



***Player Development  
Program  
For the U11 Soccer Coach***

***By John Dingle***

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As I enter the 25<sup>th</sup> year of working in youth soccer, I have looked back on the growth of the game in the United States and see we have made great progress. More players are playing the game, the level of youth soccer has improved tremendously, the Women's and Men's National team is playing at a higher level, and soccer is entering the main stream of our culture.

Looking forward, I see four areas that youth coaches need to take to continue the games growth. This coaching manual attempts to address these areas. US Soccer needs more and better game changers, we need to create a culture of possession in youth soccer, move to proactive coaching with seasonal plans, and teach tactics the appropriate way through the use of visual signs to our youth players.

The manual is broken down into four main sections:

- Improvisation
- Technical lesson plans
- Formations
- Tactical Lesson Plans

### **Developing the Game Changer Attitude**



The first is predictable to students of the international game. We need more creative soccer players. This is a huge challenge. I believe the small section on improvisation is the most important section in this manual. Players will enjoy their soccer experience more if they are set free to use their imagination, creativity, and problem solving abilities in the game. These players are not robots and coaches can't expect to control every move the player make. Remote control coaching needs to end. Challenge yourself to allow players to be free to take chances, free to make mistakes, free to be special, and free to be game changers.

In 1998, US Soccer started project 2010. Project 2010's goal was to ensure the US Men's national team could become a legitimate threat to win the 2010 world cup. At the time president of US Soccer, Alan Rothenberg, stated "Somewhere out there we've got a 9 year old Ronaldo, and we got to find him." I know the 7, 8, and 9 year old players with the ability to develop into players that could change the game with one unpredictable possession were there in 1998. What happened to these players? They more than likely were trained to share the ball, become team players, play safe, and win games. In doing this, we made the next Ronaldo the next role player. What are we going to do with the next Messi?



Read the section on Improvisation intently. Attempt to facilitate creative play. Follow the suggestions and come up with your own ideas on how you can inspire players to become game changers. But also notice that in all the activities in the technical and tactical sections, allow for players to make decisions. When coaching the wall pass, allow the player with the ball to use the supporting player as a decoy and dribble the opponent. When introducing speed of play, do not discourage dribbling. Always allow players to express themselves.

As a rule a player should:

- Shoot if possible
- If not possible, dribble or run with the ball to gain territory
- If not possible, pass the ball
- If not possible, dribble for possession(shield the ball)

### **Creating a Culture of Possession**

Most youth teams have players that kick the ball up the field with no other intention than to gain territory. When a long kick is completed, it usually is applauded with loud cheers from the sideline, even when the kick goes out of bounds or directly to the opponent.

When I was watching my daughter play a 7<sup>th</sup> grade basketball game, I witnessed a girl on her team rebound the ball and throw the ball the length of the court. Her team had no players on this side of the court. The ball bounced out of bounds to dismay of everyone playing and observing. Loud crows came from the parent's side showing their frustration. As I witnessed the play and the reaction, I turned to the parents and stated, "If this was a soccer game, you would be cheering".

Basketball has a culture of possession. Youth soccer in America does not. I recommend the following team rules to change this culture.

- **Do not allow your goal keeper to punt the ball.** The punt is conceding possession by giving a free ball to the field. The punt is inevitably a ball that each team has a chance to win. In fact, the opponent has a better chance, since they are more than likely numbers up in the area the ball is punted to. Have your keeper roll or throw the ball to team mates.
- **Take all free kicks short.** As an alternative to taking a long kick down the field or across the field, make a short pass as quickly as possible. The long kick does not yield possession, the majority of the time. A short pass does.
- **Do not allow your players to kick the ball out of play intentionally.** By kicking the ball out of play, your team is conceding possession and your player loses an opportunity to

learn how to get out of trouble. Players that kick the ball out of play at an early age will develop this habit as they have never learned how to deal with trouble.

- **Demand your players look to throw the ball into the middle of the field first.** When this is not going to yield possession they should look to throw the ball back for possession. If both of these options are not productive, the player can then look to throw the ball down the sideline. Taking this action will yield more possession off of throw ins.

I know these team rules will make it more difficult to win games at an early age, but it will develop better players who value possession. It will also force the opponent to defend the entire field and yield wins at a later stage in the player's soccer experience.

### **Be a proactive coach, not a reactive coach**

Every school system has a curriculum. Teachers know the schedule of the curriculum and do not make changes to their yearly teaching plan. Teacher may vary the methods and lesson plans they use to reach the students, but they do not move away from the subject matter in the curriculum. This allows the student to be prepared for the next grade level.

Coaches need to have a curriculum and create a seasonal plan on how and when this subject matter will be presented to the players. Reactive coaches jump around from topic to topic in an effort to react to problems in the last game. Reactive coaches are chasing short term outcomes at the expense of long term development. This manual provides coaches with the curriculum that can be used to develop a seasonal plan for developing players for the next soccer year.

### **Do not be afraid to teach tactics**

The importance of players developing good technique can't be overstated. Technically competent players will always have a huge advantage in soccer. Players at all levels need to work on becoming more technically proficient. Technical competence allows players to be able to make decisions. Decisions in youth soccer equal tactics.

Combine technical teaching with decisions so we are developing players for the demands of the game. Both the technical and tactical section in this manual uses lesson plans that progress from simple to complex. Small group activities are used that combine the two components. Technical lesson plans progress to allow for tactics. When teaching a technical topic, make sure the players are aware of the visual sign players should look for to help them make the decision on using the technique. Provide the players with the when, where, and why a technique is

used. Likewise, the tactical lesson plans are presented to allow for plenty or repetition of soccer techniques. Here are some examples of visual signs your players should be able to read:

- Space in front of player with the ball = Run with the ball
- Space behind the opponent = Opportunity to take player on
- Opponent with the ball has their head down = Close space quickly as the attacker will not see you.
- Player with the ball has their head up = Support in advance of the ball
- Player on your team is shielding = needs support quickly

Thank you for coaching. You are making a commitment of time, talent, and energy. You are helping to build a better community.



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**Section I: Improvisation**

## U11 Improvisation

If you do not know what improvisation in soccer is watch this video: [Improvisation 1](#).

US soccer has made great strides catching up to the world in soccer. We now produce some of the best goalkeepers and role players in the world. We are limited to future growth by our inability to develop world class play makers and goal scorers. World class play makers and goal scorers all have the ability to improvise. It all starts with the development of youth soccer players. If our young players can't improvise in creative ways, they will not develop into creative players.

Creativity is needed in soccer games to break down organized defenses. Sharp accurate passing combinations are not enough at times to beat a team that is committed to getting numbers behind the ball and staying organized. No team can stay organized when unpredictable creative play has defenders beaten. Improvising play unbalances defenses and open up space and frees team mates of marking.

Improvisation is not a tactic; it is not a technique. Improvisation is an attitude. Coaches of the American player and to a degree American culture work to stifle this attitude in players for the following reason:

- Focus on winning games/tournaments/leagues
- National Rankings
- Team building through acquisition instead of player development
- Focus on structure and organization in training
- Focus on sharing the ball/passing
- Use of extrinsic motivation
- Lack of pickup games
- Emphasis in youth soccer on the team instead of the individual

Coaches and youth organizations are now challenged to cultivate the attitude of improvisation. When most people think of improvisation, it is limited to dribbling, but players that truly improvise use this spirit to pass the ball, use deception in receiving the ball, and shoot the ball in unpredictable fashion and positions.

I do not believe improvisation can be taught. I do believe that coaches can enhance the player's ability to improvise by teaching spatial awareness and by inspiring players to be unpredictable. Here are some ideas to use with players to begin to lay the groundwork for players to improvise:

- In your parent's meeting share the importance of creativity in the game and ask for your parent's support. Make sure they are aware the most unselfish thing a player can do for the team is score a goal. Make them aware of the methods you will be using to develop the attitude of improvisation.
- Use the principles of attack when coaching your players through the following hierarchy: shoot if you can shoot, dribble to gain territory if you can not shoot, pass if you can not dribble to gain territory, dribble for possession if you can not pass.

- Inspire your players to become students of creative players. Have a video contest. Tell your players to find videos on the internet of creative players or plays and email you the link. No prize is needed just praise. Share all of the videos with each player on your team.
- Create a no fear of failure atmosphere in training and games. Praise the attitude not the result.
- Have one practice per week that has the players play pick up soccer. No coaching; just praise for players that are attempting to be creative.

