

## U 12 Soccer

Thank you for volunteering to coach the U12 soccer division. Coaching is the biggest responsibility for the program and we are sure you will find it nothing short of rewarding. It is a very challenging position to volunteer for, and we give you the utmost respect for doing so.

From the U6 division up through the U16 division we believe in a philosophy that promotes “the athlete first and winning second”. While this division will be more competitive than the younger ones, please always keep this philosophy in mind. We expect that you will come prepared to teach the children not just the game of soccer, but how to be a good teammate, good sportsmanship, and respect. These things can be learned as long as you come prepared to practices and games to play every child equally in time and in different positions. The goal is not to go out and crush the opposition but to help the children grow in their development of skills and knowledge of the game while in a pressure situation. You will find that you will have children that have played for several years and new comers to the sport. You will have to find the bridge to engage all of them.

In this packet you will find some very helpful resources. Amongst other things, we outline what you should expect to see from your children by the seasons end. We offer some of our favorite and most effective drills for you to use to get them there.

Please remember our philosophy in anything you do and most of all to have fun. If you ever have any questions or need help feel free to call us or email us.

Russ Matthews  
Dan Ayotte

# Expectations for U12

The expectations for this division are built off of what has been learned in the younger divisions. While most children should know the different parts of the foot to use to pass with and shoot with, some may not. So while there may be a curve as to what the children on your team know coming into the season, you should try your best to make sure they are equal in knowledge by the season end. We will not repeat what they should have already learned but how those skills should be honed for this division. If you do not know the basic skill set, please find the appropriate resource.

**Shooting** – The child should be able to shoot the ball in the air as well as the ground into open areas in the net (area where the goalie is not) preferably the corners. They should have enough strength in their legs to do this from 10 to 12 yards out consistently. They should be able to do this with both legs. They should also be able to attempt to shoot the ball on the move and while the ball is bouncing or in the air.

- **Passing** - The child should be able to pass the ball on the ground consistently through a 2 foot wide gate from 15-20 yards out. Also the child should be able to pass the ball in the air for 15 yards consistently. This should be also honed so that a child can pass to a moving teammate.
- **Trapping** - The child should be able to trap the ball and be able to turn quickly. The child should be able to trap a ball out of the air and get it under control to the feet. The child should understand the necessity to trap the ball quickly.
- **Heading** – The child should know the difference in techniques for heading a ball for a shot and for clearance.
- **Tackling** – The player should understand when to tackle and when to jockey. The child should also know the proper techniques for doing both.
- **Field Presence** – The child should know what the name of the positions of all of the field players and should know where their boundaries are.

## Practices and drills

One thing we have learned from our experience in coaching with any age group is that practices that include making players wait to touch the ball are less productive than those that consistently engage all of the players. When

children are made to wait in lines they get bored easily and get distracted. You will notice that you are constantly reeling the children in to perform an easy task. With this being said,

- we recommend that you design your practices so that there are very few activities that involve the children waiting to touch the ball.
- We recommend that your practices are setup so that the skills needed are easy at first and then proceed to become harder. An example of this would be if you were working on attacking. You could start off with a 3 vs 2 (3 attackers and 2 defenders) drill. This would give the offensive players lots of time to decide what to do with the ball. With success you make it harder by adding more players like a 4 vs 3 game and then 5 vs 4 game. By adding more players the children have less time to decide what they should do with the ball which makes the drill harder.
- When introducing new drills, it is best to explain the drill, let the players perform the drill and then explain the value of the skill being learned.
- Remember to create practices according to your teams' needs, not by what you might have already decided to work on.

The following are a few of our favorite drills and some other drills that we believe will be effective. Feel free to modify any of these to your needs.

### **PASSING:**

- **1 2 3** – in groups of 2 or more. Player passes to another player and tells the receiver before receiving the pass how many touches(1, 2, or 3) they have before passing the ball. Whatever the number is the ball must be passed on that number. When the receiver passes the ball they also give a number to the person they are passing the ball to.( IE. the passer says 2, the receiver should be passing the ball on their second touch and telling the new receiver how many touches they must perform to get rid of the ball.) The number is small so that the pace remains upbeat.

This exercise promotes forward thinking. One aspect of the game that is being worked on for this age group is their decision process. For anyone to be successful in soccer it is necessary to not only focus on what action is needed to be performed immediately, but what their next move will be. When the player receives the ball and told how many touches they have before passing to someone else, they are focusing on an immediate task. By telling the next receiver how many touches they have to perform, they are thinking about their next move.

