
AYSO

U-10 Coach

Manual



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Welcome!

The American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) welcomes you to the world of coaching youth soccer. The Coaching Department of the National Support & Training Center and the AYSO National Coaching Advisory Commission are pleased to present this manual to help you get started.

AYSO is a place where every child plays in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship and positive coaching. The emphasis in AYSO is on youth. AYSO is unique because we recognize the social and psychological needs of children and do our best to work toward the fulfillment of those needs in all our programs. This emphasis makes AYSO a model for other youth sports groups and is a key to our astounding growth and popularity.

Developing soccer skills, physical attributes, tactical awareness and knowledge of the game are critical to promoting self-efficacy and increasing self-esteem in players. Thus, they perform at a higher level, avoid injury, see the results of their hard work and achievement and most importantly, have fun. As a volunteer coach, your participation in the program should be fun, as well.

The content of this manual is drawn from the knowledge and experience of AYSO's National Coach and National Coaching Advisory Commission—people with vast soccer knowledge, yet volunteers of AYSO—just like you. The soccer skills and coaching techniques included in this manual have been carefully selected as appropriate for the level of your players. We encourage you to use the techniques in this manual to train young players in the skills most needed at their level of development and play. With these guidelines and recommendations, your coaching experience will be satisfying for both you and your players.

We encourage you to attend the Annual Coach Orientation Course, held in your local region, as well as other AYSO coaching courses available in your area. Your regional commissioner or coach administrator can provide you with information about what's available and how to register.

We are glad that you have joined the AYSO. On behalf of the players, we thank you!

John Ouellette

AYSO National Coach

Soccer the beautiful game!

Soccer, by any measure, is the most popular game in the world. It's easy to play, can be played almost anywhere and requires very little equipment—perhaps markers of some sort for the two goals and the four corners of the field, and, of course, a ball.

Soccer is non-stop action, played in two halves with far fewer interruptions than other team sports. For sheer exercise, it is hard to beat. In fact, it provides one of the best cardiovascular workouts in all of sport.

Now that you're excited about soccer, continue on to learn what it means to be a coach in AYSO!

AYSO Philosophy

This section provides a brief introduction to AYSO's vision, mission and the philosophies on which the program is based.

Vision Statement

To provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives

Mission Statement

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs, which promote a fun, family environment based on the AYSO Philosophies:

- **Everyone Plays:** Our program's goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.
- **Balanced Teams:** Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible—because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.
- **Open Registration:** Our program is open to all children between 4 1/2 and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.
- **Positive Coaching:** Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.
- **Good Sportsmanship:** We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect rather than a win at all costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

The Psychology of Coaching

Working with young athletes

It is important as a coach that you subscribe to a philosophy that acknowledges the role of athletics in developing children as complete individuals. Remember that AYSO's vision is to provide soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

As coaches we need to recognize that each athlete is an individual with unique needs and that we treat them accordingly:

- Understand that players want to enjoy attending practices and games. If they are not having fun and learning, they will lose interest and not want to return.
- Organize your activities and games so that every athlete on your team has an opportunity to develop and maintain positive feelings of self-worth.
- Provide positive encouragement to all players for both accomplishments and mistakes.

Play in this very young age group is meant to give a "taste" of the game, some experience in working together as a team, and, most of all, a positive introduction to the sports experience.

One of the appealing things about soccer as a youth sport is that practically no skills at all are required to play the game at its simplest level. If a youngster can run and can kick a ball, he or she can play soccer and enjoy it.

If we understand and support player development as both athletes and individuals, the players will enjoy themselves more and want to continue playing. **We must help them understand that the**

objective of any game is to win, but that the overall goal is to enjoy the game and strive to do their best!

What to Expect from Under-10 Players

General Development Characteristics

Physically, nine and ten-year-olds are still in the early stages of development.

Physical/Gross Motor Development:

- will participate enthusiastically in competitive activities
- will practice new skills over and over in order to perfect them
- will experience lowered frequency of minor illnesses

Social/Emotional Development:

- may have fears of failure, not being liked, etc.
- may blame others or make up alibis to explain their own shortcomings or mistakes
- enjoy talking and hanging out with friends
- need reinforcement
- like to be a coach's helper
- feelings can be easily hurt

Cognitive/Thought Development:

- recall details with considerable accuracy.
- understand the concepts of cause and effect.
- enjoy putting on "shows" for parents and friends.

They're growing up!

You will find U-10 players willing to join in games that require a moderate degree of strategy. Soccer skill building is best achieved in non-competitive games, so try to avoid lecturing. And remember, they will take what you show or tell them literally, so be sure to say exactly what you mean. Children at this age are starting to be self-critical, so make sure you are always positive in your approach.

Traditionally, youth soccer is viewed from an adult perspective, using the 11-a-side game as a reference. We need to remember that children:

- must be treated as children, not as mini-adults.
- are essentially self-oriented and naturally relate only to a friend or two, not to groups of six or more.
- cannot sustain prolonged activity, and can function best with frequent rest periods.
- have a limited span of attention, so frequent activity changes are necessary.
- focus best when learning activities are fun.

Team Management

There are off-the-field responsibilities that affect the team and the players before they ever step on the field. These activities are referred to as team management.

Organizing the Team

This should be your first priority!

1. Develop a Team Goal.

“Players having FUN while learning about soccer” is a good base for a team goal. You, the parents and players can build on that foundation.

2. Develop a Coaching Philosophy.

You can base your personal coaching philosophy on the AYSO Coach Pledge (see Appendix C).

3. Conduct a Parents’ Meeting.

- Discuss AYSO’s Five Philosophies.
- Discuss the team’s goal(s).
- Explain your coaching philosophy.
 - You can begin by explaining short-sided soccer and why we play it.
 - Do not hesitate to share your experience or lack thereof as a coach.
- Educate parents briefly on the Laws of the Game specific to this age group. Distributing the ABC’s of AYSO (contact your Regional Commissioner for copies) is a great way to introduce new parents to soccer and AYSO.
- GET HELP – You will need:
 - Assistant Coaches
 - Team Manager: administrative duties such as phone calls, coordinating carpools, etc...

- Team Parent: develop snack schedule, plan social activities, etc...
- Set team policies regarding:
 - Equipment brought to practice by each player: water, bBall (properly inflated), shinguards, appropriate clothing.
- Attendance at practices and games.
- Player and parent behavior. You can discuss expectations of players and parents based on the Player and Parent Pledges (see Appendix C).

Equipment

A coach must always come to the field prepared. Below is a basic list of the minimum equipment you should have with you at practices and games:

- player medical release forms
- a basic first-aid kit
- water container (filled with water) and cups
- soccer balls
- an extra pair of shinguards
- a marking pen for labeling
- whistle

Your players should bring a soccer ball to every activity and must be wearing shinguards.

Practice

Preparation

You should always come to practice with a plan. Consider what technique you wish to work on and what activities you can use to achieve your goal. A written plan ensures smooth transitions, little down time and that you won't leave anything out.

Sample Practice Outline

- **Warm Up & Stretch** 10 Minutes
Keep it short, but do it. Young players must get used to warming up.
- **Introduce a Technique** 15 Minutes
Remember to utilize the methods of instruction discussed later in the manual.
- **Skill-Based Activity or Drill** 20 Minutes
Activities or drills that utilize the skill being taught is the most effective way for players to practice their skills.

Attempt to utilize at least two different activities or drills. This will ensure different types of experiences with the ball and keep the players from getting bored. (age-appropriate games can be found in the following section of this manual.)

- **Scrimmage** 15 Minutes
A scrimmage is a friendly game between two halves of your own team.

Split your players in half and allow them to play largely uninterrupted. This is the time you should utilize the **See, Show, Say** technique to determine what you should work on the following week.

You should stop play a couple of times to make technical and tactical points.

This is a perfect time to reinforce points about game knowledge. For example, as the ball goes out, remind them about when the ball is and is not in play.

A short scrimmage is a good way to end a practice with these age groups. It gives them a chance to utilize the skills and knowledge they are gaining each week.

Game Day Basics

This section will provide information on the steps to follow on the days leading up to the big game. Ensuring that your players are prepared and ready to play will ease your mind and keep everything running smoothly.

In Advance of Game Day

Remind parents of where and what time your team will meet.

Ask parents to have players arrive 30 minutes in advance in order to account for late arrivals and preparation time.

