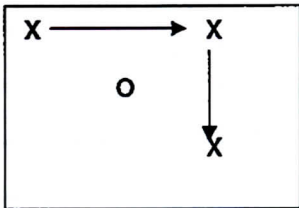
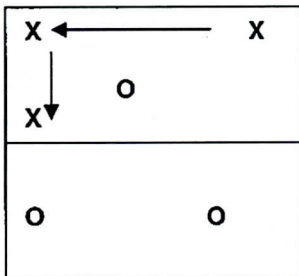
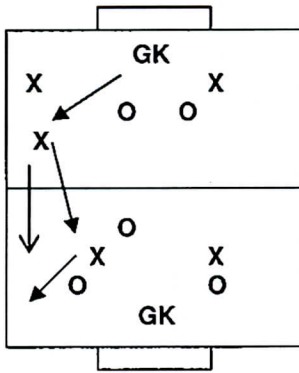
Session Title

Transition

Objectives

To Maintain Possession

To Improve Support Runs

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm up</p> <p>Players move around area with a ball each, performing turns, fakes etc. on the coach's commands. See P13.</p>			<p>Head Up</p> <p>Close control</p> <p>Dribble to space</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>3X's keep the ball away from O. Change defender after two minutes.</p> <p><i>Scoring: X's score by making four consecutive passes. O scores each time he / she wins the ball.</i></p>			<p>Distance and angle of support</p> <p>Quality of pass: Accuracy Weight Timing</p>
<p>3. Skill Development: 3 v 1 (+2)</p> <p>3X's v 1O in one half of the field. 2O's in the other half of the field. X's attempt to keep possession and O tries to steal the ball. Once O steals the ball he / she passes into teammates and follows the pass to make a group of three. One X can go after the ball to try and win it back</p> <p><i>Scoring: Team scores a goal on making four consecutive passes</i></p> <p>Progression: Can do this with 3 v 2(+1), 4 v 2 (+2) or 6 v 3 (+3)</p>			<p>Speed and angle of support run</p> <p>Positioning of two support players to receive the ball in space-provide length</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>Each team has three players in the defensive half of the field and two in the offensive half. GK can act as a sweeper keeper. The attacking players must always remain in their half. A defensive player can progress into the attacking half with the ball or after it has been played in. If the ball is lost any penetrating player must recover to their own half.</p>			<p>Decision: Who penetrates and when</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

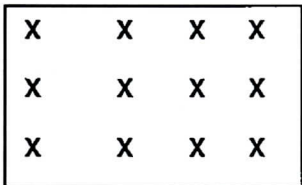
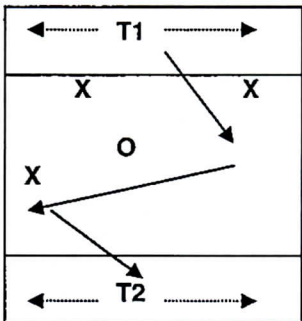
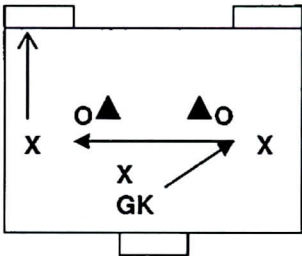
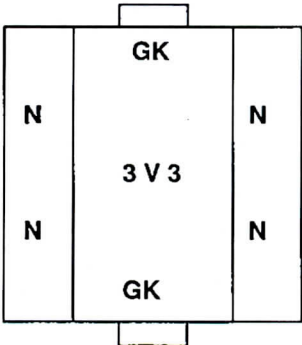
Session Title

Width in Possession

Objectives

To Maintain Width

To Attack Out Wide When Appropriate

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm Up</p> <p>Individual ball work practising moves, turns, changes of speed etc. Include rolling the ball with the sole of the foot, toe taps and boxing the ball. See P13.</p>			<p>Head up</p> <p>Find space</p> <p>Close control</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>T1 plays into X's who combine to get the ball to T2. T2 then passes into X's who attack the other way to get ball to T1.</p> <p>If O wins the ball he/she attacks in the opposite direction to the X's and score by passing to a T player.</p> <p><i>Scoring: Score by passing to target player.</i></p> <p>Progression: X's must make three passes before scoring</p>			<p>Maintain width</p> <p>Quality of pass</p> <p>Quality of 1st touch</p> <p>Distance and angle of support</p> <p>Speed of decision</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>GK passes the ball to X's who combine to score between one of the two wide gates. O's begin on cones for each restart. O's can attempt to steal the ball <i>after</i> x's first touch (i.e. GK pass is 'free') and then score on goal. Rotate positions.</p> <p>Note: Area should be wide but short.</p>			<p>Decision: Pass or dribble</p> <p>Maintain shape</p> <p>Composure on the ball</p> <p>Play away from pressure</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>3X's v 3O's with two wide neutral players in each half of the field. Neutral players cannot be challenged but the ball is not allowed to stop. N's must remain in their own half.</p> <p>Progression: Neutral players can only have three consecutive touches on the ball.</p>			<p>As above</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage</p>			

