

Rogue Valley Timbers

RESPECT - ACCOUNTABILITY - COURAGE - COMMUNITY - EXCELLENCE

U7/U8: 4v4 Coaching Resources

U7/U8 (1ST AND 2ND GRADE) COACHING RESOURCES

"If you can make them love the game, then you can teach them the game."

-Belgian FA

As a coach in the RVT Recreational Soccer Program, you will be encouraged to follow the Play-Practice-Play model set forth by US Soccer.

1ST PLAY PHASE

As children arrive at practice, they immediately start playing small games (2v2, 3v3, or 4v4, or a game with unequal numbers based on the available number of players). The coach's priorities during the first play phase are to welcome the players as they arrive and get them immediately playing.

PRACTICE PHASE

The Practice Phase is where the players will actively learn through continued guidance from the coach. This phase uses 1 or 2 free flowing game-like activities that set up meaningful repetitions of that day's topic. Adapt as necessary to make the activity easier or harder for the players.

2ND PLAY PHASE

This is a game like scrimmage with minimal interruptions, reinforcing the topic that was learned during the Practice Phase.

During each phase, you will be utilizing game-like activities that allow the player to maximize their development by developing decision making and problem solving skills alongside technical repetition. In the following pages, we have developed a season-long plan to aid in your journey as a coach. Within each practice plan you will find:

- Description and a reference picture of the Core Activity.
- Ideas to make the Core Activity **Less Challenging** or **More Challenging** depending on the current level of your players.
- Guided Questions to ask your players to aid in their development. We want them to learn by doing, not by us commanding them.

Please reference the Coaches Toolbox below on the best ways to emphasize a coaching point during practice:

COACHES TOOLBOX

Teaching Action	Purpose of the Action	When to Apply the Action
Check - Adapt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe and check the created situation, adapt if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing• In the flow (sideline coaching)• Planned stoppage (break in action or water break)• Natural stoppage (foul, goal, or ball out of bounds)• In the situation (FREEZE)
Positive Reinforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivate Players• Reinforce effective actions	
Use of Keywords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage and support players to focus on cues and/or desired behavior from the lesson plan.	

Ask Guided Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use guided questions to force players to think about cues, check for understanding, and reflect on the action or activity. 	
Demonstrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model desired behavior • Visualize the situation • Check for understanding 	
Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell players what to do 	

RUNNING AN EFFICIENT PRACTICE

An organized and efficiently run practice allows you to get more accomplished than expected. Some tips for running an efficient practice:

- Be organized and have a plan.
- Have a back-up plan just in case some drills are not being picked up as easily by the players or the session you have planned is not going well at all.
 - The back-up plan can also help you adjust if you have an unexpected number of players.
- Tell players to go to the bathroom BEFORE practice begins so you don't have a lot of players trying to go during practice. They must go with either their parents or someone cleared through the RVT Background Check.
- Keep things moving so the players are engaged and on the go.
- AVOID THE 4 EVIL L'S:
 - **No Laps:** No one wants to aimlessly run around a field
 - **No Lines:** Lessen the number of drills involving players just standing around in a line. This decreases the likelihood of players getting bored, losing focus, or misbehaving.
 - **No Lectures:** Make your instruction or coaching point timely and efficient. Refer to COACHES TOOLBOX above for more info.
 - **No Foul Language:** Be a role model for your players.
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY, KEEP PRACTICE FUN AND INTERESTING!!**

By the end of your U7/U8 Recreational Season, your players should be able to:

<u>U7/U8</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulate the ball with both feet • Running and Stopping the ball at speed • Basic coordinated movements WITH and WITHOUT the ball <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Hopping, skipping, running, etc. • Get forward when attacking • Get back on defense to protect the goal • Steal the ball • Have FUN playing soccer • Start to develop a love of the game

1st Play Phase and 2nd Play Phase Reference

1st Play Phase

Organization: Set up two 15 yard x 25 yard fields. As players show up to practice, place them into teams and let them play 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4.

