

EXPLANATION OF THE SESSIONS

The following training sessions are age appropriate and are consistent with the directives that are given for each age group. You will notice that they move from simple to complex. They also encourage every player to take many touches on the ball. The four pillars of the game are also included (technical, tactical, physical and psychological). It should be noted that these pillars may mean different things depending on the age group (ex: a tactical concern for a 14 year old may be different than for a 7 year old and vice versa).

Any topics that are given in the directives that are not included in the following sessions may be added by you or by the trainers that work with your teams. Additional games and activities are also provided for you. If you wish to use the additional activities, you can create your own sessions as long as they are age appropriate and follow the correct methodology (use the sessions that I have provided as models).

The sessions for the youngest players use the following progression: warm-up, individual, small group, large group, cool-down. The sessions for the older groups (u-14) implement a warm-up, fundamental stage, match related stage, match condition stage and a cool-down. During the warm-up stretching should be included. Stretching may be interspersed throughout the warm-up or at the end of the warm-up. Various stretches are provided for you. The cool-down phase is meant to bring the heart rate down and to allow the lactic acid that has built up in the muscles to be released. For the cool down, you may repeat activities that are similar to the warm-up or do any jogging, skipping, and walking activities that will achieve the desired results. Stretching should also be included in the cool-down phase.

Sessions may be repeated as needed. You should determine which session you will do by observations from the game and what the directives are for the particular age group. You may or may not see lasting results from just one session, so the same topics may need to be repeated.

It should also be noted that “receiving” may be taught in many of the passing sessions. Also, “heading” (should be taught starting at approx. u-11 and even then, you may wish to use soft balls) games are included and may be used to create appropriate sessions.

U-12 TRAINING

DRIBBLING SESSION I

I. Warm up

- a) Each player with a soccer ball in a restricted area (20x20). Players dribble with eyes up and control. Use moves to change direction and pace (pull-back, Beckenbauer chop-outside of foot, inside foot chop).
- b) Add defenders that give 50% pressure.

II. Individual to Small group Activities

- a) "Draw". Players match up 1v1 with one soccer ball. On a given command by coach, players react to gain possession of the soccer ball. The player who gets the soccer ball try to keep possession under pressure from the defender; each round lasts ten to fifteen seconds.
- b) "1v1 with free players". Eight to ten players in 25x25 yard area. Players match up man to man with one ball for each pair, except for a couple free players. Players with the soccer ball try to escape from the defender and pass to a free player who then passes it back to them for a point. Each round should be thirty to forty seconds.
- c) "2v2+4 or 3v3+4". 2v2 in the middle of a 25x25 yard area. Four players (one on each side) on the outside of the grid. The players in the middle try to keep possession through dribbling and passing to each other or by using the outside players.
- d) "4v4+1 or 5v5+1 to four goals in 40x40 yard area". Players in the middle match up man to man except for the one free player who helps whichever team has the ball. The object is to dribble through any one of the four goals.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage dribbling, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

DRIBBLING SESSION II

I. Warm up

- a) Each player dribbling a soccer ball. Players change direction on call from coach. Players demonstrate different ways to change direction, providing a challenge to each other (they should know ways that coach has shown them also). Change of direction on hand signals from coach. Play opposite.

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) "Paint Brush". Each player with a soccer ball in a rectangular grid. Players imagine that their soccer ball is a paint brush and the grid is a canvas. Can they paint the entire canvas?
- b) Same as above but add two "ball-bandits" who can steal the soccer balls.
- c) "Four goal game". Play 4v4 (matched up man to man) with one soccer ball. The object is to dribble through any of the four goals.
- d) "End-zone game". Play 4v4 (matched up man to man) in a 20x35 yard grid. The object is to dribble across the oppositions end line.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage dribbling, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

DRIBBLING SESSION III

I. Warm up

- a) Each player dribbles at his/her own pace in a restricted area. On a given signal the players should dribble with the laces, bottom of the foot, inside or outside of foot. Players should use both feet and gradually increase their pace.
- b) Players continue to dribble in the grid. On the coach's signal, the players must dribble as fast as possible to get out of the grid. They must maintain control of the soccer ball.

