



3rd-6th Grade Coach Education



U10 Age Group Characteristics:

- attention span lengthens from U8 and they start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions
- they start to think ahead and think “If this, then that”
- they are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play
- demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their complete responsibility
- they start to recognize fundamental tactical concepts
- children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure
- players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach—“I play for the Tigers” or “I play for coach Amy’s team”
- there is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams
- this is still a crucial age for technical skill development

Skill Priorities:

U10:

Continue with dribbling foci from U8

Passing with inside and outside of both feet

Shooting with both feet

Receiving the ball with all parts of the body

Proper 1v1 and 2v1 defending and attacking

Intro to 2v2



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U10 Sample Lesson Plan:

Intentional Free Play:

Have a field set up for players to scrimmage in. When they start arriving, have them join the field and play anywhere from 1v1 to 4v4. If you have more players, set up a second field and have them start off with playing 1v1 to 4v4.



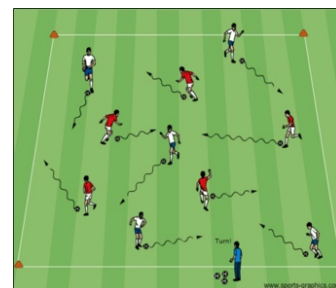
Technical Box:

All players dribbling in a defined space. Players should use all surfaces of their feet.

Coach: Prompt players to work on change of direction, scissors, fake left/go right, step over and turn, pull back, half-turn, sole of the foot rolls when the coach claps, “change”, “turn”, etc.

Version 2: Walk around and put pressure on the players.

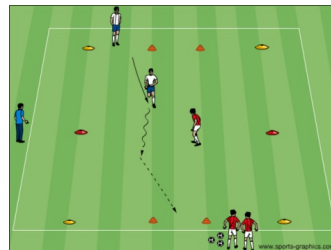
Version 3: Players will try to knock each other’s soccer balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own.



1v1 to Two Small Goals:

In a grid 10x15 yards with small goals on the end lines. A player passes the ball diagonally across the grid to their opponent who then attacks the small goal. Passing through the goal is 1 point and dribbling through the goal is 3 points. Each player keeps track of their own score.

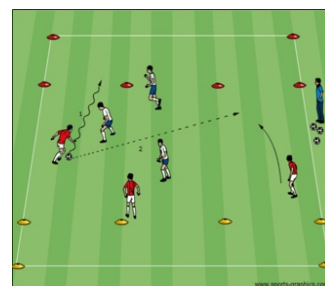
Coach: The goals are 4 yards wide.



3v3 End-zone Game:

Two teams play in a defined space with each team attacking an end-zone defended by the opponent. Teams score points when a player dribbles into the opponent’s end-zone under control.

Coach: Encourage players to recognize opportunities to burst into space under control.



Scrimmage:

Create field based on playing numbers and size of area.



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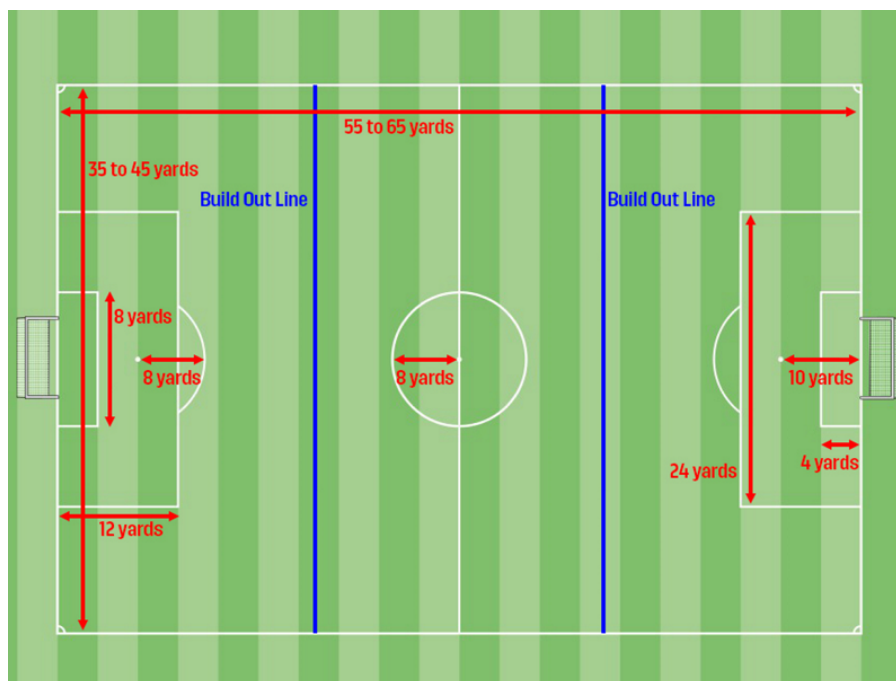


General coaching points:

- Stress proper technique in all your activities
- Be concise and direct with your comments
- Recognize that players will tune you out if you speak for longer than roughly 25 seconds
- Keep practice active so players will not drift
- Remember that players are watching your facial and body reactions, be aware and be sensitive
- Let kids be kids and do not be afraid to show your fun, childlike sense of humor
- Keep things fun and challenging and your players will both smile and develop!

US YOUTH SOCCER U10 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

- Under 10's play 7v7 (includes GK)
- Field Size: 35 yds x 55 yds to 45 yds x 65 yds
- Ball: Size 4
- Offsides: Yes
- Buildout line: Blue





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U12 Age Group Characteristics:

- all children are maturing at different rates
- players need to warm-up and stretch as muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common otherwise
- players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations
- they like to solve problems
- peer evaluation is a constant
- egos are sensitive
- coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt
- technique still needs to be reinforced constantly
- playing too much can lead to overuse injuries
- playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out
- this is the dawn of tactics!
- keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks, we never want them to stop doing these things
- ask for feedback from them, they will tell you how things are going
- try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them
- keep it fun!!!