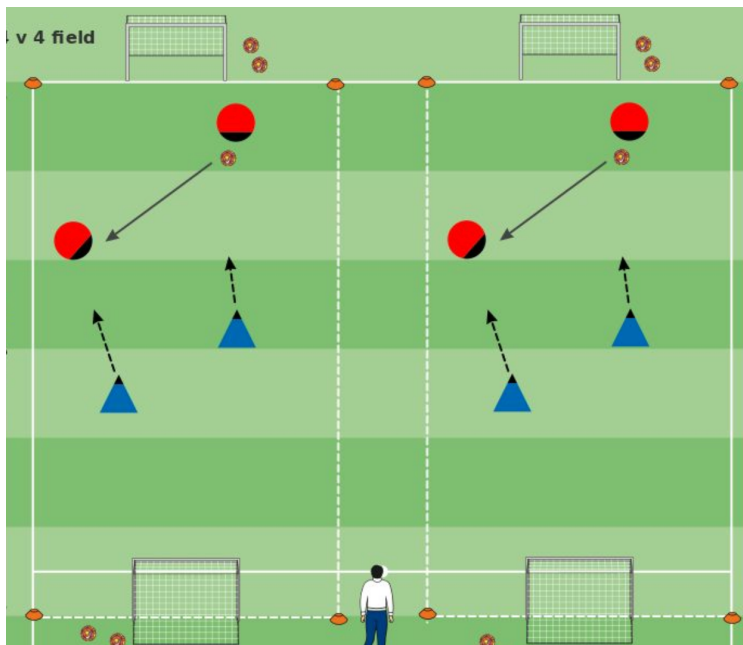


FIGURE 1

2nd Play Phase

Organization: Set up a 25 yard x 35 yard field and play 4v4 or whatever your numbers allow.

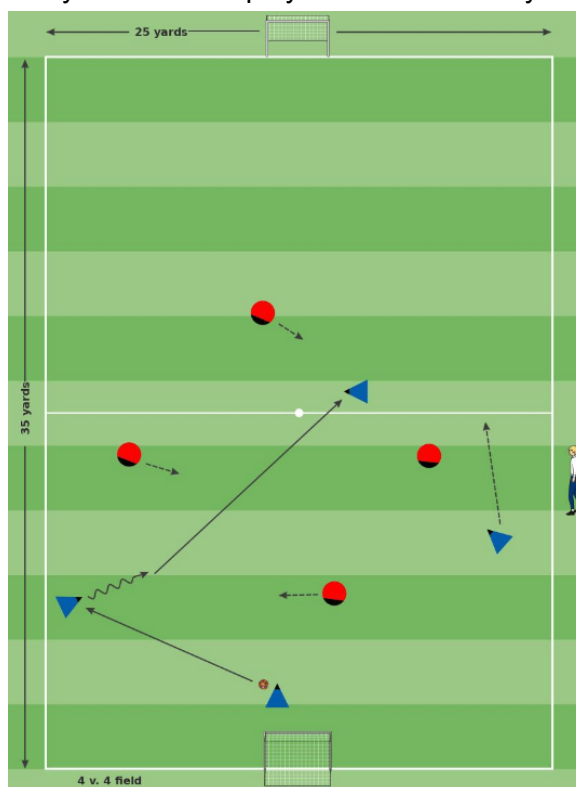


FIGURE 2

GUIDED QUESTIONS:

Suggested questions to ask players during the game to guide them rather than command them.

1. How do you find an opening? (Look at the opponent's position)
2. How do you create an opening? (Make the opponent move)
3. What should you do if you see an opening? (Pass or dribble through it)
4. How should the attackers position themselves to get from their own half to the opponent's half? (Spread out and support the attack)
5. What are your options when you have the ball? (Dribble, pass, or shoot)
6. When is it a good time to dribble? (When there aren't any defenders near me and I have space)
7. When should you pass? (When a defender is blocking my path and a teammate is open)
8. When should you shoot? (When I'm close to the goal and I have a clear shot at it)
9. Where is the goal? (In the middle)
10. So, which path do you need to block if you want to keep the opponent from shooting? (The path in the middle)
11. And, what if they manage to get in front of the goal anyway? (Then we have to pressure them and make sure they can't shoot)
12. What are you supposed to do if you lose the ball? (Get back on defense and protect our goal)
13. What else could you do? (Stay forward and try to win the ball back right away)

TECHNIQUE INSTRUCTION

Close Dribbling: Touch the ball every time their foot comes down with gentle/soft touches. You can use inside, outside, laces, and sole of the foot to dribble. Try to have eyes up looking for open space or an open teammate.

Dribbling with Speed: Toe pointed down, using laces or outside of the foot pushing the ball out in front of you a couple of steps. Try to have eyes up looking for open space or an open teammate.

Passing: Non-kicking foot is placed next to the ball, toe of passing foot is pointed out to the side and ankle is locked, use the inside of the foot to strike the middle of the ball, and follow through with your foot coming back down in place; NO CROSSING OF LEGS.

Shooting: Non-kicking foot is placed next to the ball, toe of shooting foot is pointed down, ankle locked, use the laces to strike the middle of the ball, and follow through by landing on your shooting foot after striking the ball.

TACTICAL INSTRUCTION

Kick-off: Pass to a player on your team.

Goal Kick: Kick the ball to the side of the field, rather than up the middle.

Throw In: Two hands on each side of the ball, bring the ball over your head to the back of your neck, both feet stay planted on the ground, and stay behind the line.