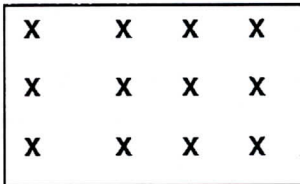
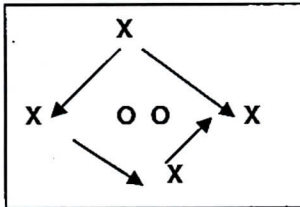
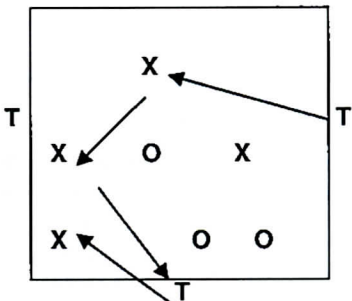
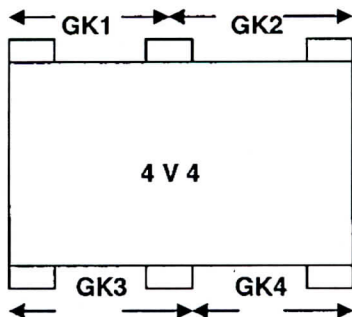
Session Title

Switching Play

Objectives

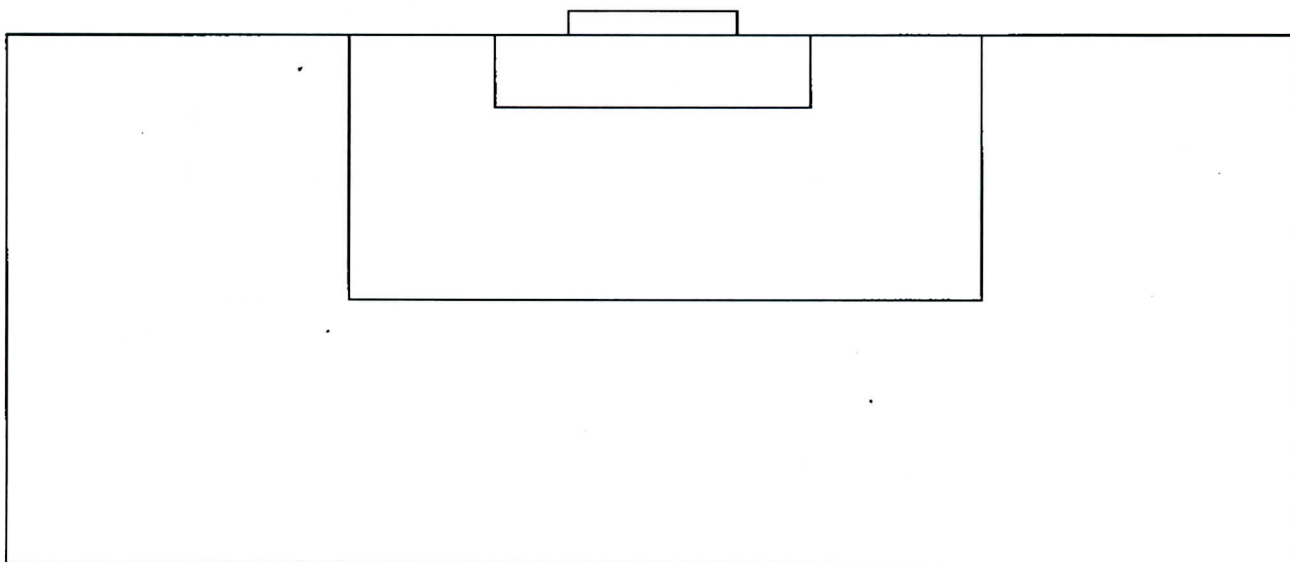
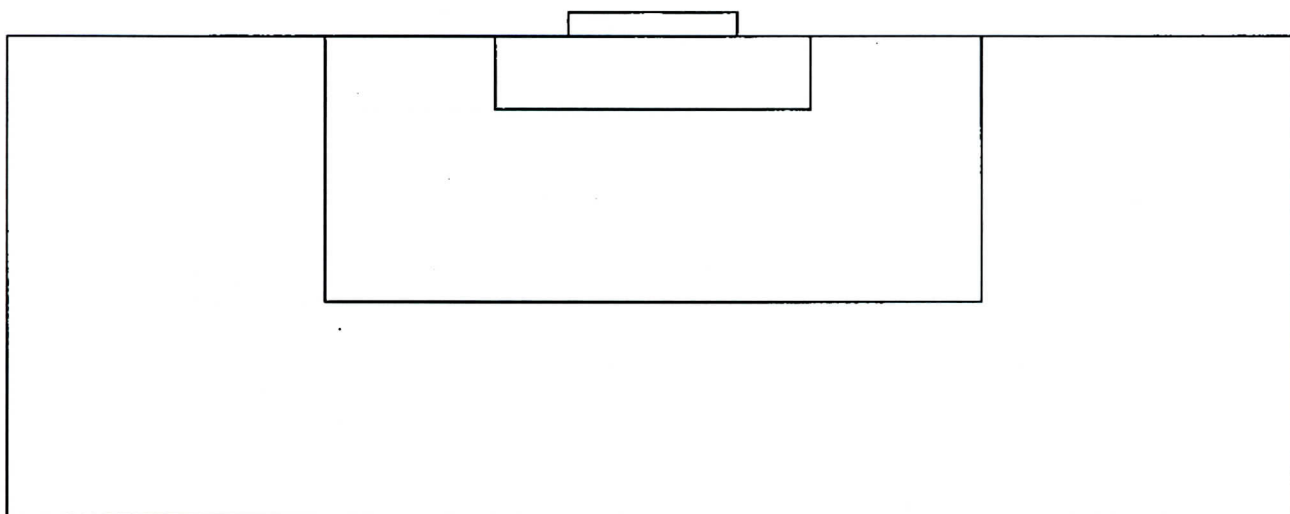
To Change The Angle Of Attack