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) In a restricted area, half of the players have soccer balls and take on other players who defend 50%. After a short time, switch roles. Accelerate the defensive pressure and confine the playing area.
- b) In a 25x35 yard playing area, the players should match up man to man with one soccer ball. The object is to keep possession of the ball and escape from your opponent. The players get a point if they can successfully make eye contact with coach (moving) and pass him/her the ball (coach then gives the ball back to the player that passed the ball).
- c) Play 4v4+1 with one soccer ball in a restricted area (25x40). 4v4 are matched up man to man. The object is to keep possession of the ball by dribbling or passing to your teammates or the free player. However, players may not pass the soccer ball until they have dribbled and escaped from their opponent.
- d) Same as above but play to two goals at the ends of the grid.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage dribbling, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

PASSING SESSION I

I. Warm up

- a) Groups of two's or three's in a restricted area with one soccer ball for each group. Groups are passing with the inside of their foot. Next, Outside. Next, chipping.
- b) "Feet v Hands". 4v4 or 5v5 in a restricted area. One team dribbles and passes a soccer ball on the ground. Their objective is to keep possession of the soccer ball. The other team has two soccer balls that they may run with or pass in the air by using their hands. Their objective is to throw one of their soccer balls and hit the others teams soccer ball. If they are successful, the two teams quickly switch roles and continue.

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) 3v3+2 to center goal. Create a small goal in the middle of a grid (20x25). The object is to pass the soccer ball through the center goal to a teammate. The two extra players play for whichever team is in possession of the soccer ball.
- b) "Three or Four Goal Game". Play 4v4+1 to either three or four goals. The object is to pass the soccer ball through any one of the goals to a teammate. The one extra player plays for whichever team has possession of the soccer ball. If you use four goals they should be placed in a rectangular shape approx. (20x30)
- c) 5v5+1 to targets. In a 25x40 grid with target players at each end. The object is to pass the soccer ball to a target player, get it back and attack the opposite target. The one extra player plays for whichever team is in possession of the soccer ball.
- d) 5v5+1 over end line. Same as above but there are no targets. The object of this game is to pass the soccer ball to a teammate over the end line, then attack the opposite line.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage passing, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

PASSING SESSION II

I. Warm up

- a) Players in pairs or three's in a restricted area. One soccer ball per each group. Players make safe passes in and around the other groups. The ball and the players should not stop moving.

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) 3v3+2 in a restricted area (20x40). The object is for the team with the ball to keep possession of the ball mainly through movement and passing. The team without the soccer ball should try to win it. The two extra players play for whichever team has possession of the soccer ball.
- b) 4v4+1 with outside targets (25x45). 4v4+1 in the middle of the grid. Each team of four try to keep possession of the ball by passing to each other, the one "free" player or any of the four outside targets that are patrolling the four sides of the grid.
- c) Four Goal Game. 6v6+2. Place a small goal on each side of a half of the field. Each team tries to keep possession of the soccer ball until they can pass the soccer ball through any one of the four goals to a teammate. The two "free" players play for whichever team has possession of the soccer ball.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage passing, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

PASSING SESSION III

I. Warm up

- a) Each player with a soccer ball. Players dribble then toss their soccer balls in the air, receive it and change direction with a dribble. Players may juggle the ball into the air instead of tossing it.
- b) Same as above, but have players burst into space after changing direction.
- c) Groups of two with one soccer ball in a restricted area. The partners dribble and then vary the service to each other (inside, outside, chipping). The player who receives the pass should “prepare” the ball with his first touch, then change direction on the dribble.

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) Play 3v3+1 in a grid (20x30). Coach serves a soccer ball into the grid. The team that wins possession must make five passes before passing it back to coach for a point. Coach may move to make it more challenging. The number of passes may be varied. The team on defense tries to win the ball.
- b) Same as above, but play 4v4+1 and place targets at the ends of the grid (20 x40) that the players must pass to for a point.
- c) Same as above, but play 5v5+1 and place goals at the ends of the grid (30x50). The players may shoot to score after completing the required number of passes.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage passing and receiving, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

SHOOTING SESSION I

I. Warm up

- a) Groups of two with one soccer ball for each group. Players should dribble in a restricted area and strike the soccer ball to their partner using their laces (instep). Soccer balls and players should be in motion.
- b) Place several small goals around the area. The partners should strike the soccer ball (with their instep) through any of the goals to their partner. They may not use the same goal twice in a row. Make it competitive.