- **Side help scrimmage**

## Objectives:

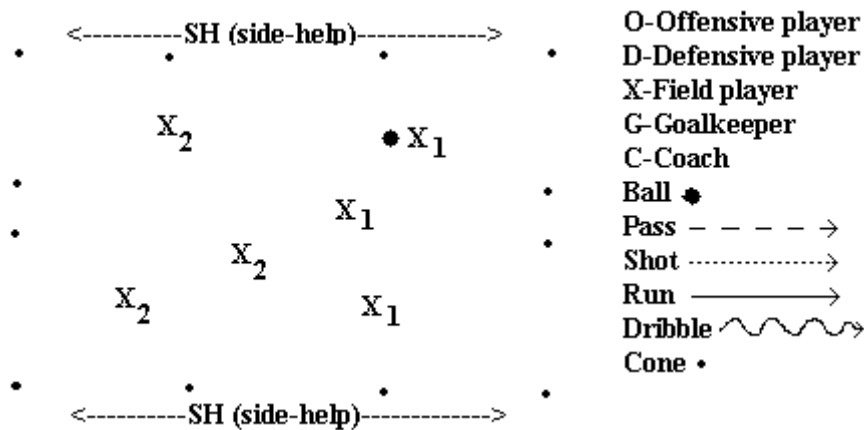
Improve team passing and possession using outside support

## Description:

Setup and Procedure: Soccer field about 30 x 20, small goals, 3 vs 3 (up to 5 vs 5), and two "side-help" players. Normal soccer rules apply except the side-help players are neutral and roam up and down the side lines providing support to whichever team has the ball. The side-help cannot dribble and must pass back to the team which touched the ball last. Players on the field cannot take the ball away from a side help player. If the ball goes past the side-help player then it is a throw-in. This is a good scrimmage to which encourages passing and possession.

Tip: Really encourage the players to use their side-help. For younger teams it is better if the side-help are coaches and/or more skillful players.

Encourage and-again's using the side-help. Also, Vary the field size taking into account age and number of players.



- **Tiger Ball** – 6 players, 1 ball. Players position themselves in a circle with one player in the middle. Players positioned on the outside of the circle pass the ball any direction. The player in the middle tries to intercept the pass. If the player in the circle touches the ball, if the players use any other part of the foot then their instep to pass, or if the ball goes over head height, the inside player switches with the player who last passed the ball and play continues.

Start off allowing the players to have two touches on the ball (a trap and then pass) and then progress into one touch passing. Again the value here is to force the players to be ready for a pass and to decide upon where the defender is, where they will pass the ball. Only using the instep, which provides the most accurate passing, allows them to become more comfortable with it.

## TRAPPING :

### **Partners Call -**

Drill to work on specific traps, one touches, and passes

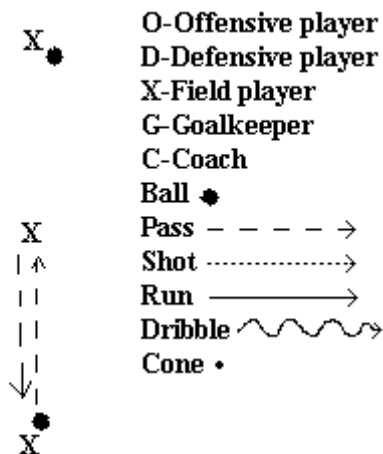
### **Description:**

Three players and two balls. Players are in a straight line about 7-8 yards apart. The outside players start with the balls. One ball is served to the center player and that player performs a specific skill and returns the ball. He then turns to the other outside player to receive another ball. Continue for 2-4 minutes working 2-3 different skills and then change places.

Some skills to work:

- a. chest trap & pass
- b. thigh trap & pass
- c. head ball
- d. inside foot volley
- e. instep foot volley
- f. one touch on ground
- g. instep trap (from air) & pass
- h. inside foot trap (from air) & pass

Tips: When working on high balls outside players should toss or throw-in ball for proper height. Center player should always turn and approach for the ball - do not stand still!