To Maintain Width

PHASE & ACTIVITY	DIAGRAM	TIME	COACHING POINTS
<p>1. Warm Up</p> <p>Five balls between twelve players. Pass and move in area. Encourage players to move wide to receive the ball and stretch the field. Condition to pass with left/right foot, inside/outside of feet.</p> <p>Progression: Encourage longest pass available</p>			<p>Vision Movement wide to create space Quality of pass Quality of 1st touch</p>
<p>2. Technical Practice</p> <p>4X's keep the ball away from 2O's. Scoring: 4 consecutive passes=1 goal for X's. 2 consecutive passes=1 goal for O's. O's can be joined by a pinnie if there is a need to reduce pressure.</p>			<p>Maintain width, depth and length</p> <p>Quality of pass</p> <p>Open up to field on receiving the ball</p>
<p>3. Skill Development</p> <p>5X's v 3O's (+4 support players). X's start with the ball and maintain possession using the wide players. If O's win the ball they also use wide support.</p> <p><i>Scoring: A goal is scored each time the ball is [played to a wide player. On receiving from one support player the ball must be transferred to another support</i></p> <p>Rotate positions after five minutes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">T</p> 		<p>Distance and angles of support</p> <p>Movement of T players to receive the ball</p> <p>Maintain shape</p> <p>Head up on receiving the pass</p>
<p>4. Conditioned Scrimmage</p> <p>4 V 4 to three small goals. Each team has two GK's who can move to defend all three goals on their side.</p> <p>Note: Area should be wide but short.</p>			<p>Maintain width, depth and length.</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Play away from pressure.</p>
<p>5. Regular Scrimmage: 6 V 6</p>			

