



*The Soccer Education Specialists*

# United Soccer Academy

Recreation Soccer  
Training

Curriculum  
(5-8 years)



*Experience Excellence in Soccer Education*

A division of USA Sport Group



## Mission Statement

As the premier providers of soccer training on the East Coast we will deliver diverse soccer programs, which are both inspirational and educational. These programs are age and ability appropriate and are found on the principles of safety, learning and enjoyment.

## Philosophy

The underpinning principles of our programs:

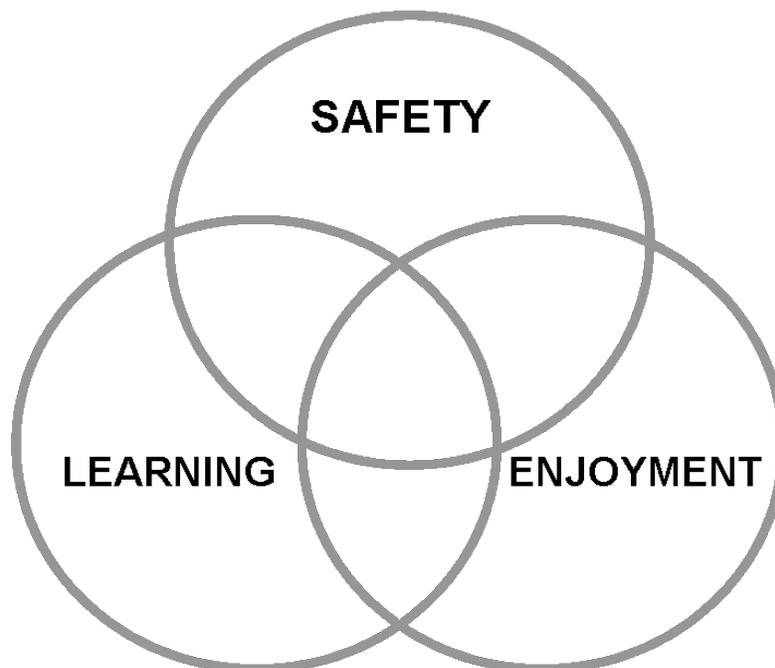
- Safety, learning and enjoyment;
- Maximum participation;
- Structured and progressive learning;
- Identify all potential partners and foster relationships between them;
- Develop positive attitudes.

## Three Pillars of USA, Inc. Programs

USA, Inc. have identified three essential elements that are present in all of our own programs and coaching sessions that we call the Three Pillars of Soccer.

It is recognized that all USA, Inc. programs contain the elements of safety, learning and enjoyment. It is your responsibility as a coach to ensure that these elements are at the forefront of your mind in all sessions. All are their own separate entity, yet encompass each other. The USA program identifies a player's age and ability level (from the age and curriculum breakdown model) which will in turn affect the extent to which an element is present at any time during a USA program. It is also recognized that safety, learning and enjoyment are interpreted different at each program level.

We have placed an emphasis upon the individual importance of safety which has to be at the forefront of the coaches mind before learning and enjoyment can take place.





### Activity 1

#### Activity 1: Traffic Lights

Players use their soccer balls as cars and dribble ('drive') around the defined area. Emphasis placed on players keeping their balls ('cars') under control. Coach adds various commands to progress the activity. For example: coach calls out either '1st, 2nd or 3rd gear' to determine players speed; 'Red light' for Stop, 'Green light' for Go, 'Yellow light' for Get Ready; Coach becomes traffic cop to patrol the area for cars out of control; If cars are out of control players get a ticket and have to perform a particular skill/number of juggles to pay off the fine; 'Traffic jam' players sit on their soccer ball and honk their horns as loud as they can; 'Bumper cars' players try to hit their soccer ball against others (introduction to passing).



### Activity 2

#### Activity 2: Ghostbusters

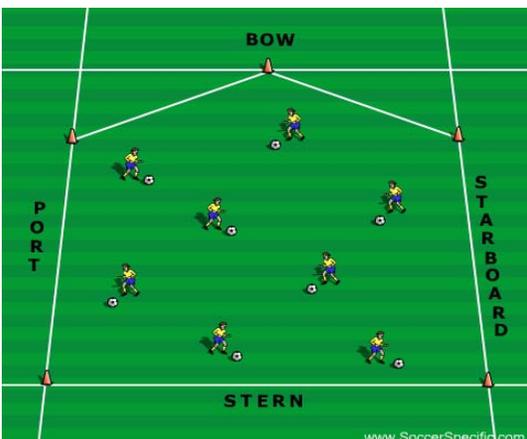
Inside the area 10 players have a ball while the two remaining players are the evil ghosts. The players must dribble their ball around the area – they can move in any direction as long as they stay within the area – trying to move away from the ghosts. The ghosts attempt to tag the dribbling players. Once a player has been tagged they freeze and stand with their feet apart holding their ball above their head. See how many players the ghosts can freeze in 1 minute. The quickest time to tag all players, or the most tagged when the time runs out, wins. After each game nominate two new ghosts and restart with all players back in the game.