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) Central goal game. Five players at each station. Two players match up 1v1 on each side of a goal created with cones or flags (with a keeper). The defender is passive to start. The first pair plays 1v1 until the attacking player can shoot on goal. When the keeper makes a save, he/she distribute the soccer ball to the opposite side where the other pair plays 1v1. The game is continuous.
- b) Same, but defenders are 100%.
- c) Same, but 2v1 on each side of the goal.
- d) 1v1+2 (3v1) to two goals with keepers. Keep extra soccer balls in the goals so the keepers can quickly get a new soccer ball in play. The two extra players play for whichever team has the ball.
- e) Same, but 2v2+2.
- f) Same, but 3v3+2.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage shooting, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

SHOOTING SESSION II

I. Warm up

- a) Groups of two with one soccer ball in a restricted area. The partners should strike the soccer ball to each other using their laces (instep). The players and the soccer balls should be in constant motion.
- b) Hand to foot volley game. Two teams play to full goals by alternately catching and volleying the ball within their teams. Goals may only be scored by foot.

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) Center goal game. Two players on each side of a goal with a keeper. The goal should be created with cones or flags. The keeper starts with the soccer ball. He distributes to the two players in front of him. The player that receives the soccer ball prepares it for his partner to strike at goal (the ball may not stop moving). The keeper saves and distributes to the opposite side. The game is continuous. Switch keepers.
- b) Same as above, but add a defender to each side.
- c) Create a goal at each end of a 40x25 yard grid. Create a mid line in the grid so there are two halves (attacking and defending halves). There should be keepers in each goal. Play 1v3 in the attacking 1/2 and 3v1 in the defending 1/2 not including the keepers. The players may not cross the half line. If the players score from the back 1/2, the goal equals 2 pts. The front player may turn and score or lay the ball back for the others to score. The game is continuous.
- d) Same as above, but allow a player to enter the attacking half.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with a GK
- Encourage shooting, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

SHOOTING SESSION III

I. Warm up

- a) Half of the players with a soccer ball. All of the players in a restricted area. The players strike the soccer balls to free players using their instep (laces).
- b) Same as above, but add defenders that may steal the soccer balls.
- c) Create two teams of equal numbers. The teams try to score by passing the soccer ball over the end line to a teammate. The players must alternate between catching and volleying the ball to each other. The team on defense tries to intercept the ball using their hands and then attack the other line in the same manner.

II. Individual to Small group Activities

- a) Place two goals with keepers thirty yards apart in a grid twenty yards wide. Play 2v2+1. The players may score on any goal. Play should be unrestricted to start. After a short time make a stipulation that all goals must be from a one touch shot.
- b) Same as above, but play 3v3+1. Adjust the grid size as needed.
- c) Same as above, but play 4v4+1.
- d) "Get out". 4v4 on a small field (25 x 45) with two goals and keepers. Have players ready to come on quickly for both teams. When a goal is scored, the team that was scored on has to "get out" and they are quickly replaced by the players that were waiting to come on. If the ball goes out of bounds, both teams "get out" and are replaced by the players that were waiting to come on. This is a fast moving game, so the coach should be sure to have a supply of soccer balls at his feet. Encourage shooting.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with keepers
- Encourage shooting, but let them play

U-12 TRAINING

HEADING

I. Warm up

- a) Half of the players with soccer balls. Players move about an area with the soccer balls in their hands. They serve the balls to the players that don't have one who return it to the servers with an appropriate body part (ex: head). Switch.
- b) Same as above, but, servers use their feet and vary the service to the receivers (if this is too difficult, the servers may kick the ball out of their hands to the receivers. Make sure the services are low.)

II. Individual to Small Group Activities

- a) Players move about an area tossing the soccer balls to themselves and heading it to themselves. Increase the speed of movement.
- b) Same as above, but, each player tosses it in the air, heads it twice then heads it to another player.
- c) In groups of three or four, players try to keep the headed ball alive. Condition -- no player can head the ball more than once before each of the other players head it.
- d) Play 3v3 or 4v4 to two goals. Players must play by passing the ball from hand to head. Award points for heading the ball properly while moving towards the goal. Three points are awarded for scoring a goal.

III. Larger Group Activity

- Play 6v6, 7v7, or 8v8 to two goals with keepers
- Encourage heading, but let them play