Defending: Protect your goal by forcing the other team to the sideline and focus on clearing the ball away from the middle of the field.

Attacking: Don't run at your teammate with the ball, instead go to an area where your teammate can kick you the ball. Spread out.

Positions: You should not be worried about specific positions at this age. Everyone plays offense and defense and moves in the correct direction.

4v4 Practice Plans

LEGEND



PASSES or SHOTS are represented using solid lines with an arrow head. Length of the line indicates distance, arrow head represents the end point of the pass. Angle and length should be drawn in proportion to the field.



DRIBBLING or RUNNING WITH THE BALL is represented using a snaked line with an arrow head.



PLAYER MOVEMENT or RUNNING WITHOUT THE BALL is represented using a dashed line with an arrow head.



TACTICAL ARROWS- which indicate a player's area of influence, are represented using solid red lines. This can be **MOVEMENT WITH OR WITHOUT THE BALL.**



Week 1: Dribbling

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1

Practice (30 Minutes)

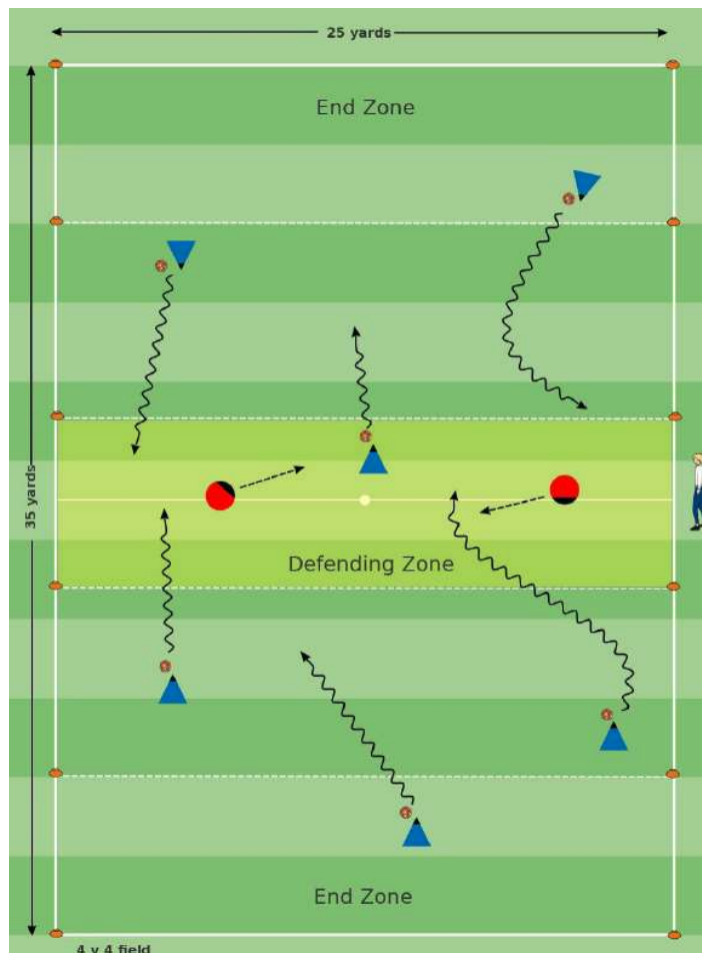
Organization: Set up a 4v4 field (25 yards x 35 yards) with a middle defending zone and two end zones. Players dribble back and forth into the end zones to earn points. Two defenders are stationed in the defending zone. They switch with the attackers when they win the ball, or every few minutes.

Less Challenging: Same as Core Activity, except the coach acts as a defender and all of the players have to go in the same direction.

More Challenging: Same as Core Activity, except the middle defending zone has been removed and the defenders can go anywhere but the end zones.

Guided Questions:

1. How do you keep the ball close? (Have more gentle/soft touches with the ball)
2. How do you dribble faster? (Use hard touches to get the ball out in front of you)
3. What's the difference between dribbling forward and dribbling to the side? (You have to use a different part of the foot)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2.