### • **Trap Turn Pass**

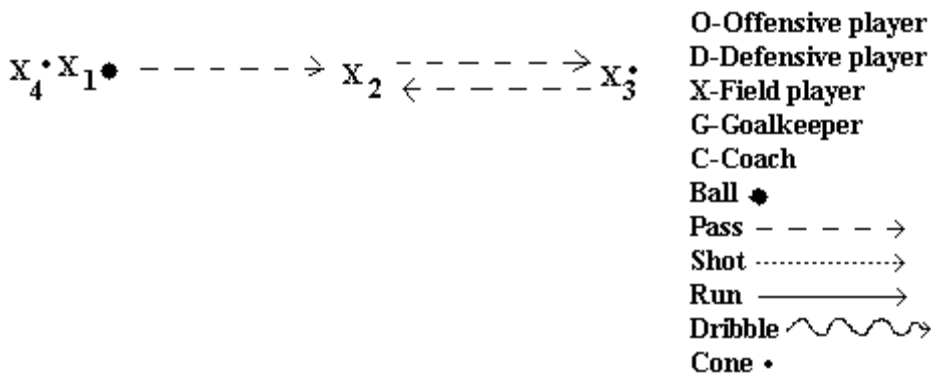
#### **Objectives:**

Improve the important skill of trapping and turning simultaneously

## Description:

See figure below. Players should be at least 12-15 yards apart. Player 1 passes firmly to player 2 and follows ball to the player 2's spot. Player 2 traps and turns, passes to player 3 and follows ball to player 3's spot. Player 3 traps, passes to player 1 (who is in the center spot) and follows ball to center. Player 1 traps and turns, passes to player 4, and follows ball to player 4's spot. Continue this for 5-10 minutes. Remember, follow the ball to the player you pass to, and the pass to the center should be fairly firm!

Trapping and turning, in my opinion, is an essential skill for any good player. It must be done quickly and smoothly to be effective. Watch any professional game and you will see this type of trap used many, many times.



The value here is to get the players comfortable using all parts of their body to trap the ball. Trapping the ball is more than just stopping the ball. It is also about positioning yourself so that when you do receive a pass you will be able to do something constructive with the ball.

## DRIBBLING:

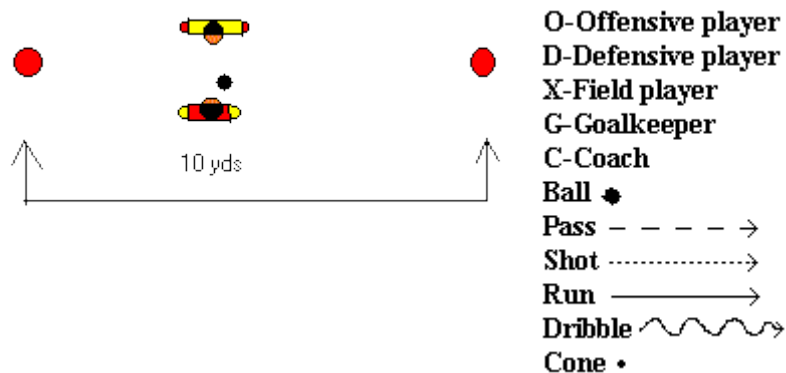
### • CONTROL JOCKEYING

#### Objectives:

Good 1v1 game to use feints and moves to unbalance a defender

#### Description:

Two cones about 10 yards apart and two players facing each other, one with a ball. The player with the ball uses feints and moves to try to touch a cone with the ball (under control) before the defender can touch the cone with his foot. The defender "shadows" the player with the ball and neither player is allowed to cross the imaginary line between them. Good game to teach the player with the ball to sense when the defender is off-balanced.



- **FEINT and FINISH**

**Objectives:**

Improve 1 vs 1 offensive and defensive skills and shooting

**Description:**

**SETUP**

One keeper, one defender in a marked 15x10 yard area about 20 yards from goal, and a line of attackers 10 yards beyond the area.

**PROCEDURE**

1. First player dribbles toward the defender and tries to beat him by getting the ball past the far line of the marked off area.
2. If the attacker beats the defender he can take one more dribble and shoot.
3. If defender plays or dribbles the ball out of the rectangle he wins and the attacker becomes the defender. The defender retrieves the ball and goes to back of line.

**RULES**

1. Defender cannot leave the rectangle area.

**COACHING POINTS**

1. Attackers should use short, quick steps when approaching defender and a burst of speed to beat the defender after a move.