### Activity 3

#### Activity 3: Pirates of the Caribbean

As captain of the ship, begin by telling your crew of pirates the names for each of the sides: Bow (front), Stern (back), Port side (left), and Starboard side (right). This acts as an education and a memory test. The pirates dribble around on deck and when the captain calls out one of the four names the pirates must dribble to that end or side. The last pirate to reach the side called has a small forfeit to undertake (e.g. 5-10 star jumps).



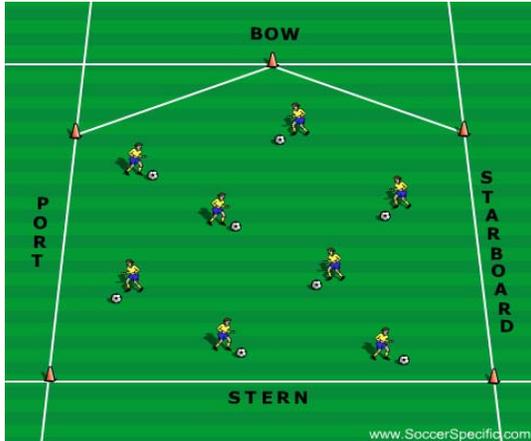
### Conditioned Game / Cool Down

Small-sided conditioned game (3v3 maximum). Practice concluded with dynamic cool down.





### Activity 1



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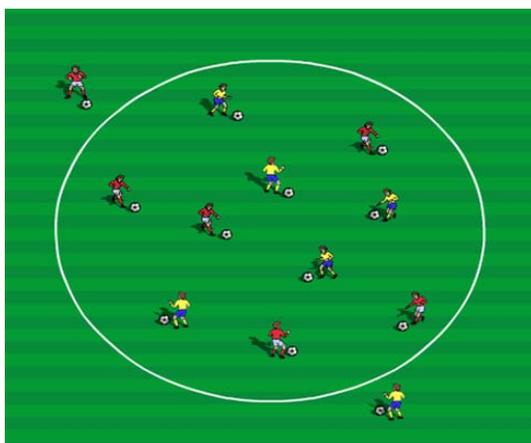
### Activity 2



#### Activity 2: Tiger Tails

Each tiger has a tail tucked into the back of their shorts. The tail must be visible so that other tigers can steal it. The tigers run around inside the area trying to steal each other's tails by pulling the tail out of another tiger's shorts. When a tiger steals a tail they add it to their own. If a tail drops on the floor any tiger can steal it. Tigers cannot grip their tail to stop it being stolen. They need to protect their tail by sprinting away, turning and screening. The game can be played to a time limit (e.g. 2 minutes). The winner is the tiger with the most tails at the end.

### Activity 3



#### Activity 3: King of the Ring

The fighters begin by dribbling around inside the ring in any direction keeping their own ball under close control. They must try to knock another fighter's ball out of the ring. To be successful fighters must decide who to attack and use defensive skills to knock their ball out, while being aware that they might be attacked from a different angle. Once a fighter's ball has been knocked out they are out of the fight and must not touch another fighter's ball. Any fighter who has been knocked out should collect their ball and walk around the outside of the ring with it so you can clearly see who is in and who is out. When down to the final 2 or 3 fighters introduce a time limit to encourage them to win. If there is no winner before the time is up everyone can rejoin and start again.

### Conditioned Game / Cool Down

Small-sided conditioned game (3v3 maximum). Practice concluded with dynamic cool down.



## Activity 1



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## Activity 2



### Activity 2: Robocops

One player stands in each target zone to act as a target for the attacking team. They also serve the ball for the other team to counter attack. The ball is thrown and caught between team mates to reach the target player. Players can move with the ball but only at walking speed – like Robocop. Speed walking is permitted. They can pass freely and must pass if tagged by an opponent. Opponents can only win the ball from an intercepted throw or if the ball is dropped. A point can either be scored by reaching the target player from a designated third of the pitch or after a minimum number of passes to encourage team play.