Week 2: Dribbling Past a Defender to a Goal

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1

Practice (30 Minutes)

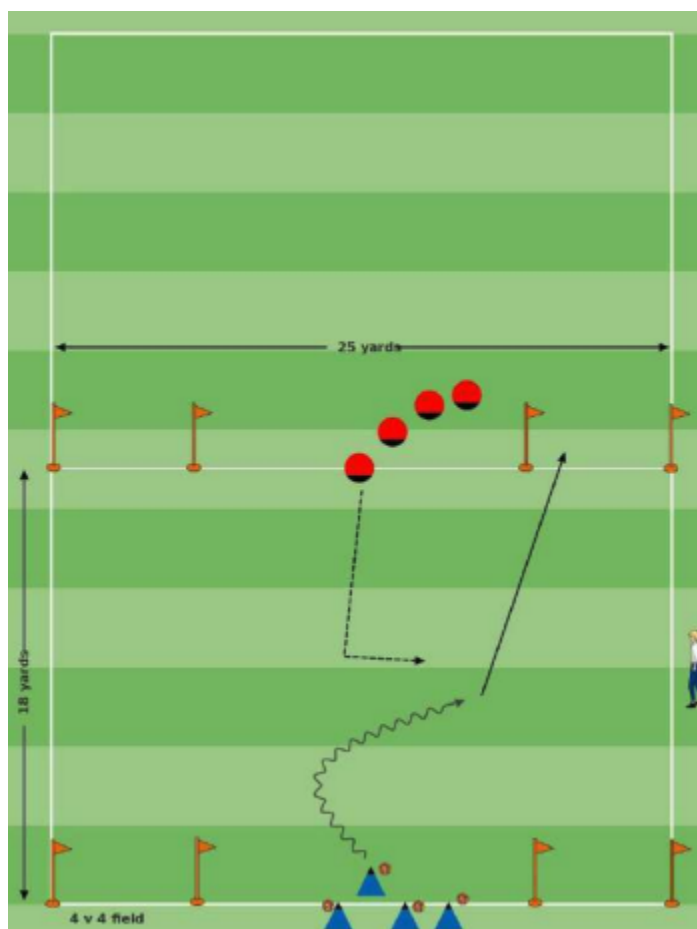
Organization: Mark out an 18x25 yard field with two goal lines on each line. Attackers (blue) and defenders (red) line up between the goal lines on opposite end lines. The first attacker dribbles on the field and attacks one of the goals across from them and tries to dribble through the goal. The first defender runs in and tries to stop the attacker from scoring. The defender can score by winning the ball and dribbling through one of their goals. Afterwards, the next 1v1 starts.

Less Challenging: Make the goal lines set at an angle diagonally across the corners.

More Challenging: Each attack starts with a pass from the coach on the sideline (instead of starting with the ball at the endline). Players run out, attempt to gain possession and attack their respective goals.

Guided Questions:

1. Attackers, what's the fastest and most reliable way to score? (Dribble towards open space/goal with speed before the defender reaches me)
2. What should you do if the defender blocks your path to the goal? (Switch directions, dribble to the other goal and try to score on it)
3. How do you switch directions while dribbling? (Use a different part of your foot or change of direction of move to go the other direction.)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2

Week 3: Passing

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1.

Practice (30 Minutes)

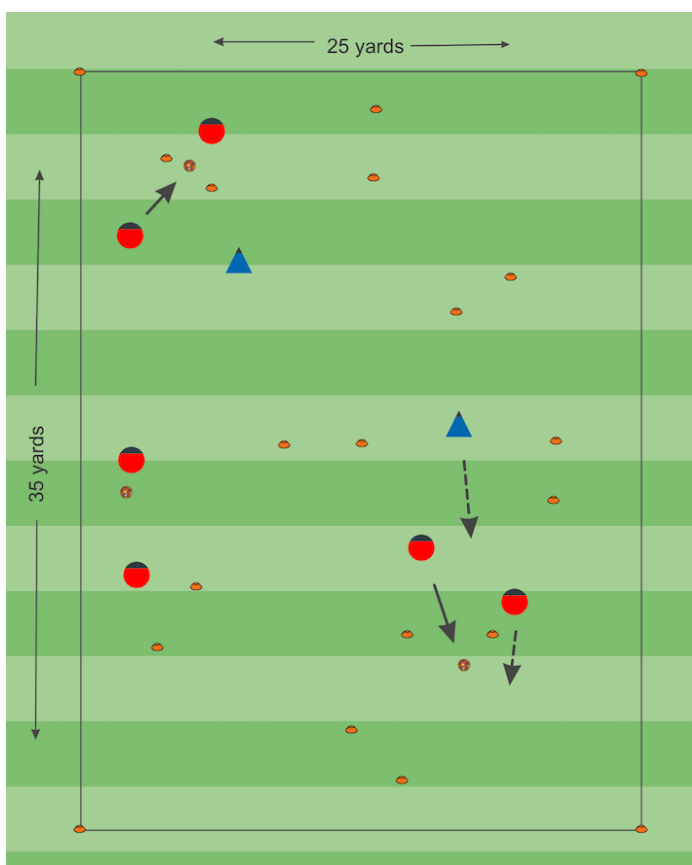
Organization: Set up a 25 yard x 35 yard field. Place 6-8 2 yard wide gates all over the field. Players should work in pairs with (1) ball between them. Players are to pass to one another through each gate. Count the number gates passed through during specific time period. Players have to go through each gate once before they can go through the same gate again.

