



# ACTIVE START JR & SR COACHING MANUAL



This manual was adapted with permission from Newmarket Soccer Club - 2018

## ACTIVE START

### Stage One – U3/4 to U5/6

**G**ive the youngest players the opportunity to develop basic movement skills like running, jumping, landing, kicking, throwing and catching in a fun setting built around informal play and positive reinforcement.

At this age, we want the kids to FALL IN LOVE WITH THE GAME.



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## WELCOME

Firstly, welcome to the Woolwich Youth Soccer Club and thank you very much for volunteering your time to coach! The club along with the players greatly appreciate what you are doing for them.

This manual will provide you with an outline of what is required of you while coaching with the Woolwich Youth Soccer. It is also your go to resource for week-by-week session plans.

If you have any concerns throughout the season, please do not hesitate to contact the office: 519-669-1000

Thank you once again for supporting the Woolwich Youth Soccer Club!

- Brendan Lowther, Technical Director, WYSC

## The Role of The Coach

Teacher. Mentor. Role model. Cheerleader. Parent.

Soccer coaches wear many different hats, particularly when they're training young players, many of whom are lacing up their cleats for the first time. You might find yourself leading a fun activity one minute and reining in a distracted player the next.

You must be flexible, because a session or activity that was meant to last 10 minutes might need to be switched up after half that time to keep the players engaged.

Above all, make sure everyone is enjoying the session—including you.

Being a coach is demanding, but it's also incredibly rewarding. There's nothing quite like witnessing the thrill a young player gets when they score their first goal, or make a fantastic pass. And the lessons a child learns from a good coach can last a lifetime.

The objective isn't just to develop better soccer players—it's to develop well-rounded people who are disciplined, persistent and able to work well with others.

## PARENT MEETING

It is recommended that you hold a brief parent meeting at the start of the season at the first practice day. The benefit of this, is that you get to introduce yourself to all the parents and you can lay out some expectations for them. It is also a good opportunity to try and find some parent helpers to help you run the practices or they might be able to help organise the snack list.

When talking about expectations, try to outline the following:

- Everyone is here for the kids and for them to have fun
- Please try to arrive on time and let you know if you are not attending
- Ensure that their child has water
- Ensure that their child has their correct uniform, including shin-pads and cleats
- HAVE FUN as a parent
- Respect all players and other parents
- Encourage good play from all teams
- Snack should be healthy choices, Fruit is ideal!

## GAME DAY

The best day and the one that everyone looks forward to!

A couple of things to try and remember:

- Do your best to be the first one at the field
  - You can then meet the players when they arrive and have a quick chat with them, ask them how their day was etc.
- Ensure you have parents to help! Kids should not be standing around for very long so try to keep them engaged with help.
- Lots of water breaks when it is hot!
- Keep it fun and interesting. Kids may wander off or not be interested at times, so change it up when that happens!
- Work with the other coach to ensure you agree on when to start the small sided game and if you want to work together on the practices.

## EQUIPMENT

You should have received the following and try to ensure that you bring it every session:

1. This coaching manual
2. pinnies
3. soccer balls (each player keeps a ball)
4. 20 discs

Equipment a player should have every session:

1. Uniform – shirt, shorts and socks
2. Soccer Ball
3. Shinpads – under socks!
4. Appropriate footwear – cleats
5. Water

**Players are not allowed to wear jewellery of any kind unless for medical reasons – get them in the habit now.**

## WEATHER AND CANCELLATION POLICY

If the weather is bad, the Club website has information on field conditions and availability – [www.woolwichyouthsoccer.com](http://www.woolwichyouthsoccer.com)

Check there to see if fields have been deemed unplayable and closed by the Township.

### BAD WEATHER DURING PRACTICE

- Use your best judgement when it is poor weather. Rain shouldn't stop practice unless it is heavy or the fields have been closed.
- When lightning is observed, all players, coaches, management and spectators are to seek proper shelter. At this age group, the practice/game will be ended for that week.
- Practices/games are not cancelled due to extreme heat; parents/guardians are to make individual decisions on player participation. In the event of extreme heat, coaches and referees must provide water breaks at reasonable times during the practice/game.

## TRAINING TEMPLATE

The training sessions for the Active Start age group is 60 minutes in length and is comprised of:

- 25% General Movement
- 25% Coordination
- 25% Soccer Technique
- 25% Small-Sided Games – these are played 3v3 (two games at a time per field)

Each area of the session will always include a ball.