Game Day

Check Your Equipment Before You Leave Home: make sure you have everything you need, such as all the materials that were listed previously in this manual.

Before the Game

- Arrive early: at least 10 minutes before the time you expect your players.
- Gather team: preferably by the playing field; and in the shade, if it is hot.
- Conduct a warm-up.
- Talk: Excite them about getting ready to play.
 - Remind them to have fun and to do their best!
 - Review any important points you may determine necessary.
 - A quick reminder of the rules can be most beneficial.

After the Game

- Congratulate players on working hard.
- Individual kudos are great, but at this age, they must be given to all or none!
- Give a reminder of next practice or game (to the parents, not the players).

Warm Up

Keep it short, but do it. Young players must get used to warming up.

At this young age, player's muscles are not developed to a point where injuries will occur often, especially due to a lack of warming up and stretching. It is critical, however, that players be introduced to the concepts in order to prepare them for future competition in the years to come.

Warm Up the Muscles

Before stretching muscles and other parts, they must be sufficiently warmed up. This requires aerobic activities that get the heart pumping and breathing above a resting rate.

Ideally, these activities should include a ball and be related to the technique you will be working on during the activity.

Activities should not be speed oriented, but they should cause players to move.

Stretch the Muscles

After an aerobic warm up, players must stretch their muscles in order to avoid injury.

Stretch by slowly and evenly extending each muscle just to the point that the body naturally resists. Movements should be steady and gentle—static.

Training Overview for U-10 Players

Objectives of the game for the U-10 player

Attacking Objectives

- Score
- Maintain Possession
- Advance the Ball

Defending Objectives

- Prevent Scoring
- Regain Possession
- Delay the Opponents

Principles of play for the U-10 player

Attacking Principles

- Penetration
- Depth
- Width
- Mobility

Defending Principles

- Delay
- Depth
- Concentration
- Balance

Techniques

- Instep kick
- Dribbling
- Throw-in
- Inside of the foot–push pass
- Inside of the foot–ball control
- Tackling–front block
- Goalkeeping

Knowledge

-
- What is in and out of play
 - Corner kick
 - Goal kick
 - Penalty kick
 - Don't kick or trip others
 - Don't hold or push others
 - No handling of the ball

Objectives & Principles of the Game for U-10 Players

Objectives of the Game

Objective is defined in the dictionary as “a goal or a purpose.”

The Objectives of the Game at this age are simple:

- If your team has possession of the ball, your team is attacking, and your objectives are to **MAINTAIN POSSESSION, ADVANCE THE BALL and SCORE!**
- If the opposing team has possession of the ball, your team is defending, and your two objectives are to **DELAY THE OPPONENTS, STOP them from SCORING and REGAIN POSSESSION!**

Principles of Play

Principle is defined in the dictionary as “a fundamental origin or cause of something.” The Principles of Play are used to achieve the Objectives of the Game.

There are five attacking and five defending Principles of Play utilized in soccer; however for this very young age we will focus on four attacking principles and four defending principles.

Attacking Principles

Penetration: Advancing the ball past opposing players by dribbling, passing and shooting.

Depth: Supporting teammates by creating safe options for the player with the ball.

Width: Attacking on a broad front (players spread out) stretches the defense and creates space for players to advance.

Mobility: Players changing positions (filling in for one another when necessary) and moving off the ball creates numerical advantages and thereby attacking/scoring opportunities.

The attacking principles of penetration, width, depth, and mobility ultimately leads us to achieving our attacking objectives – to MAINTAIN POSSESSION, ADVANCE THE BALL and SCORE!

Defending Principles

Delay: To slow down the attack by closing gaps and denying space for the other team to work in. Once the attack is slowed, your team can attempt to take the ball back.

Depth: Supporting the player(s) challenging the ball in case they are beaten.

Concentration: Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area makes it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball.

Balance: Reading the attack and providing an equal or greater number of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.

The defending principles of delay, concentration, depth and balance ultimately lead us to achieving our defending objectives – to DELAY THE OPPONENTS, STOP SCORING and REGAIN POSSESSION!

Teaching Methods

This section covers the most comprehensive and difficult aspect of coaching to master—how to develop player skills. Covered first are methods for instructing your players, followed by an explanation and discussion of the techniques necessary to perform the skills.

P. I. E. Positive Instruction & Encouragement

This concept is so important to AYSO's coaching philosophy, it was written into the National Rules and Regulations. Positive Instruction and Encouragement should always be used to instruct and motivate your players. They will respond better to you and it will help keep AYSO a happy, positive place for all.

Say, Show, Do and Review

This method is effective for teaching any age group. Simply follow these four steps for the technique you are working on with you team:

Say: Explain the skill or technique.

Show: Demonstrate the skill or technique.

Do: Have players perform the skill or technique.

Review: Review, correct and confirm proper technique.

Remember to keep explanations and demonstrations brief and that young children will only want to work on the same thing for a short period of time.

See, Show, Say Method

This process can be used in conjunction with the Say, Show, Do and Review method described above. Once you have taught the technique, you can observe and correct your players as described below.

See

Coaches must learn to be observers of their players' performances, looking to see if the skills, tactics and strategies they have learned are being properly utilized and executed on the field.

Observation is a silent activity. Instead of trying to coach or correct immediately, let them play uninterrupted for a time while taking notes:

- Make notes (preferably written) on what your players do.
- Make notes on the positive outcomes.
- Make a note (ONE note) on how they can improve.

Through the act of seeing (without speaking or directing), you can focus on analyzing the players and their performance. This analysis is the basis for the next step.

Show

Showing consists of two complementary parts: description and demonstration.

Description involves briefly telling the players what you saw in terms of their execution; then provide them with attainable modifications to correct one or two deficits. This is called analysis and application. Don't try to describe every error or apply every remedy.

Demonstration comes after the description of what you saw, and involves showing the players what modifications they can employ to improve their technique most effectively. If you are unable to demonstrate the technique yourself, utilize a player who can.

Say

Once all of these steps have been followed, if the players perform the skill, tactic, or strategy effectively, it's time to let them know! Say it out loud, so everyone can hear.

That's the whole thing: See, Show, Say using Positive Instruction and Encouragement.

Techniques for U-10 Players

This section covers the various techniques you can teach to your players. The better grasp you have of the techniques, the better you will be able to teach them to your players. Note: all techniques should be practiced with both feet to ensure players do not develop a “strong foot” and a “weak foot.”

Dribbling

Dribbling is the art of using the feet to advance the ball, on the ground, under control, while moving. The two primary reasons to use dribbling skill are:

- to move the ball into a better position on the field.
- to retain possession of the ball.

Dribbling is one of the ways to achieve penetration, the Attacking Principle of Play for this age group.

The most important element of dribbling is developing a “feel” or “touch” for the ball with the feet... BOTH OF THEM. The key is then to keep the ball close by touching it softly.

Dribbling Basics

- Use all major surfaces of the foot.
- Knees should be slightly bent and body leaning slightly over the ball for balance.

- Players should play with their head up, enabling them to see the field as well as the ball by utilizing peripheral vision as their ability progresses.
- Ball should be kept close.
 - Encourage players to touch the ball softly.
 - Close control of the ball should be emphasized.
 - Players should attempt to touch the ball every other step (or so).
 - Ball should never be more than a step or two away.

Common Errors and Corrections

E Ball is played too far ahead.

C Have players move slower and remind them to the touch ball softer.

E Player does not look up from ball.

C Remind players to look up, then run activity requiring players to look up while dribbling.

E Player re-positions entire body behind ball before touching.

C Encourage player to use motion of foot to direct ball, instead of re-positioning their body.

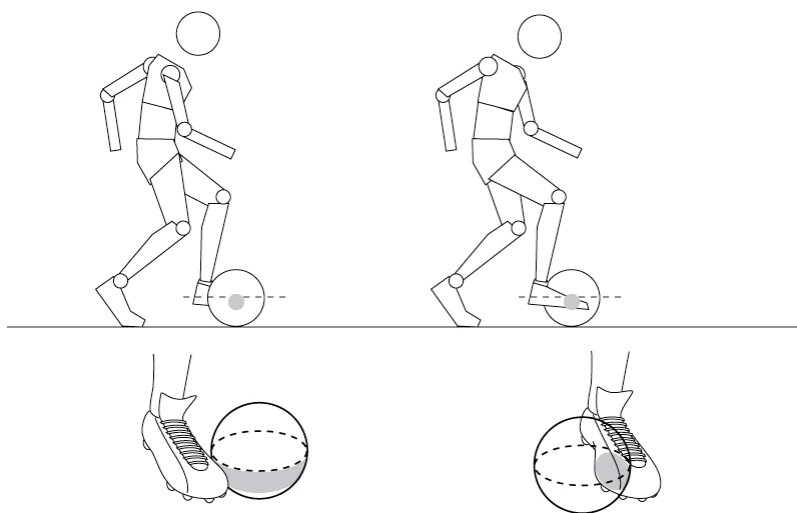
Dribbling Build Up

Stop the Ball: Players at this age should be able to stop the ball by putting their foot on top of it.