Less Challenging: Each player should have a ball at their feet. Players are to dribble around and try to "kick the coach" = pass the ball into the coach (below the knee). Points are scored for hitting the coach, who is moving around the field. Play for a specific time and keep score.

More Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but now add 2 or 3 defenders (blue triangles) to try and prevent the partner teams from passing through the gates.

Guided Questions:

1. What are the players options? (Dribble or pass)
2. Where should the player without the ball go to help their teammate? (Spread out and find open space on the other side of a goal.)
3. What do you do if a defender is blocking the gate you're trying to score in? (Change direction quickly and find another gate.)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2.

Week 4: Passing - 4 v 3 to Two Goals Each

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1

Practice (30 Minutes)

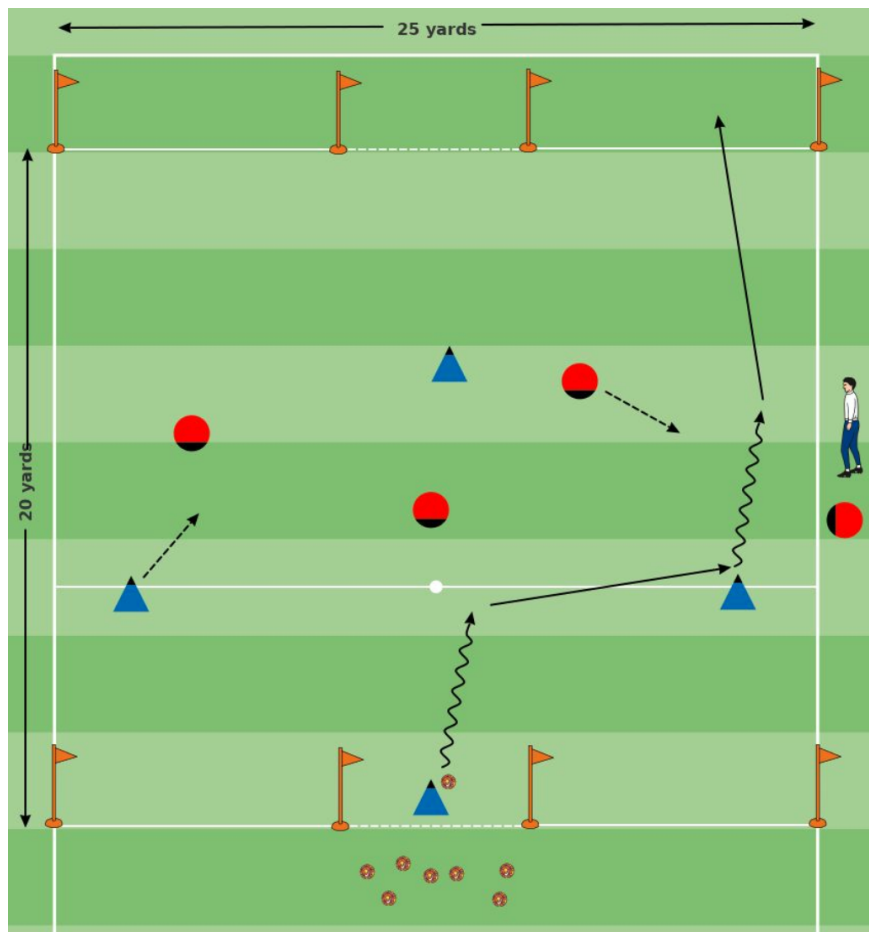
Organization: Mark out a smaller 20x25 yard field with two goals on each endline. Divide players into two teams of four. Teams play 4v3 on two goal lines each and score by dribbling through or passing past the goal line. The attackers have eight balls to attack with. If a ball goes out or a goal is scored, they start a new attack from their endline. After eight attacks, teams switch roles. Which team scores more goals?

Less Challenging: To make the activity less challenging, play 4v2. The defenders rotate on and off in pairs every two attacks.

More Challenging: Play 4v4. Teams switch roles after 8 attacks.

Guided Questions:

1. How should the attackers position themselves in order to cover the field evenly? (They should spread out and create openings)
2. What are the ball carrier's options? (Dribble or pass)
3. When should attackers dribble? (When they have space)
4. And when should they pass? (When the defender is blocking their path and a teammate is open)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2.