## Activity 3



### Activity 3: Chain Gang

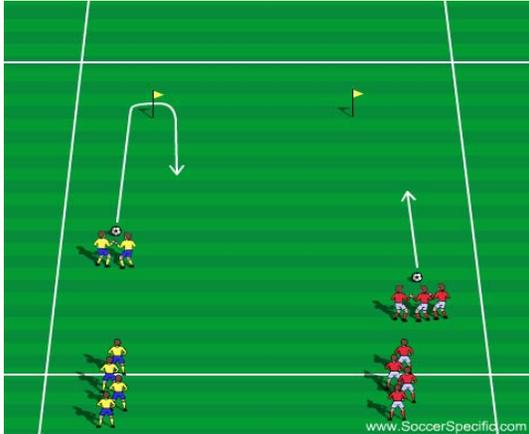
Place a large cone or pole at one end of each channel. The players are divided into two teams and start at the opposite end. The first player dribbles a ball up the channel, around the cone, and back to their team mates. The starting player then links arms with the second player on their team and they dribble the ball up the channel, around the cone, and back to their team mates. Each time an extra player joins the chain gang until all the players are in the chain. The whole team must negotiate the course and the turn without breaking and keeping their ball under control. If at any time the chain breaks they must start again from the line without adding an extra link.

## Conditioned Game / Cool Down

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### Activity 1

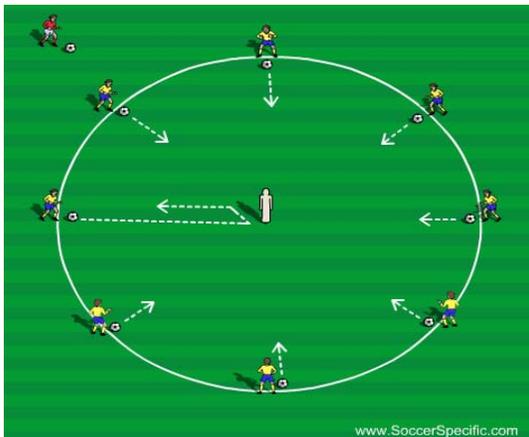


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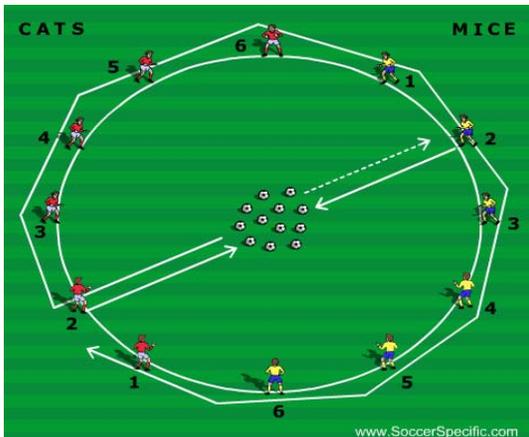
### Activity 2



#### Activity 2: Funny Turns

Players start in the diamond with a ball each. Nominate a player to audition their funny turn. This can be any way they know of turning with the ball, however unorthodox. The player called dribbles to one of the outside cones and shows a turn that all the others must watch. If you are happy with the turn then the player dribbles back and all of the players get 1 minute to practice the turn they have just watched. The coach and the player that auditioned the 'funny turn' now become judges and choose the best attempt at the turn as the winner. Make sure everyone has a chance to audition a turn.

### Activity 3



#### Activity 3: Cat & Mouse

Players are divided into two teams, cats and mice, with the players on each team numbered 1-6 each starting at a cone. Start with 12 balls (pieces of cheese) in the middle. The coach calls out a number and the appropriate mouse runs to the centre and steals the cheese, one piece at a time, taking it back to their starting place on the circle. At the same time, the appropriate cat takes a piece of cheese, dribbles back to their starting cone and then all the way around the outside of the circle before returning the cheese to the middle. When the cat gets back the turn is over. The mouse counts their cheese and returns it to the middle before the coach calls the next number to repeat the game. After all 6 pairs have gone, count the total number of pieces of cheese stolen. Switch cats and mice.