- Balance on plant foot (foot on the ground), while keeping play foot (foot on the ball) firmly on top of the ball.
- Step past the ball with plant foot before stepping on it, keeping in mind the speed at which the ball is rolling.

Turn the Ball: Learning to change direction while dribbling is critical in soccer and should be introduced at this age level.

- Use motion of foot to direct the ball.
- Accelerate after changing direction.



Instep Kick

The instep kick is used to kick the ball and, as players get older, for long passes and shots on goal.

Instep Kick – Basics

Prepare Plant Leg (supporting, non-kicking foot)

- Place support foot next to the ball pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms out to sides for balance.

Prepare Striking (kicking) Leg

- Bend knee (cock lower leg).
- Withdraw leg straight back at hip.
- Lock ankle back and down with toes pointed down.

Striking Movement

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Set plant knee over ball (eye-knee-ball in line).
- Move thigh of striking leg forward (whip action).
- Strike the center of the ball on the instep (“laces” of the shoes).
- Follow through—move leg straight through toward target:
 - Pull leg straight through while maintaining balance.
 - Lower body as leg rises.
 - Follow through and lift knee.
 - Step out of the kick.

Instep Kick – Coaching Points

Before having players strike the ball:

- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.



Next, have a parent sit down with legs out in front and secure ball with feet. Have each player stand with plant foot in proper position and strike lightly until they begin to hit the ball solidly (properly).

Instep Kick – Common Errors And Corrections

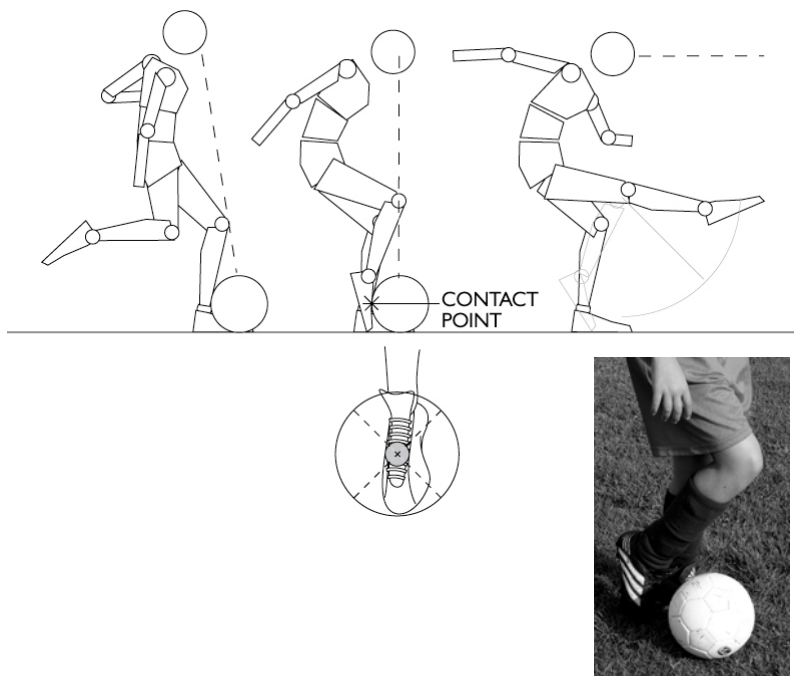
- E Plant foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.
- C Review proper technique with player(s).

- E Knee(s) are locked, not bent.
- C Review proper technique with player(s).

- E Ankle is not locked and toes are not pointed.
- C Lock ankle, point toes.

- E Ball is stabbed or jabbed.
- C Encourage player to follow through.

- E Leg is swung across the body instead of toward the target.
- C Encourage player to withdraw leg straight back and follow through straight toward target.



Throw-In

A throw-in is used to restart the game after the entire ball has crossed the touch line, whether on the ground or in the air.

Throw-In – Basics

To execute a proper throw-in, the player must:

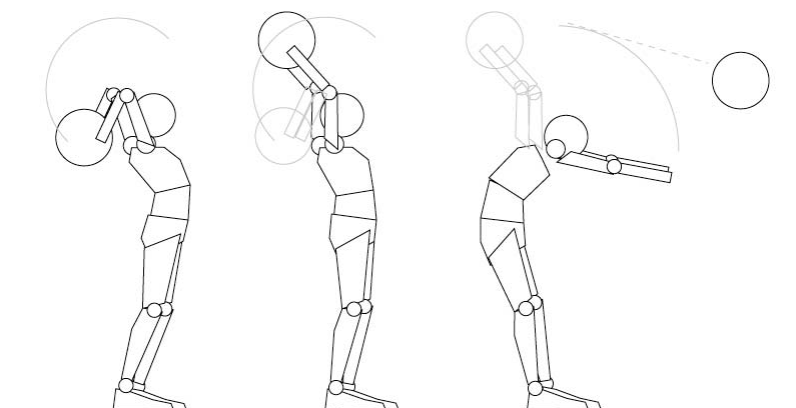
- Face the field of play.
- Have part of each foot on the ground, either on or behind the touchline when the ball is released.
- Use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion.
- Hold the ball evenly in both hands (hands should be slightly apart).
- Feet must be kept on the ground until ball is released.

Throw-In – Coaching Points

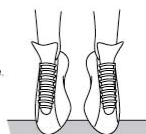
- The thrower may not play the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.
- Your team should try to maintain possession when executing a throw-in.
- Get the parents involved! Have each one of your players execute a throw-in by making a throw-in to a parent.
- Have each player continue to make throw-ins while you circulate and correct.

Throw-In – Common Errors And Corrections

- | | |
|---|---|
| E | Foot/feet come off ground during throw. |
| C | Have players keep their feet together with knees bent and hold their feet down until they develop the feeling of throwing without lifting their feet. |
| E | Ball slips out of grasp. |
| C | If player's hands are too small, instruct them to spread hands out until they have a solid grasp. |



Make sure your feet stay on the ground ON OR BEHIND the touchline.



Inside of the Foot – Push Pass

This technique is used to advance the ball or to maintain possession by passing to a teammate.

Inside of Foot-Push Pass – Basics

Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to the ball (toe should not be past ball) pointed in general direction of target (distance from ball will depend on height of the player).
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms for balance.

Prepare Action Leg

- Draw leg back from hip.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 90 degrees outward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.
- Inside of foot should face the general direction of target.

Striking Movement

- Body should be over the ball, moving forward.
- Keep eyes on ball.
- Move leg straight forward.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot.
 - Sole of foot should be off the ground with toe pointed slightly up, and perpendicular to ball (form “T” or “L” with feet).
- Follow through:
 - Pull leg straight through in general direction of target while maintaining balance.
 - Lower body as leg rises.
 - Follow through and lift knee.
 - Step out of the kick.

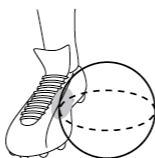
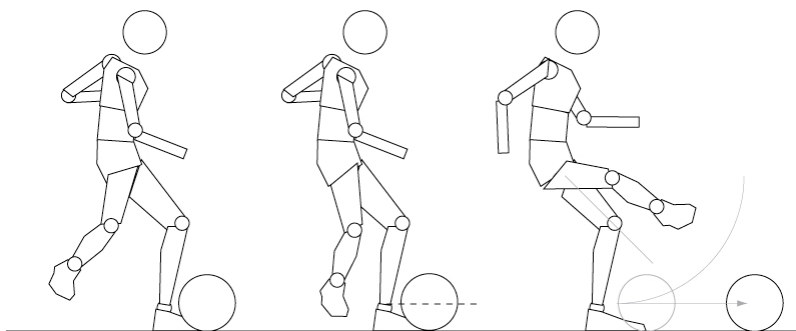
Inside of Foot-Push Pass – Coaching Points

Before having players strike the ball:

- Have them practice planting their foot in the proper place.
- Have them practice swinging their leg and foot straight back and forth, ensuring proper body and leg movement.

