

ORGANIZING A PRACTICE AND SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

In order to be able to give your players the best you have, you must prepare properly before arriving at practice. If you turn up at practice and “wing” your session, then the players will soon realize that you are cheating them out of a terrific learning experience. Some coaches believe that all they have to do is turn up, roll a ball out, pick sides and the game will teach them all they need to know-not exactly.

It is well documented that in a 90 minute game the ball is in play, on average roughly 2/3 of the time or about 60 minutes. Since there are two teams then each will have the ball about 30 minutes. And, with 11 players on the respective teams, each player will handle the ball between 2-3 minutes. That’s 2-3 minutes in a 90-minute match! So if you think the game will teach them all they need to know, then you are in for a big letdown. The game will highlight what skills the players must grasp, but it is up to you to construct practice sessions that give them repetitions, choices, maximum touches on the ball all in a challenging environment that improve those skills. And, then plug it back into the game to see if your coaching is having an effect.

In order to run an efficient practice, you must be organized and observant. Arrive at your practice before the players do, so you can layout the cones, have the bibs ready and go over in your mind your practice. One activity should flow into the next one with a minimal amount stopping and reorganizing. Observe what the players are doing. How they are working? Are they having fun? Are they getting maximum touches on the ball? Don’t stay in one activity too long (especially for the younger ages), but yet long enough so they understand what you are asking of them. Do not have elimination games where players have to sit out if they don’t perform something well (for example, their ball gets kicked out of the area). You will always end up with the lesser skilled players leaving the activity early, thus drastically cutting down on their opportunities to improve. Allow the players to continue to play and to find their own level within your format.

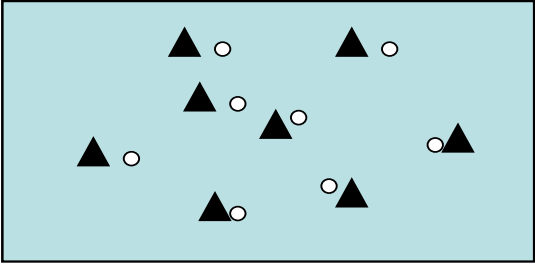
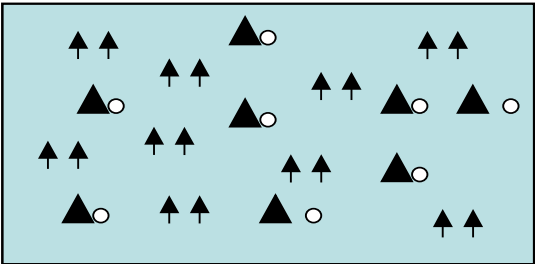
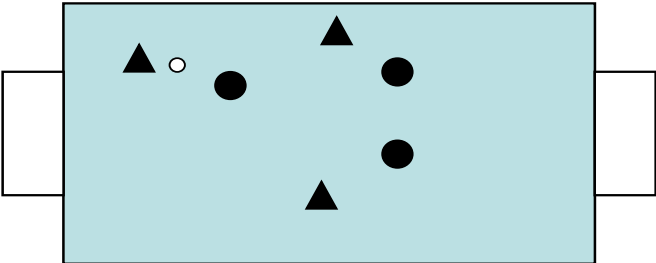
The following are four individual, age specific, lesson plans. They are designed so that you see the organization of the age-appropriate activities, the key points associated with each, and the instructions that go along with them. There are also other games, exercises and activities that we have added at the end of the lesson plans in order to give you additional help. However, we feel that it is very important for you to understand more than simply regurgitating what you see here. We want you to seek out coaching education classes, seminars, and other resources that allow you to comprehend the art of coaching. We want you to construct your own lesson plans, understand what the children of your age group are capable of, grasp age appropriate activities, and then deliver to your players a quality soccer experience.

