

## ACTIVITIES

- C. With players in a legs spread wide standing position, ask them throw the ball over the head to the other hand. Upon catching, the ball is returned back overhead to the other hand.

### Games (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have all players on their knees in a circle. Two balls should be thrown between players with successful catches being tallied. A 30-second time limit for a world record could help stimulate excitement.
- B. This requires a participant and a scorekeeper. At a given signal the participant plays the ball from his hands to any body part and back to his hands. No body part can be used twice in succession. After 30 seconds, switch roles.

### Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have all players move around in half the field either dribbling the ball with their feet or throwing it in the air. When coach calls a body part, the ball is controlled with that body part called touching the ball.

## EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- C. This is an eye/hand and ball sense activity. At times the ball may go out of their sight. If they still catch it, that's ball sense.
- A. Observe how some of the players are more successful at this than they are at some of the ground games.
- B. Creative players really enjoy these kinds of activities. Others moan a lot and complain.
- A. Although this is a large group activity, this is a very individual exercise. Observe to see which of the players can adapt to the demands and succeed.



## SESSION 15 | Balance

### ACTIVITIES

#### Organizing Activity

- A. Have players move around in the penalty box (with no ball). Ask them to act as small as they can be or as big or as thin or as tall or as wide or as heavy or as light.
- B. Direct players to run in place as fast as they can, then as slow as they can. Do the same with bouncing in place or with hand movement.
- C. Have kneeling players raise one hand, then one arm, then one foot, leg, etc. Keep switching to different body parts.

#### Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Balance

- A. Each player has a ball at his feet. On a given signal players touch the ball with their hands as often as they can in 10 seconds. Same activity with elbows, then with feet.
- B. With the ball between their feet, have players play it back and forth from foot to foot. Use 10-second intervals as time limits for count of touches.
- C. Holding the ball with both hands, have players hop on one foot then the other. Do the same activity with players holding the ball as low as possible, then behind them.

### EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Be sure to praise creative efforts.
  - B. Here we are looking for body control and foot/hand speed.
  - C. Observe those who can successfully shift their center of gravity and those struggling with their balance.
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- A. Use hands and elbows as the confidence builders. It's the foot touches that require balance.
  - B. Emphasis is on lower body control and quick footwork.
  - C. Switching weight from foot to foot requires strength and coordination with balance as the end result.

## ACTIVITIES

### Games (10-15 minutes)

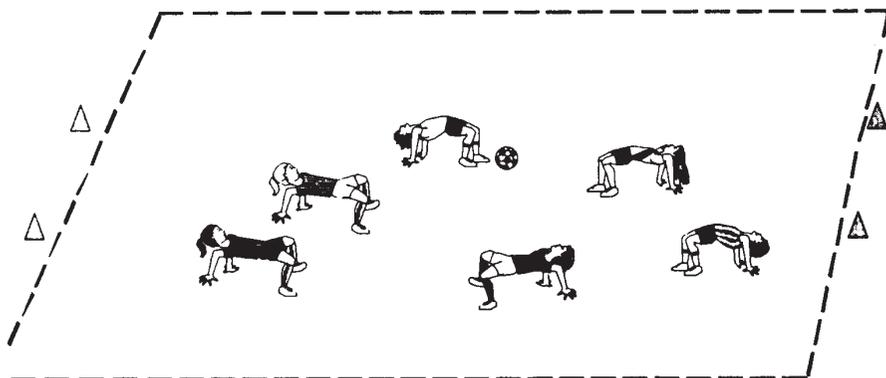
- A. With a ball in both hands have a pair of players "chicken fight" trying to knock each other off balance by hitting one another's ball.
- B. In an "elephant walk" position (bent at the waist, knees stiff, hands clasped, and arms hanging down) have pairs of players move around in the center circle knocking the ball back and forth with their "trunk" (clasped hands) to each other.

### Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have two teams going for each other's goal in a "Crab Soccer Game". The crab position is hands behind the back on the ground, belly up, and knees bent. Throw in a second ball if it gets boring.

## EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Match up stronger players with stronger players. Try this with players balancing on one foot.
  - B. This is a fun activity where the coach must have all of the players moving. Use a 20-second time count and have them tell you the number of successful passes. Rest assured, they'll exaggerate.
- 
- A. Some little ones don't have enough stamina to play this more than 30 seconds at a time. That's okay; play sixteen 30-second periods.