Inside of Foot-Push Pass – Common Errors & Corrections

- E Plant foot is too far in front, behind or away from ball and/or not pointed in general direction of target.
- E Knee(s) are locked, not bent.
- E Ankle is not locked and sole of foot is not parallel to ground and/or facing general direction of target.
- C To correct any of these errors, refer to picture and description, review proper technique with player(s).



Inside of the Foot – Ball Control

This technique is used to control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

Inside of Foot-Ball Control – Basics

Prepare Plant Leg

- Place support foot next to path of the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Put weight on plant leg.

Prepare Control Leg

- Leg forward.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 90 degrees out.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed up to ensure solid contact point.
- Raise foot off the ground and perpendicular to ball.

Controlling Movement

- Keep eyes on the ball.
- Contact center of the ball with center of inside of the foot (in curve/arch).
- Withdraw action leg straight back as contact is made in order to cushion the ball.
- Prepare ball for your next move—pass, dribble, or shoot.

Inside of Foot-Ball Control – Common Errors & Corrections

E Player misses the ball.

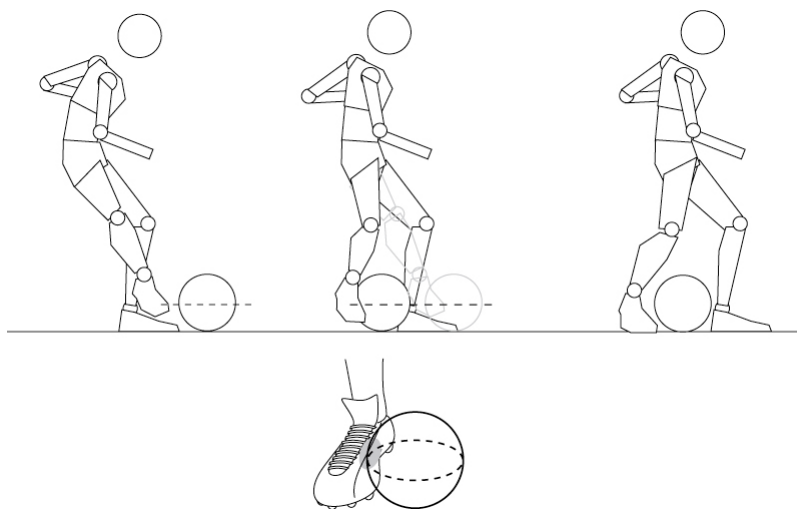
C Keep eyes on the ball and move into its path.

E Ball rolls over the controlling foot.

C Lock the ankle and point toe slightly up.

E Ball bounces off the controlling foot.

C Draw the controlling leg back as the ball arrives.



Tackling – Front Block

Tackling is used to take the ball away from an opponent or to maintain possession.

Tackling – Basics

Prepare Plant Leg (supporting, non-tackling foot)

- Place support foot even with and next to the ball.
- Bend knee slightly.
- All weight should be on plant foot.
- Use arms for balance.

Prepare Tackling Leg

- Draw leg back from hip.
- Bend knee slightly.
- Rotate leg at hip 45 degrees outward.
- Lock ankle with toe pointed slightly up.

Tackle

- Keep eyes on the ball.
- Move tackling leg straight forward.
- Lower body and lean slightly forward.
- Strike at the center of the ball with the inside of the foot and block through the ball with your body weight.

Follow through

- Keep foot behind the ball with body lowered.
- Win the ball from opponent.
- Dribble away or pass the ball to a teammate.

Tackling – Common Errors and Corrections

Error: Incorrect placement of the plant foot puts the plant foot too far away causing the tackler to reach for the ball and lose it.

Correction: Review technique and encourage player to place plant foot closer to ball.

Error: Ankle is not locked up and ball “dribbles” off the foot.

Correction: Lock toe up on the tackling foot.

Error: Tackling movement and follow through is tentative, causing player to miss and/or lose the ball.

Correction: Build this technique up slowly, beginning with “soft” tackles and progressing to “harder” tackles as player becomes more comfortable with the technique.



Goalkeeping

Goalkeeper is a unique and exciting position. Goalkeepers are the only players on the field that are allowed to use their hands to play the ball, so long as they are within their own penalty area. They are the last line of defense when the other team is attacking and the first line of attack once they possess the ball.

At this age, one player should not be designated as your team's only goalkeeper. Allow everyone who wants to try playing keeper a chance, but do not force any player to play keeper if they are reluctant to do so.

Goalkeeping Basics: Receiving the Ball

Body Position

- Stand on balls of feet with knees slightly bent.
- Move body in line with ball when shot is taken.
- Always receive ball with body behind ball (between ball and goal).

Hand Position

- Hands should be up at the side at approximately waist level, facing the field of play before the shot is taken.
- When receiving the ball, hands should be close together behind the ball:
 - The “W” is formed by touching the thumbs together with fingers extended to either side (“butterfly”). It is utilized for receiving high balls – chest level and above.
 - The “M” is formed by touching the little (“pinky”) fingers together and spreading the fingers and thumbs to either side. It is utilized for receiving low balls – waist level and below.

Bending for Ground Balls

- Keep legs together.
- Bend at the waist.
- Scoop up ball with hands in the “M” position.
- Let ball run over hands and up arms.
- Gather ball to chest.
- Stand up straight.

Goalkeeping Basics: Distributing the Ball

The goalkeeper starts the attack by putting the ball back into play. Maintaining possession is the prime objective when distributing the ball, requiring an accurate delivery to a teammate. Distance is secondary.

There are two primary methods of distribution: throws and kicks.

Throws

- Underhand roll – “bowling” - quick, short and accurate, should not bounce.
- Overhand – “baseball” - longer distance, arrives quickly after one or two bounces.
- Overhand – “arc/sling” - most distance but least accuracy; may take too much time, allowing for interception.



Kicks

- Volley (“punt”) - greatest distance, but not very accurate; can relieve pressure or create a numerical advantage.
- Volley is performed by holding the ball in the hands and kicking it with the instep before it hits the ground.



Training Games for U-10 Players

This section will provide you with training games recommended by the AYSO National Coaching Commission to help the players practice their skills. The games are grouped according to the skill that they will most effectively help to teach.

“The game itself is the teacher!”

Despite all of the coaching techniques that can be utilized, nothing will ever teach young players more effectively than just letting them play.

You can be creative with the names of the games and modify them. Change the speed, space, and opposition as you and your players begin to feel comfortable with them.

Shoot for the Shoes

Skill: Throw-In

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 team

Equipment: 20 or more cones to mark the grid, one ball for each player.

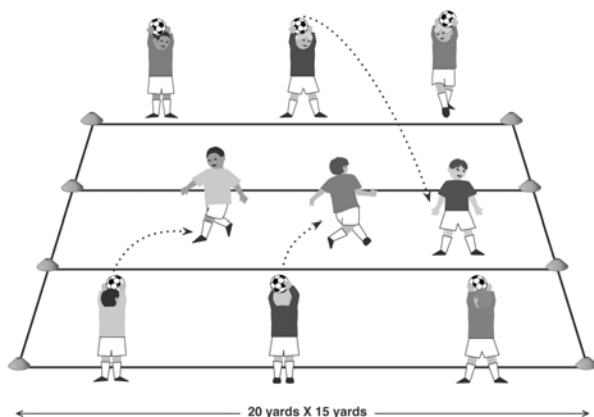
Grid Requirement: 15 X 20 yard grid

Organization: Create a 15 X 20 yard grid marked with cones. Create three groups of three players (depending on the number of players on the team). Using cones; mark a rectangular grid 15 X 20 yards, dividing the grid into three zones. Place one group of players at the top of the grid, each with a soccer ball (throwers), one team in the center area of the grid (targets), and the last group on the other end of the grid (throwers).

How The Game Is Played: The coach yells, “go”. Throwers attempt to hit targets in the feet (for sure below the waist). All throw-ins must be legal. Targets can move anyplace in the central grid. Players on the opposite end collect balls not hitting a target. A target player who is hit with a legally thrown ball returns the ball to one of the throwers and play continues. One (1) point for each hit below the waist, deduct a point for illegal throw, first team to ten (10) wins. Play three rounds.