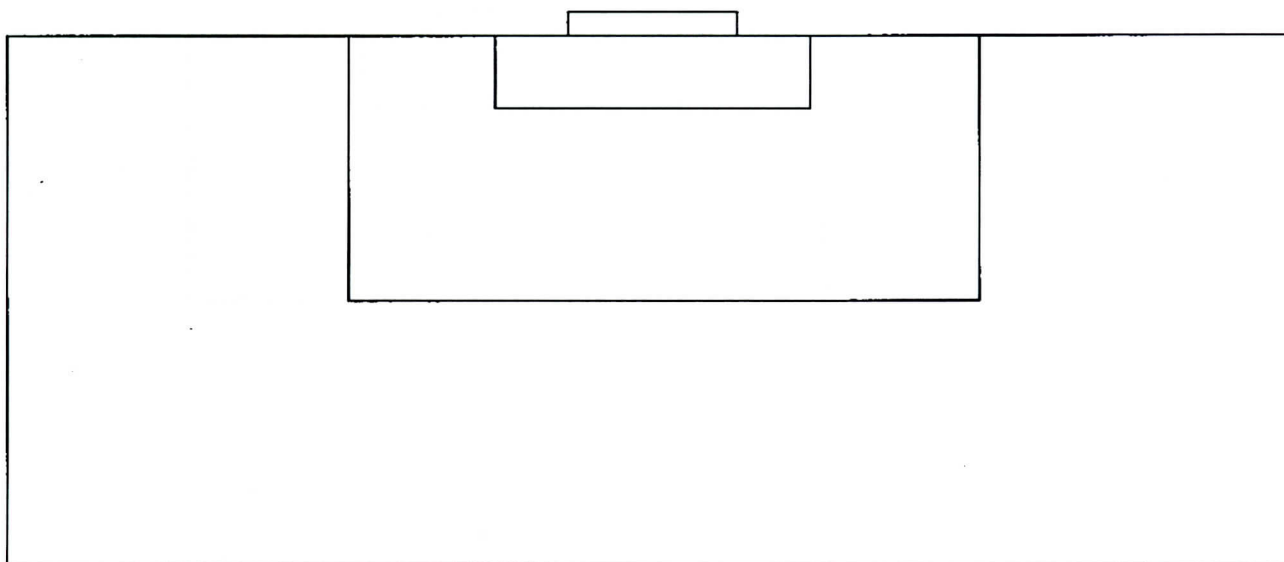
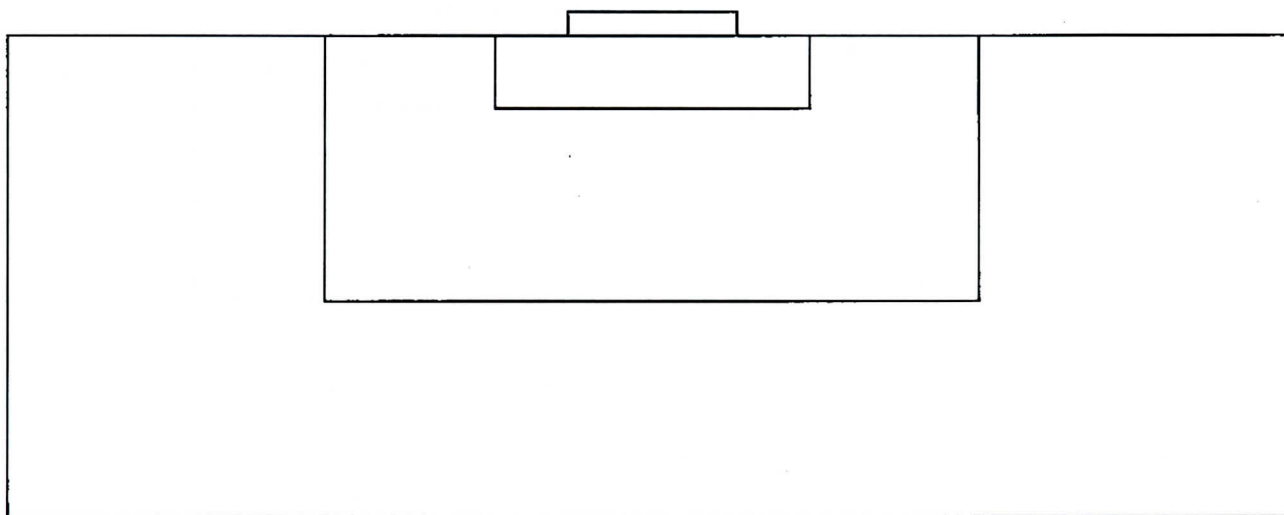


Attacking From Corners





Attacking From Free Kicks



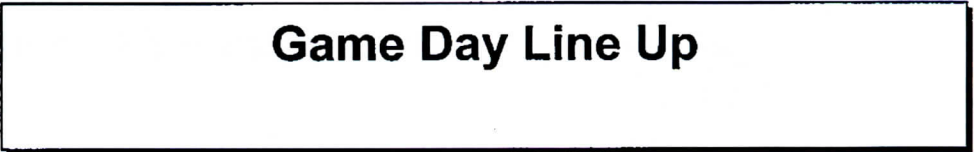




<h1>Roster</h1>

Name	Date of Birth	Address	City	Phone Number	E-Mail

40



Enter Position of Player:	F= Forward M= Midfield D= Defense S= Substitute
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Enter The Playing Time For Each Player



