



Tips for fun and Effective Soccer Practice

KEEP IT FUN. Picture yourself at the bank and you're the last person in a 12 person line. Is that any fun? Same thing for the kids, avoid using lines in your drills or activities. Another good practice tip is not to have elimination games in which a player sits if he/she loses. Chances are good that if he/she lost, he/she needs to practice and not be sitting. (see page 3)

HAVE A PLAN... You won't be stumbling for ideas with 24 eyes looking at you. You will look more professional. Fold it in half and tuck it in on the side of your waistband for quick access to it. After practice, use it to write what worked well and what you would change. Keep them as records so you know what and when you practiced.

ARRIVE EARLY. Have all your cones laid out for two or three activities. Do not allow down time in between drills. No time for kids to get into mischief.

USE SMALL SIDED GAMES (See page 2)

USE PROGRESSIONS (not needed for Micro) (see page 4)

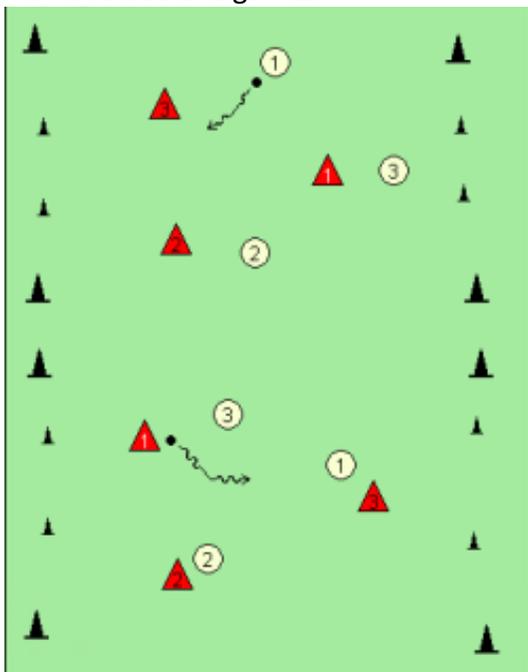
OTHER TIPS for FUN EFFECTIVE SOCCER PRACTICE

- Have an odd number of players.
- Use the player as a target player (a player that plays on both teams). This will give you numbers up on either offense or defense. This can be useful to show the team success in a certain area.
- Or use extra player as "ball buddy" to keep player busy.
- Last player to practice is on "cone duty". Cone duty is picking up all the cones and gear at the end of practice. I guarantee the player won't be late too often.
- Keep it simple. Don't use big fancy words.
- Fake it. If you had a bad day at work and you are not enthusiastic about being at practice then you have to fake it.
- If a drill or activity is not working, don't be afraid to change it or even stop it all together.

Why Small Sided Games?

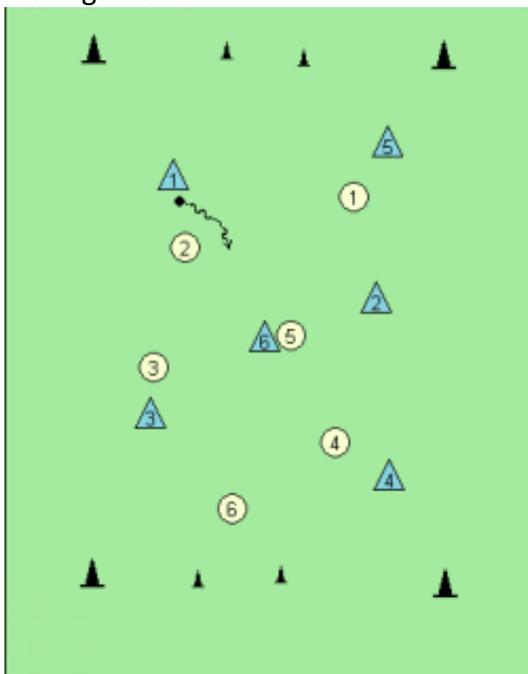
Example #1

2 small sided 3v3 games.



Example #2

1 6v6 game



The biggest advantage for small sided games- players will touch the soccer ball more. In example #1, there are two players touching the ball compared to only 1 player touching the ball in example #2.

In both examples, all the basic soccer principles are there (offense, defense, 1st attacker, 2nd attacker, etc) but in example #1, those principles are easier for the players to recognize, identify and learn from.

In example #1, ALL players are one pass away so all players are in the game.

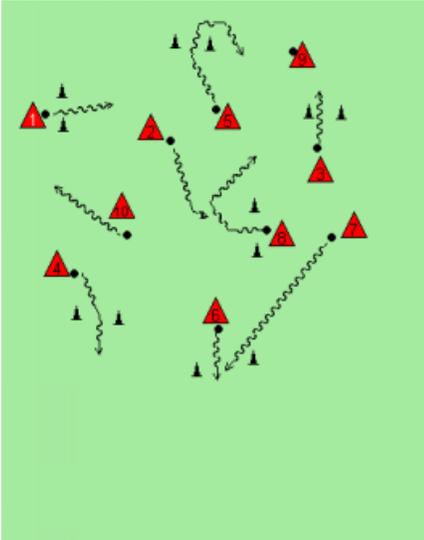
In example #2, More players will get opportunities to score which creates excitement.