Deviations:

None



Shooting Gallery

Skill: Passing/Shooting

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 team

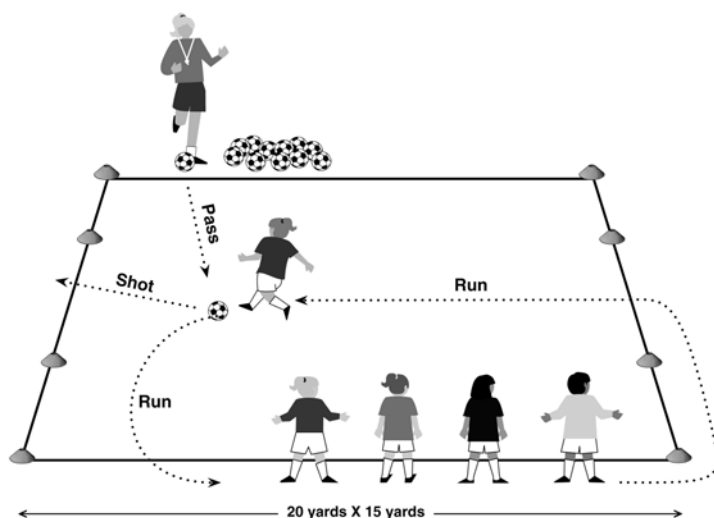
Equipment: Ten or more cones to mark grid, a lot of soccer balls (at least two per player).

Grid Requirement: 15 X 20 yard grid

Organization: Create a 15 X 20 yard grid marked with cones. Mark two goals with cones on each goal line. The coach will be located on the opposite touch line from the players with a good supply of soccer balls.

How The Game Is Played: The coach will call the name of the first player in line, when the name is called the player will run between the near two cones, receive a pass from the coach so the player can shoot on goal, and return to end of the line.

Deviations: Coach and players will switch sides. Players should try to one touch the shot on goal. Have players use their left and right foot.



My Buddy

Skill: Passing

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 team

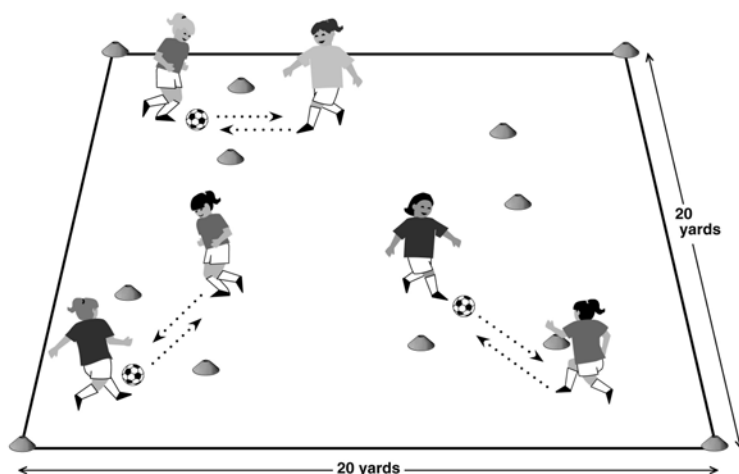
Equipment: 12 or more cones to mark grid and goals. Group players in pairs; one ball for every pair.

Grid Requirement: 20 X 20 yard grid

Organization: Create a 20 X 20 yard grid marked with cones. Create four or five goals that are arbitrarily placed in the grid. Group players in pairs; one ball for every pair.

How The Game Is Played: Both players in the pair will move to a goal with one of the players dribbling to one of the goals in the grid. When the pair gets to a goal they then pass the ball through the goal three times to score a goal. Pairs move throughout the area until they have completed all the goals in the grid. If another pair is at a goal, players must go to a goal that is vacant.

Deviations: Left foot passing only, right foot passing only.



Shooting Skunks

Skill: Dribbling, Passing, Attacking and Defending

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

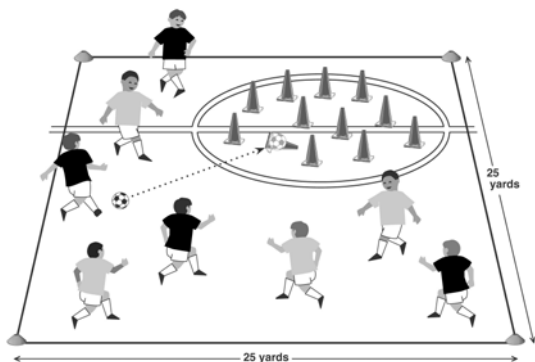
Equipment: Four or more pro cones to mark the grid with, 10 or so tall cones to act as skunks and one soccer ball.

Grid Requirement: 25 X 25 yard grid with the center circle of a field some place in the grid.

Organization: Create a 25 X 25 yard grid marked with pro cones, with the center circle of the field located within the grid. Evenly distribute 12 or so tall cones in the center circle. Divide the team into two equal groups. The coach will decide which team will have the ball first, outside the center circle but within the grid.

How The Game Is Played:

The coach will decide which team will have the ball first. The coach will yell, "go." Team with the ball is on the attack, while the other team defends. If the defenders gain



possession of the ball, they are now on the attack. Points are scored by shooting the ball into the center circle and knocking down one or more of the tall cones (one point for each cone knocked down). Players are not permitted to enter the center circle except to get a stopped ball. The team with most points wins. Play the game three times.

Deviations: Play one touch, or two touch only. Allow only push pass or instep kick. Think about putting one team in pennies if you get confused.

Mad House

Skill: Dribbling, Passing, Attacking and Defending

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

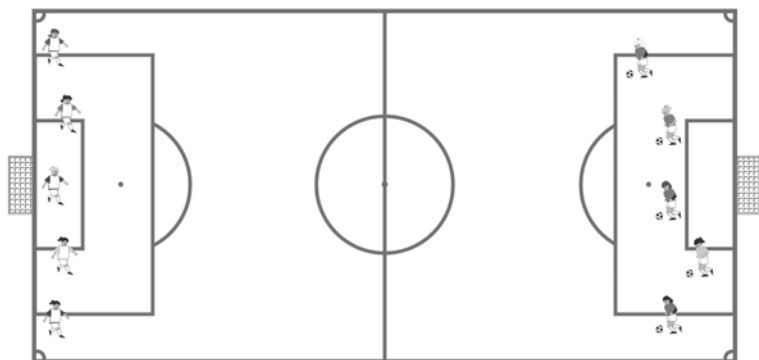
Equipment: One soccer ball per player and a set of pennies

Grid Requirement: Full size U-10 soccer field

Organization: Using a full size U-10 soccer field, divide the team into two equal groups, one of which will wear the pennies. Place one group on one goal line with a soccer ball at their feet and the other group on the other goal line. The coach will decide which group will have the ball first.

How The Game Is Played: The coach will decide which team will have the ball first. The coach will yell, “go.” Group with the ball is on the attack the other group defends. Points are scored by shooting the ball into the goal at the opposite end of the field. If the defending group gets possession of a ball they go on the attack and try to score in the other teams goal. Group that scores the most wins. Play the game four times.

Deviations: Allow each player to have a ball.



You and Me (1v1)

Skill: Dribbling, Attacking and Defending

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 team

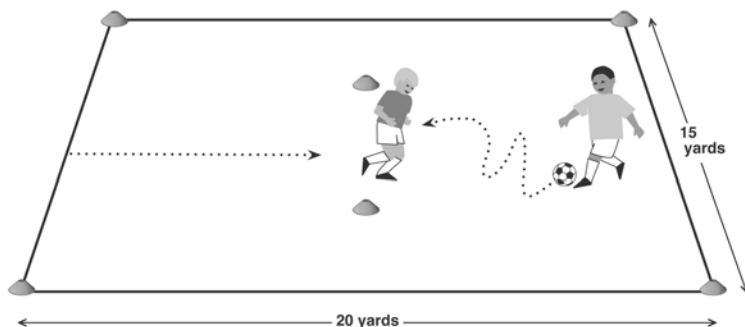
Equipment: Eight or more cones to mark the grid, two or three soccer balls.

Grid Requirement: 15 X 20 yard grid

Organization: Create a 15 X 20 yard grid marked with cones and create a goal with cones on the center point of the grid. Group players into pairs. Place one player from each pair, standing anyplace on the end lines.

How The Game Is Played: The coach directs which player has the ball first. The coach yells, “go.” Player with the ball is on the attack, while the second player defends. Attacker tries to beat the defender by dribbling past the defender through the goal. If the defender gains possession, she attempts to dribble through the goal. Play is stopped when a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. A point is scored every time a ball is dribbled through the goal. First player with three points wins.

