

OYSA Micro 3v3 KinderSoccer Practice Games

Introduction

The first week or two, practice on your own with your 5-6 players – get to know ‘your’ team a little better. THANK YOU so much for volunteering to coach these youngsters!

Lay out cones in a 15x20 yard box. This will do for all activities! Remember 5 year old players find it difficult to see an imaginary line between 2 cones so lay down as many as you can for sidelines. Also, try and *stay away* from the 4 L’s; Lines, Lectures, Laps and Language...

L = Laps; Young kids don’t need stretching so start with a FUN warm up game – pick one below!

L = Lines; Don’t have kids wait in turn in a line, have them all play at same time

L = Lectures; If you talk or make little kids wait in line for more than 30 seconds, then you will lose them! Their powers of concentration are not the same as an adult!

L = Language; We are all important role-models in the lives of these young kids so don’t use any bad language or behavior!

Warm-Up

Ball Gymnastics (3-5 minutes)

Have kids all start with a ball in front of the coach. Then proceed to do age appropriate ball gymnastics with them, for instance... have them bend down with their legs apart and move the ball with their hands in a figure 8 around their ankles, picking the ball up and trying to touch the sky, holding the ball standing on one leg and closing eyes (see who is last player standing!). Coaches use your imagination!! Have kids come up with ideas to show you!

Sharks and Minnows (3 minutes)

All players start in a line at one end of the grid, while coach is in the middle. The Coach puts his/her hands together on top of their head like a shark’s fin. The players, on the coach’s call, try to reach the other side of the grid safely. If they do they turn around and wait for the coach to call again. If they are tagged by the coach then they become a shark in the middle with the coach. After a few runs, declare whoever is left winners and progress to having the kids each with a ball (gets them to attempt to look up for the ‘shark’ while dribbling!)

Swim across River (and take your ball)! (3-5 minutes)

Version of Sharks and Minnows. Have narrow river set up with cones. First have kids carry their ball and not be tagged by coach (crocodile), then progress to having them dribble across and not get tagged.

Freeze Tag (3-5 minutes)

Every player starts with a ball in a grid except two taggers (in different color bibs). After 3 seconds, the taggers are free to tag anyone with a ball. If tagged, they have to freeze with their legs apart and ball by side. They can be released (or unfrozen) by another free player dribbling ball up to them and passing ball through frozen players legs. Swap taggers after 30 seconds or if they freeze everybody!

This can also be played without the ball, just as a tag game. To be unfrozen, free players crawl through the legs of the frozen players.

Hospital Tag (3-5 minutes)

Lay out appropriate sized grid, with a small square on one side (the hospital). All players are in it and try to tag each other. If tagged on shoulder for instance, player has to hold shoulder with one hand. If tagged a second time hold that spot with the other hand and run into the hospital to free themselves. Game gets amusing if player is tagged twice on the feet!

Fetch! (3-5 minutes)

Each player picks up a ball and brings it to the coach. The coach throws it away 10 yards and calls a number (i.e. 2). That is the # of body parts the player has to bring the ball back with. The coach can show them a couple of ways to retrieve ball if needed (i.e. holding ball between knee and one hand) then let them be creative! Then the number that the coach calls can represent the number of kicks the child should have to kick it back to the coach. Then the coach can move to a different position after he throws the ball away.

Pac-Man (3-5 minutes)

The Coach starts with a ball in the grid. All the others start in the grid without their balls (placed just outside the grid within easy reach). On command the coach with the ball has to dribble the ball under control while attempting to tag others. If he does then they also get their ball and attempt the same.

Body Part Dribble (3-5 minutes)

Each player has a ball in a grid, and dribbles it around with his/her feet. After 20 seconds or so, the coach calls out a part of their body i.e. 'hand' and the players have to stop their ball with their hand as quickly as possible. Play a few times, having fun using ideas such as 'ear', 'nose', 'elbow', or 'knee'. Then advance the game where coach instead of calling a body part out, simply points to it on their body. The kids are therefore taught in a fun way to look up each time they touch the ball. Coach can move around when kids get used to looking up. Challenge kids to dribble faster!