Below are some videos to share with your players:

[Improvisation 2](#)

[Improvisation 3](#)

[Improvisation 4](#)

<p>Pick up Soccer</p>	<p>Have your players set up the field, form teams, and play soccer. Players will learn to set up games and will not be depended on the coach to play soccer.</p> <p>They are then more likely to play soccer on their own.</p>	
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**Section II: Technical Topics**

Soccer Source 360's U11 Curriculum has ten technical topics that need to be introduced to all SAC players to lay a foundation for the future. These topics include:

- Running with the ball
- Front foot passing
- Attacking dribbling moves
- Shielding
- Finishing
- Instep passing
- 1<sup>st</sup> touch for ground balls
- Long Passing

As a team participating in the fall and spring season your team will practice between 20-90 times. Teams practice from 10-15 weeks each season and once, twice or three times a week. It is not enough to simply run the sessions included in this document. Map out a seasonal play to allow for coverage of the entire u11 curriculum: technical, tactical, improvisation, and formation. Lay a strong foundation so the players will be ready for the U12 curriculum.

Coaches need to connect.

- Connect with the player
- Connect the technique to the game of soccer
- Connect the player with a passion for the game

In fact, the lesson plans are sample sessions and you can modify. Changes may be needed to adjust to your team and players needs.

- Adjust numbers to fit with your team
- Adjust space to fit your player's needs
- Change activities to fit your player's needs
- Vary practice plan when going over topic for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> time

When making changes be sure to follow a simple to complex progression and have all sessions end with a game. The game is the test for the players and the coach. Have the players connected the lesson to the game.

Coaches also need to recognize and capitalize on coaching/teaching moments. Know the execution of the technique. We do not recommend lecturing the players on the execution of the technique, but your knowledge base will help spot the flaws. We recommend breaking the technique down into the preparation, contact with the ball, and finishing position.

When capitalizing on a coaching moment it is recommended you vary teaching methods and not only coach flaws but use positive experiences to highlight success.

Teaching Methods

- Coaching the individual – Most players are not disturbed and the player receives feedback for themselves.
- Coaching over the top – Provide needed information while the activity is taking place.
- Coaching at a natural stoppage – Using the coaching moment when the game was stopped on its own. Ex. Ball played out of bounds.
- Coaching with a stop/freeze – Stopping the activity and demanding all of the players remain in the position they held when the stop command was given. This allows you to show players the picture, move players, and then rehearse the situation. Rehearsing is necessary to insure the players received the information.

## U11 Running with the ball

- What:** The player takes space with the ball quickly.
- Where:** Opportunities present themselves in all part of the field.
- When:** Any time open space is present for the player with the ball.
- Why:** When a player takes the ball forward themselves, the opposition not only has to deal with the ball in a forward position but must also handle an additional player. The opponent that is forced to stop the forward progression of the ball leaving a player or vital space open.
- How:** Step 1: Recognize open space
- Step 2: Step through the ball with the instep of the foot. The toe should be pointed down. The touch should be large enough to take two to three steps between touches. Each touch should be made in natural running motion.
- Step 3: Keep the head up to see when space is closed and be aware of options.

<p>Rapid Training Switch</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and split into groups of two. Each pair starts passing the ball back and forth and are separated by 20 yards from the other pair in their group.</p> <p>On the coach's command of switch the player with the ball runs with the ball across the open space and combines with their new partner and continues to pass the ball until the coach makes the switch command.</p>	
<p>Ball Chaser</p>	<p>One player starts and runs with the ball across the space. When the turnover of possession occurs, the player who just had the ball chases the player who just received the ball.</p> <p>Each player has a turn as the player with the ball and the chaser.</p>	

<p>4v4</p>	<p>Can the players make the transition into a small game?</p> <p>Do they recognize opportunities to run with the ball?</p>	
<p>6v6 1/3's Game</p>	<p>Transitioning to a bigger field we segment the field into thirds and play 2v1 in the defensive third 2v2 in the middle third and then 1v2 in the attacking third.</p> <p>The ball can only move from one third to another by a player running with the ball into this new third. This player can stay in this part of the field until it progresses into the next third, the ball is lost, or a goal is scored.</p>	
<p>6v6 Game</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Front Foot Passing

**What:** The player passes the ball in natural running motion with either the outside of the foot, the instep, or the top of the inside of the foot.

**Where:** Opportunities present themselves in all part of the field.

**When:** When the players are moving forward.

**Why:** By passing the ball in natural running motion the pass is unpredictable.

**How:** Step 1: As player is moving forward and has support at an angle they step through the side of the ball in natural running motion.

Step 2: Continue run to support the ball.

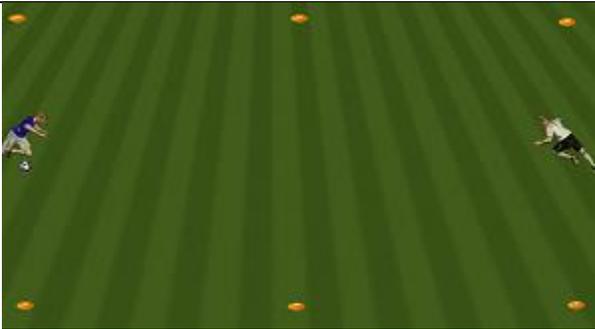
<p>Frost Tag</p>	<p>Divide the team into two groups.</p> <p>One group has each player start with a ball. They attempt to hit players on the other team, who are running through the grid, below the knee with a outside of the foot pass. When a player is hit they are frozen. Frozen players stand with their legs apart. They can be unfrozen by having a team mate crawl through their legs. A player can not be hit with a pass when they have any part of their body between a player</p>	
<p>2v1 ladder</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and subdivided. Each group is placed in an eight yard wide by 15 yard long field with a midline. Two players start on an end line and the other group places one player at the midline and one at the opposite end line from the opponent.</p> <p>The group of two attempts to beat the first defender by dribbling by them or making a front foot passing combination. The defender can not recover into the 2<sup>nd</sup> half box. The defender who started on the end line becomes active when the ball enters their half.</p>	

<p>2v2 Directional</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and subdivided into groups of two. Each group of two sets up on the end lines of a 8 yard by 15 yard field.</p> <p>One team passes the ball to their opponent and begins to defend once the ball has been touched.</p>	
<p>3v3 game</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	
<p>6v6 game</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Attacking Moves

- What:** The player with the ball attempts to dribble past an opponent while moving the ball forward.
- Where:** Opportunities present themselves in all part of the field, but mostly in the attacking third.
- When:** When the player is moving forward with the ball and has space behind the opponent.
- Why:** To get by the opponent and unbalance the defense.
- How:**
- Step 1: Keep control of the ball while dribbling forward.
  - Step 2: Recognize a confronting opponent that has space behind them.
  - Step 3: At the point the opponent is around 1 yard away, fake to take the ball in one direction.
  - Step 4: Quickly move the ball by the opponent in the direction away from the fake.
  - Step 5: Accelerate away

<p>Box dribble/call move</p>	<p>Each player has a ball and is placed in a 15 yard by 15 yard grid.</p> <p>As the players are dribbling through the grid, the coach calls out patters or names of dribbling moves for the players to execute.</p>	
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<p>1v1 attack/defend 2 goal game</p>	<p>Set up a field 25 yards long by 35 yards wide. Place two goals in the corners. Divide the group in half and have them stationed opposite a goal. Every player needs a soccer ball.</p> <p>The activity starts with one player coming out to defend against the other team. The first player on the team that did not send out the defender begins by attempting to score in one of the goals. Once a goal has been scored or they are dispossessed, the player who started with the ball becomes the defender and the first player on the opposition begins an attack.</p> <p>Each player takes a turn as an attacker then a defender before returning to their line.</p>	
<p>1v1 directional</p>	<p>Groups of two are formed and placed on opposite sides of a 10 yard by 15 yard grid. Each player has a ball.</p> <p>The player with the ball passes the ball to their partner who then attempts to dribble the ball by the opponent and across the end line under control.</p>	
<p>3v3 game</p>	<p>Encourage dribbling when players have the visual sign to dribble.</p> <p>Space behind the opponent.</p>	

8v8 game

It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?