Deviations: Coach can play the ball to the center of the grid. Players can pass the ball between the goal for a point.



The Web

Skill: Dribbling/Fitness

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

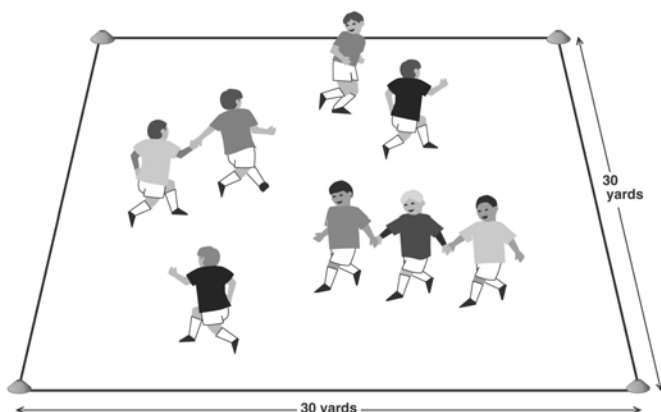
Equipment: Four or more cones to mark the grid.

Grid Requirement: A 30 X 30 yard grid

Organization: Using cones layout a 30 X 30 yard grid. All players are within the grid. The coach will designate two players to be “it” and position them outside of the grid. All other players are called “moths.”

How The Game Is Played: The coach yells “Build the Web” (this means go). The “it” players enter the grid to chase after the “moths.” A “moth” that is tagged must join hands with the player who tagged him or her to form a chain. The last “moth” becomes “super moth.”

Deviations: This is a very good warm-up activity. Have all moths dribbling trying to avoid being tagged.



The Shadow

Skill: Dribbling

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

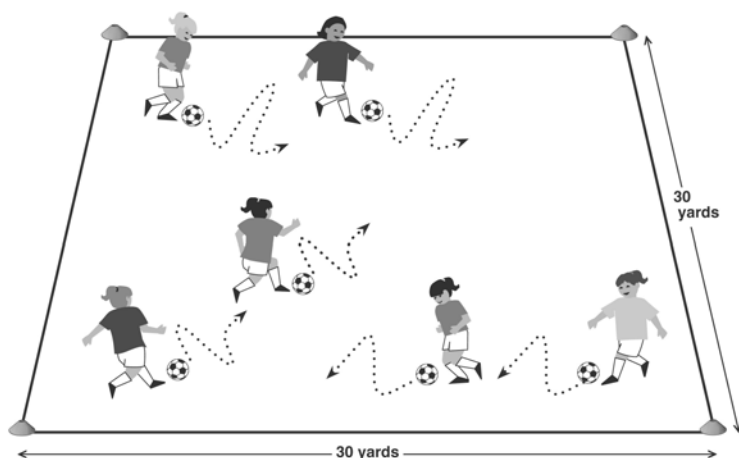
Equipment: One soccer ball per player and four or more cones to mark the grid.

Grid Requirement: A 30 X 30 yard grid

Organization: Using cones, lay out a 30 X 30 yard grid. Divide the team into pairs. All players are within the grid, with one ball per player.

How The Game Is Played: Players begin to move in any direction throughout the grid, with one partner leading and the other closely following. The trailing player tries to imitate the dribbling movements of the lead player. Coach will blow his or her whistle after about 20 to 30 seconds. The leader then becomes the follower.

Deviations: This is a very good warm-up activity.



The Race

Skill: Dribbling/Passing

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

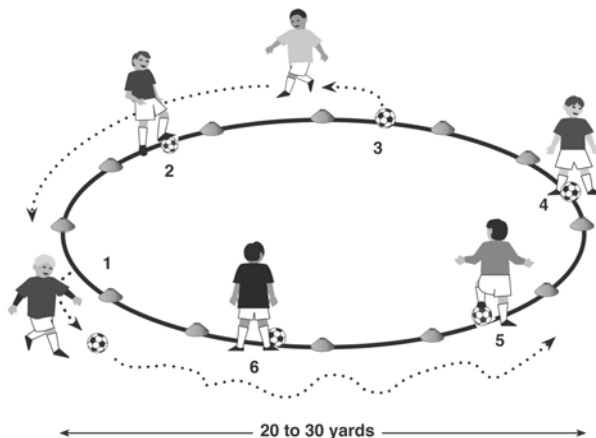
Equipment: 12 or more cones to mark the grid (circle) and one soccer ball per player.

Grid Requirement: A circle 20 to 30 yards in diameter.

Organization: Using cones, lay out a circle 20 to 30 yards in diameter. Number all players 1 – 10 (depending on the number of players at practice). Position all players on the perimeter of the circle.

How The Game Is Played: The coach will call a number and that numbered player will immediately start dribbling counter clockwise around the grid. The second player to the left of the one whose number was called will leave his or her ball in place and will immediately pursue the player that was called, trying to tag the called player before he or she reaches his/her starting position. (For example, if the number one is called, one dribbles and three chases.)

Deviations: Change the size of the circle as needed. Change the chaser to be three numbers removed from the player that was called if needed to gain required results. Have both players dribble.



Takeovers

Skill: Dribbling and Takeovers

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

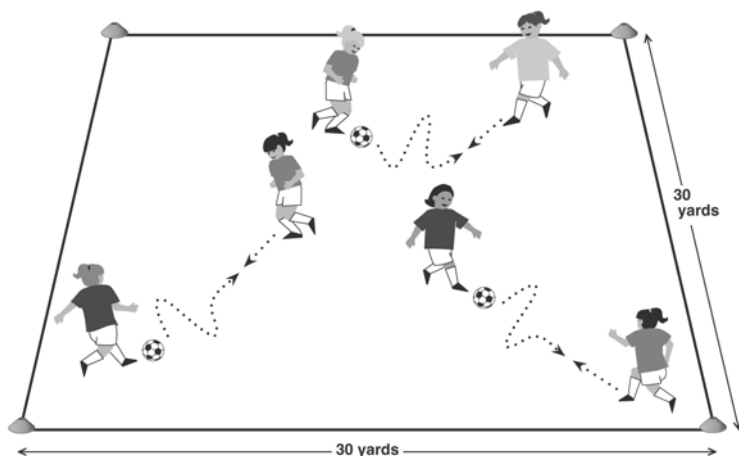
Equipment: One soccer ball per pair of players and four cones to mark the grid.

Grid Requirement: A 30 X 30 yard grid

Organization: Using cones, lay out a 30 X 30 yard grid. All players are within the grid, with one ball for each two players.

How The Game Is Played: All players begin to move in any direction throughout the grid. Half of the players will have a ball at their feet and all players will be moving at half-speed. When the coach shouts “takeover,” the players with the ball will exchange possession of the ball with one of the players without a ball, using good takeover technique. Coach should shout “takeover” about every 10 or 15 seconds.

Deviations: Add a pass just before the takeover.



Slalom Shooting

Skill: Dribbling and Shooting

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

Equipment: One soccer ball per player plus six additional balls, some type of goal, four cones to mark a grid and 10 pro cones to set a slalom course.

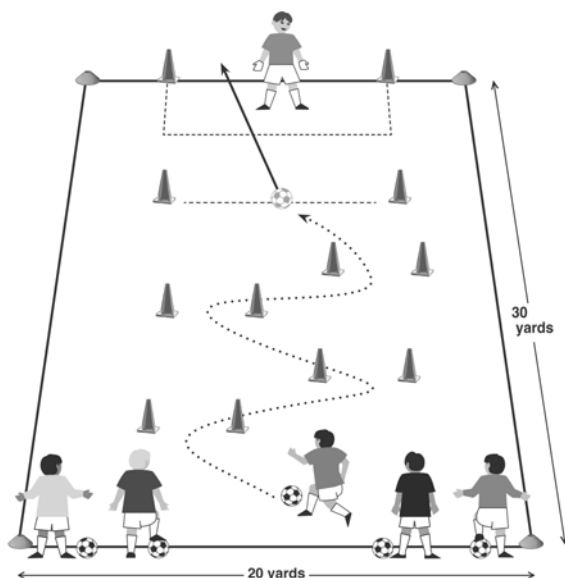
Grid Requirement: A 30 X 20 yard grid

Organization: Using cones, lay out a 30 X 20 yard grid with some type of goal. Shooters are at the opposite from the goal. Each shooter has a ball and a keeper is placed in the goal. Lay five pairs of cones between the endline in a slalom style with the last pair of cones about eight yards from the goal.