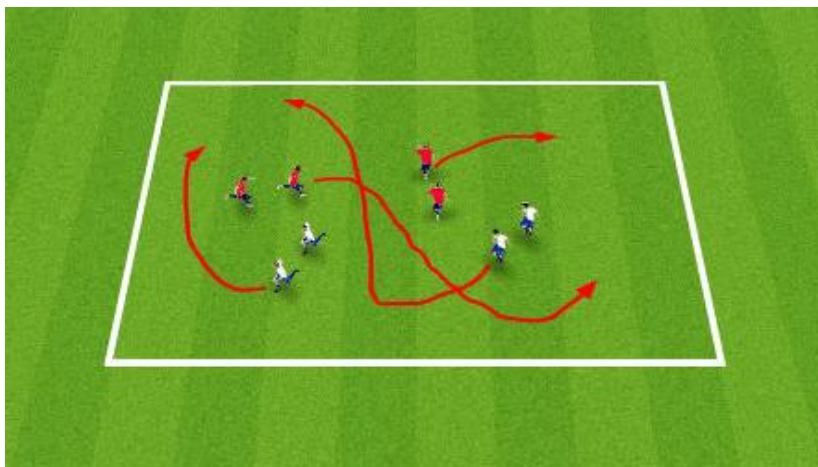
The manual is broken down into 10 week by week sessions for you. You can follow along exactly each week or you can mix them up. It is up to you!

It is strongly encouraged that parents are involved within the sessions and should be helping you through the sessions with their child. At the U5-U6 age group, parent participation can become less but there are times where they will be needed.

There are plenty more activities located here if you want to try different ideas than the ones listed in this manual:  
<https://www.ontariosoccer.net/grassroots-practices>



## WEEK ONE



### Follow the leader (5 mins)

**Set up:** Pair players up with another player or use parents and numbered 1 and 2

**Organization:** On your teams half of the field only, player 1 leads and player 2 follows where ever they go. Player 1 tries to loose player 2. On coaches shout of switch, players switch roles, number 2 is now the leader

**Coaching Points:** Head up, change of speed and direction. What other movements could the players use? Hopping, skipping, jumping etc.

**Progressions:** Add a soccer ball



### Ball Familiarisation (10 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball in their own space

#### Organization:

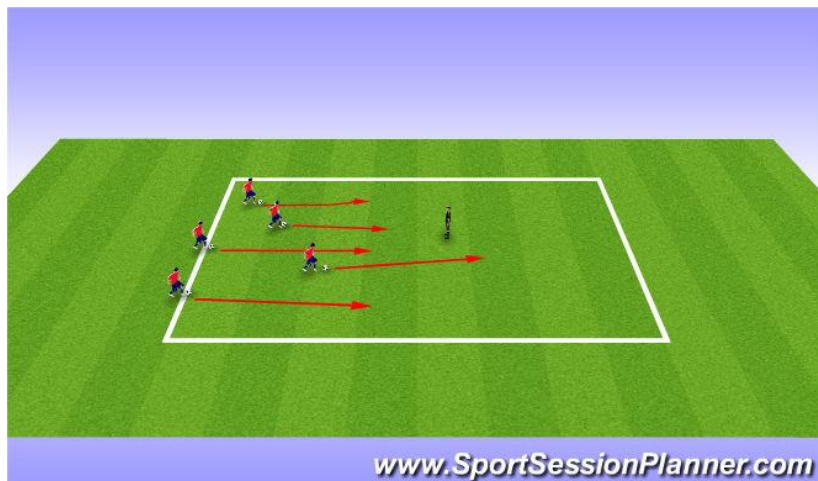
Part 1: Each player holds the ball in their hands and throws the ball up in the air to try and catch it.

Part 2: When the ball is in the air, can the player clap their hands before they catch it?

Part 3: When the ball is in the air, instead of catching the ball, can they control the ball with their feet.

**Coaching Points:** Eyes on the ball, watch it into hands/onto foot, body inline with the ball, move foot away on contact with the ball

## WEEK ONE CONT.



### Red light, Green light (15 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball, lined up on one side of the field

**Organization:** The coach has a red and green cone, on the coaches shout of green light/hold up green cone, players dribble out onto road looking to make it to the other end. When the coach says red light, players stop and put their foot on top of the ball. Once all the players have made it to the other side, they turn around and come back.

**Coaching Points:** Head up, keep the ball close, small, quick touches with the pinky toe.

**Progressions:** Coach does not say anything, players have to keep their head up.



### Numbers Game (15 mins)

**Set Up:** Set up two small goals at either end of the field, all the balls with the coach in the middle. Split the group into two groups and number 1-3/4 depending on numbers

**Organization:** The coach will shout out a number, eg 1, player number 1 from each group then come out to get a ball and score on the other end. Start by playing in two balls then progress to 1.

## WEEK TWO



### Freeze Tag (5 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball, one without.

**Organization:** The player without the ball attempts to tag other players. If tagged then, player is now frozen, picks up ball above their head and calls out 'help!' with their feet shoulder width apart. Player can be unfrozen if another player plays a ball between their legs or if the parent and player count to 10 with each other

### Progressions:

Easier – start with no balls and players hold hands out to their side. Player is freed by going under an arm. Progress to going between legs.

Harder-have players who are 'it' and they tag players to freeze them.