Coaches’ Activities Checklist

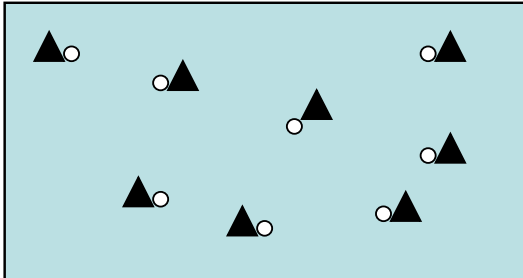
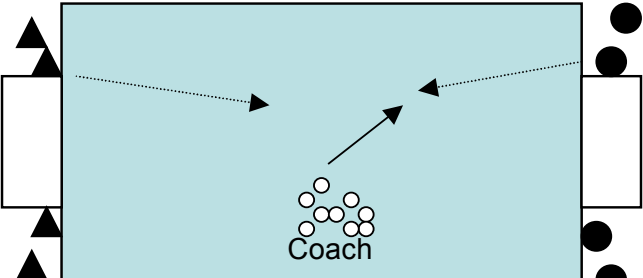
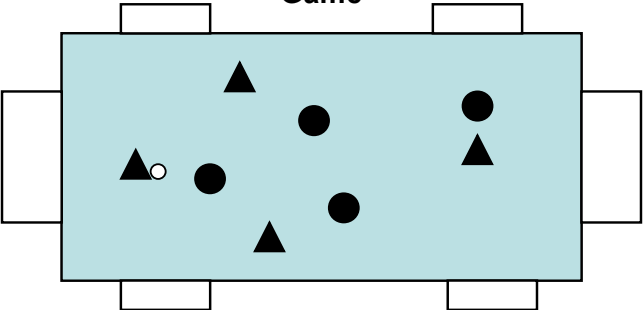
- Activities Fun/ Age Appropriate
- Organized/ Clear Objectives
- Involvement (All Players Active)
- Creativity/ Decision Making
- Spaces Appropriate size for ability and number of players
- Coaches Feedback Appropriate- Clear/ Brief/ Concise/ Positive

PRACTICE PLANS

U.6 Practice Plan

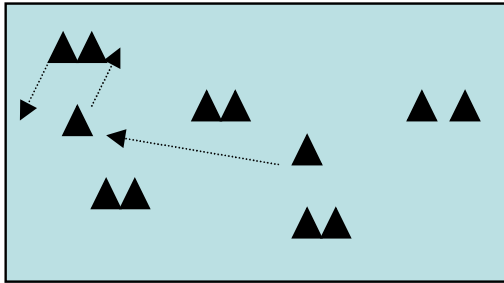
Warm-Up Activities / Games	Organization
 <p>10x15 yard grid marked with cones</p>	<p>Each player with a ball dribbling anywhere in the grid, keep control of the ball and avoid hitting the other players and balls</p> <p>Body Part Dribble – players must stop the ball with the body part the coach calls out, e.g. knee, elbow, ear, etc... and then dribble again in the opposite direction</p> <p>Ballnastics – players roll ball around feet with feet together and legs straight, roll ball as a figure 8 around feet with feet apart, etc...</p> <p>Tag – all players are “it” and attempt to tag the others while maintaining control of their ball, players receive a point for each tag; tag the player’s back and then the stomach = shielding</p> <p>Red Light Green Light – players move across grid or towards moving coach dribbling the ball on coaches’ green light command and stop the ball on coaches’ red light command</p>
 <p>same grid; add 2 yard gates made with cones</p>	<p>Dribbling Gates – all players with a ball; players must dribble through the gates to score a point; How many points can each player score?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) In a limited amount of time e.g. 1 minute <li>b) Before the coach scores a certain number of points <li>c) Score going backwards through the gate <li>d) Score with different body parts (how many different ways?) <p>Red Rover – (remove gates) all players on one side of the field with a ball; coach stands in the middle of the field, on coaches’ command players attempt to dribble across field to the other side without the coach tagging them; players tagged join coach for the next round</p> <p>Progress to “crab” position and kick the ball out of the area</p>
 <p>20x30 yard field marked with cones; small goals</p>	<p>3v3 or 4v4 Game to lines – play across the field; to score player must dribble across the line in control of the ball</p> <p>3v3 or 4v4 Game to small goals – play normally on the field; place small goals (or use cones) on each goal line</p>