## SESSION 16 | All Skills

### ACTIVITIES

#### Organizing Activity

- A. Have players dribble in and out of each other in a confined area. Use cones to designate an area 15 x 20 yds. Vary the field size based on numbers.
- B. Continue the activity. On occasion stop the players and demonstrate a pose you would like them to copy, e.g. one foot on ball, sit and spin on your ball, stand on one foot with your hands out.
- C. Assemble all players with their ball in hand. On coach's command they should all throw their ball in the air and duck. Chase any ball, dribble and repeat.
- D. Place all balls in an area by the coach. Coach kicks balls in different directions 10 to 15 yds. away. Each kick should be accompanied with a player's name. That player should chase down that ball and quickly dribble it back to coach.

#### Individual activities Emphasis - All Skills

- A. Ask players to roll their ball away, chase it, and control it with whatever soccer body part is appropriate. After they've shown coach a few, show them a few, e.g. bottom of the foot, inside, outside, etc.

### EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Ask players to move at various speeds and in different directions. Don't let them run in a circle.
  - B. Stress balance and muscular development in the poses you choose.
  - C. This is simply to get them laughing and in a great mood for training.
  - D. Stress dribbling quickly and reacting to the proper ball when their name is called.
- 
- A. In this activity body control is being developed while the feet are being used to control a ball.

**ACTIVITIES**

- B. Ask players to toss their own ball in the air and attempt to bring it under control without using hands.
- C. Show players how serve air balls and ground balls to each other. This is difficult at first but, this skill will develop over time.

**Game**

- A. Set up a small field with small goals (no goalkeepers). Teams must have different colored shirts. Play 2 v. 2 for about a minute and then alternate another group of 2 v. 2. Keep rotating players every minute or so.

**Final game**

- A. Mark out an area 30 x 30 yds. Divide players into two groups (two colors) and play "keep away" (no goals).
- B. Add goals and allow the kids to play!

**EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS**

- B. This improves foot/eye coordination and also will improve ball control over time.
  - C. This activity introduces the concept of working with a partner and will eventually lead to group cooperation.
- 
- A. Games of this nature are fun, relevant, and provide maximum contact with the ball.
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- A. You won't see much teamwork but, that's fine for now.
  - B. Don't coach now. Let them play.

## SESSION 17 | Eye-foot coordination

### ACTIVITIES

#### Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)

- A. Have players with feet together jump forward, backward or sideways to the number of jumps called by the coach.
- B. With the same idea, coach calls out a number of skips (not less than five). See how far a player can travel with so many skips.
- C. Create an obstacle course out of anything you have available. Tell players they must go over, around or under anything they find. First on their own, then the same course, same conditions with their ball.

#### Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Eye-Foot Coordination

- A. Ask players to play their ball from foot to hand and from thigh to hand. For a greater challenge, ask them to try foot to thigh to hand. The one who does this successfully will really have a sense of achievement.
- B. In a large area each player sends his ball in the air with either hand or foot. The objective is to recover the ball with the feet in less than four bounces and dribble to the starting position.
- C. Have each player play his ball on the ground with his hands. Before the ball stops, he must do a forward roll, jump over his ball and let it pass between his feet.

### EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Observe the coordination exhibited by the players.
  - B. Encourage players to extend their bodies and reach greater distances.
  - C. With or without a ball the more physical or athletic types will do well. They should be praised and the others must be encouraged.
- 
- A. See which players are willing to risk a little failure. It's good for the spirit. Have players try these skills while standing still and while moving around.
  - B. Observe eye/foot coordination with emphasis on foot speed to the ball.
  - C. Encourage players to plan ahead. Observe how some of the thinkers sort this out.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Games (10-15 minutes)

- A. With three to four players per team, set up cones 20 yards away from each team. The challenge is for each team member to play a ball, with his feet, to a cone. The team with the three team balls closest to the cones wins.
- B. Have pairs of players stand around the coach. Each pair has one ball. Coach points to a pair. They give their ball to coach who serves it on the ground or in the air. The partners chase it with the first one to touch the ball winning the points. Play the best four out of five serves.

#### Final game (10-15 minutes)

- A. Combine the ideas in Small Group A and B. Each team member strikes a dead ball, a rolling ball, a bouncing ball and a hand held ball to established targets. Keep team scores.

### EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. Observe the stroke used by the players in this accuracy activity. Some will kick, not push the ball.
  - B. This encourages speed off the mark and eye/foot or soccer body (no hands) touch. Active players like this kind of activity.
- 
- A. This is a total team effort and an activity in which some very non-athletic children can get lucky and be heroes. Have teams try to improve their score at a future session.



