

Practice Plan

U6 Week 7 Defending

549: Block Tackle

Objective: This demo outlines the technical teaching points for executing a successful face-to-face tackle.

Description:

- Watch the ball (and not the opponent) so you aren't deceived by the attacker's feints
- Time your tackle carefully, striking when you are close to the ball and your opponent is off-balance
- When you decide to tackle, attack the ball aggressively with your full weight leaning forward into the challenge
- Plant your non-kicking foot next to the ball, and drive through the ball using the inside of your other foot
- Keep the toe up and ankle locked on your tackling foot so the ball doesn't roll over the top of your foot



063: "Ankle Tag!"

Objective: This exercise teaches players to keep their bodies low when defending.

Description: Two players, without a ball, simply stay low and try to tap each other on the ankles with their hands. They must have quick feet to tap their partner and keep from being tapped!

Variants: Next, give one player a ball who keeps it at his feet and tries to keep the other person from tapping him on his ankles.



105: Shuffle Drills

Objective: Shuffle Drills increase the speed of your players' footwork, which is especially important for defending.

Description: Line your players up in front of you. You will either say "Back" or "Forward", or you will point left or right. Your players must do as you say, either jogging backwards, sprinting forwards, or shuffling left or right (without crossing their legs), and they must quickly transition from one direction to the next.

Variants: 1. Require your players to do the opposite of what you say, shuffling left when you point right and vice versa.

2. Repeat the activity with each player controlling a ball at his feet. Provide visual cues only so you force your players to look up from the ball.



100: Tackling Practice

Objective: Tackling Practice strengthens your players' tackling ability.

Description: Two players stand facing each other with a ball on the ground between them. On the count of three, both players "tackle" the ball by hitting it at the same time, both using the same foot. Alternate feet with each tackle, and see how many tackles each pair completes during a specified period of time.



082: Steal the Bacon

Objective: Steal the Bacon is a fun game for your players to practice 1v1 attacking and defending.

Description: Line up half of your players on one side of a rectangular grid, and the other half on the other side facing each other. Number your players 1 through 3 on each side. The coach should stand outside the grid with a supply of balls, and serve one ball into the middle of the grid as he calls a number. The two players with that number (one from each



side) sprint to the ball and attempt to play it across the opposite line to score.

Variants: Add a small goal to each end, and play to goals.

194: 1v1 Keepaway

Objective: 1v1 Keepaway is excellent for teaching your players how to shield the ball from their opponents.

Description: Players are paired up, and each pair has a ball. On the coach's signal, the player with the ball in each pair attempts to screen the ball from the defender for at least 10 seconds. Repeat many times, alternating roles at each repetition.

Variants: Develop the game further by encouraging each player on the ball to turn on his opponent and bypass him.



761: Cliffhanger

Objective: This activity provides a fun way for beginning players to practice the technique for passing or striking the ball, and is an excellent "self-training" activity for players to play at home.

Description: Position your players along the goal line, facing the field, with a ball at each player's feet. On the coach's command, the players attempt to pass their balls so that each ball stops on the line at the top of the penalty area. The player whose ball stops closest to the line without going completely past it scores a point, and any player whose ball stops on the line scores two points. Have the players retrieve their balls and play additional rounds in alternating directions.

Variants: 1. Allow players to chase their passes and attempt to stop the ball on the line using the sole of their foot. Players may only touch the ball once to control it after making their initial pass.

2. Require players to strike the ball using the instep.



763: The Numbers Game

Objective: This fast-paced game allows players to compete in a variety of small-sided situations, and provides excellent training to improve awareness and soccer-specific fitness.

Description: Using cones, mark a 20x30 yard playing area, and place a goal at each endline. Divide the players into two teams, with one team wearing vests. Position a server at the halfway point of one sideline with a large collection of balls, and line up each team behind a cone on either side of the server.



Play begins when the server calls out a number ("1" indicates "1v1", "2" indicates "2v2", and so on). The corresponding number of players at the front of each line respond by sprinting around the back of their own goal before entering the playing area. As the players are sprinting, the server plays a ball into the area, and the game continues until a goal has been scored or the ball has been kicked out of play. The server then calls out "New Groups!" followed by a new number, and the game continues with new players on the field from each team.

When the server no longer has any balls available, pause the game so that all the players can retrieve them, then continue playing for a second round. The team scoring the most total goals after two rounds wins the game.

Variants: For older players, increase the size of the playing area and play to full-sized goals with goalkeepers.

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