U.8 Practice Plan

<h3>Warm-Up Activities / Games</h3>	<h3>Organization</h3>
 <p>10x15 yard grid marked with cones</p>	<p>Hospital Tag (without ball then with ball) – all players are it and attempt to tag the others; first time a player is tagged he must hold that spot with a hand, the second time he must hold that spot with the other hand, third time he must go to the ‘hospital’ and see the doctor (coach), coach has player do an exercise e.g. number of ball touches and then he is back in the game</p> <p>Ballnastics – (see U.6 Practice Plan)</p> <p>Tunnel Tag – all players with a ball except one who is it and tries to tag the other players; if tagged the player is frozen and holds ball on his head with feet apart; other players may unfreeze them by playing the ball between the frozen player’s legs</p> <p>Math Dribble – all players with a ball dribbling anywhere in the grid; coach calls out a math problem (1+1), players solve it and form the appropriate sized group (2)</p>
<h3>Main Activities / Games</h3>  <p>20x15 yard field with small goals</p>	<p>Goal on the Move – players are in pairs (from math dribble) with a ball; 2 coaches form a goal by holding a bib between them, the ‘goal’ moves about the area; players pass the ball through the moving goal to their partner to score; How many goals can each pair score?</p> <p>Passing through Gates – form gates (see U.6 Practice Plan) pairs pass the ball through gates to score; How many points can each pair score?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In a limited amount of time Score with different body parts <p>Number Game – divide players into two teams, each player is given a number 1 to 4; coach has all of the balls on the side of the field; coach passes a ball to one of the sides and calls a number, the corresponding player from each team plays 1v1 to the small goals; Coach can also call out 2 numbers to play 2v2 or call out two separate numbers, one for each team to play 2v1</p>
<h3>Game</h3>  <p>25x35 yard field marked with cones; small goals</p>	<p>4v4 Game to 4 small goals – play across the field; each team defends two small goals (marked with cones) and scores on the opposite two small goals (marked with cones)</p> <p>4v4 Game to 2 goals – play normally on the field; place small goals (or use cones) on each goal line</p>

U.10 Practice Plan

Warm-Up Activities / Games



15x20 yard area marked with cones

Organization

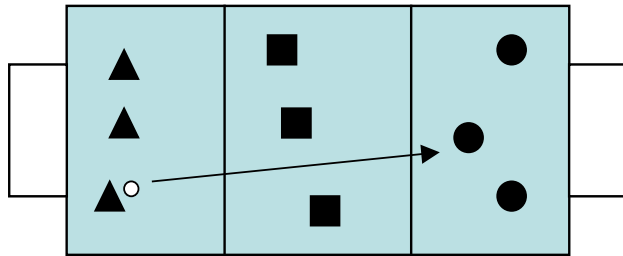
Island Tag – players in pairs making “islands”; coach breaks apart 1 pair; 1 player is ‘it’ & chases the other trying to tag him; if player is tagged the roles are reversed; the player being chased is safe on an “island”, but only 2 are allowed on an “island”, so the player on the other end must leave & is now being chased; Progress to 2 chasers and 2 being chased, from standing to lying position

Ballnastics – (see U.6 Practice Plan)

Switch-Out-Reverse – all players with ball dribbling anywhere in area; coach calls “switch”, players leave ball & find another & dribble again; coach calls “out” players must dribble out of area as fast as possible; coach calls “reverse”, players reverse ball & dribble in opposite direction

Knock Out – all players, but 1 with ball dribbling anywhere in area; on coaches’ command the 1 tries to kick the others balls out of the area; if ball is kicked out, the player joins in kicking out balls

Main Activities / Games



3 - 15x20 yard areas, add goals for final progression

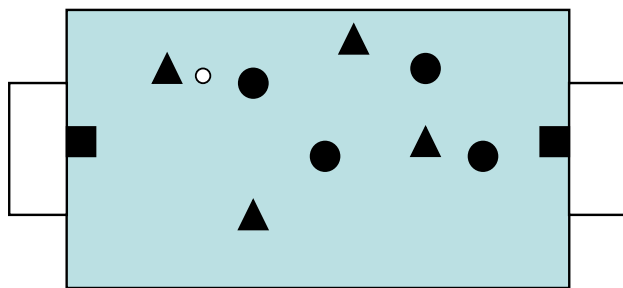
Freeze Tag – 3 teams of 3 to 4 players; 1 team is “it” each player with a ball and tries to hit the players on the other two teams with a ball to freeze them; frozen players stand with legs apart and can be unfrozen if a player crawls through his legs; start with hands (throw) and progress to feet (pass or shoot); team that is it, can pass the ball(s) between them

3 Zone Game – teams on the end try to pass the ball through the center area to the opposite side with out the center team winning the ball; if center team wins the ball, they change places with the end team; team scores a point each time they pass a ball through the center area

Progress to center team playing with a player in each end area to make a 3v1; same rules as above