### Making friends with the ball (10 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball in their own space

**Organization:** Part 1: Each player places one foot on top of the ball. On the coaches shout of switch, players then switch which foot is on top of the ball. This is called a toe tap. Players can either step down or jump from foot to foot.

Part 2: Players have the ball between their feet and pass it from one foot to the other using the inside of their foot.

**Coaching Points:** Hands out for balance, try to keep the head up, occasionally looking down, light touches



## WEEK TWO CONT.



### Mine field (15 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball and have as many cones as possible spread out on the field.

**Organization:** Players attempt to dribble through mine field without hitting the mines. If players hit mines they have to do dive on the ball

**Coaching points:** head up (look for open space), small touches, baby toe, use different parts of the foot

**Progression:** Add defender into mine field



### Nuts and Squirrels (15 mins)

1. Teams are divided into 4 groups – each group is given a different coloured pinnie and all of the balls are positioned in the middle square.

2. On coach's command, 1 player from each group (with parent) collects a ball (nut) from the middle with their feet. Player dribbles the ball back to their assigned team square (nest)

3. Next player (with parent) can go when the ball is stopped in the nest.

4. When the coach stops the game, the team with the most nuts in their nest wins the game.

#### Progressions:

- a) Easier – Instead of dribbling the ball players uses hands
- b) Harder – One player from each group is allowed to steal a ball from the other team's squares

## WEEK THREE



### Body Part Game (5 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball in the area.

**Organization:** Ball can start in hands or on the floor. On "go" players run around holding/dribbling the ball, when a coach shouts a body part, players stop put the ball on the ground and place that body part on the ball.

**Coaching Points:** Pinky toe to dribble, keep the ball close, head up



### Relay Race (10 mins)

**Set Up:** Set up two relay courses as shown above and split the players into two groups with a ball each.

**Organization:** On the coaches shout of "go", the first player in line completes the course and returns to the start.

**Coaching Points:** All parts of the foot to dribble, small touches, keep the ball close.

## WEEK THREE CONT.



### Rush Hour (15 mins)

**Set up:** Set up two end zones with cones as shown. Split the players into two groups, each with a ball.

**Organization:** Each team starts driving/dribbling in central area. When the coach calls out 'Rush Hour', the players attempt to dribble out of the rush and into an end zone.

**Progressions:** Add cones into the middle zone to act as "pot holes". If a player's ball hits a pot hole, they have to stop and call out "tow truck" - coach enters the grid "high fives" the player to "fix their car" and player can continue to the other side.



### Numbers Game (15 mins)

**Set Up:** Set up two small goals at either end of the field, all the balls with the coach in the middle. Split the group into two groups and number 1-3/4 depending on numbers

**Organization:** The coach will shout out a number, eg 1, player number 1 from each group then come out to get a ball and score on the other end. Start by playing in two balls then progress to 1.



## WEEK FOUR



### Making friends with the ball (10 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball in their own space

**Organization:** Part 1: Each player places one foot on top of the ball. On the coaches shout of switch, players then switch which foot is on top of the ball. This is called a toe tap. Players can either step down or jump from foot to foot.

Part 2: Players have the ball between their feet and pass it from one foot to the other using the inside of their foot.

**Coaching Points:** Hands out for balance, try to keep the head up, occasionally looking down, light touches



### Truck and Trailer (15 mins)

One player is the truck, the other is the trailer. Where ever the truck goes, the trailer must follow!

Head-up, keep the ball close. Use different parts to move the ball in different directions

Speed Up - trucks start moving faster

Turn - Trucks change direction

Park - Use the bottom of your foot to stop the ball

Switch - truck and trailer swap roles

## WEEK FOUR CONT.



### Special Delivery (15 mins)

All players are delivery drivers and they have to ensure safe delivery of their package (the ball) to the next square.

Have at least 2 or 3 spare balls in each square.

Players must dribble their ball to the next square, drop it off and pick up a new package to deliver to the next square. Players try to make as many deliveries as possible in allotted time. Stay away from the dogs who are trying to steal the package.

Turn-players turn and go the other way. Add in pot holes etc that the driver has avoid



### Indy 500 (15 mins)

**Set up:** Set up a small racetrack as shown with a ball each in the cockpit.

**Organization:** Players start their engines in the pit and must drive around the track. If they crash (leave area), players must fall to ground and complete 5 toe taps to fix themselves.

Add in pot holes. Turns etc to make the game fun.

**Progression:** Split into two teams, one team drives one direction, the other drives the opposite.



## WEEK FIVE



### Everyone's it Tag (5 mins)

**Set Up:** Each player finds their own space in the area (your half of the pitch)

**Organization:** Every player is a tagger and they look to tag as many players as possible in 45 seconds (tag must be on the back to count).

**Coaching Points:** Head up, change of direction, speed

**Progressions:** Play multiple times, can they beat their score? Play a new game that when every time they tag a player, they gain a point but they get tagged, they lose a point.