## SESSION 18 | Striking

### ACTIVITIES

#### Organizing Activity

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area. Coach calls out "stop!" and "go!"
- B. Have players continue dribbling in a defined area. Coach calls out a color of any player's shirt. At this time all players should look for and move to a player with that color shirt. They must touch that player's ball.
- C. In pairs, ask players to balance a ball between their foreheads while standing face to face.
- D. Ask players to tap dance with the ball. They should alternate tapping the ball lightly with the right and left foot. Then ask each player to pass the ball (with himself) back and forth, from one foot to the other.

#### Individual activities

#### Emphasis - Striking a Ball

- A. Demonstrate a proper instep kick.

### EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. This exercise will work on dribbling skill and will help develop body control involved in stopping the ball.
  - B. This causes players to make a decision under pressure and act instantly. Instead of a color, you could call players names.
  - C. Among other things this stresses cooperation between players.
  - D. Emphasize tapping at different speeds. (Slow, slower, fast, faster).
- 
- A. Let players try to imitate. Don't talk; have them try.



## SESSION 19 | Dribbling

### ACTIVITIES

#### Organizing Activity

- A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area like cars in a crowded parking lot.
- B. Ask players to try to move around their ball with one foot on top of it. Repeat with one knee, one hand, the forehead, etc.
- C. Ask players to skip, jump off one foot or both feet and fly, jump and roll, etc.
- D. Ask players to throw or kick the ball out of their hands, as high as they can. Everybody duck! Retrieve any ball. Repeat.

#### Individual activities Emphasis - Dribbling

- A. Ask players to dribble to a well-defined line of cones 10 yds. away, turn any way they can, and return to the starting line with their ball. Repeat
- B. In an area 20 x 20 yds., ask players to dribble away from you, the shark (coach).
- C. Make a circle with cones and ask the team to dribble around them. After a short time, ask players to reverse directions. Change directions faster and faster.

### EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- A. No collisions. Honking is permitted.
  - B. All these positions will aid in body control.
  - C. Varied movements like these develop balance and strength in the legs.
  - D. Let them enjoy!
- 
- A. The emphasis is on body control and turning with the ball. Give rest as needed.
  - B. Just keep moving and telling them not to get caught.
  - C. Observe ball control with changes in directions.

## ACTIVITIES

- D. Set up a short and simple obstacle course with cones. Demonstrate the pattern and ask players to go through it as quickly as possible.

### Game

- A. Set up several small 20 x 15 yd. fields with 2 yd. goals. Have players play a series of 1 v. 1 games. The first goal wins, then rest. They should then be ready for another game.

### Final Game

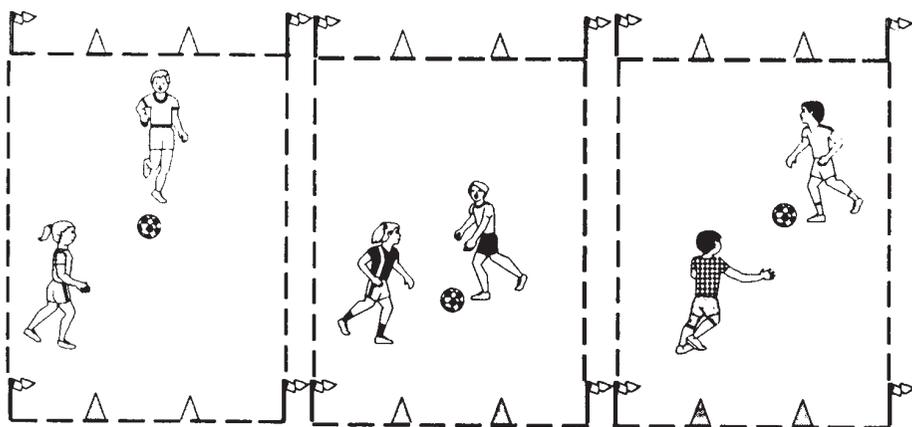
- A. Enlarge the field to about 30 x 20 yds. and play a series of 3 v. 3 games. Keep moving players on and off field.

## EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS

- D. Don't make the course too elaborate. Time them if you want. This will create a line of those doing nothing unless you plan another activity, be creative.

- A. Define enough fields to keep players active. They'll love this forever.

- A. Change teams regularly so that everyone becomes a winner. Get them excited!



## SESSION 20 | Bonus

For this particular training session you (coach) must invite all of the parents in advance. Tonight will be the soccer game of all soccer games. Tonight we will play Brain and Brawn v. Brawn and Brain.