Has your session had an impact on the players?



## U11 Finishing

- What: Shooting to score goals.
- Where: The attacking third of the field.
- When: The player has an opportunity to shoot.
- Why: To convert scoring opportunities into goals.

<p>Rapid Training ball moving away from player</p>	<p>The team is divided into two groups and each team puts a player in goal.</p> <p>Each group takes all of their soccer balls to opposite goal post with their keeper and forms a line.</p> <p>The first player on each team takes a touch towards their goal and shoots at the same time as the other team.</p>	
<p>Rapid Training ball moving towards player</p>	<p>The team is divided into two groups and each team puts a player in goal.</p> <p>Each group takes all of their soccer balls to opposite goal post with their keeper and forms a line.</p> <p>The first player in each line pass the ball straight out and find the ball that is passed to them and shoot it at the goal they are facing.</p>	
<p>2v2/3v3 revolving game</p>	<p>The team is divided into two groups and each team puts a player in goal.</p> <p>Each group takes all of their soccer balls to opposite goal post with their keeper and forms a line.</p> <p>Each groups sends out two players and play until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. The team that scores stays on and the opponent sends on new players. When the</p>	

	<p>ball is played off the field, both groups send on new players.</p>	
<p>Numbers up/down game</p>	<p>The team is divided into two groups and each team puts a player in goal.</p> <p>One group always sends out the same number of player usually two, and the other team sends out the number of players the coach calls, when they send a ball onto the field.</p> <p>Switch the team that sends on the same number of players.</p>	
<p>6v6 game</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Instep Passing

- What:** Passing the ball with the top of the foot (shoelaces). Instep passes can be short, long, driven, or lofted.
- Where:** All parts of the field.
- When:** The player has time to plant their non kicking foot near the ball before making the pass.
- Why:** The most powerful way of accurately striking the ball.
- How:**
- Step 1: Approach the ball from an angle.
  - Step 2: Place the non kicking foot pointing in the direction of the target either slightly behind the ball for a flighted ball or even with the ball for a pass on the ground.
  - Step 3: In natural running motion point the toe down to offer the instep to the ball while building leg speed.
  - Step 4: Strike through the midline center of the ball.
  - Step 5: Continue stepping through the ball to land on the kicking foot.

<p>Rapid Training Pairs</p>	<p>Groups of four are subdivided into groups of two and placed 15 yards across each other. The players pass the ball back and forth with their partner.</p> <p>Once the switch command is called by the coach, the player on each side with the ball gets their head up and finds the player on the opposite side who does not have the ball. They then make an instep pass to this player.</p>	
<p>Split Passing</p>	<p>Groups of four are subdivided into groups of two. One group shuffles back and forth opposite each other between two cones 6 yards apart.</p> <p>The other group pass the ball between these two players with a one touch pass.</p> <p>The players need to focus on timing as</p>	

	<p>well as accuracy. They can move up to the ball or move back to the ball. They can pass it hard or slow. The object is to not hit a player with the pass.</p>	
<p>4v4+2</p>	<p>Possession is played 4v4 with two neutral players in a 20 yard by 25 yard grid.</p>	
<p>6v6 End Zone Game</p>	<p>Two teams are formed and placed on a 40 yards by 50 yard field with two end zones added another 10 yards at each end to the length of the field.</p> <p>Goals are scored when a team is able to pass the ball into an end zone to a team mate that can not enter the end zone until the ball has been passed.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Long Passing

- What:** A pass over long distance (20 yards or more)
- Where:** All parts of the field
- Why:** Change the point of attack, play out of pressure, take available space quickly
- When:** Defense is defending ball with numbers, space is available,
- How:**
- Step 1: Approach the ball from an angle
  - Step 2: Place non kicking foot even with the ball about 6 inches from the ball with the toe pointed to the target. (for low pass) Place non kicking foot slightly behind ball about 6 inches from the ball with the toe pointed to the target. (for lofted pass)
  - Step 3: Lock the ankle of the kicking foot with the toes pointed down.
  - Step 4: Draw the kicking foot back.
  - Step 5: Strike through the midline center of the ball
  - Step 6: Follow through in the direction of the ball while landing on the kicking foot

<p>Short-short-long</p>	<p>Groups of three are formed. Two players start off standing together with one player placed 30 yards away.</p> <p>The player starting with the ball makes a short pass to his partner and then receives a pass back. The next pass is the long pass to the player stationed across the field. The player making the long pass follows the pass and receives a short pass back. They then plays a short pass back in the path of the player, so a long pass can be made and the activity continues in this pattern.</p>	
<p>Rapid Training Long Passing</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and subdivided into groups of two. Pairs pass the ball back and forth and are separated from the other pair in the group by 25 yards.</p> <p>On the coaches command of switch the player with the ball in both pairs</p>	

	<p>gets their head up and plays a long pass to the player in the other pair that does not have the ball. Pairs then go back to short passing waiting for the switch command.</p>	
<p>3v1:3v1</p>	<p>Two groups of 3v1 are placed in 10 yard by 7 yard grids separated by 20 yards.</p> <p>The ball starts in one grid and the group of four plays 3v1. Once three passes are connected they attempt to play a ball into the opposite grid to the numbers up team that then plays 3v1 and is free to play a long pass after connecting three passes.</p> <p>Coaches can allow the team receiving the long pass to receive it under no pressure at first. Move to no restrictions before proceeding to the next activity.</p>	
<p>3v3+2</p>	<p>A group of eight is divided into three, three, and two.</p> <p>Players play 3v3+2 in the 20 yard by 30 yard grid.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 1<sup>st</sup> Touch Ground Balls

**What:** The player gets a ground ball under control by taking a cushion or wedge touch with their foot.

**Where:** Opportunities present themselves in all part of the field.

**When:** As the player is receiving a pass, clear, or miss kick.

**Why:** To get control of the ball in order to successfully dribble, pass, or shoot.

**How:** Step 1: Get in the path of the ball.

Step 2: Decide if a cushion or wedge touch is needed.

Step 3: Place foot in path of ball.

Step 4: In case of cushion: withdraw foot on impact. In case of wedge: direct foot toward ball in direction of open space.

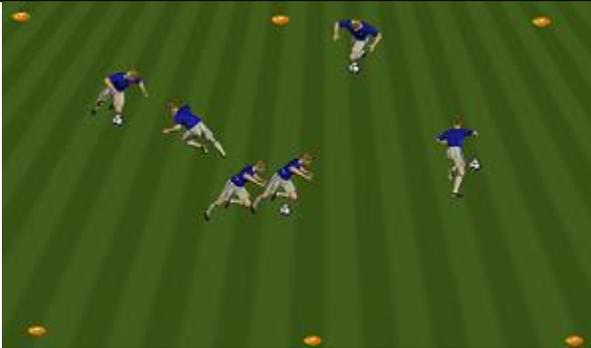
Step 5: Immediate chase to be the first one to ball.

<p>Rapid Training Circle Circle Variation 1: turn and play to new server</p>	<p>Team is divided into two groups. One group spreads out in a circle with a ball. The other group starts in the middle of the circle.</p> <p>Each player in the middle checks to an open ball and receives a hard pass and takes a turn touch by allowing the side of the ball to hit the inside or outside of their foot.</p> <p>When turning with the inside of the foot, the ball should be met in front of their body so the ball has room to go across their body and behind them.</p>	
<p>2v2 sweatbox with outside neutrals</p>	<p>Groups of six are subdivided into groups of two. Two players start as neutral players and are placed on the narrow sides of a 7 yard by 10 yard grid.</p> <p>The players play possession in the grid with a two touch minimum.</p>	

<p>2v2 sweatbox</p>	<p>Groups of four are placed in a 7 yard by 7 yard grid. Two players start as the defenders.</p> <p>A mandatory minimum of two touch possession is used as a condition. Transition occurs naturally as the ball is won/lossed.</p>	
<p>3v3 game</p>	<p>Require a two touch minimum.</p>	
<p>6v6 game</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Shielding

- What:** The player with the ball keeps their body between the ball and opponent.
- Where:** Opportunities present themselves in all part of the field.
- When:** When forward progress is not probable or possible.
- Why:** To keep possession of the ball while waiting for a passing option.
- How:**
- Step 1: Recognize forward progress in not possible or unlikely.
  - Step 2: Move your body between the ball and the opponent in a side on position.
  - Step 3: Bend knees to keep balance from pressure applied from opponent.
  - Step 4: Use arm to hold player off being sure not to push the opponent.
  - Step 5: Keep head up to see supporting players that the ball can be passed to.