### Topple me coconuts (10 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a partner, a ball each and two discs. Place cones 5-10 yards apart.

**Organization:** One player at a time looks to pass the ball and hit their partners ball off the cone to "topple the coconut"

**Coaching Points:** Side of foot, NO TOES, use both feet, keep eyes on the ball when kicking

## WEEK 5 CONT.



### Cops and Robbers/Hit the coach (15 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball, either coach or parent without

**Organization:** In the area, players look to dribble around and shoot their ball at coach/catch the robber, everytime the coach gets hit, they lose a limb (instead of running, they are now jumping/hopping/crawling etc)

**Coaching Points:** Head up looking for coach, side of foot/laces to kick ball  
– NO TOES



### 1v1 candy store (15 mins)

**Set up:** Name each side of grid after a candy eg, Smarties, m&ms, jelly beans, skittles. Each player with a ball.

**Organization:** Players dribble around the area, when the coach shouts out a candy, every player dribbles the ball as quickly as possible to that side of the grid.

**Coaching Points:** Listening skills, close control, head up

## WEEK SIX



### Making friends with the ball (10 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball in their own space

**Organization:** Part 1: Each player places one foot on top of the ball. On the coaches shout of switch, players then switch which foot is on top of the ball. This is called a toe tap. Players can either step down or jump from foot to foot.

Part 2: Players have the ball between their feet and pass it from one foot to the other using the inside of their foot.

**Coaching Points:** Hands out for balance, try to keep the head up, occasionally looking down, light touches



### Red light, Green light (15 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball, lined up on one side of the field

**Organization:** The coach has a red and green cone, on the coaches shout of green light/hold up green cone, players dribble out onto road looking to make it to the other end. When the coach says red light, players stop and put their foot on top of the ball. Once all the players have made it to the other side, they turn around and come back.

**Coaching Points:** Head up, keep the ball close, small, quick touches with the pinky toe.

**Progressions:** Coach does not say anything, players have to keep their head up.

## WEEK SIX CONT.



### Shark Attack (15 mins)

Split the group into two. One group with a ball start at one end and the other group at the opposite end without a ball.

Objective is for the players to dribble from the beach into the sea using different parts of the foot.

When the coach shouts 'Shark Attack!' – group without the ball look to steal the ball.

Player with the ball has to turn and get back to the safety of the beach. When the player loses their ball, they join their parents as the sharks.



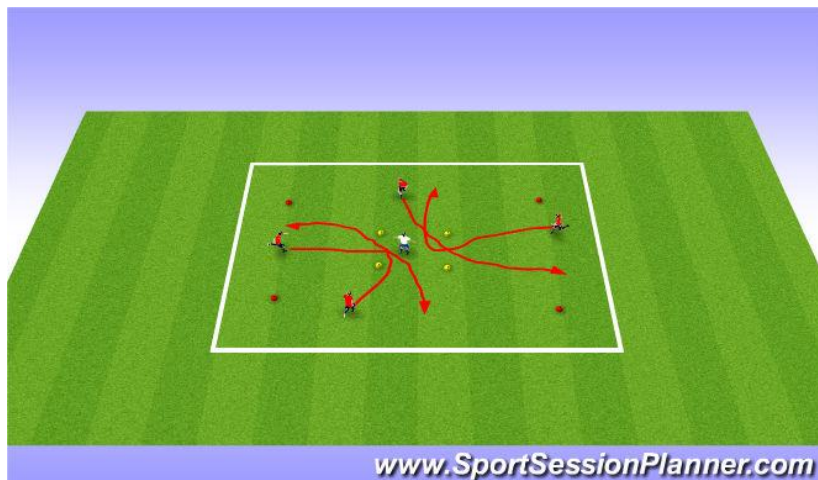
### Numbers Game (15 mins)

**Set Up:** Set up two small goals at either end of the field, all the balls with the coach in the middle. Split the group into two groups and number 1-3/4 depending on numbers

**Organization:** The coach will shout out a number, eg 1, player number 1 from each group then come out to get a ball and score on the other end. Start by playing in two balls then progress to 1.