In this activity, the adults come onto the field (properly attired -- sneakers that is), and participate with the children. The rules go like this:

1. Each adult pairs with one child.
2. Two teams are formed with an equal number of adult/child partners.
3. Use US Youth Soccer Modified Playing Rules to define the field.
4. The referee's whistle sounds and the game begins.
5. If the adults are designated as Brains, they must take the child by the hand where they think he should be, but they (the adults) may not touch the ball.
6. All striking of the ball, including and not limited to scoring, is done by the children.

Caution, Caution, Caution: Sometimes the adults become over zealous. Slow down any adult who tries to move faster than the child can move.

A word to the coach: Observe the bunching that goes on during the game. How can you ever blame the players again, it must be in the genes? It's the adults who are telling them where to go!

7. Now reverse roles by letting the players be the Brain and pulling the adults' Brawn to where they belong.
8. Be sure the adults know that the ball may only be struck below the waist.

Final statement:

Is this really soccer? Perhaps not, then again it is a heck of a lot of fun and for a 5-, 6-, or 7-year-old that's really what soccer should be about.

# Stretches



Up on toes. Don't bounce!



Thigh stretch. Younger players may need to rest their free hand on a partner's shoulder for support.



A. With knees slightly bent, reach for your ankles and hold for a few seconds.

B. For fun, swing like a rag doll in and out.



Back on heels. Bend forward slightly for balance.



With knees slightly bent, swing to one side, hold your ankle for a few seconds. Swing to the other side hold your ankle for a few seconds.



Toe touch. Have knees bent slightly and don't bounce.

## How to play Small-Sided Games with “large” rosters

Easy! Play two games of 4 v. 4 or 3 v. 3 at the same time on adjoining fields. Coaches name their teams of four and play begins! Ideally the coach and substitutes will occupy the space between fields with the spectators on the opposite sidelines. Two teams each with a roster of 12 and two mini fields allow eight to play at once! With three mini fields all 12 can play at once. The size of your roster is not as important as how many children get to play and for how long. Remember, no one comes to play only half a game! Worried about coaching three games at once? Don't! Let the children play!

## US Youth Soccer Official Under 6 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at [www.ussoccer.com/referees](http://www.ussoccer.com/referees). Please also note the U6 addendum and appendix.

### **Law 1) The Field of Play**

**Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

**Length:** minimum 20 yards maximum 30 yards

**Width:** minimum 15 yards maximum 25 yards

**Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

**The Goal Area:** None.

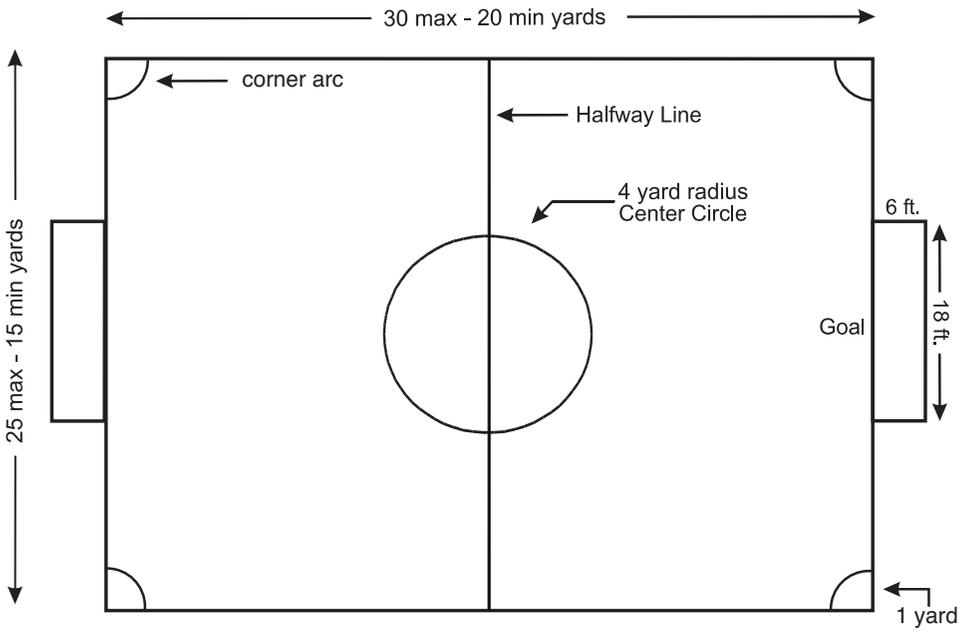
**The Penalty Area:** None.