### Conditioned Game / Cool Down

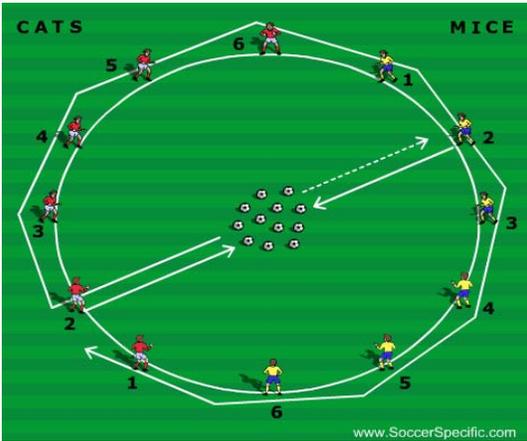
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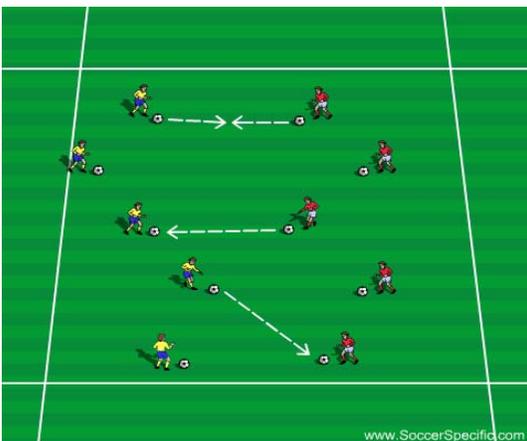
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### Activity 2

#### Activity 2: Space Wars

Two fleets of star fighters start either side of the grid on their launch pads. The star fighters take off on the commander's order to battle the opposing fleet. To score you must knock an opponent's ball out of the grid with your ball whilst ensuring that your ball stays inside the grid. If your ball leaves the grid you have been shot down and should crash land outside of the grid. At the end of the battle the fleet with the most remaining star fighters wins.



### Activity 3

#### Activity 3: Star Gates

The team in possession must play a set number of passes (e.g. 5) then attempt to break into the next frontier through one of the star gates by passing or dribbling through. The defending players must not simply stand in front of the gate to block it. Once the ball has been played through a gate - and the player who played it has followed it through - all players move through into the next frontier and the process begins again. Unless both ball and player have gone through, no-one else is allowed in as the next frontier is deemed to be unsafe. The object of the game is to get from one end to the other and back again through any combination of gates. If possession is lost the other team faces the same challenge. If ball is lost in the central zone the other team must get into an end zone to start.



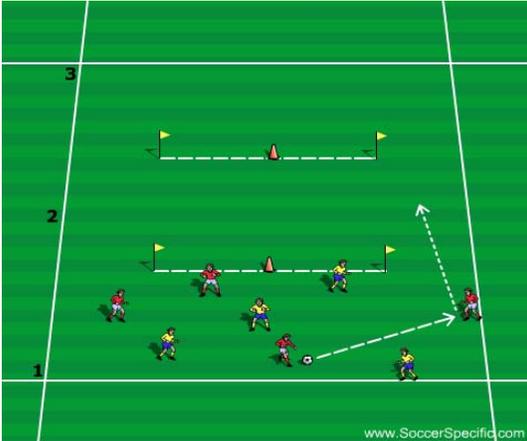
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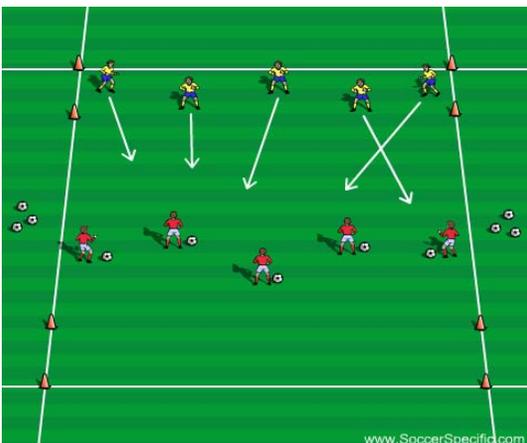
#### Activity 2: Aliens



Nominate one player to start as an alien. The rest of the players become space cadets. The alien collects a ball from the side of the area and must play the ball against any of the space cadets below knee height in order to bite them. The space cadets must run around the area – in any direction – trying to avoid being bitten by the alien. If a player is bitten they collect a ball from the side of the pitch and they too become an alien. The space cadets cannot be attacked when they are in one of the safety pods. A player can only stay in a pod for a maximum of 10 seconds and cannot return to the same pod without first visiting another.