<p>Find a ball</p>	<p>The team is placed in a grid with 2/3 of the group having possession of a soccer ball.</p> <p>The players without a ball attempt to win a ball. On the coach's command of stop, the players with a ball win and a penalty can be given to the players without a soccer ball.</p> <p>The coach can reduce the number of soccer balls to make the activity more competitive as it progresses.</p>	
<p>1v1 possession</p>	<p>Groups of two are formed and placed in a 5 yard by 5 yard grid.</p> <p>Each player attempts to have the ball when the coach stops the game.</p> <p>The ball changes possession when the ball is won by the opponent or when the player with the ball plays it off the field.</p>	

<p>1v2 combat</p>	<p>Groups of three are formed and placed in a 5 yard by 7 yard grid.</p> <p>Each player attempts to win the ball and keep it. The winner is the player who has the ball when the coach calls stop.</p>	
<p>3v3 game</p>	<p>Can the players transition the activity into a small sided game?</p> <p>Do they shield the ball instead of turning into pressure or forcing a pass?</p>	
<p>6v6 game</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	



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For the U11 Soccer Coach***

**Section III: Formations**

## U11 Formations/Positional Responsibilities

Formations are used to place players on the field by positions. Formations are simple the allocation of players throughout the field by designating a number of defenders, midfield players, and forwards. When talking about formations, we start with the number of defenders, then midfield player, and then forwards. This means a 2-3-1 formation has 2 defenders, 3 midfield players, and 1 forward.

At the U11 age groups formations should be used to enhance the player development of the team members; formations should not be used to win games. Over the course of the player's progress through long term player development plan winning will occur.

At the U11 age group players play 9 a side. We recommend choosing between a 3-3-2 and 3-2-3 formation. Both of these formations promote the principles of play through the allocation of players.

Positional Responsibilities are listed below for each formation.

3-3-2	<p>Qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong defensively</li> <li>• Allows for defensive shape to cover width of field</li> <li>• Outside midfield needs to recover</li> <li>• Provides width in attack</li> <li>• Midfield players must support attack and find opportunities to go in advance of forward</li> <li>• Forward must learn to make diagonal runs to cover field</li> <li>• Center midfield connects the two diamonds as long as the center forward makes diagonal run to ball side.</li> </ul>	
Defenders	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1v1 defending</li> <li>• Cover</li> <li>• Ball side high, weak side deep</li> <li>• Playing possession out of back</li> <li>• Connecting with midfield players at supporting angles in attack</li> </ul>	
Center Midfield	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting diamonds</li> <li>• Change point of attack</li> <li>• Recover defensively</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining possession</li> <li>• Create scoring opportunities</li> <li>• Get in advance of forward when forward has ball and head up, and when forward has made wide runs and team is in possession of the ball</li> <li>• 1v1 attacking and defending</li> </ul>	
<p>Outside Midfield</p>	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide width in attack</li> <li>• Crossing</li> <li>• Recovery runs</li> <li>• Protect weak side in defending third</li> <li>• Maintaining possession</li> <li>• Get in advance of forward when forward has ball and head up in a central position, and when forward has made check runs into midfield and team is in possession of the ball</li> <li>• 1v1 attacking and defending</li> </ul>	
<p>Forwards</p>	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create scoring opportunities</li> <li>• Finish scoring opportunities</li> <li>• Make check runs to ball</li> <li>• Make diagonal runs</li> <li>• Be first line of defense</li> <li>• Maintain possession</li> <li>• Work with each other to unbalance the defense by using the “one run for the defense and one run for the ball” concept.</li> </ul>	

<p>3-2-3</p>	<p>Qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong defensively in center of field</li> <li>• Organized approach is easy to implement</li> <li>• Provides width in attack</li> <li>• Demands mobility from forward</li> <li>• Allows for building up in attack</li> <li>• Allows for defenders to come forward to unbalance the opponent</li> </ul>	
<p>Defender</p>	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1v1 defending</li> <li>• Cover</li> <li>• Balance</li> <li>• Communicate with midfield players on recovery, tracking, and marking.</li> <li>• Playing possession out of back</li> <li>• Connecting with midfield players at supporting angles in attack</li> <li>• Adding to attack by coming out of the back as third attacker</li> </ul>	
<p>Center Midfield</p>	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change point of attack</li> <li>• Recover defensively</li> <li>• Usually played with one holding (#6) and one attacking (#10)</li> <li>• 1v1 attacking and defending</li> <li>• When to possess: When to penetrate</li> <li>• Maintain possession</li> <li>• Delay counterattacks</li> </ul>	
<p>Outside Forwards</p>	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide width in attack</li> <li>• Crossing</li> <li>• Recovery runs</li> <li>• Maintaining possession</li> <li>• Create space for wide</li> </ul>	

	<p>defenders to come forward by moving into central positions during the build up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get in advance of forward when forward has ball and head up in a central position, and when forward has made check runs into midfield and team is in possession of the ball</li><li>• 1v1 attacking and defending</li></ul>	
Forward	<p>Positional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create scoring opportunities</li><li>• Finish scoring opportunities</li><li>• Make check runs to ball</li><li>• Make diagonal runs</li><li>• Be first line of defense</li><li>• Maintain possession</li></ul>	



***Player Development  
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**Section IV: Tactics**

Soccer Source 360's U11 Curriculum has thirteen tactical topics that need to be introduced to all U11 players to lay a foundation for the future. These topics include:

- Connecting
- Cover
- Immediate Pressure
- Numbers +/-
- Over lap
- Quick Restarts
- Small Group Defending
- Spatial Awareness
- Speed of Play
- Splitting
- Transition
- Wall Pass
- When to dribble? When to Pass?

As a team participating in the fall and spring season your team will practice between 20-90 times. Teams practice from 10-15 weeks each season once, twice or three times a week. It is not enough to simply run the sessions included in this document. Map out a seasonal plan to allow for coverage of the entire u11 curriculum that includes improvisation, technique, and tactics. Lay a strong foundation so the players will be ready for the U12 curriculum.

Coaches need to connect.

- Connect with the player
- Connect the technique to the game of soccer
- Connect the player with a passion for the game

In fact, the lesson plans are sample sessions and you can modify. Changes may be needed to adjust to your team and players needs.

- Adjust numbers to fit with your team
- Adjust space to fit your player's needs
- Change activities to fit your player's needs
- Vary practice plan when going over topic for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> time

When making changes be sure to follow a simple to complex progression and have all sessions end with a game. The game is the test for the players and the coach. Have the players connected the lesson to the game.

Coaches also need to recognize and capitalize on coaching/teaching moments. Know the execution of the technique. We do not recommend lecturing the players on the execution of the technique, but your

knowledge base will help spot the flaws. We recommend breaking the technique down into the preparation, contact with the ball, and finishing position.

When capitalizing on a coaching moment it is recommended you vary teaching methods and not only coach flaws but use positive experiences to highlight success.

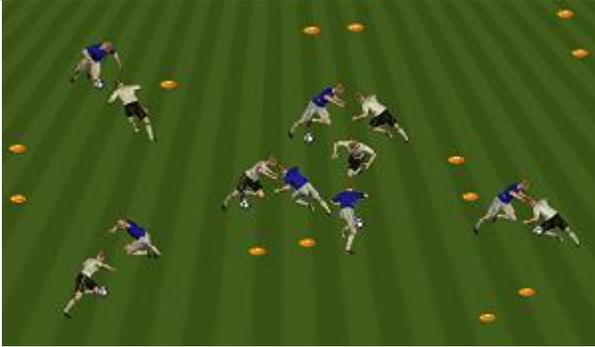
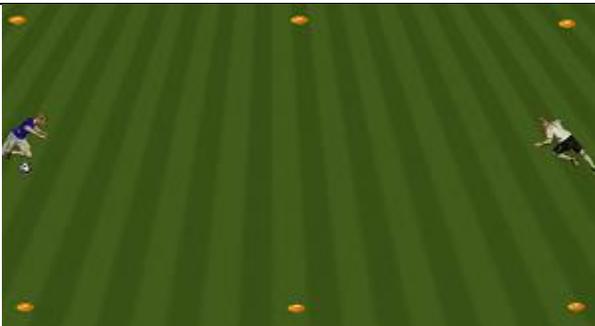
#### Teaching Methods

- Coaching the individual – Most players are not disturbed and the player receives feedback for themselves.
- Coaching over the top – Provide needed information while the activity is taking place.
- Coaching at a natural stoppage – Using the coaching moment when the game was stopped on its own. Ex. Ball played out of bounds.
- Coaching with a stop/freeze – Stopping the activity and demanding all of the players remain in the position they held when the stop command was given. This allows you to show players the picture, move players, and then rehearse the situation. Rehearsing is necessary to insure the players received the information.