Progress to taking the game to goals with the center area being a neutral free area where the opponent can not take the ball away; this area is used to “regroup” before the next attack

Game

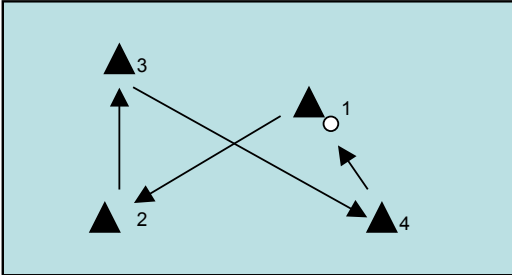
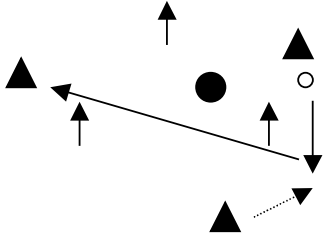
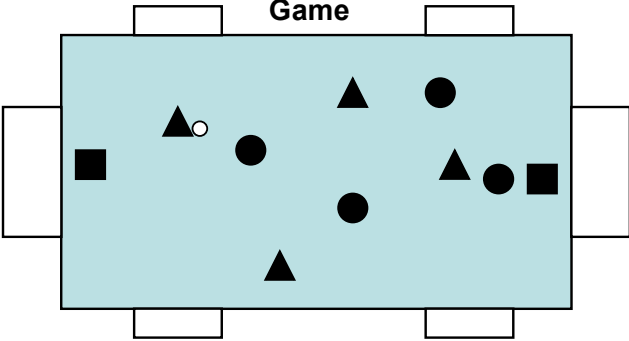


25x35 yard field with goals

5v5 Game with Goalkeepers – smaller numbers equals more touches of the ball for all the players

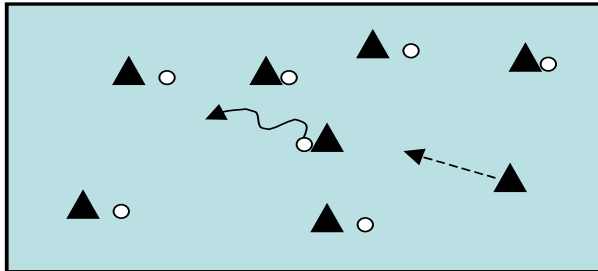
6v6 or 7v7 with Goalkeepers

U.12 Practice Plan

Warm-Up Activities / Games	Organization
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">15x20 yard grid marked with cones</p>	<p>Tail Tag – all players wear a “tail” (bib) out of the back of their shorts; one player or all players is/are it and try to pull the other’s tail out ; without a ball then with a ball</p> <p>Static Stretching – players need to get in the habit of stretching before and after practice</p> <p>Sequence Passing – players in groups of 4 with a ball; players number themselves 1 to 4; ball starts with number 1, 1 passes to 2, 2 to 3 etc.; all players continue to move, no one stands still; after a pass is made the player must move into a space as not to interfere with the next pass; once the players get into a passing rhythm, add a second ball and challenge them to catch the first ball</p>
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Triangle Tag – 3 players form a triangle placing arms on each others shoulders, 4th player is outside; group designates 1 player to be target; 4th player tries to tag the target, while the other 2 players move the triangle to protect & prevent target from being tagged; players change roles</p> <p>Keeper's Nest – 1 player (keeper) guards, but can't touch the ball; other 3 players try to get the ball away from the keeper without being tagged & frozen by the keeper; keeper tries to freeze all 3 players; once a player is frozen, he can remain frozen until all are frozen or the ball is stolen</p> <p>Keeper's Nest 3v1 – 3 cones form a triangle; 3 players on outside possess the ball; triangle creates 3 goals; 1 player (keeper) is in middle & tries to prevent the ball from penetrating the triangle from a pass; the 3 players try to pass the ball between them and move the keeper out of position so the ball may be played through two sides; if keeper intercepts the ball, player who played the ball last becomes new keeper</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Very good for teaching passing and support</p>
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">25x35 yard field</p>	<p>4v4 Games</p> <p>To Lines – play across the field; to score player must dribble across the line in control of the ball; Dribbling Game</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>To 4 small goals – play across the field; each team defends two small goals (marked with cones) and scores on the opposite two small goals (marked with cones) Passing Game</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>To 2 normal goals with GKs – Shooting Game</p> <p>6v6, 7v7 or 8v8 – depends on the number of players on your team; increase the size of the field to fit the numbers</p>