### Activity 3

#### Activity 3: Zombie Attack



Split the players into two teams. One team starts in the middle and one team goes to an end zone. The team in the middle is the zombies and in order to bite a player they have to keep their ball close and within touching distance when they tag a runner with their hand. The players without a ball have to go from end zone to end zone without being bitten by the zombies. Once a runner is bitten they turn into a zombie and get a ball from the side of the area. The winner is the last runner to get bitten.

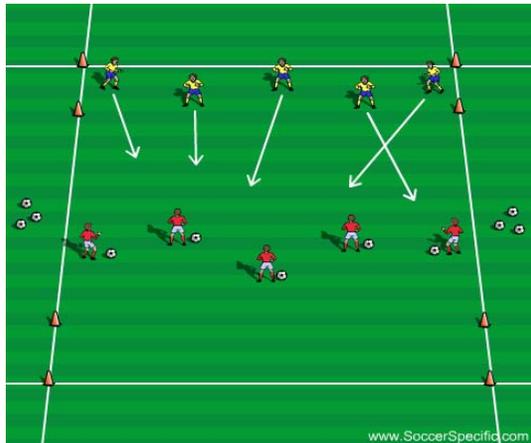
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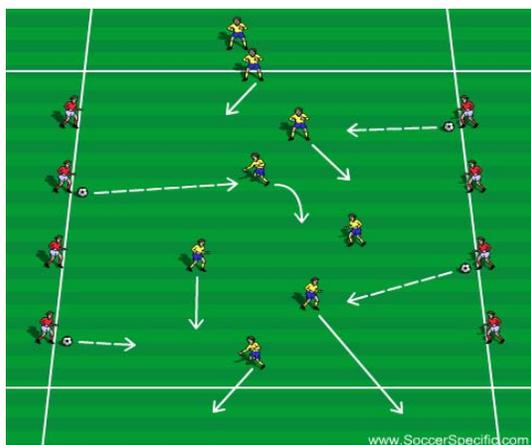
### Activity 2



#### Activity 2: Twins

Players are paired with a twin and play together by tying their legs together with a bib – think three-legged race. Divide the players into two teams. They are aiming to hit the cones on the goal line in order to score a point. Players must stay linked throughout the game and can only pass or shoot, tackle or intercept with their outside leg. Players must switch sides on the coach's command so that they practice using both their left and right feet. Anyone can take possession of the ball once they have switched and tied their legs together again. The ball must remain below head height to encourage the use of the weaker foot.

### Activity 3



#### Activity 3: Space Invaders

In pairs, players from one of the teams stand on either side of the channel and on the coaches command play one touch passing back and forth. This represents the laser to shoot down invaders. One of the teams - the invaders - has to dribble through the channel (one player per zone at a time) avoiding having their ball hit by a laser. If an invader's ball is hit by a laser, they have been destroyed and leave the channel in that zone. The invaders must aim to reach the safety zone at the end of the channel. The team with the most invaders reaching the safety zone wins. If neither team reaches the safety zone, the team that progress the farthest along the channel wins.

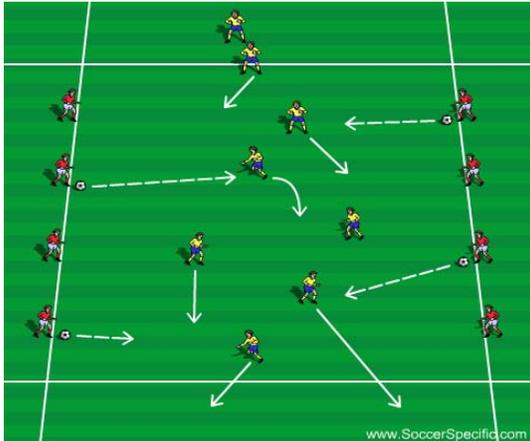
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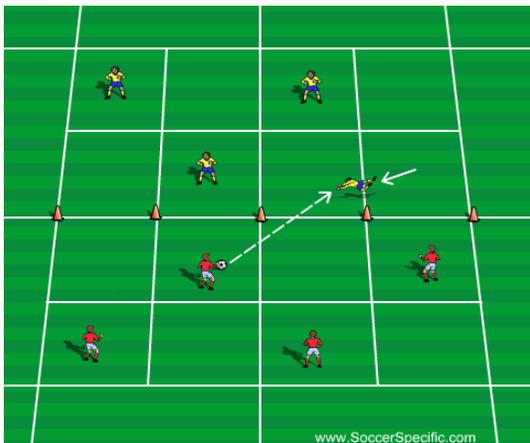
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## Activity 2



### Activity 2: Airball

This game must be played by teams of 4 or 5 as you need at least one spare grid in each half of the area. Players look to throw the ball above head height into the spare grid in the opponent's half. It must hit the ground to score a point. The opposition must prevent this by catching the ball. They can then try to throw into their opponent's spare grid. Players must call to avoid having two players going for the same ball. If two players go for the same ball they incur a penalty point. Play to 10 points, switching sides halfway through. Serves alternate and points are scored on every serve no matter what. If the ball goes out of bounds the team that touched the ball last loses the point.