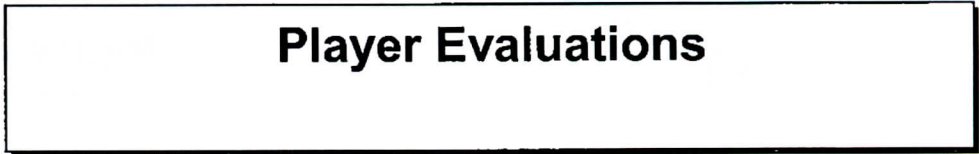
Game Details

Date	Opponent	HT Score	FT Score	Scorer	Assist



Injury Log

Date	Name	Nature of Injury	Treatment	Parent Follow Up



Enter a comment or score to evaluate the players' performance



Our Season Plan

	Session 1	Session 2		Session 1	Session 2
Week 1			Week 13		
Week 2			Week 14		
Week 3			Week 15		
Week 4			Week 16		
Week 5			Week 17		
Week 6			Week 18		
Week 7			Week 19		
Week 8			Week 20		
Week 9			Week 21		
Week 10			Week 22		
Week 11			Week 23		
Week 12			Week 24		

[illegible]

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Player Evaluations

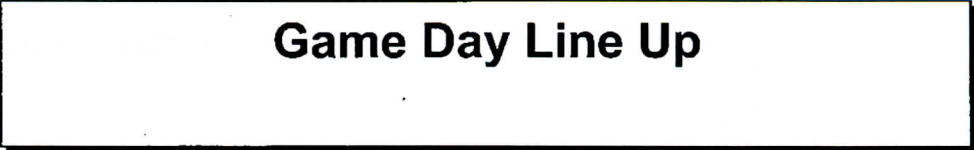
	Passing	Dribbling	Shooting	Defending	Attitude
Name					

Enter a comment or score to evaluate the players' performance



Enter The Playing Time For Each Player

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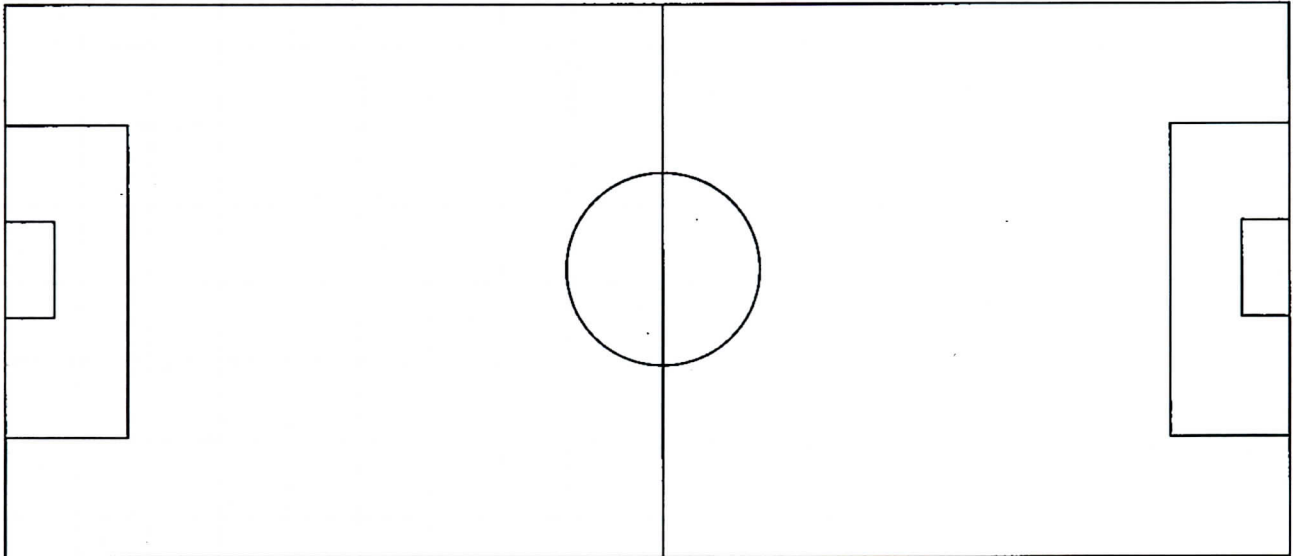