Age Appropriate Activities

U.6 Age Appropriate Activities



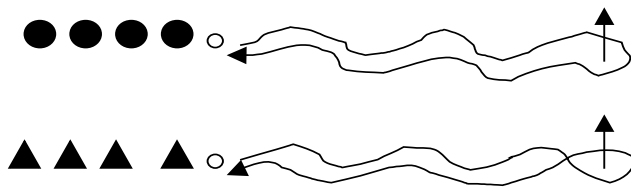
10x15 yard grid marked with cones

Organization

Pirates

All players, except one (Pirate) with a ball; all players dribble away from the pirate keeping control and protecting their ball; Pirate tries to tackle (dispossess) the ball away from a player; the dispossessed player then becomes the Pirate; also, if the player with the ball dribbles outside of the grid, he relinquishes his ball to the pirate; game continues

Progress to adding additional Pirates – 2 pirates, 3 pirates, 4 pirates



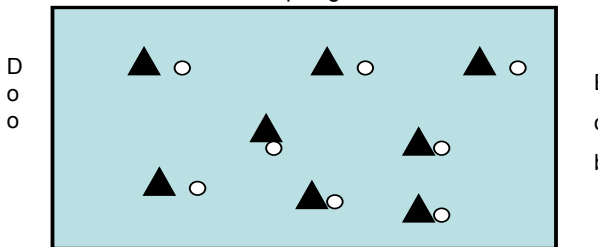
Vary distance between “starting line” and cone depending on ability level and the activity

Relays

Form 2 even teams; create various types of relay races:

- 1st player dribbles ball down around cone or flag and dribbles back; gives the ball to the 2nd player, who does the same etc...
- Run holding ball on head to cone or flag and back
- Run backwards to cone or flag and return running forward
- Add more cones to make a slalom course; players must dribble ball around the slalom course around cone or flag and back through slalom course
- Invent your own races.

Sponge



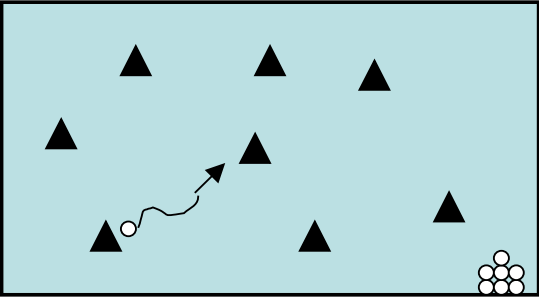
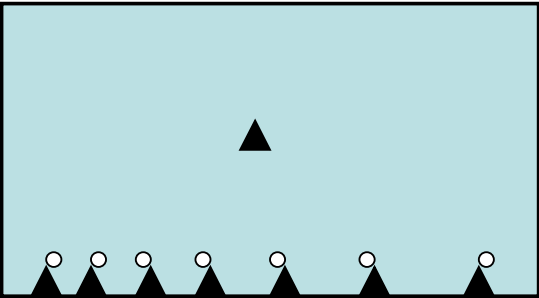
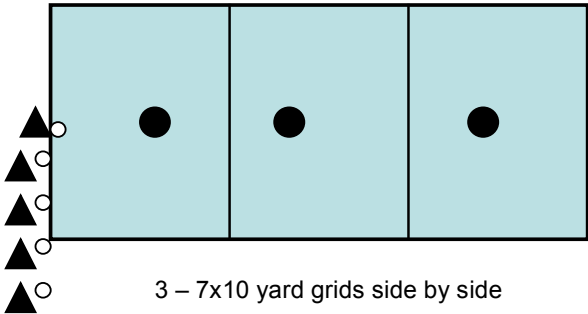
Scooby
10x15 yard grid marked with cones

Colors or Cartoons

All players with a ball in the grid; Have players pick their favorite colors or cartoons; coach gives each side of the grid a color or a cartoon name; players dribble anywhere in the area; coach calls out the name for one of the sides; the players try to get to that side as fast as they can with ball under control.