**Flagposts:** None.

**The Corner Arc:** Conform to FIFA.

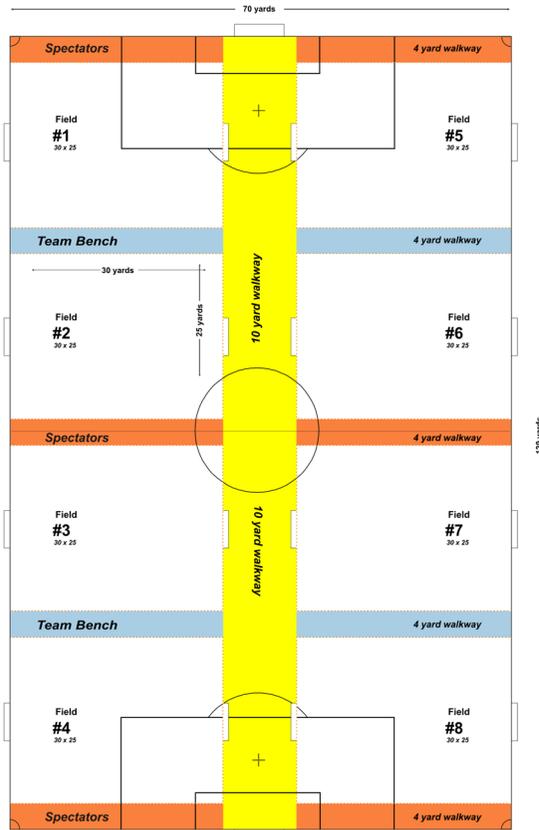
**Goals:** Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

**Safety:** Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



### Suggested Set-up for 3v3 Fields

*Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 8 - 30 x 25 fields (maximum field size)*



**Law 2) The Ball** - Size three (3).

**Law 3) The Number of Players** - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than three players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and games may be coed.

**Law 4) The Players Equipment** - Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

**Law 5) The Referee** - An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

**Law 6) The Assistant Referees** - None.

**Law 7) The Duration of the Match** - The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, six (6) to eight (8) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

**Law 8) The Start and Restart of Play** - Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 9) The Ball In and Out of Play** - Conform to FIFA.

**Law 10) The Method of Scoring** - Conform to FIFA.

**Law 11) Offside** - None.

**Law 12) Fouls and Misconduct** - Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

**Law 13) Free Kicks** - Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all free kicks are direct and opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 14) The Penalty Kick** - None.

**Law 15) The Pass-In** - A pass-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 16) The Goal Kick** - The goal kick should be taken within 2-3 yards of the goal line anywhere across the width of the field of play at the nearest point from where the ball was retrieved. Opposing players must be four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

**Law 17) The Corner Kick** - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U6 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.

## US Youth Soccer Official Under 8 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at [www.ussoccer.com/referees](http://www.ussoccer.com/referees). Please note the U8 addendum and appendix.

### **Law 1) The Field of Play**

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 25 yards maximum 35 yards

Width: minimum 20 yards maximum 30 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line three (3) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of three (3) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

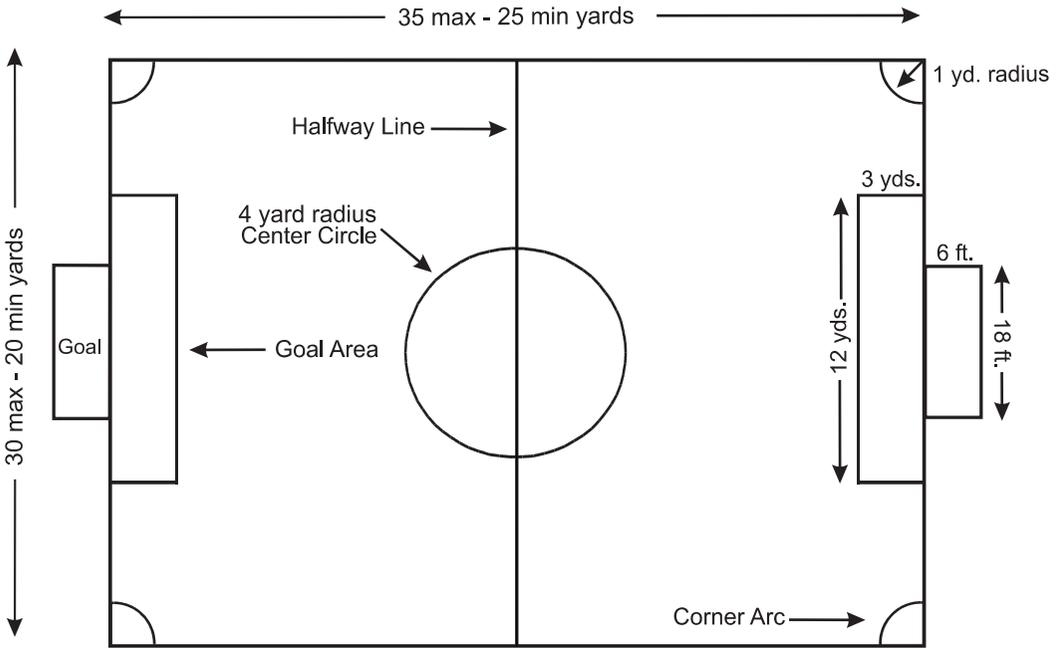
The Penalty Area: none.

