

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, there are five basic areas that can be included in each practice. This section explains the application portion of a practice and gives examples of some games to practice these skills. Although each practice needs to begin with a warm up and stretching, whether all other areas are included in each practice is up to the discretion of the coach. If your team needs more work on a certain tactical skill (e.g. corner kicks or kick offs), the coach could choose to skip the technical portion of a practice to focus on this need. The coach's assessment is what determines the focus and activities of each practice.

## Application

Application is the opportunity for the players to put it all together. This is where they get to use their technical skills paired with their tactical skills in a game-like situation. This is a great opportunity for the coach to just observe and let the game be the teacher. As a coach, refrain from much direct instruction at this time. Let the situations arise and, maybe on a dead ball, discuss what happened. For example, complimenting a player on moving to an open spot or asking the team where a midfielder positions themselves for a goal kick. The idea is to allow situations to arise in a game-like setting, let the players put their skills to work, and then teach from those situations.

### Application Drills

Any of the above drills can be used as application drills. As stated above, the idea during this time is to let the players play and teach from situations that arise. Here are a few more drills that can be used:

#### 3v1 Keep Away

Objective: movement without the ball, good passing, receiving passes

Set up: 10 yd square.

Activity: Three players on offense, 1 player on defense. Offensive players keep ball away from defensive player by passing and dribbling. Offensive players without ball must move to position themselves so they may receive a pass. Players must be communicating. If defensive player gets possession or if ball goes out of square, roles of players change. Extra players can be outside of the square to take the place of defensive player or defensive player can trade with one of the offensive players.

#### Four Corners

Objective: movement without the ball, positioning for a pass

Set up: Full sized field appropriate for team's age/size. Four squares are made from cones, one in each corner of the field. Square should be 3-4yds long/wide—one side of each square is the endline and another side is the sideline.

Activity: Players are divided into two even teams. If there are an odd number of players, one player can be a floater and always play for the team that is on offense. Coach feeds ball onto field, players scrimmage. To score, players must pass to a teammate that has positioned themselves in one of the squares. Teams can score in any square. Play until a given score or a given amount of time. If ball goes out of bounds or a team scores, coach restarts game by feeding another ball onto the field.

## Numbers Game

Objective: practicing one on one situations (both offensive and defensive), dribbling, shooting

Set Up: Use appropriate full sized field for age of team, goals made from cones

Activity: Players are divided into two even teams. Each player is given a number—if there are 3 players on each team, each team will have a number 1, number 2, number 3. Try to have players of similar ability matched against each other (with same number, but on opposite team.) Players can stand on opposite end lines or on opposite sidelines from coach. Coach puts ball into play and calls out a number. The players from each team with that number play a one on one until ball goes out or someone scores. If players are on endlines, coach can play ball toward one team instead of in the middle. Mix up which team ball is played toward. Progression: call out 2 numbers at once or whichever player touches ball first get to have a helper (teammate) join to create a 2v1 situation.

## End Line Goals

Objective: be in position for ball, ball control, shielding, passing angles

Set Up: 10yd. x 20yd. rectangle, set up as many as necessary for all to participate

Activity: Divide players into groups of 4. Two players are inside rectangle, other two players are behind endlines (one on each end) and may move along their respective lines to create a passing angle for middle player. Ball begins with one end player. Ball is played to one of the middle players. The middle player's objective is to pass the ball to the opposite end player. Other middle player tries to win ball. Each time middle player completes pass to opposite end, a point is scored and possession is retained. If ball is stolen by other middle player, they try to complete pass to opposite end. Game is played for one minute and middle players switch with end players. Winner is player with most goals.

## Defensive 2v2

Objective: close down opponents quickly, time tackles, stay goalside of offensive player

Set Up: 20yd. x 30yd. rectangle with 3 yd. goals at ends

Activity: Divide players into two teams, one team is on each endline. Play starts when coach plays ball toward one team. First two players from each team enter playing area. Receiving team controls ball and attempts to score at opposite goal. Defensive team attempts to gain control of ball and score at opposite end.

Scrimmage—a scrimmage is a fun activity for the kids to learn the flow of the game. It can be used to reinforce dead ball starts, positioning, and many other tactical skills that have been taught. The main drawback of having kids scrimmage each practice is that the weaker players, the ones who need the most touches on the ball, are often the ones who get the fewest touches in a scrimmage. Therefore, scrimmaging should be used selectively and not necessarily at each practice