## U11 Transition

Your team can only be in one of three states of the game: attack, defense, or transition between the two. Improving your team's ability to react mentally and physically between defense to attack when the ball is won and attack to defense when the ball is lost will give your team an advantage over the opponent. Since the principles of play of defense and attack are opposites, the team that transitions mentally and physically faster has the early advantage to apply the principles before the opponent is ready to respond. When we develop players with good transition skills, the concept of counter attacking and countering the counter can later be taught with great effectiveness.

Below is a transition session, but good coaches add transition to every activity that has opposition. Whenever you run an activity that has opposition give the defenders something to do once they win the ball. By doing this, the defense transitions into an attacking role, and team that was attacking must react by transitioning to defensive principles.

<p>1v1 to gates</p>	<p>Groups of two placed in a field with gates(two cones separated by 1 yard). One ball per group.</p> <p>The player with the ball attempts to dribble through as many gates as possible while their partner attempts to stop them and gain possession. When transition occurs the game continues. Have players keep score. Change opponents when necessary to make activity competitive.</p>	
<p>1v1</p>	<p>Groups of two are formed and placed on opposite sides of a 10 yard by 15 yard grid. Each player has a ball.</p> <p>The player with the ball passes the ball to their partner who then attempts to dribble the ball by the opponent and across the end line under control.</p>	
<p>2v2</p>	<p>Groups of four play 2v2 to goal on a field 12 yards wide by 18 yards long.</p>	

<p>3v3</p>	<p>Groups of six play 3v3 to goal on a field 18 yards wide by 30 yards long.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Speed of Play

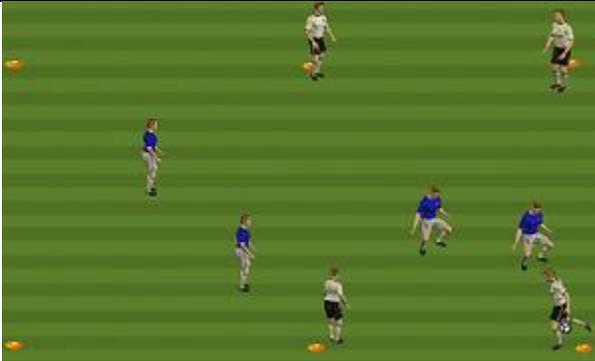
Speed of play is not a tactic but an ability to combine technique and decisions quickly. When players increase their ability to play fast, the principles of attack can be applied faster than the opponent can react.

The technical aspects that lead to a faster speed of play include the pace of the pass, the ability of players to receive hard paced passes, a quality first touch that allows the player to play quickly, accuracy in passing that does not slow the receiver down, and running with the ball touches that can be taken in natural running motion. In short, the players need to be technically proficient so the ball does not slow the player down.

The tactical parts of the game that increase player's ability to play quickly are spatial awareness. If the player knows where team mates and opponents are they can make a quicker decision as they process new information and recognize visual signs earlier.

Speed of play is a concept that youth players will be working on through the course of the playing career. Later curriculum will introduce rhythm play. This will show players how to unbalance teams by changing the speed of play.

<p>Sequence passing with ball chaser</p>	<p>The group is divided into two groups and placed in a grid about 15 yards by 15 yards. Players in each grid are given a number in sequence.</p> <p>Players pass the ball in sequence while moving throughout the grid. Use two soccer balls so that there is pressure to play quickly. The players need to support thinking ahead, as they need to get in a supporting position so that they can receive the pass and then play it quickly.</p>	
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<p>4v4 possession</p>	<p>Groups of eight are divided into two groups who play 4v4 possession in a 15 yard by 20 yard grid.</p> <p>Even numbers and limited space force the players to play fast or lose possession.</p>	
<p>3v5 to targets</p>	<p>Ten players form two groups of four and one group of two and are placed in a 20 yard by 25 yard grid.</p> <p>Each team places a player on an end line to serve as a target. The group of two are always defending against the team of three in possession of the ball who are attempting to play the ball to a target. If they are successful they get the ball back from the target and attempt to play to the other target.</p>	
<p>5v7 to goal</p>	<p>One team of five plays against a team of seven.</p> <p>Make sure all players are rotated so they get the chance to play numbers down.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p> <p>Have they connected the lesson plan to the game?</p>	

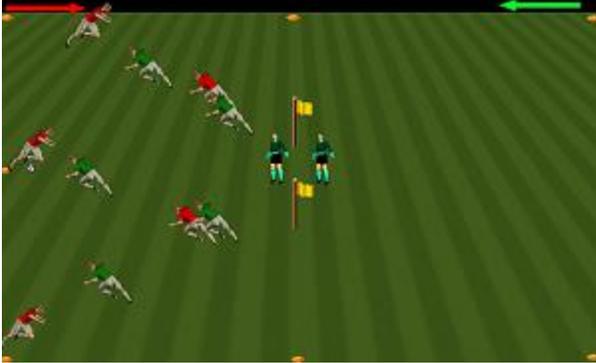
**U11 Connection**

**What:** Connection is a term used to describe the distance players are from each other vertically on the field. In soccer, spacing around the ball is very important.

**Why:** Correct space between players allows for quality attacking and defensive play, and most importantly transition between the two. Many youth teams leave too much space between the forward, midfield, and defensive lines. This space affects support in attack, compactness in defense, and the ability to pressure and cover in transition.

**Where:** All over the field

**When:** All Times

<p>Center goal everyone over</p>	<p>The team is divided into two groups and play on a field 40 yards by 40 yards with the goal in the middle.</p> <p>Each team is given a side of the goal they can score through.</p> <p>Use restrictions to insure the players move relative to the ball. Restrictions such as a goal can not be scored until all players are on the attacking side demand all attacking players stay connected. A condition that punishes the defensive team, if a goal is scored when all the defensive team is not on the defensive side will place recovery as a team a priority.</p>	
<p>3v3 ¼ game</p>	<p>Groups of six are formed and play 3v3 on a field that coned off in quarters laterally.</p> <p>The condition is that all players must be in within no farther than one quarter away from the ball.</p>	

<p>4v4 ¼ game</p>	<p>Groups of eight are formed and play 4v4 on a field that coned off in quarters laterally.</p> <p>The condition is that all players must be in within no farther than one quarter away from the ball.</p>	
<p>6v6 ¼ game</p>	<p>Groups of six are formed and play 6v6 on a field that coned off in quarters laterally.</p> <p>The condition is that all players must be in within no farther than one quarter away from the ball.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p> <p>Is their connection between the forward, midfield, and defensive lines.</p>	

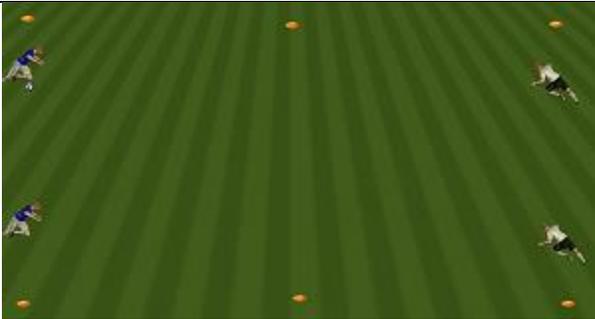
### U11 When to dribble? When to Pass?

Players should dribble or run with the ball when they have open space before confronting an opponent. By passing the ball forward in these situations, the attack has one less player with the ball. When a player takes the ball with them to cover this space, an additional attacker is brought forward.