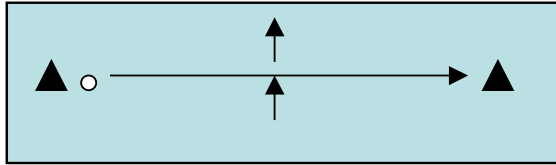
Progress to making teams of two, three or four; each team tries to get to the correct side before the other team

U.8 Age Appropriate Activities

Organization	
 <p>10x15 yard grid marked with cones</p>	<p>Pac Man</p> <p>One player with a ball, all others with out run freely within the grid; player with the ball, “Pac Man”, dribbles the ball and attempts to hit the other players below the waist by passing the ball at them; players without the ball try to avoid getting hit with the ball; once a player is hit, he gets his ball and becomes the second “Pac Man”; game continues until all players have been hit and have their ball</p>
 <p>10x15 yard grid marked with cones</p>	<p>Snake in the Grass</p> <p>All players with a ball except one, the “Snake”; the players with the ball on the coaches’ command attempt to dribble the ball across the grid past the “snake” to safety on the far side of the grid; the “snake” tries to kick the ball away from the players and outside of the grid; repeat the procedure from the other side; when a player’s ball is kicked out of the area, he becomes a “snake” as well; continue game until all are caught.</p> <p>Can also play game with “snake” in sitting position playing as a crab.</p>
 <p>3 – 7x10 yard grids side by side</p>	<p>Jungle Ball</p> <p>Players start at one end of an area with a ball; they go one at a time attempting to get through the area ‘guarded’ by an “Animal” to the next area which has a different “Animal”; the “Animals” which ‘guard’ the areas must stand and move like the animal they represent e.g. crab, snake, monkey; “Animals” try to kick the ball of dribbling player outside of grid; Add a goal at the end of the third area for players to shoot; rotate players so all have an opportunity to dribble and be an animal.</p>

U.10 Age Appropriate Activities

Organization

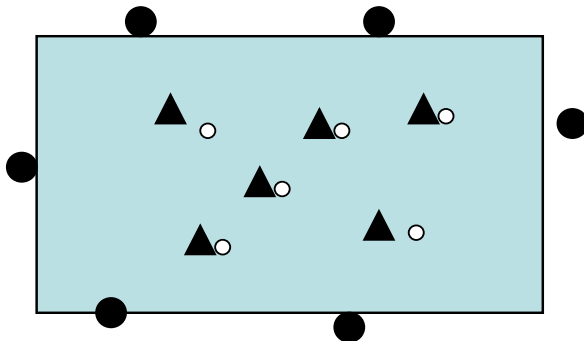


2x15 yard grid marked with cones

Bowling

Partners start 1 yard away from each other; each one passes the ball through the goal to his partner; after each goal the player takes one step back; if a player misses the goal, then the pair must start over; who is the first pair to score goals from outside the 15 yard end lines? Players must use both feet.

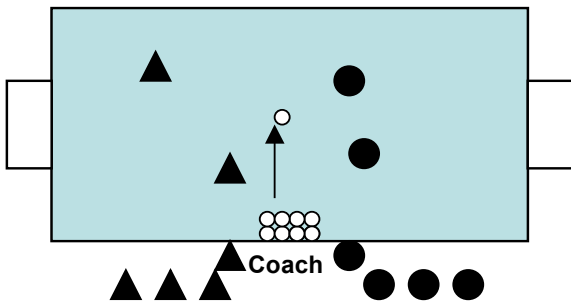
Progress to the most goals scored in 30 seconds, 1 minute, change partners.



20x25 yard field marked with cones

Team Knock Out

Form 2 teams; Team ▲ is on the field each with a ball; Team ● stands anywhere along the sidelines without a ball; on the coaches' command, Team ● runs on to the field and attempts to kick all the balls off of the field; the coach starts the clock on his signal and stops it when the last ball is kicked off the field; Team ▲ members, who have had their ball kicked off the field should help their teammates by getting into positions, so that they may receive a pass; which team can keep their balls on the field the longest?



10x15 yard field marked with cones, with small goals

Get Out of Here

Form 2 teams; each team stands in a queue on either side of the coach; the coach plays a ball out on to the field the first two players from each team immediately enter the field and play 2v2; when the ball goes out of the field, the coach calls "Get Out of Here" – both teams leave the field and go to the back of their team's queue; the coach plays a new ball out onto the field and two new players from each team enter the field and play 2v2; if a goal is scored, the pair who scored stays on the field and two new opponents enter the field when the coach plays out a new ball and they play 2v2; the game is continuous.