## WEEK SEVEN



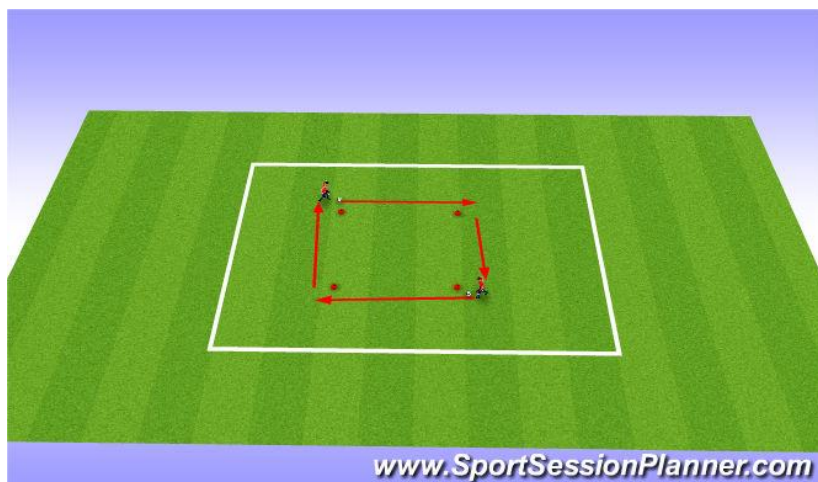
### Catch me if you can

**Set up:** set up two squares, one 15x15 and the other 5x5. One player is the catcher (player in middle) all the other are on a side.

**Organization:** On the coaches shout of go, players on the outside try to run through the middle square without the catcher tagging them. If the tagger tags them, tagger gains a point. The tagger cannot leave the middle square.

**Coaching points:** Head up, change of speed and direction

**Progression:** provide each player with a ball.



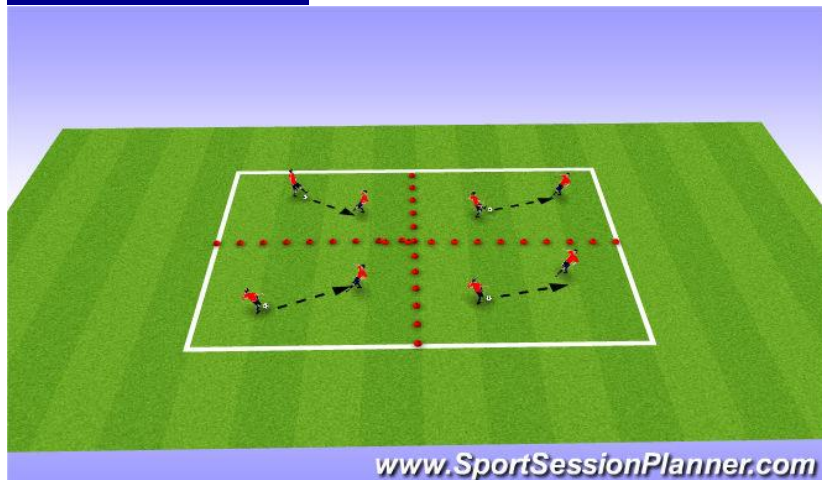
### Catch me if you can pt 2

**Set up:** Make a 8x8 square, two players each with a ball (Set up multiple areas for more players)

**Organization:** On the coaches shout of GO, players dribble around the outside of the square trying to catch their partner

**Coaching Points:** Small touches, pinky toe to dribble, keep the ball close, head up

## WEEK SEVEN CONT.



### Pairs in Squares

**Set Up:** Split the area into 4 squares, two players in each (more if necessary), one ball per pair

**Organization:** Players pass the ball back and forth with your partner while staying inside the square. Start by using your hands to throw the ball and catch it. When your coach says to change the way you're passing, do it!

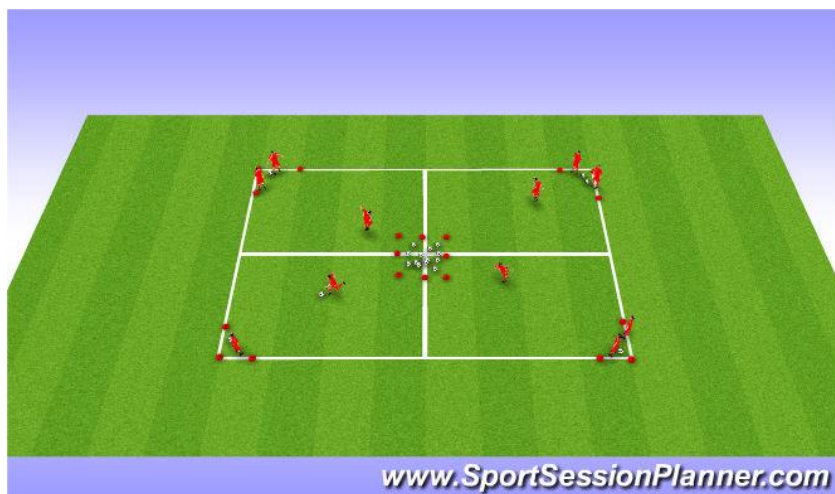
1. Pass the ball with the inside of your foot, then the top of your foot (laces).

Use any part of your foot to control the ball when you're receiving a pass.

2. Throw a bounce pass to your partner, and they will use their foot to control the ball before picking it up and bouncing it back to you.

**Coaching Points:** Make sure to get in line with the ball when you see it coming

Progression: "Switch!" – rotate squares 1 player at a time so everyone has an opportunity to work with different teammates.