## Activity 3



### Activity 3: Head for Home

To introduce the skill of heading players are allowed to serve the ball to themselves - without pressure from the opposition - in order to head the ball to a team mate. If they are not comfortable self serving, players can head the ball straight out of their hands. Players must make themselves available to catch a headed pass before serving themselves to head to another team mate. The object of the game is to get the ball home by heading to any team mate that has run into the end zone. The defending team is not allowed to block the header. They can only prevent a goal by marking runners and intercepting the ball by catching it and starting their own counter attack.

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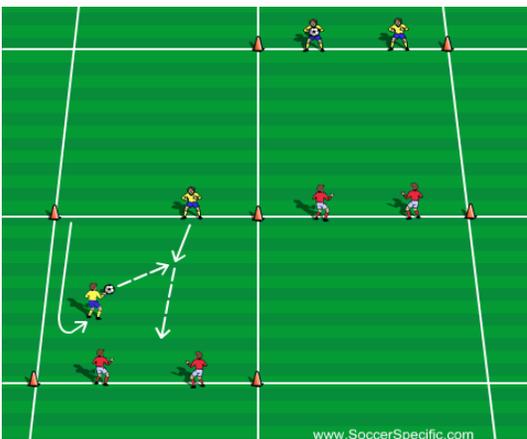
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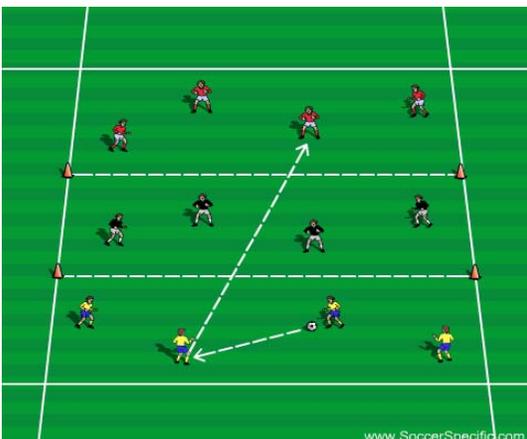
### Activity 2



#### Activity 2: Flying Headers

Players start on opposite sides of the grid in pairs. One of the pairs starts with the ball. Players with the ball jogs to the opposite corner, turns, and serves the ball to their team mate at around waist height so that the team mate is encouraged to dive to head the ball. The team mate tries to score past the opposition pair with a diving header that must be below head height of the standing pair. Opposition players encourage this by only being able to stop the ball with their head or chest, no hands. After each attempt the opponent gets a go so that all players are constantly rotating position. Quick attacks will be better before the opposition defenders are able to get back in position. Play to a score before switching opposition.

### Activity 3



#### Activity 3: Behind Enemy Lines

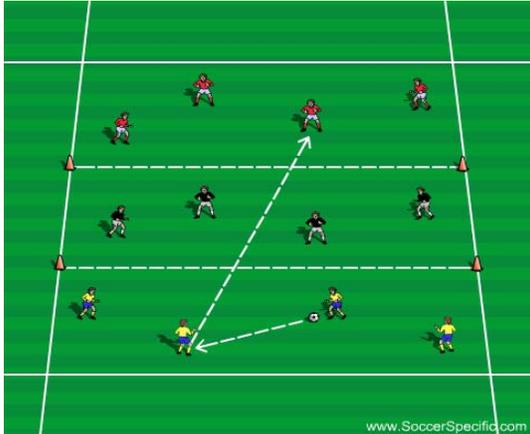
The groups go into each of the zones with the two end zones representing allied units, the middle zone play as an enemy unit. The ball is a package that must be delivered behind enemy lines. One of the units starts with the package, passing amongst themselves. They must pass the package into the opposite end zone – below head height – through the enemy's line. If the pass is intercepted or miss hit out of the area the unit must switch with the enemy. Count the number of completed passes through enemy lines in a specified time (e.g. 3 minutes) if the ball has not been intercepted by then.