Week 5: Shooting - Scoring Goals

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1

Practice (30 Minutes)

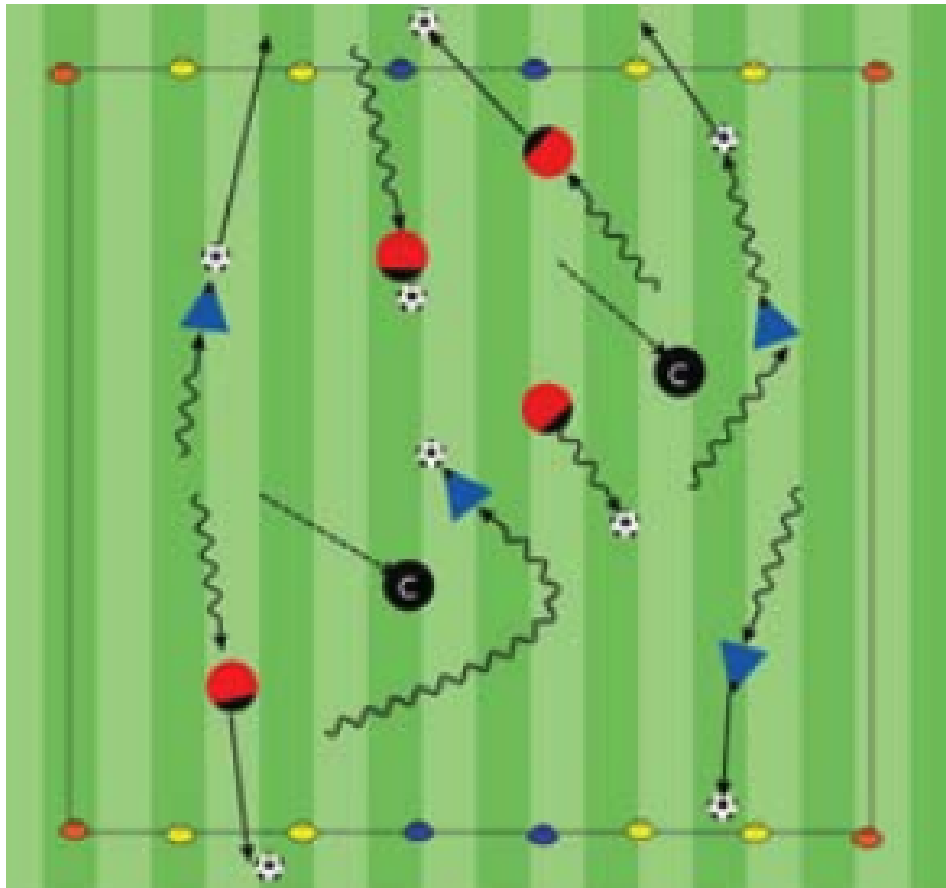
Organization: Set up a 25 x 35 yard grid w/6 goals on the end lines. Each player has a ball and Coaches or players are defenders. Dribble & shoot to score in a goal at one end then go to the other end to shoot. How many goals in 2 minutes or a set time. Bonus points for goals scored with a player's weaker foot.

Less Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but remove the defenders and see how many goals players can score in a set time limit.

More Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but add a marker line 3-5 yards in front of the goals that the players must shoot before they get to.

Guided Questions:

1. How do you know it's a good time to shoot? (There is a clear path to the goal, or they are close to the goal.)
2. What is the correct shooting technique? (Toe of shooting foot is pointed down, ankle is locked, striking the ball with the laces of our shooting foot. NO TOE BALLS.)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2

Week 6: Shooting - 3v1 to Goal

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1

Practice (30 Minutes)