Flagposts: none.

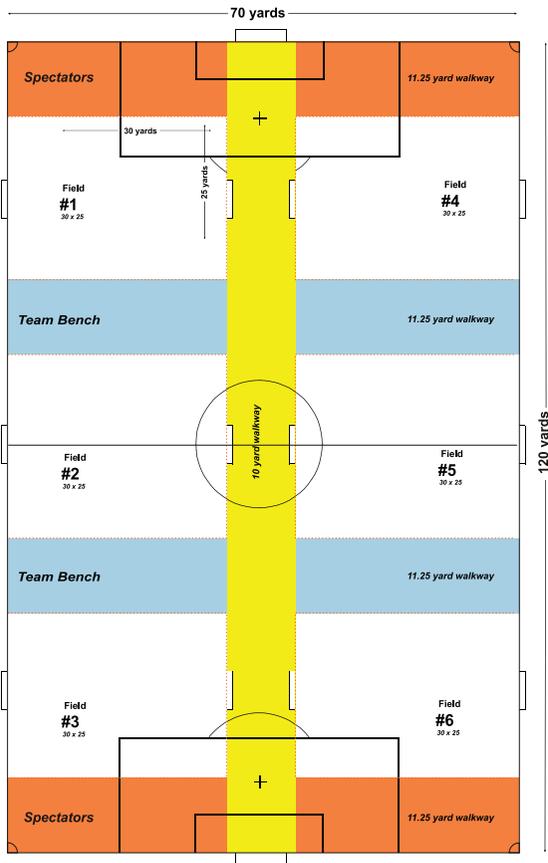
The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



**Suggested Set-up for 4v4 Fields**  
*Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 6 - 30 x 25 fields (maximum field size)*



**Law 2) The Ball** - Size three (3).

**Law 3) The Number of Players** - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than four players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage of play and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

**Law 4) The Players' Equipment** - Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

**Law 5) The Referee** - An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

**Law 6) The Assistant Referees** - None.

**Law 7) The Duration of the Match** - The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, twelve (12) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

**Law 8) The Start and Restart of Play** - Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 9) The Ball In and Out of Play** - Conform to FIFA.

**Law 10) The Method of Scoring** - Conform to FIFA.

**Law 11) Offside** - None.

**Law 12) Fouls and Misconduct** - Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

**Law 13) Free Kicks** - Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all kicks are direct and all opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 14) The Penalty Kick** - None.

**Law 15) The Pass-In** - A pass-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 16) The Goal Kick** - The goal kick should be taken anywhere within the goal area. Opposing players must be outside the goal area AND at least four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

**Law 17) The Corner Kick** - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play. PLEASE ALSO READ THE U8 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.

## Coaching Education Programs

US Youth Soccer offers coaching courses and training for all coaches. For a course schedule contact your local State Association or US Youth Soccer.

### **Youth Coaching Modules**

There are a number of Youth Coaching Modules offered to improve your age-appropriate coaching from US Youth Soccer. Each module offers classroom and field sessions designed for the parent/coach or novice coach with an emphasis on the age group of your players. Techniques, psychology and FUN are introduced with an emphasis on player development. Check out your State Association website or USYouthSoccer.org for more courses on coaching education. Some states offer the course online as well!

Available Modules include: U6/U8, U8/U10 and the U12 Youth Module

### **Also available from US Youth Soccer:**

The Novice Coach DVD

Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual

The Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer

Assistant Coach Series: U10 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

Assistant Coach Series: U12 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach

For additional information contact US Youth Soccer or your State Association.

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