A player also can dribble when there is space behind the opponent that is confronting the ball as the defender does not have cover.

The session below can be used to have players recognize when to dribble and when to pass.

<p>1v1 with bail out</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and subdivided into groups of two. Players are placed on opposite sides of a eight yard by 15 yard grid.</p> <p>The first player attempts to dribble by an opponent. If they are successful they pass the ball back to their team mate who attempts to dribble by the other opponent. If a player attempting to dribble by an opponent gets in a bad situation or does not have a good chance to be successful they shield the ball and pass it back to their team mate. This ends the activity for the two that were on task and starts the activity for the player who received the pass and the defender who was inactive.</p>	
<p>2v1 ladder</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and subdivided into groups of two. Two players begin on the end line with a ball of a 8 yard wide and 20 yard long grid that is separated with a mid line. One opponent starts on the mid line and the other starts on the opposite end line.</p> <p>The player on the midline applies high pressure to the player with the ball. As high pressure is the visual sign to make a wall pass, the supporting player supports in a side on position for a wall pass. The player with the ball has the option to make a wall pass or dribble the defender.</p>	

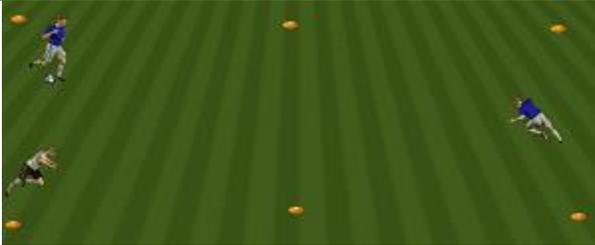
	<p>Once they make it past the first defender, they enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the grid and the new defender applies high pressure to the players with the ball.</p>	
<p>2v2</p>	<p>Groups of four are subdivided into groups of two and placed in a grid 10 yards wide by 15 yards long.</p> <p>Pairs begin on opposite end lines. One group passes the ball to the other team. This team then attempts to get the ball under possession past the opposite end line.</p> <p>Coach the players to recognize the visual sign to dribble? If they do not see open space behind the opponent they should make a pass.</p>	
<p>5v5 to four goals</p>	<p>Groups of five play 5v5 on a 40 yard wide by 20 yard long field.</p> <p>By using a wider field the defense is stretched out allowing for more dribbling opportunities.</p>	
<p>5v5</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Wall Pass

- What:** A give and go passing combination
- When:** A supporting player is close to a team mate that is under high pressure
- Why:** The player with the ball is in need of help and the supporting player can help to beat this defender by supporting for a wall pass
- Where:** Anywhere on the field but most often in the middle and attacking third
- How:**
- Step 1: The supporting player recognizes the player with the ball is under high pressure while moving forward.
- Step 2: The supporting player moves to a tight distance and angle in a side on position to the player with the ball. This angle is most often parallel to the defender.
- Step 3: The player with the ball plays a front foot pass to the supporting player's far foot or uses the supporting player as a decoy while dribbling past the opponent. If they make the pass, they must continue to run move past the defender on the opposite side of the defender that the ball was passed to.
- Step 4: As the supporting player receives the pass to their far foot they turn their foot so to pass the ball back in the path of the player who made the pass to them.
- Step 5: The player who made the pass back moves on to continue to support the player they just passed the ball back to.

Important details: The player with the ball that starts the wall pass using the front foot for disguise and to be able to not have to slow down. This pass is made on the move. They pass the ball to their team mates far foot so that this player does not have to make a difficult pass back and is able to continue to move forward to support the ball.

<p>2v1 wall pass walk through Unrestricted space</p>	<p>Groups of three are formed with two players standing opposite one player with 20 yards separation.</p> <p>The two players pass the ball back and forth a couple of times until one of the players passes the ball to the single player. When this pass is made the player receives the ball and begins to dribble while the player who passed the ball supports for a wall pass. The</p>	
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	<p>player who did not pass the ball applies high pressure but is not allowed to tackle. The player with the ball plays a front foot pass to the supporting player's far foot and moves to get the wall pass back.</p>	
<p>2v1 wall pass walk through Unrestricted space</p>	<p>Same as above but place the players in a 20 yard by 7 yard grid and allow tackling.</p>	
<p>Rotating 2v2v2</p>	<p>Groups of six are subdivided into three groups of two and placed on a 12 yard wide by 18 yard long field with a target goal on each end line.</p> <p>One group starts with the ball in the middle of the field. The other two groups each place a player as a target in the goal and one player out to defend. The team in the middle starts the activity by attacking one of the defenders who must defend with high pressure. Since high pressure is the visual sign to support the ball with wall pass support, the supporting player gets in position to receive a wall pass. Once the defender is beaten with wall pass support, with either a wall pass or being beaten on the dribble the players pass the ball to the target player in the goal.</p> <p>This attacking team then takes the place of the team they just defended and the team who was just defending and acting as a target attacks the team at the other end that was inactive.</p> <p>The activity continues to rotate.</p>	

2v2 to goal	Groups of four play 2v2 to goal on a field 12 yards wide by 18 yards long.	
6v6	It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?  Has your session had an impact on the players?	

## U11 Over lap

**What:** A supporting run that starts behind or goes around the ball into a position in advance of the ball.

**When:** A supporting player is close to a team mate that is under low pressure

**Why:** The low pressure on the ball allows the supporting player time to get in advance of the ball while creating space for the player with the ball.

**Where:** Anywhere on the field but most often in the middle third and attacking third and most often close to a sideline.

**How:** Step 1: The supporting player recognizes the player with the ball is under low pressure while moving forward.

Step 2: The supporting player begins to move in advance of the ball. If the player begins from behind the ball they make the run between the player and the sideline. If the player is square or in advance of the ball, they run behind the player before moving in advance of the ball. This player must make a loud verbal call to alert the player with the ball that an overlap run is coming for support.

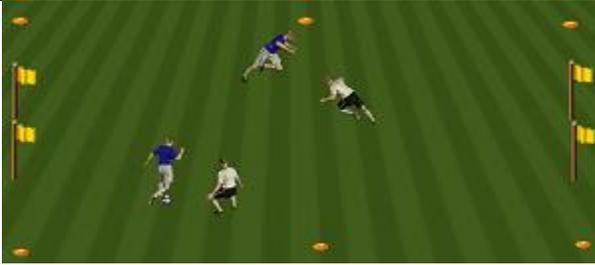
Step 3: When the player with the ball hears the overlap call, they begin to dribble at a forward angle away from the space the supporting overlapping run is going to.

Step 4: The player with the ball either makes a forward pass behind the opponent or uses the overlapping run as a decoy and continues to dribble.

Step 5: The player without the ball continues their forward run to support the ball.

<p>Rapid Training Overlap</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and subdivided into groups of two.</p> <p>Each pair is separated by 20 yards from the other pair and begin to pass the ball back and forth with their partner. On the coaches command of switch the player with the ball in each group begins to dribbles across the open space while their partner runs around the player. The player making the over lap must make a verbal call. The verbal call alerts the player with the ball they have support coming and then begins to dribble away from the space their</p>	
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	<p>partner is moving towards. This makes it difficult for a defender to split the two players.</p> <p>The player with the ball, either pass a forward ball to this player or uses the player as a decoy and continues to dribble.</p>	
<p>2v1 overlap walk through</p>	<p>Groups of three are formed with two players standing opposite one player with 20 yards separation.</p> <p>The two players pass the ball back and forth a couple of times until one of the players passes the ball to the single player. When this pass is made the player receives the ball and begins to dribble while the player who passed the ball begins to run around the player with the ball. The player who did not pass the ball applies low pressure but is not allowed to tackle.</p> <p>The player with the ball plays a front foot pass into the supporting player's path and passed the low pressuring defender or uses the supporting run as a decoy and dribbles past the opponent.</p>	
<p>2v1 ladder</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and subdivided into groups of two. Two players begin on the end line with a ball in a 8 yard wide and 20 yard long grid that is separated with a mid line. One opponent starts on the mid line and the other starts on the opposite end line.</p> <p>The player on the midline applies low pressure to the player with the ball. As low pressure is the visual sign to make an overlap, the supporting player begins to make an overlap. The player with the ball has the option to make a pass or dribble the defender.</p>	

	<p>Once they make it past the first defender they enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the grid and the new defender applies low pressure and the activity continues.</p>	
2v2 to goal	<p>Groups of four play 2v2 to goal on a field 12 yards wide by 18 yards long.</p>	
5v5	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Spatial Awareness

- What:** A player's ability to see opponents, team mates, open space, and field markings.
- When:** At all times with and without the ball.
- Where:** All over the field.
- Why:** The game of soccer is a visual game. Visual signs help the player make decisions. The more a player sees the higher the quality of the decisions.