### Nuts and Squirrels (15 mins)

1. Teams are divided into 4 groups – each group is given a different coloured pinnie and all of the balls are positioned in the middle square.
2. On coach's command, 1 player from each group (with parent) collects a ball (nut) from the middle with their feet. Player dribbles the ball back to their assigned team square (nest)
3. Next player (with parent) can go when the ball is stopped in the nest.
4. When the coach stops the game, the team with the most nuts in their nest wins the game.

#### Progressions:

- a) Easier – Instead of dribbling the ball players use hands
- b) Harder – One player from each group is allowed to steal a ball from the other team's squares

## WEEK EIGHT



### Body Part Game (5 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball in the area.

**Organization:** Ball can start in hands or on the floor. On "go" players run around holding/dribbling the ball, when a coach shouts a body part, players stop put the ball on the ground and place that body part on the ball.

**Coaching Points:** Pinky toe to dribble, keep the ball close, head up



### Making friends with the ball (10 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball in their own space

**Organization:** Part 1: Each player places one foot on top of the ball. On the coaches shout of switch, players then switch which foot is on top of the ball. This is called a toe tap. Players can either step down or jump from foot to foot.

Part 2: Players have the ball between their feet and pass it from one foot to the other using the inside of their foot.

**Coaching Points:** Hands out for balance, try to keep the head up, occasionally looking down, light touches



## WEEK EIGHT CONT.



### Indy 500 (15 mins)

**Set up:** Set up a small racetrack as shown with a ball each in the cockpit.

**Organization:** Players start their engines in the pit and must drive around the track. If they crash (leave area), players must fall to ground and complete 5 toe taps to fix themselves.

Add in pot holes. Turns etc to make the game fun.

**Progression:** Split into two teams, one team drives one direction, the other drives the opposite.



### Numbers Game (15 mins)

**Set Up:** Set up two small goals at either end of the field, all the balls with the coach in the middle. Split the group into two groups and number 1-3/4 depending on numbers

**Organization:** The coach will shout out a number, eg 1, player number 1 from each group then come out to get a ball and score on the other end. Start by playing in two balls then progress to 1.



## WEEK NINE —



### Everyone's it Tag (5 mins)

**Set Up:** Each player finds their own space in the area (your half of the pitch)

**Organization:** Every player is a tagger and they look to tag as many players as possible in 45 seconds (tag must be on the back to count).

**Coaching Points:** Head up, change of direction, speed

**Progressions:** Play multiple times, can they beat their score? Play a new game that when every time they tag a player, they gain a point but they get tagged, they lose a point.



### Relay Race

**Set Up:** Set up two relay courses as shown above and split the players into two groups with a ball each.

**Organization:** On the coaches shout of "go", the first player in line completes the course and returns to the start.

**Coaching Points:** All parts of the foot to dribble, small touches, keep the ball close.

## WEEK NINE CONT.



### 1v1 candy store (15 mins)

**Set up:** Name each side of grid after a candy eg, Smarties, m&ms, jelly beans, skittles. Each player with a ball.

**Organization:** Players dribble around the area, when the coach shouts out a candy, every player dribbles the ball as quickly as possible to that side of the grid.

**Coaching Points:** Listening skills, close control, head up



### Shark Attack (15 mins)

Split the group into two. One group with a ball start at one end and the other group at the opposite end without a ball.

Objective is for the players to dribble from the beach into the sea using different parts of the foot.

When the coach shouts 'Shark Attack!' – group without the ball look to steal the ball.

Player with the ball has to turn and get back to the safety of the beach. When the player loses their ball, they join their parents as the sharks.

## WEEK TEN



### Truck and Trailer (15 mins)

One player is the truck, the other is the trailer. Where ever the truck goes, the trailer must follow!

Head-up, keep the ball close. Use different parts to move the ball in different directions

Speed Up - trucks start moving faster

Turn - Trucks change direction

Park - Use the bottom of your foot to stop the ball

Switch - truck and trailer swap roles



### Topple me coconuts (10 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a partner, a ball each and two discs. Place cones 5-10 yards apart.

**Organization:** One player at a time looks to pass the ball and hit their partners ball off the cone to “topple the coconut”