Enter Position of Player: F= Forward
 M= Midfield
 D= Defense
 S= Substitute



Game Analysis

Date	_____ vs _____	Score



Notes

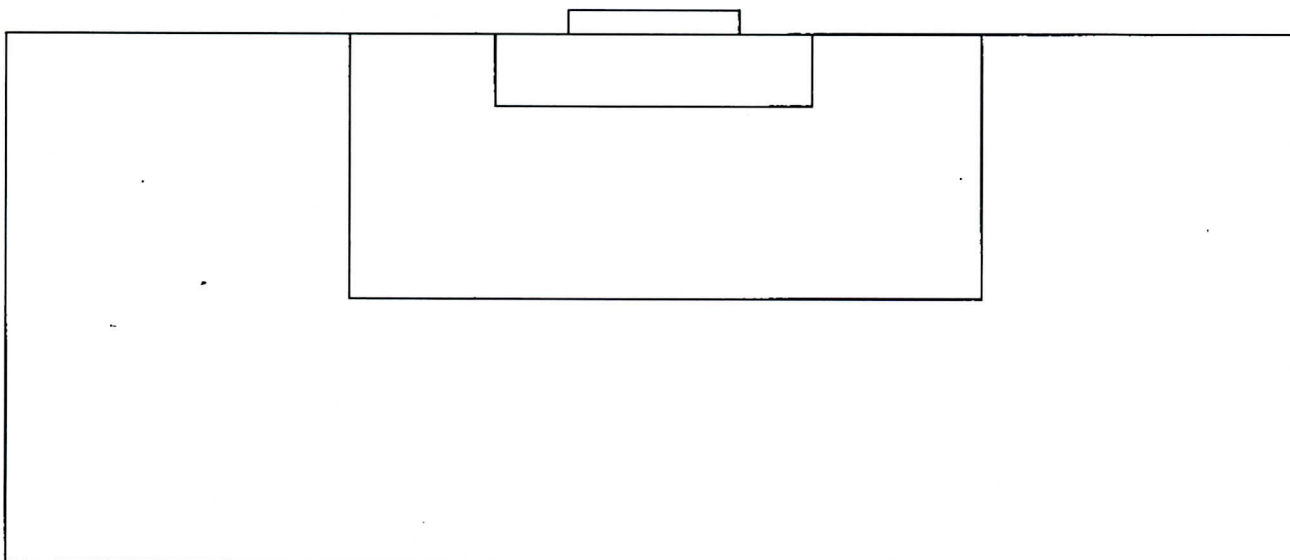
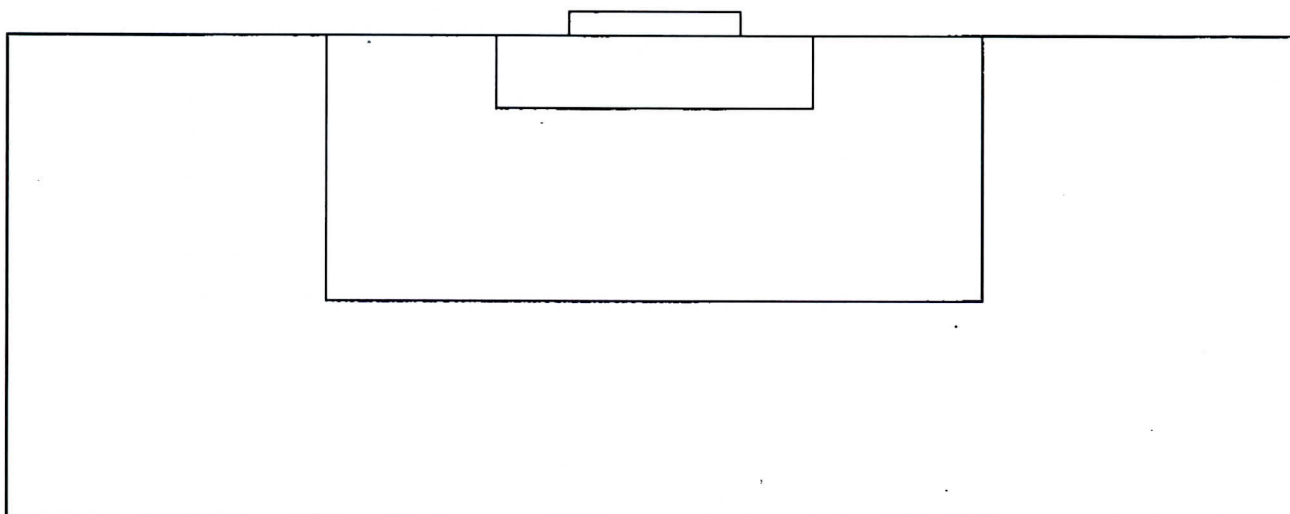
Defense:

Midfield:

Offense:

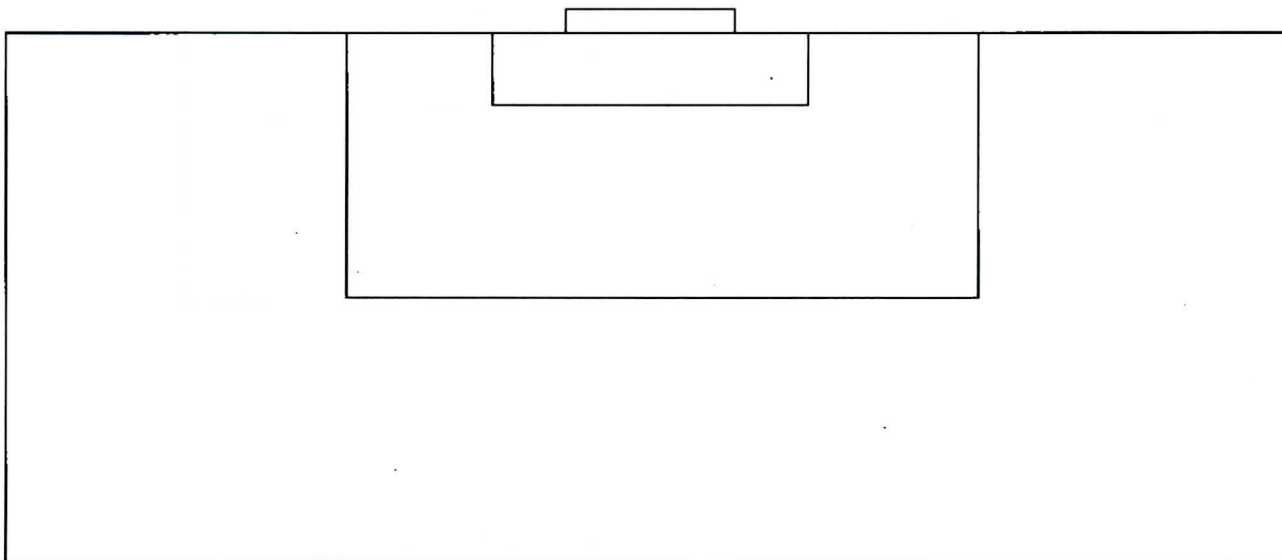
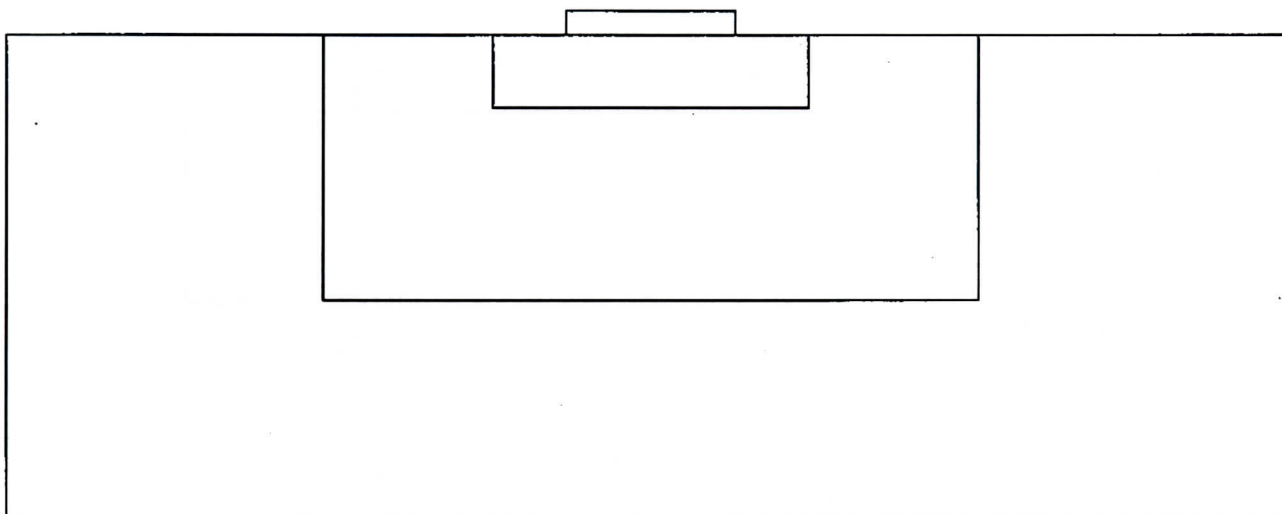


Defending From Free Kicks





Defending From Corners





Pat McCarry has spent his entire career educating both children and adults - formally and informally in Europe, Asia and the USA.

His educational resume includes a BSc (Hons) in Sports Science; Post Graduate Certificate in Education; English FA Coaching Badge; National Soccer Coaches Association of America "Advanced" diploma.

Pat regularly contributes youth soccer development articles to the English FA journal 'Insight'.

Pat is a Physical Education graduate of Loughborough University, England - the premier sports teaching institute in the country. He worked as a PE teacher and soccer coach in London before becoming a Primary School Curriculum Manager in Wales. After training teachers in Thailand he moved to the United States in 1999 to take up the position of Director of Professional Development at U.K. Elite Soccer.