<p>Sequence Passing</p>	<p>Divide the group into two groups, and place each group in a 10 yard by 15 yard grid. Number each player in the group in sequence.</p> <p>Players move throughout their grid and pass the ball in sequence. As number one passes the ball to number two, three should be in a position that they can receive a pass and see number four.</p> <p>Demand players move while keeping the head on a swivel to see the dynamic changes to the activity, and have the ability to react.</p>	
<p>2v2 to target Point to 'space' and talk out loud</p>	<p>Groups of three are formed and play 2v2 towards a target at each end.</p> <p>Players must point to the open space they have throughout the game. When a player receives the ball they must call out little, some, or a lot to indicate the amount of space they have.</p> <p>When a player knows the amount of space they have, they are able to make better decisions. By having the players announce what they see, the coach can get inside the player head and know what</p>	

	they are thinking.	
5v5 to target Point to 'space' and talk out loud	Same as above but larger numbers.	
6v6 Point to space and talk out loud	Go to goal with the same conditions.	
6v6	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

### U11 Number up and Number Down

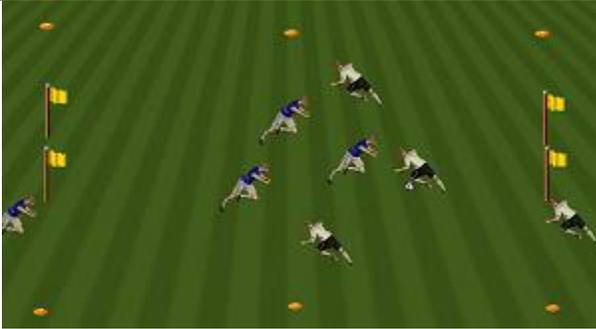
Players need to understand the numbers game in soccer. When a team is in attack and they are numbers up they need to take more risks and attack with speed. When they are numbers down, the attacking team needs to delay the attack and wait for help. The opposite applies to the defending team.

When a defending team has more players around the ball, they need to take apply high pressure and possibly double team the ball. When a defending team is numbers down around the ball they need to delay the attack in an effort to give team mates time to recover.

In the attacking third, players should consider even numbers as an advantage or numbers up and defenders should consider this situation as numbers down.

The session below puts players in situations that they are numbers up or numbers down. Can they recognize the situation and then apply the correct tactic.

<p>1v1 with add on player</p>	<p>Groups of four are formed and place two players on each end line of a 10 yard by 15 yard grid.</p> <p>One player passes the ball to a player on the other team, and closes the space while the ball is moving. These two players play 1v1. The attacking player attempts to beat the defender. If they are unbalanced or slowed down, the attacking player can pass the ball back and bring an additional player into the game. This makes the game 2v1.</p>	
<p>Revolving 3v2 with time activated add on</p>	<p>Groups of six are placed on a 20 yard by 30 yard field that has a goal on each end line.</p> <p>The attacking team plays with three players and the defending team plays with two. When transition occurs the team that won possession adds a player and the team</p>	

	<p>that lost possession loses a player.</p> <p>The defensive team adds the idle player if they can delay the attack by 15 seconds.</p>	
<p>3v3/3v4/4v4</p>	<p>Groups of eight begin playing 3v3 on a 25 yard by 40 yard field that has a goal on each end line.</p> <p>The attacking team can add the player if they recognize they have been delayed by passing the ball back to this player. In the event they have not scored or are disposed in 10 seconds the defending team adds a player.</p>	
<p>4v4 + keepers/4v5/5v5</p>	<p>Same as previous activity but larger numbers and keepers added.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Quick Restarts

Soccer is different than most sports played in America in how the game is started after the referee stops play to enforce the laws. The referee permission to restart play is only needed for a penalty kick, when the attacking team asks for the referee to enforce the ten yard rule for free kicks, and when substitutions are used.

Attacking teams need to take advantage of this rule/law by getting the ball into play as quickly as possible most of the time. By utilizing this approach the attacking team can get the ball in before the defense is organized and in position.

Using quick restarts is a tactic and an attitude. Your team needs to be ready to get the ball into play right away. This includes throw ins, goal kicks, direct kicks, indirect kicks, and corner kicks. It is also recommended that all free kicks for youth soccer should be short passes that keep possession. By utilizing short passes from free kicks you are instilling a culture of possession over a culture of gaining territory.

For this session we are using a whole-part-whole teaching progression.

6v6	<p>Divide the team into two teams and have them play soccer.</p> <p>Referee the game and after ten minutes begin to count out loud how long it takes to get the ball back into play after each call. Call all fouls.</p> <p>Stop the game and tell the players they need to learn how to get the ball into play quicker.</p>	
6v6 Quick Restarts	<p>Same as above but soccer balls are placed all around the field so that whenever a ball is played out the closest player on the team with possession can pick a ball up and get it back into play.</p> <p>Continue to referee and coach the players that are restarting play.</p>	

6v6

Go back to the game without soccer balls surrounding the field.

Continue to referee.

Have your session had an impact on your players?

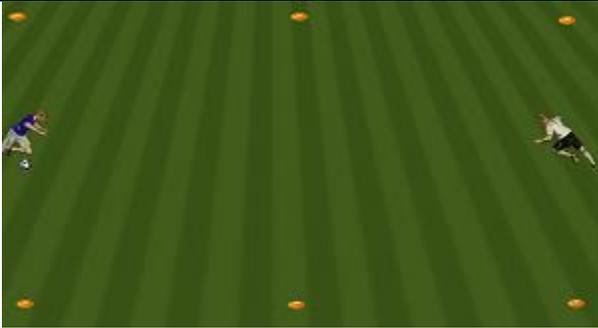
Follow up with this concept during the season.



## U11 Immediate Pressure

- What:** Closing down space quickly to put the player with the ball under stress. The visual sign for the coach to read to see if the player is under pressure is the player with the ball's head. If the head is down the player is under pressure and not thinking about going forward. This is the correct distance. No over committing.
- Who:** The closest player to the ball or to where the ball is headed.
- When:** As quickly as possible, players should close down as much space as possible before the ball is under control.
- Where:** All over the field
- How:**
- Step 1: Cover space quickly with big fast steps to start in an angle that denies penetration.
  - Step 2: Once the space is closed to 7 yards begin to make quick short steps being sure not to over commit.
  - Step 3: Take an angle that denies penetration and forces the player in one direction.
  - Step 4: Set feet so that they can be moved quickly. Standing on balls of feet with knees bent.
  - Step 5: React to visual signs to stay at the same distance
  - Step 6: Be patient and wait for a mistake. Contain the play and give team mates time to recover.
  - Step 7: Tackle when a mistake is made.

<p>Close Space Knee Tag</p>	<p>Each player finds a partner and begins from a starting position 15 yards from their partner.</p> <p>On the coach's command, each player runs at each other closing down the space as quickly as possible. When the distance is narrowed each player begins to get low and take small quick steps. When the players get in striking distance they begin to play knee tag by attempting to hit their partner below the knee.</p>	
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	Make sure players do not over commit.	
1v1	<p>Groups of two are formed and placed on opposite sides of a 5 yard by 10 yard grid. Each player has a ball.</p> <p>The player with the ball passes the ball to their partner who then attempts to dribble the ball by the opponent and across the end line under control. Once the pass is made the defender attempts to close down as much space as possible before the ball arrives to the opponent.</p>	
3v3 to targets	<p>Groups of eight are formed and broken into three groups. Two groups of three and one group of two and placed in a 12 yard by 18 yard grid.</p> <p>The group of two takes the role of targets and stand on opposite end lines. The other two groups play 3v3 attempting to pass the ball to a target.</p> <p>Quality pressure will deny the opportunity for forward passes to a target.</p>	
3v3	<p>Groups of six are subdivided into groups of three and placed on a 18 yard by 15 yard field with a small sided goal on each end line.</p> <p>Teams of three play a game and concentrate on pressuring the ball.</p>	

6v6

Has your session had an impact on the players?