How The Game Is Played: Each shooter in turn dribbles through the slalom course and must shoot when he arrives at the last set of cones. As soon as the shot is taken, the next shooter starts. The shooter and the keeper exchange places. Every shooter becomes the keeper. First player to score five goals wins.

Deviations:

Shoot with the right or the left foot only.



Musical Balls

Skill: Dribbling

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

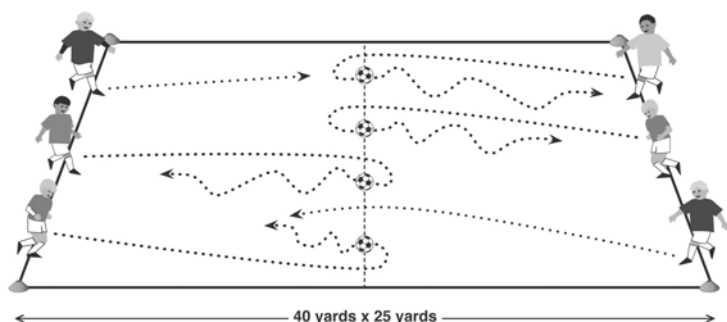
Equipment: 6–8 soccer balls and six cones

Grid Requirement: A 25 X 40 yard grid

Organization: Using cones, lay out a 25 X 40 yard grid, divided by a midline. Divide the team into two equal groups and place one group on each endline; facing the center of the grid. Place balls along the midline (two fewer than the number of players).

How The Game Is Played: The coach will yell, “go.” Players from both sides rush to the midline and compete for possession of a ball and attempt to return to their endline by dribbling. The players who did not get a ball will try to steal a ball from someone from the other team and return it to their endline. Game is over when all the balls have been dribbled and are stopped on an end line. Play the game five times.

Deviations: Keep reducing the number of balls and players (those who didn't get a ball) so that the last round is 1 v 1 with one ball on the midline.



Moving Marbles

Skill: Dribbling/Passing

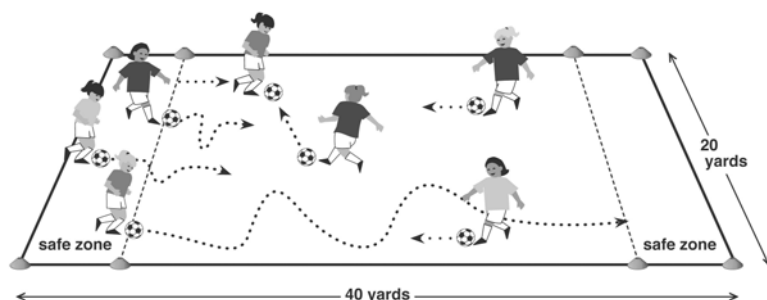
Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

Equipment: Eight or more cones to mark the grid.

Grid Requirement: A 20 X 40 yard grid

Organization: Using cones, lay out a 20 X 40 yard grid with a five-yard “Safe Zone” at each end. Place three (3) shooters in the center of the grid with a ball at their feet. All remaining players, each with a ball, are located in one of the “Safe Zones.”

How The Game Is Played: Players in the “Safe Zone” try to dribble the length of the grid to the other “Safe Zone.” The Shooters can prevent dribblers from reaching the other “Safe Zone” by knocking their ball out of the grid with a passed ball. After a player’s ball is knocked out of the grid they become a shooter. Last player remaining wins. Players dribble between “Safe Zones” until one player remains.



Find the Number

Skill: Dribbling

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 Team

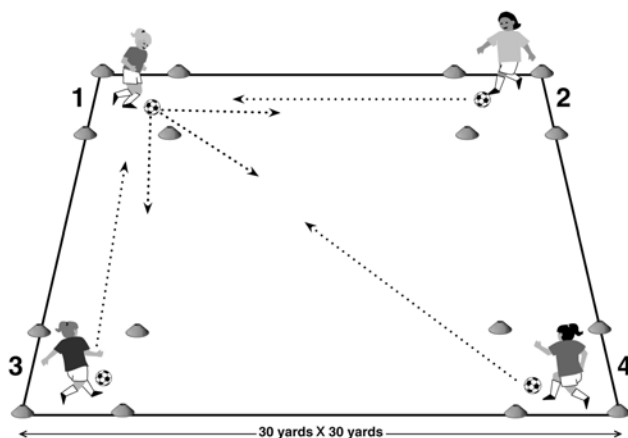
Equipment: 12 or more cones to mark a grid and one soccer ball per player.

Grid Requirement: A 30 X 30 yard grid with 5 X 5 yard grids in each corner of the large grid.

Organization: Using cones, lay out a 30 X 30 yard grid with 5 X 5 yard grids in each corner of the large grid. Place one or two players (depending on the number of players you have at practice) in one of the corner grids, each with a soccer ball.

How The Game Is Played: The coach will designate a number 1–4 for each of the small grids. Each small grid will have at least one player who will be randomly dribbling within the grid. The coach will yell a number 1–4 and all players will dribble as fast as they can to the grid number that was called. The player who was playing in the grid that was called must dribble to any one of the three grids that are now empty. First player to the new grid wins. The coach, assigning starting grids for all players, restarts game.

Deviations: None



You and Me (1v1)

Skill: Dribbling, Attacking and Defending

Number Of Players Required: Full U-10 team

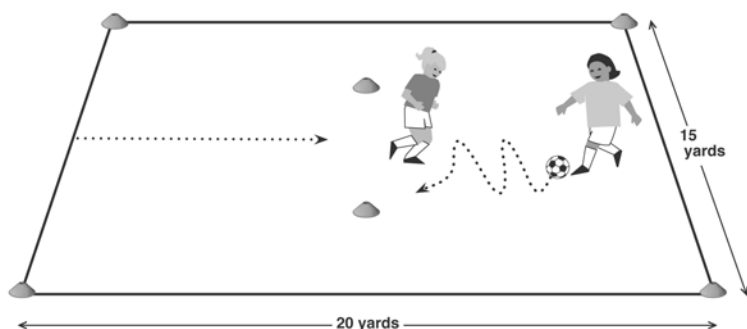
Equipment: Six or more cones to mark the grid, two or three soccer balls.

Grid Requirement: 15 X 20 yard grid

Organization: Create a 15 X 20 yard grid marked with cones and create a goal with cones on the center point of the grid. Group players into pairs, placing one player from each pair any place on the end lines.

How The Game Is Played: Coach will direct which player has the ball first. The coach will yell, “go.” Player with the ball is on the attack, while the second player defends. Attacker tries to beat the defender by dribbling past the defender through the goal. If the defender gains possession she attempts to dribble through her goal. Play is stopped when a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. A point is scored every time a ball is dribbled through the goal. First player with three points wins.

Deviations: Coach can play the ball to the center of the grid. Players can pass the ball between the goal for a point.



Appendix A: Under-10 Program Guidelines

Field

- **Dimensions:** 80 yards long, 40 yards wide.
- **Markings:** Distinctive lines recommended.
 - Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.
 - Center circle with an eight-yard radius in the center of the field.
 - Corner arcs with a one-yard radius at each corner of the field.
 - Goal area in front of each goal measuring 6 x 15 yards.
 - Penalty area in front of each goal measuring 14 x 30 yards.
 - Penalty mark ten yards from the goal line.
 - Penalty arc extending in a eight-yard radius from the penalty mark.
- **Goals:** Maximum seven feet high and seven yards wide.

Ball

- Size 4

Players

- **Number:** Seven per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper. Ten maximum on roster.
- **Substitutions:** Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.
- **Playing time:** Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.
- **Teams:** Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Players' Equipment

Footwear: Soccer shoes, tennis shoes or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.