Skill Priorities:

U12:

Continue with all U10 foci

Basic Combination Play

Proper 2v2 defending and attacking

Ability to chip the ball

Accurately play long passes

Intro to 3v3



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U12 Sample Lesson Plan:

Intentional Free Play:

Have a field set up for players to scrimmage in. When they start arriving, have them join the field and play anywhere from 1v1 to 4v4. If you have more players, set up a second field and have them start off with playing 1v1 to 4v4.



Numbered Passing:

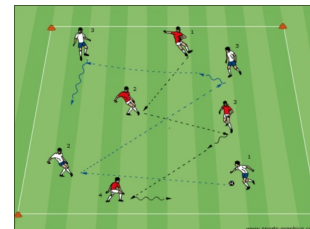
In a defined space create small groups of 5 players with one ball. Each player is numbered 1-5. Sequential passing: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1, 2, 3, etc.

Version 1: Two touch

Version 2: Two touch, one touch

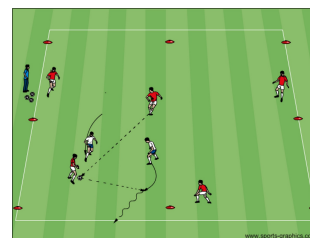
Version 3: One touch

Focus: Technique of passing and when receiving, move with the ball



5v2 possession:

In a 15x20 grid, five players keep the ball away from two defenders. The five players score a point if they string together 4 consecutive passes (can change the amount of consecutive passes to make it easier/harder). If the two defenders dispossess the opposing team; they try to dribble out of the grid to score a point. Change defenders every 1-2 minutes.



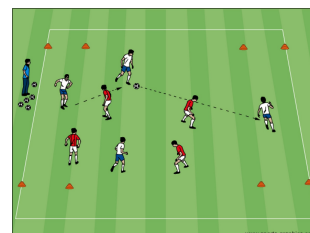
3v3 to 4v4 to four goals:

In a grid place small goals (3 yards wide) near each corner. The goals are set up along the 25-yard lines for extra width in the attack. Play a 3v3/4v4 match. Each team attacks the 2 goals opposite them and defends the 2 goals behind them.

Method of Scoring:

- 1 Point for each pass between the cones

All goals must be below knees and may not touch the cones



Scrimmage:

Create field based on playing numbers and size of area.



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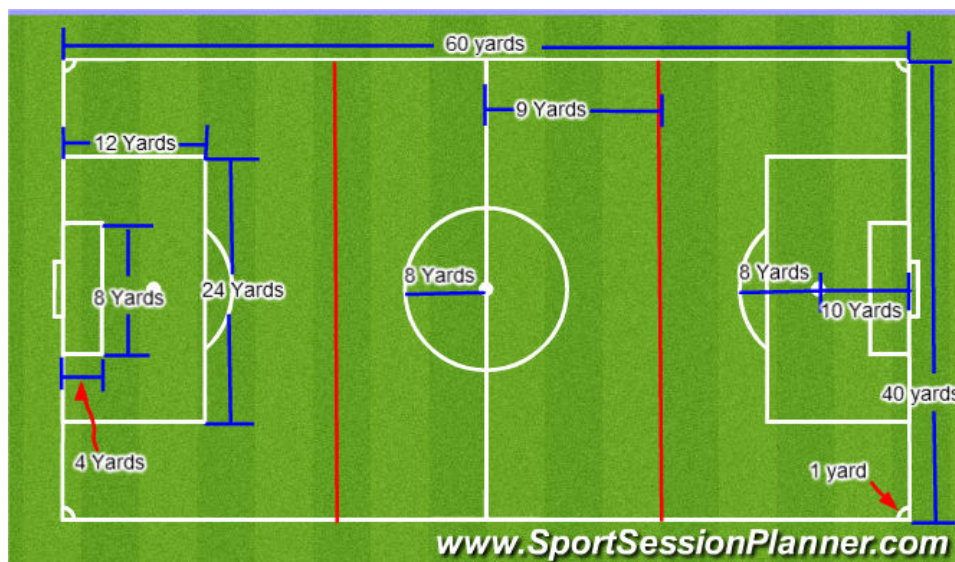


General coaching points:

- limit talking vs getting them in an activity and showing them
- constantly challenge the players to keep them interested and having fun
- avoid line drills as players find those to be boring
- no need to yell at players.....ever
- players should be able to play a couple or few positions at this age
- let their personalities shine
- remember, it is their team, not yours
- make sure they understand the basic tactical concepts well, as opposed to many tactical concepts superficially
- run a tight ship
- have fun!

US YOUTH SOCCER U10 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Under 12's play 9v9 (includes GK)
- Field Size: 70 yds x 45 yds to 80 yds x 55 yds
- Ball: Size 4
- Offsides: Yes





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General Notes:

- Dribbling forms the foundation for all other skills
- To boot or not to boot?
- Encourage all skills vs only scoring
- Teach parents the correct phrases and let them know your goals for the season
- Guided Discovery/Slanty Line Theory
- Spacing for activities/games
- Player centered approach
- Game like experience
- Enjoyable environment
- Support individual growth

Resources:

Laura Ray, lauraraysoccercamp@gmail.com

(Website: <https://lauraraysoccercamp.com/>) (Instagram: lauraraysoccercamp / Facebook: Laura Ray Soccer Camp)

Mass Youth Soccer: <https://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/session-plans/>

App: <https://www.mojo.sport/>