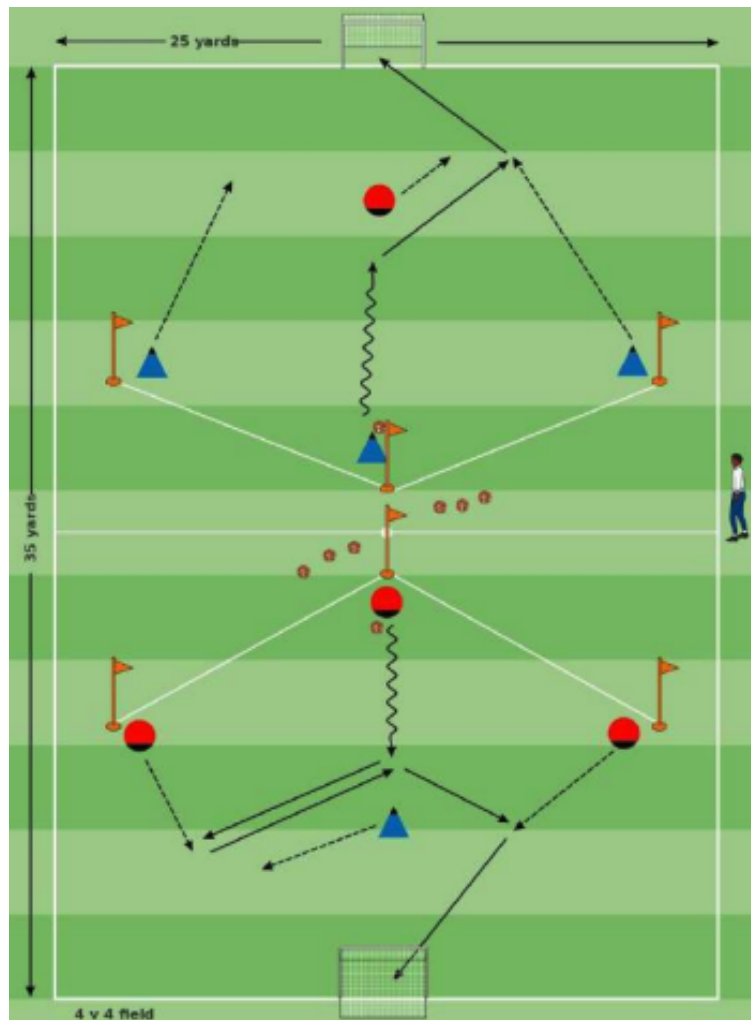
Organization: Divide a regular 4 v 4 field (35 x 25 yards) into two fields, each with one goal and two diagonal goal lines. Divide players into two groups of four. Choose one defender from each group. Teams play 3 v 1. Each attack begins with the attackers at their starting positions. The defenders counterattack on the goal lines. Each team gets four balls/attacks. Which team scores more goals? Afterward, choose new defenders.

Less Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but make the goal bigger.

More Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but add another defender or play 2v1 instead of 3v1.

Guided Questions:

1. How can the attackers make the most of their advantage? The middle attacker should dribble at the defender, look for passing opportunities on the right and left, and pass to a teammate.
2. When should you shoot? (When I'm past the defender and the goal is open.)
3. When should you pass? (When the defender is blocking the goal.)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2

Week 7: Defending - 1v1 to Lines

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1

Practice (30 Minutes)

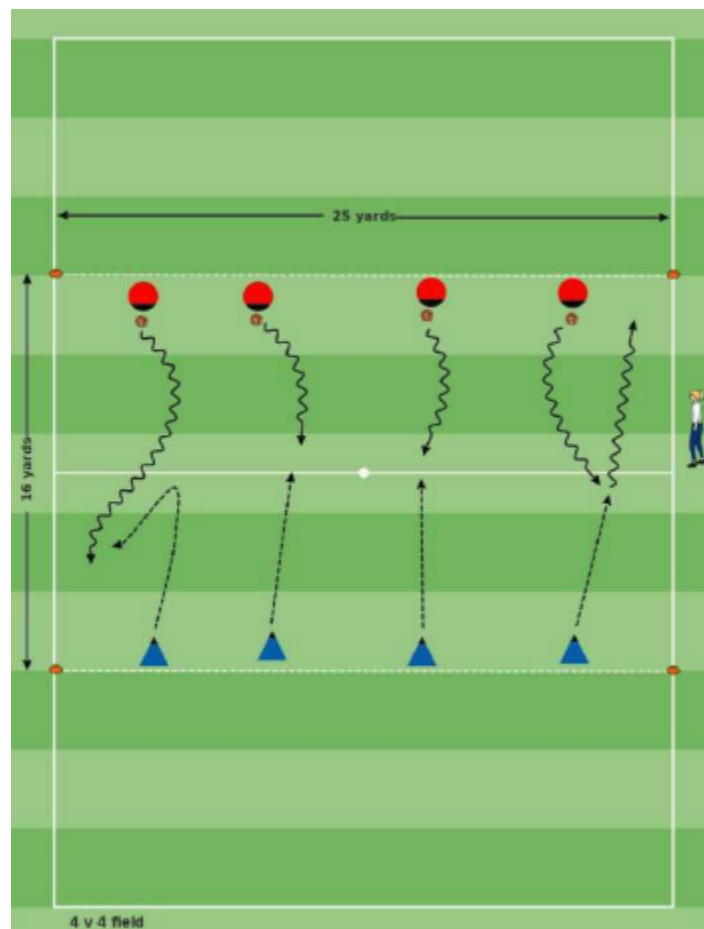
Organization: Mark out a 16x25 yard field. Divide players into two teams. The attackers (red) line up on one endline with a ball. The defenders (blue) line up on the opposite endline. At the coach's signal, all the attackers dribble onto the field and try to dribble across blue's endline. The defenders try to stop them, steal the ball, and counterattack on the opposite endline. Teams switch roles after four rounds.

Less Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but make the playing area smaller so the defenders have less area to cover.

More Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but make the field bigger or have less defenders.