Shinguards: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Duration of Game

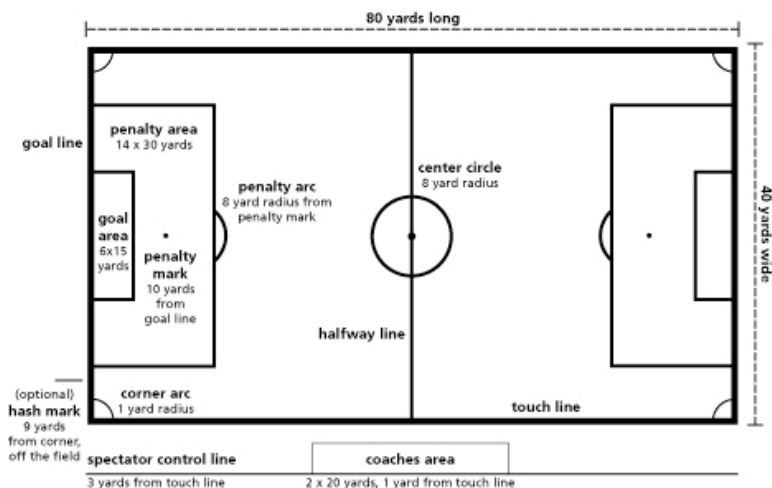
- Four 12.5-minute periods
- Halftime break of 5–10 minutes.

Referee

AYSO-certified regional referees or higher are required for U-10 and older games. Be a thinking referee who only interferes with play when necessary for the safety of the players and the good of the game. The game belongs to the players.

Assistant Referees/Club Linesmen:

If available, qualified assistant referees who have completed Assistant Referee Certification may be used to assist the referee. This is an opportunity for new assistant referees to begin getting experience. If qualified assistant referees are not available, club linesmen (untrained volunteers who may be affiliated with one of the teams/clubs) may be recruited from the spectators to assist the referee with calling the ball in and out of play only. This is an opportunity for parents to get involved.



Appendix B: Knowledge of the U-10 game

The Start of Play

To start the first and second halves and following each goal in all age group games, play is started or restarted with a kick-off in the center of the field. A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Following a goal, the team scored upon kicks off.

The Kick-off

The kick-off is taken from the center of the field with each team in their own half and the team not kicking off at least eight yards from the ball.

Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is out of play in all age group games when it completely crosses the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air.

Method of Scoring

A goal, in all age group games, is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal.

Fouls

For U-10 and older games, all fouls identified in Law 12 apply. Refer to the Laws of the Game for more information. Although there is now the potential for more fouls, referees still try to only stop play for deliberate breaches of the Law that are not trifling or doubtful. The goal is to maximize playing time and minimize unneeded stoppages.

Misconduct

Misconduct should still be relatively rare in U-10 games. Coaches at all levels of play have the option of calling players to the touchline to receive a few words of “positive instruction” concerning

the player's behavior. A coach also has the option of telling a player to ask the referee for permission to leave the field and then, after getting the player under control, having the player request permission to reenter the game. The referee should permit these requests. However, substitution is not allowed for the player leaving the field in this situation.

Free Kicks

Free kicks, in U-10 and older games, may be either direct (may score directly) or indirect (must be touched or played by another player before a goal can be scored). Opponents must be at least eight yards from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks in U-10 games. Free kicks awarded the attacking team inside the defending team's goal area are to be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line parallel to the goal line. Refer to the Laws of the Game for further details.

Penalty Kicks

Penalty kicks may be awarded in U-10 and older games. A penalty kick results from a player committing one of the ten direct free kick fouls inside his or her own penalty area. The penalty kick is taken from the penalty mark with all other players outside the penalty area except for the opposing goalkeeper. Refer to the Laws of the Game for further details.

Throw-in

Second chances are not given for improper throw-ins for U-10 and older players. An improper throw-in results in a throw-in for the opposing team. The referee, in an attempt to keep the game moving and to minimize unnecessary interruptions, must judge if indeed the throw-in violated the spirit of the throw-in Law, or if the violation was trifling and not worthy of stopping play.

Goal Kick

A goal kick is awarded the opposing team when the attacking team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area. The ball is not in play and cannot be touched or played by either team until it has been kicked beyond the penalty area in U-10 and older games. The goal kick is retaken if the ball is touched or played by either team before leaving the penalty area.

Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded the opposing team when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least eight yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in U-10 games. Refer to the Laws of the Game for further details.

Offside

The offside Law applies in U-10 and older games. Offside is a simple Law easily misunderstood by those new to the game. Refer to the Laws of the Game for more information regarding the offside Law.

Appendix C: Pledges

AYSO Coach Pledge:

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Enthusiastically support and practice the AYSO Philosophies of: Everyone Plays, Open Registration, Balanced Teams, Positive Coaching and Good Sportsmanship.
2. Stay informed about sound principles of coaching and child development.
3. Respect the game and know the Laws.
4. Emphasize to my players that they must abide by the Laws of the Game at all times.
5. Develop a true respect for the judgment of all referees.
6. Develop a team respect for the ability of our opponents.
7. Ensure a safe environment for my players.
8. Never yell at or ridicule a player.
9. Always set a good example.
10. Remember that soccer is a game and all games should be fun.

AYSO Player Pledge:

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Play for the sake of playing a game, not just to please a parent or coach.
2. Always give my best effort and work as hard for my teammates as I do for myself.
3. Treat all players as I would like to be treated.
4. Be a team player and not show off or hog the ball.
5. Be a good sport and acknowledge good plays whether they are made by my team or my opponents.
6. Abide by the Laws of the Game.
7. Cooperate with my coaches, teammates, opponents and the referee.
8. Never argue with or complain about referee calls or decisions.
9. Control my temper when I feel I have been wronged.
10. Remember that the object of the game is to win, but the goal is to enjoy myself.

AYSO Parent Pledge:

In my words and action, I pledge to:

1. Attend and participate in team parent meetings.
2. Be on time or early when dropping off or picking up my child for a practice or game.
3. Ensure my child is supported and encouraged by family or loved ones at games.

4. Encourage my child to have fun and keep sport in its proper perspective.
5. Define winning for my child as doing his/her very best.
6. Endeavor to learn the Laws (rules) of soccer and support the efforts of referees.
7. Honor the game and show respect for all involved including coaches, players, opponents, spectators and referees.
8. Applaud and encourage players from both teams and not yell out instructions.
9. Not make negative comments about the game, coaches, referees or players in my child's presence.
10. Encourage others to refrain from negative or abusive sideline behavior.

Appendix D: VIP

Integrating the “VIP” Player into Your Region

A VIP (Very Important Player) is a player who’s physical and/or mental challenges make it difficult to successfully participate on a mainstream soccer team.

What is successful participation? It should be defined by the player’s enjoyment and the safety of all team members.

The player who has only a physical disability is likely to have many of the expectations and capabilities of a non-disabled player and should be coached accordingly. Every effort should be made to integrate these players into mainstream teams, as much as safety allows.

VIP is an AYSO program designed to provide a quality soccer experience for VIP players. VIP teams offer many players with disabilities the least-restrictive and safest environment in which to learn and enjoy the game of soccer. Contact your Regional Commissioner, Regional Coach Administrator, Regional VIP Administrator or the National Support & Training Center to obtain AYSO’s special VIP training materials and information on how to begin a VIP program.

everyone plays[®]

Glossary of Terms

Balance: Reading the attack and providing an equal or greater number of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.

Concentration: Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area makes it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball.

Corner kick: A corner kick is awarded the opposing team when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least eight yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in U-10 games. Refer to the Laws of the Game for further details.

Delay: Slowing down the attack by closing the gap and denying space to allow the defense to get organized.

Depth (defending): Supporting the player(s) challenging the ball in case they are beaten.

Depth (attacking): Supporting teammates by creating safe options for the player with the ball.

Dribbling: The skill of using the feet to advance the ball on the ground when opponents are near.

Everyone Plays: Our program's goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.

Good Sportsmanship: We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude. All our programs must be designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

Inside of the Foot–Push Pass: This technique is used to advance the ball or to maintain possession by passing to a teammate.

Inside of the Foot–Ball Control: This technique is used to control the ball using the inside of the foot in order to maintain possession and prepare for the next move.

Instep kick: This skill is used for long passes and strong shots on goal using the instep of the foot.

Mobility: Players changing positions (filling in for one another when necessary) and moving off the ball creates numerical advantages and thereby attacking/scoring opportunities.

Penetration: Advancement, moving the ball and/or players past an opponent in order to get into position to shoot and/or score, and is achieved by shooting, dribbling, and passing.

Positive Coaching: Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.

Tackling–Front Block: Tackling is used to take the ball away from an opponent or to maintain possession.

Throw-in: The throw-in is used to restart the game after the entire ball has crossed the sideline, whether on the ground or in the air.

Warm-up: Keep it short, but do it. Young players must get used to warming up and stretching their muscles.

Width: Attacking on a broad front (players spread out) stretches the defense and creates space for players to advance.