### Conditioned Game / Cool Down

Small-sided conditioned game (3v3 maximum). Practice concluded with dynamic cool down.



### Activity 1



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### Activity 2



#### Activity 2: Under Arrest

Outfield players choose an opponent to be marked by and to mark when their team is not in possession of the ball. For a set time period (e.g. 3 minutes), this is the only player that can tackle you and the only player that you can tackle. Players must therefore escape to get space to receive the ball or take your player away so that a team mate can attack that space. Defensively, players must stay as close as possible and stop their opponent receiving the ball and/or scoring a goal.

### Activity 3



#### Activity 3: Bumper Cars

Place one player inside each of the 5x5 yard squares. 4 players dribble around inside the main area. Two defenders – without a ball – look to knock balls out of the grid. Each ball they knock out is worth 1 point. The game stops when they knock all 5 balls out of the area. If a dribbling player needs a rest they can 'bump' a player out of one of the safety zones. When inside a safety zone, if a ball is passed to you and a player runs into your zone you must leave and dribble the ball into the main area. If bumped out of a safety zone you can attempt to 'bump' someone else out but cannot return to your own safety zone. It is important that the first touch takes the player into space and not into danger. Players in a safety zone try to control any passes into them.

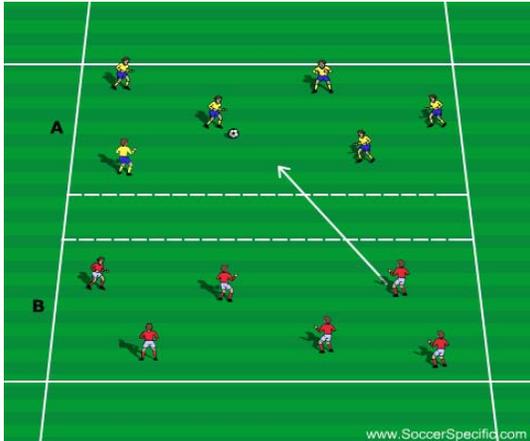
### Conditioned Game / Cool Down

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## Activity 1

### Activity 1: Tomb Raiders



Players in tomb A pass the skull (ball) using one or two touches, depending on ability. One raider from tomb B enters through the tunnel to steal the skull. If successful they must dribble/run with the ball back through a tunnel into their own tomb and begin passing it with their team to keep it for as long as possible. The team in tomb A now send through a raider of their own – who must follow through the same tunnel that team B escaped through – to try and steal the skull back again. At any point the coach can call for a second raider to go and help steal the skull. If the skull is knocked out of the tomb the coach can choose which team restarts with a new skull. A point is scored by stealing the skull, or achieving a set number of passes (e.g. 10) when in possession.

## Activity 2

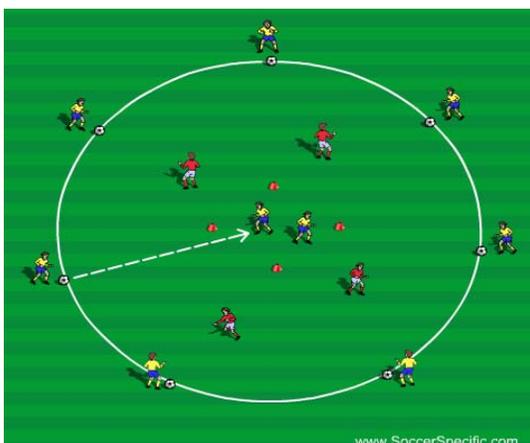
### Activity 2: Over the Border



The teams start in opposite countries (end zones) with each player, numbered from 1 to 6, passing in order (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4 and so on). At any point the coach can shout out a number and the player with that number must sprint across the border and try to steal the opponent's ball. Both players go across at the same time. The remaining players do not have to pass in sequence but must retain possession. The first player to win the ball or knock it out of the opponent's country wins a point and both players return home to restart the sequence. Ensure that all numbers are called - do not be predictable. The same number could go twice in a row. The first team to ten points wins.

## Activity 3

### Activity 3: Don't Feed the Monkeys



2 monkeys are placed inside the monkey cage (inner circle) and are guarded by 4 zoo keepers who start in the zoo itself (outer circle). Visitors start on the cones forming the perimeter of the zoo with a ball each. The visitors must try to feed the monkeys by passing a ball to them. The monkey must be able to control the pass and return it to the visitor for a point to count. The zoo keepers must try to stop the monkeys being fed by intercepting passes with their feet or head. The monkeys cannot leave their cage, while the zoo keepers and visitors cannot enter the cage or leave the zoo itself. Visitors can interchange balls in order to keep the defenders guessing and change the point of attack. Play for 2-3 minutes and record the scores. The winner is the visitor with most points scored.