**Coaching Points:** Side of foot, NO TOES, use both feet, keep eyes on the ball when kicking



## WEEK TEN CONT.

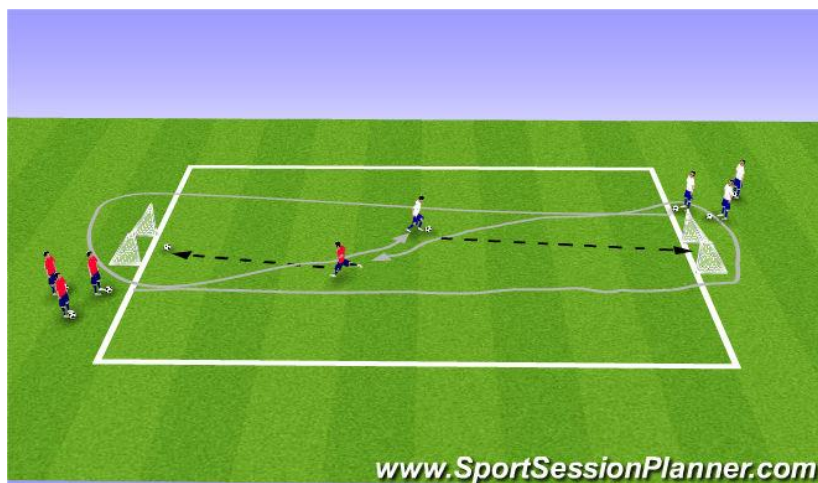


### Cops and Robbers/Hit the coach (15 mins)

**Set up:** Each player with a ball, either coach or parent without

**Organization:** In the area, players look to dribble around and shoot their ball at coach/catch the robber, every time the coach gets hit, they lose a limb (instead of running, they are now jumping/hopping/crawling etc)

**Coaching Points:** Head up looking for coach, side of foot/laces to kick ball  
– NO TOES



### Race to Goal (15 mins)

**Set Up:** Split the group into two, each player with a ball lined up next to the goals.

**Organization:** On the coaches shout of GO, the first player from each line dribble there ball all the way round the opposite goal and then come back and score on their own goal.