Have they connected the lesson plan to the game?

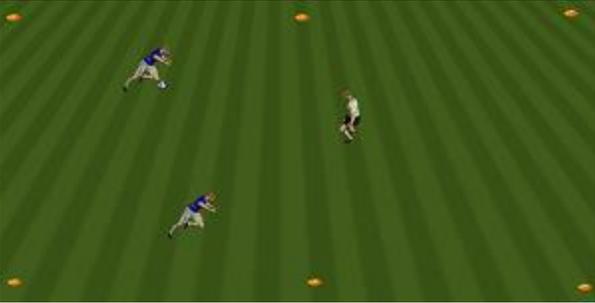


## U11 Splitting

Splitting is a term used to describe the role a defender takes when they are alone against two attackers, one of which has the ball. The defender takes a distance and angle that allows them to split their attention between the player with the ball and the other opponent. The distance and angle allows the player to keep both attackers in front of the defender, and able to stop the dribbling player from getting behind them, and also apply low pressure to the other attacker if the ball is passed.

We teach splitting at the U9 age group for the following reasons:

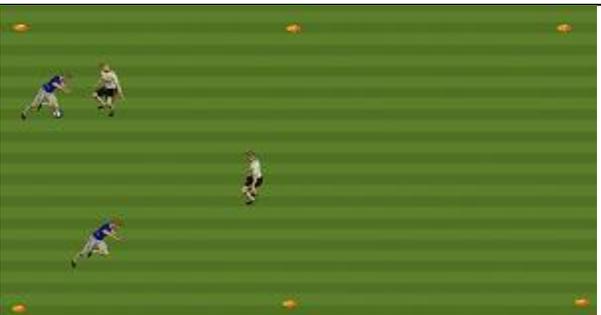
- Patience- the concept of splitting teaches players to be patient in defending and not rush the ball. This helps players from over committing in 1v1 situations.
- Cover- the concept of cover will be introduced at the U11 age level. If players understand splitting they will already be exposed to some of the principles of cover.
- Number up in attack- the players with the ball get quality age appropriate repetition to develop attacking abilities in a numbers up situation.

<p>2v1 Directional</p>	<p>Groups of three are formed with two attackers starting on one end line of a 15 yard by 10 yard grid. The defender begins at the opposite end line.</p> <p>The play starts with the defender passing the ball to one of the attackers. The defender then closes down space and picks the right distance and angle to split the attackers.</p> <p>The attackers attempt to beat the opponent and stop the ball on the end line.</p>	
<p>3v2</p>	<p>Groups of five are formed with three players attacking two defenders in a 15 yard by 20 yard grid.</p>	

<p>3v2 ladder</p>	<p>Groups of seven are formed and divided into groups of three and four. Players are placed in a 15 yard by 30 yard grid with a half line. Three attackers start on an end line with two defenders at the half line and two defender at the opposite end line.</p> <p>The attackers attempt to get by the first line of defender who splits the three. If the attackers are successful they move into the second half and attempt to beat the next line of defense.</p>	
<p>5v3 to goal</p>	<p>Groups of eight are formed and placed on a soccer field with 40 yard by 22 yard dimensions.</p> <p>The players play 5v3 to goal. Rotate the groups that play numbers down often.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Cover

Cover is a principle of defense. It is the role of players near the ball that are not pressuring the ball. Cover is used to support the pressuring defender, so that if the player with the ball is beaten, the supporting defender is in position to apply pressure. The angle and distance of cover are important and depend on the ability of the attacking player, place on the field, and amount of support the attacking player has.

<p>1v2</p>	<p>In a 12 yard by 18 yard grid one player starts on an end line opposite two players.</p> <p>One of the two players passes the ball across the field to the player on the opposite end line. As the ball is moving both defenders close down the space. One player applies pressure while the other takes a cover angle cover in an attempt to prevent the opponent from gaining possession of the ball over the end line.</p> <p>Coach the angle and distance the covering player takes. They need to be far enough that one touch from the attacker can not beat both players and close enough that in the event the first defender is beaten, immediate pressure can be applied to the ball.</p>	
<p>2v2</p>	<p>In a 12 yard by 18 yard grid two players start on an end line, opposite two players.</p> <p>One group passes the ball to the other group and applies pressure and cover in an attempt to prevent the opponent from gaining possession of the ball over the end line.</p> <p>Coach the angle and distance the covering player takes. They need to be far enough that one touch from the attacker can not beat both players and close enough that in the event the first defender is beaten or passes the ball to the other attacking player immediate pressure can be applied to the ball.</p>	

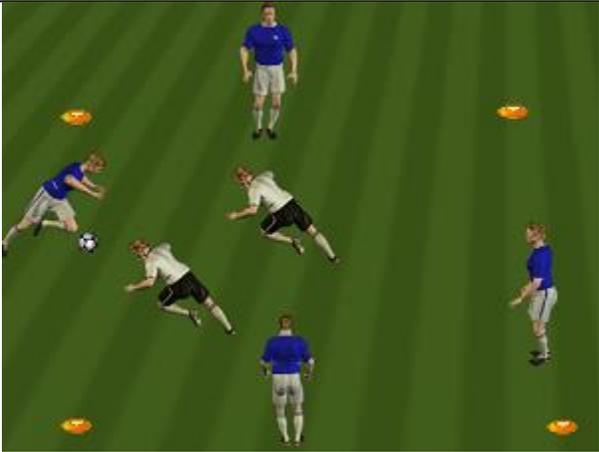
<p>3v2</p>	<p>Groups of five are subdivided into a group of three and a group of two. Both groups start on opposite end lines of a 15 yard by 22 yard grid.</p> <p>One group passes the ball to the other group and applies pressure and cover in an attempt to prevent the opponent from gaining possession of the ball over the end line.</p> <p>Coach the angle and distance the covering player takes. They need to be far enough that one touch from the attacker can not beat both players and close enough that in the event the first defender is beaten or passes the ball to the other attacking player immediate pressure can be applied to the ball.</p>	
<p>3v3 three goal game</p>	<p>Groups of six are subdivided into two groups of three and placed on a field that is 35 yards wide and 20 yards long with three goals on each end line.</p> <p>Teams play 3v3 with the defense tested to apply cover on wide field.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	

## U11 Small Group Defending

The topic of small group defending addresses the need for defenders close to the ball to work together to win the ball back. Players work together through applying the principles of play, team strategy, and communication.

Defending always starts with pressure on the ball. The pressuring defender needs to give visual communication to their team mates on the angle they are taking when they approach the ball. This is a signal for the covering defenders and possibly the players balancing the field.

The covering defender then chooses the distance and angle, cuts off passes lanes, and communicates with the pressuring defender. The balancing defender can then see passing lanes that are open and assume a position to deny or limit this option. The balancing defender can also provide communication to both the pressuring and covering defenders, as they are in a position to see much more.

4v2	<p>Groups of six play 4v2 possession in an 8 yard by 8 yard grid.</p> <p>The defenders are instructed to work together to make the opponent play predictable. Pressure and cover is demanded and players can not ball chase.</p>	
Can you play through?	<p>Groups of seven are divided into a group of three and two groups of two. Each group of two starts on the outside of opposite sides of a 15 yard by 15 yard grid. The group of three starts inside the grid.</p> <p>One group of two pass the ball back and forth, attempting to pass the ball through the grid to the one of the players in the pair on the other side of the grid. The group of three applies pressure, cover, and balance attempting to deny the opportunity for the ball to be played through the grid.</p>	

<p>3v3 to three small goals</p>	<p>Groups of six are subdivided into two groups of three and placed on a field that is 35 yards wide and 20 yards long with three goals on each end line.</p> <p>Teams play 3v3 with the defense tested to apply cover and balance on wide field.</p>	
<p>3v3</p>	<p>Groups of six play 3v3 on a 20 yard by 30 yard grid.</p>	
<p>6v6</p>	<p>It is all about connection. Can the players connect the lesson plan into the game?</p> <p>Has your session had an impact on the players?</p>	