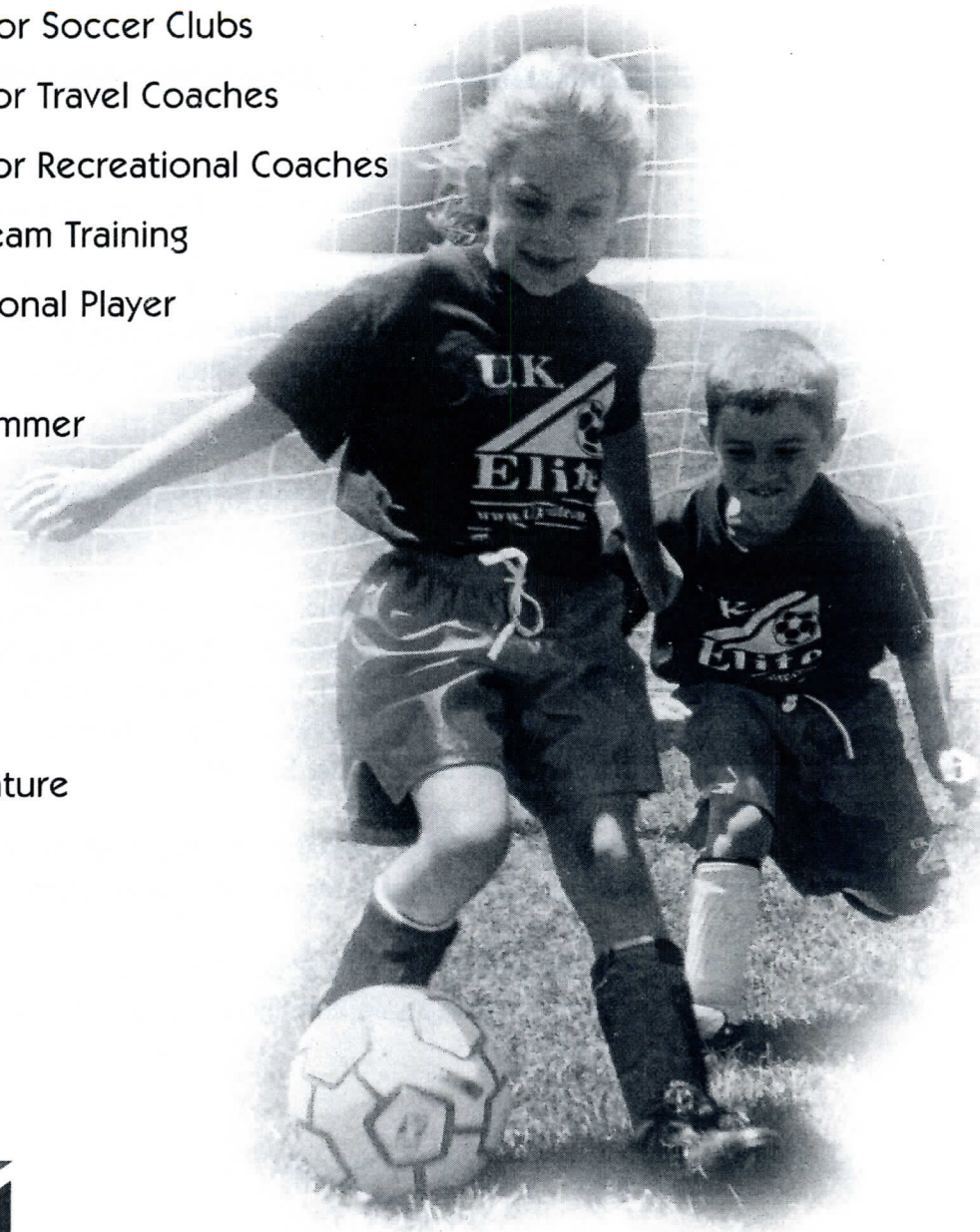
U.K. Elite Soccer is a full service coaching company serving NJ, PA, NY, CT, MD, DE, VA, RI, MA. The corporate headquarters are based in Morristown, New Jersey.

As Leaders in Youth Soccer Education U.K. Elite Soccer promotes the learning and application of sound educational principles in a safe, fun filled environment where the children come first.

Pat McCarry can be contacted at PatM@UKElite.com

U.K. Elite Soccer offer the following Coaching Services:

- Coaching Clinics for Soccer Clubs
- Coaches' Clinics for Travel Coaches
- Coaches' Clinics for Recreational Coaches
- Seasonal Travel Team Training
- Seasonal Recreational Player Development
- Day & Evening Summer Soccer Camps
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