**Coaching Points:** Close control, accuracy on shot

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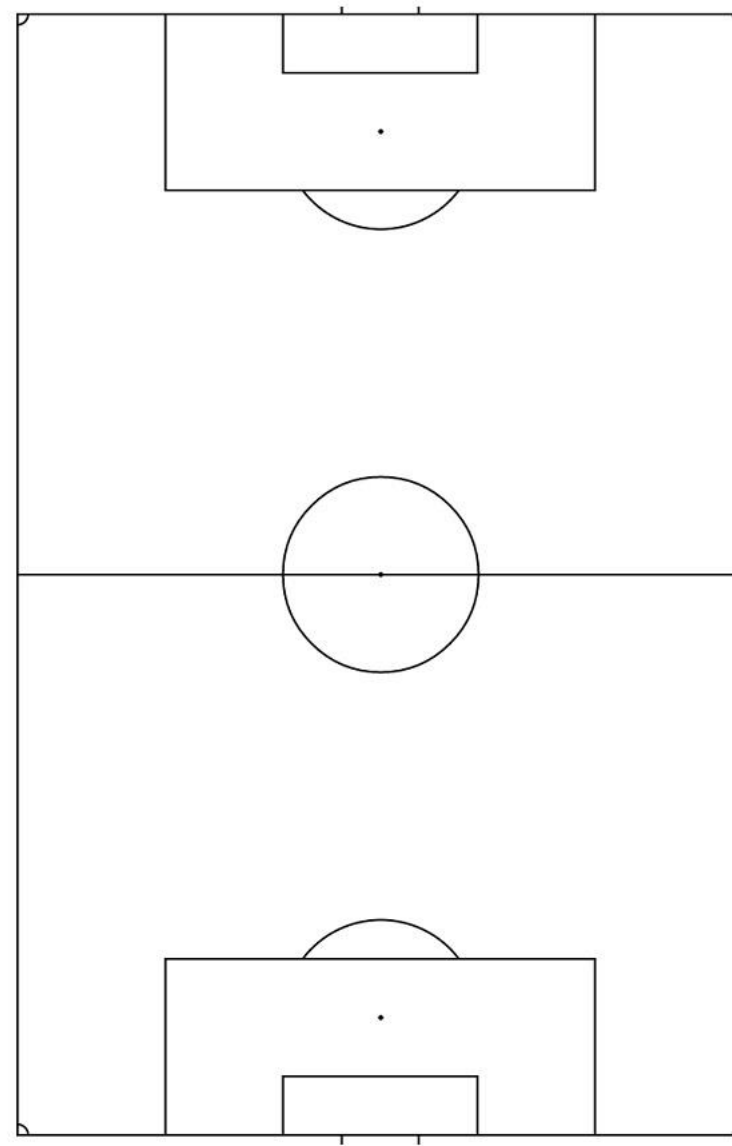
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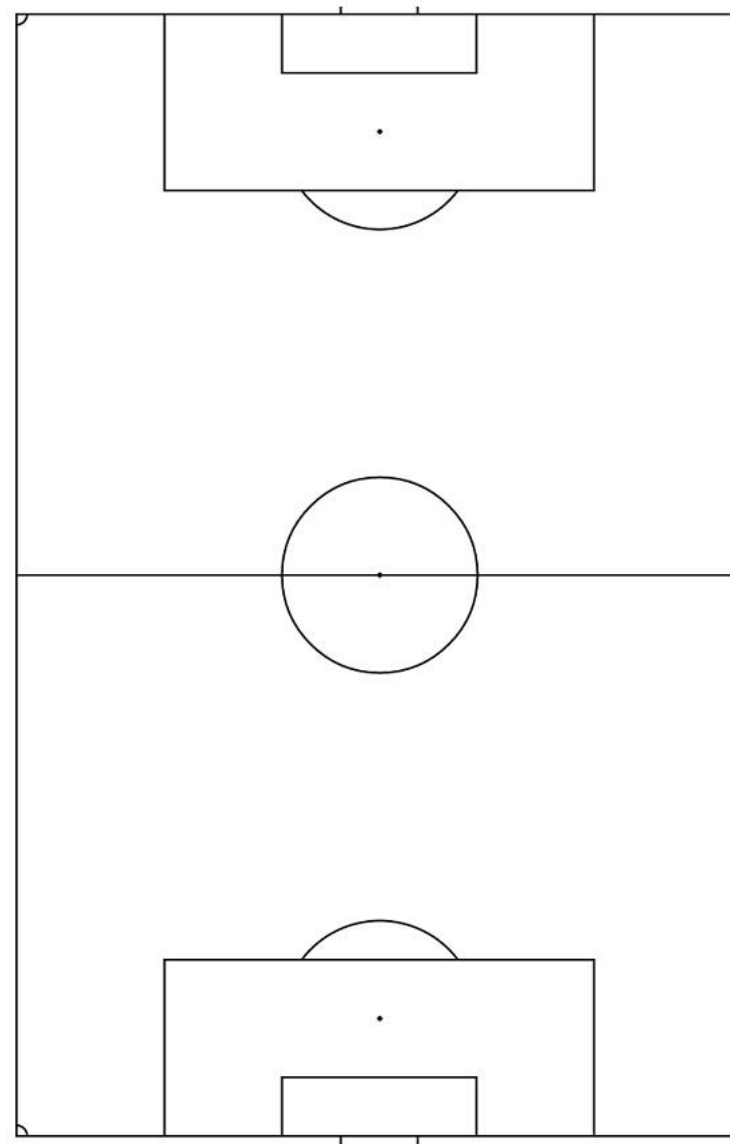
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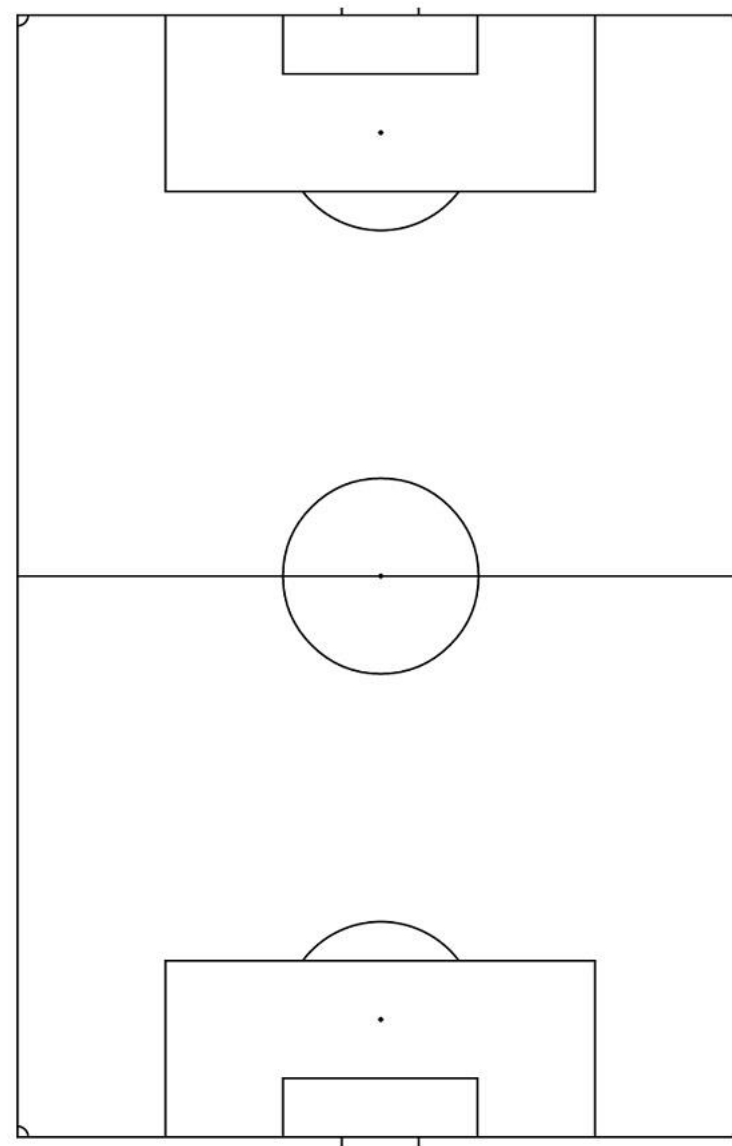
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