## Conditioned Game / Cool Down

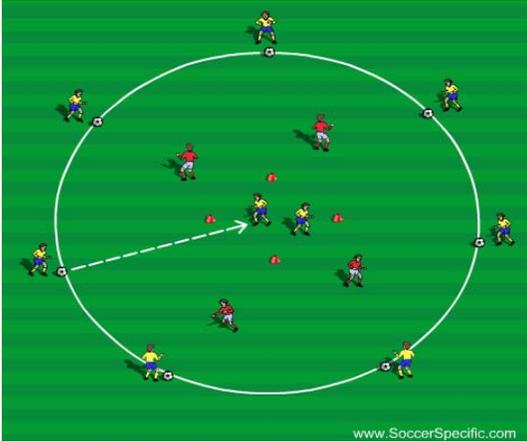
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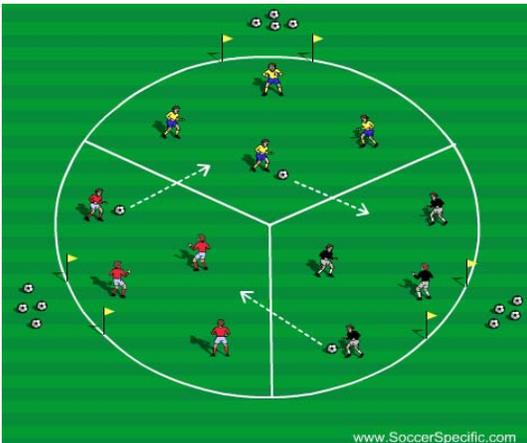
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### Activity 2

#### Activity 2: Bodyguards

Split the area into 3 equal sized zones with a VIP (goalkeeper) and two bodyguards (defenders) in each zone. Place 4 balls beside each goal. Bodyguards must stay in their zone and protect their VIP, who in turn must protect their goal. Each team has one assassin who attempts to score points by beating the VIP to score a goal. The assassin must be inside the opponent's zone to score in their goal creating 2v1 or 1v1 situations (2 assassins can go for the same VIP). Each assassin has 4 shots and must return to their own goal to reload and collect a new ball after each shot.



### Activity 3

#### Activity 3: Pool Table

Two even numbered teams free play using as many skills as possible to get an opportunity to pass or shoot through one of the six pockets. The other team tries to prevent this and gain possession. If a team pots a ball they retain possession and continue their break until they miss the target or lose the ball to a tackle or interception. The first team to score 8 (i.e. 7 reds then the black) wins the game. For any fouls or cheating the opposition team is awarded a free shot.



### Conditioned Game / Cool Down

Small-sided conditioned game (3v3 maximum). Practice concluded with dynamic cool down.

## 50 Different Ways to Say 'Good Job'

### *During Practice:*

1. Well done!
2. Terrific!
3. That's the way to do it!
4. That's a real improvement!
5. Good thinking!
6. Keep up the good work!
7. That's it!
8. That's better!
9. Outstanding!
10. Fantastic!
11. Fine work!
12. Magnificent!
13. Wonderful!
14. You're really working hard today!
15. That's looking good!
16. Good work!
17. That's the right way to do it!
18. Top stuff!
19. I think you've got it now!
20. Tremendous!
21. Perfect!
22. That's better than what I can do!
23. That's a great effort!
24. You're getting better!
25. Now you've got the hang of it!
26. You're getting better every day!
27. You're learning fast!
28. I knew you could do it!
29. I'm so proud of you!
30. That's much better!
31. Superb!
32. That's amazing!
33. Great work!
34. That's as good as I have seen!
35. Keep it up!
36. Spot on!
37. You are doing much better today!
38. Keep on trying!
39. Excellent - I'm impressed!
40. Very imaginative!

### *After Practice:*

1. That was really good!
2. I'm proud of your efforts today!
3. That's the best you've ever done!
4. You did really well today!
5. You must have been practicing!
6. That was great, you remembered!
7. You worked well today!
8. Great effort out there today!
9. You really are learning quickly!
10. You're nearly getting there!

**USA coaching staff honors Grassroots Soccer  
by *always* creating a POSITIVE learning environment!**