Why Avoid Lines

IF YOU WERE A KID AND PLAYER # 8 WHICH GAME WOULD YOU WANT TO PLAY?

GAME #1

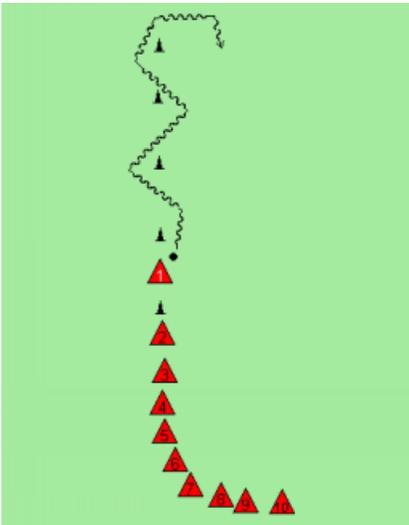
The Game - 10 players with soccer balls try to dribble through as many gates as possible in 5 minutes. If two player's balls touch, those players have to do five pushups and then continue dribbling.



This game Player #8 dribbles soccer ball for all of the 5 minute activity.

GAME #2

The Game- 10 players each take turns dribbling through the cones. The coach uses stop watch to keep track of times.



This game Player #8 dribbles soccer ball for about 30 seconds.

Both games use the same amount of cones and set up time. A lot of soccer balls and a little planning can make the difference.

Progressions

- Pick One Skill or Theme For Your Practice – Passing, Dribbling, Defense
- Start with Fundamentals with No Pressure
- Slowly Increase the Level of Difficulty and Pressure
- Progress to a Large Sided Game with Goals

In other words, instead of spending 5 minutes on dribbling, 5 minutes on passing, 5 minutes on defense. Use progressions to slowly and thoroughly develop a skill or theme for your practice.

Here is an example:

If passing is the skill a team needs most. The example below uses 5 progressions, you may decide in some practice sessions to use only 3, some may use 6-7.

- Start the practice with a warm up that uses passing to get the kids running.
- Once players are warmed up, work on passing technique with no pressure (example- players pair up and pass back and forth to each other focusing on technique).
- Next, add some non-defensive pressure. It could be passing for accuracy (two players passing between gates) or maybe passing against the clock.
- Then add some defensive pressure in a small sided game. Use games or drills that will insure some passing success. Example: "monkey in the middle". For example: 4 passers against 1 defender.
- Then progress to a 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4 small sided game with full pressure.
- Lastly, progress to a large sided game with goals.
- Finish with a cool down.

After this practice, passing skills are bound to improve.

New or Existing Coach FAQ's

I received my roster, now what?

- Call or Email Parents
- Introduce yourself and give them your phone # if you called them, provide give them your email address
- Tell them where and when practice will be.
- What players will need to bring to practice? Water bottle, shin guards, a soccer ball and what size. Cleats are preferred.

What will I need for my first practice?

- A practice plan or outline.
- Some extra soccer balls.
- Some pinnies or alternate jerseys.
- Some practice cones. The flat ones are the best.
- Stop watch
- First aid kit
- Proper attire-you should wear clothing befitting a soccer coach.

Why do I need a Practice Plan?

- It's the key to a smooth running practice
- You will look more professional. Fold it in half and tuck it in on the side at the waistband of my shorts for quick access to it.
- You won't be stumbling for ideas with 24 eyes looking at you.
- After practice, use it to write what worked well and what you would change.
- Keep them as records so you know what and when you practiced.

What are some tips for planning a good practice?

- Keep players active at all times. Get to the field early and set everything up beforehand!!!! Another reason to arrive early is to check the field conditions and make sure that it is safe to play on.
- Avoid the three L's. Laps, lines, and lectures.
- Keep it FUN.
- Keep it simple, especially for young players. Don't use fancy words or complicated drills.
- Don't be afraid to change things if something that isn't working.

Is there a special Practice Plan form?

Use a simple index card. The most important thing is you have a plan.

Should I have a parent meeting?

- You should have a team meeting as soon as possible and definitely before the first game. Prepare a "handout" with everything clearly stated. Use the handout as your notes. Pass the handout at the end of the meeting.
- Tell parents to make sure their spouses, if they are not there, know the team policies.
- Make sure they cheer for good defensive plays as well as offensive. The handout should include you and your assistant's name and phone numbers.
- You should also discuss team goals, parent conduct on the sideline and playing time.
- If you are having the meeting at your practice field, make sure you are facing the players. This way, you can keep an on your players and the parents will focus on what you're saying and not what their kids are doing. This is also effective when talking to your players.

What do I need to know for game day?

HAVE FUN. Both you and the players should have fun. Don't get too worked up about it. Hopefully your goal isn't winning. As long as the kids try their hardest, they are good sports and most importantly, that they have fun then you did your job.

What should my game day strategy be?

HAVE FUN. Notice the theme here? If you are coaching younger kids, it will be beehive soccer. Don't worry about it. The game is the best teacher. Eventually, with a little bit of help from you, they will figure it out. On offense, they will eventually figure out if they get open and get a pass they will have a clear look at the goal. And they will figure out on defense, that if the whole team goes after the soccer ball, no one will be covering the open second attacker on the other team.

Hopefully, this answered some of your questions. One of the great things about being a soccer coach is you can always learn something new.

If you have any questions or comments? Please do not hesitate to email us:

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