Guided Questions:

1. With all the players running at you, how can you win a ball? (Pick one attacker, block their path, and steal the ball from them)
2. How do you steal the ball from an opponent who's dribbling? (By knocking the ball away or tackling the ball with your feet)
3. What part of the foot should you use to tackle the ball? (Inside of the foot)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2

Week 8: Defending - 1v1 to Goal

1st Play (10 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 1

Practice (30 Minutes)

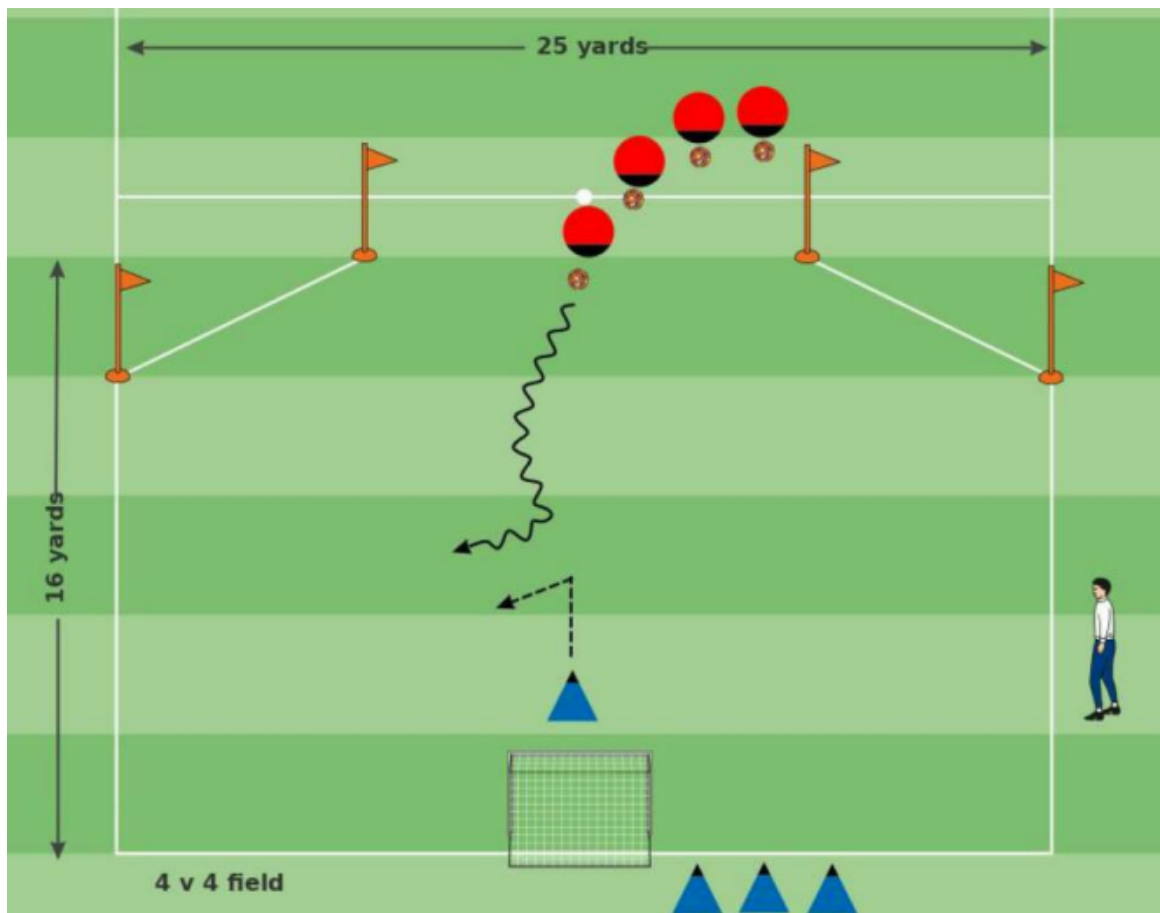
Organization: Mark out two diagonal goal lines 16 yards from a small goal. Assign attackers (red) and defenders (blue) to starting positions as shown. The first attacker runs onto the field for the 1v1. The defender anticipates the attacker, blocks the path to the goal, looks for a chance to try and steal the ball, and then dribbles or passes it through one of the diagonal goal lines. Play continues until a goal is scored or goes out of bounds. Afterward, the next attacker starts.

Less Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but Attacker has to score within a set time limit.

More Challenging: Same as Core Activity, but the Defender has to run out to engage the attacker, and can't stand in front of their goal.

Guided Questions:

1. How can you keep the attacker from scoring? (Block the path to the goal, force the attacker outside, and steal the ball)
2. What's a good moment to steal the ball? (When the attacker lets it get too far away)



2nd Play (20 Minutes)

Refer to Figure 2