Red Light Green Light (3-5 minutes)

When you (the coach) calls 'green light' the kids make the sound of a car revving up and move forward. When you call 'red light' they must stop (making the noise of screeching brakes) keeping their ball under the control. Add yellow light, that means walking! If coach calls red light twice in a row, watch all kids move – joke about them crashing! Coach can introduce moving up gears to move

Blob / Link Tag (3-5 minutes)

Coach is it, all the players have a ball in a grid. If the coach tags someone's ball (usually get the best dribbler first to allow the weaker kids to get more touches), that player's ball is knocked out of the grid and then the two link arms (or hold hands) and try to tag somebody else's ball. Game continues. Instead of having 6 people linked, the blob can mutate to 2 blobs of 3. Can play again!

Magic Goals! (3-5 minutes)

Each player starts in area with a ball. The coach and assistant hold up one end each of a bright t-shirt twisted up and ask the kids what it looks like. Hopefully one of the parents will call it a goal and then play with them having to kick their ball through the goal. They cannot run through/under the goal otherwise they lose a point. The goal can then walk around the area!

Everybody's it! (3 minutes)

Every player starts with a ball in a grid. On command they can hunt each other down and if they can touch their ball against somebody else's then they score a point. This teaches them to be creative, fake to get a view of someone's ball or in turn shield their own ball from attack!

Crab Soccer (3-5 minutes)

Divide the kids into 2 teams of 3-4 players. Set up a grid with a goal at one end. Have one team (each with a ball) stand on the opposite end line from the goal and get them to dribble around the other team (down on hands and feet like crabs with bottoms off the floor). If player scores, have them pick ball up run back to start line and try again. Switch teams after 1-2 minutes. Each team will score a lot (thus having fun and success) so you can call it a tie!

Everybody Tag! (3 minutes)

Every player starts with a ball on a small field. On command they can dribble towards each other and if they can lightly tag someone else's arm then they score a point. This teaches them to be creative, fake, turn with their ball, shield and get their head up. Coaches can play and be tagged easily to help all kids be successful and have fun!

Keep away from coach! (3 minutes)

Show players how to turn with the ball (as simple as turning in a tight small circle manoeuvring the ball with the inside of the right foot) keeping the ball close to their feet. Coach jogs around and says they will try and tag kids balls (but don't really)! Concentrate on having kids keeping the ball close to their feet but turning away from the coach (getting their body in between opponent and ball as soon as possible).

Fun Shielding Game using hands (3-5 minutes)

Introduce the concept of shielding the ball using hands first (younger players will comprehend this infinitely quicker as they are more dexterous with their hands than feet). Each player has a partner with one ball between them. (The Coach should give a good picture to start so they do not go straight down and bang heads). One player tries to keep the ball away from coach. The only rules are that the ball has to remain on the ground and that you can only maneuver it with one hand at a time. If partner (coach) touches the ball with his/her hand possession changes! When coach wins ball, demonstrate that you don't have to run away, just simply place your body frame between the ball and the opponent.

Secondly, tell players not to travel – can stay in one spot and still retain possession. Third, get shielder to keep hip pointing to partner. Fourth, give everyone a ball in the rectangle and if coach (without ball) approaches them they are to turn away to shield. Coach can introduce inside and outside of foot turns this way.

Minefield (5 minutes)

Put all the cones randomly on the field (half right way up and half upside down). Coach and assistant coach make two teams and join one each. Appoint one team to search out the cones that are right way up and flip them upside down while the other team is doing the opposite. Play for 30 seconds then yell stop and see which team wins! Losing team gets a fun silly exercise, i.e. do a donkey impression.

Variations of Minefield

Dribble round cone in order to pick up

Croquet – same as above only introduce knocking other persons ball away with your ball

Kick to the edge of the world (3-5 minutes)

Have all the players stand at one edge of your grid with their ball and then tell them that they all have 3 kicks to get it as close to the other side (edge of the world) without going over as they will lose their ball. Coach should demonstrate! For fun ask they how far away the other line is! This gives the kids the idea of putting the correct weight behind a pass or when they are kicking the ball.

1v1 Circle of Fire (5 minutes)

Divide players into 2 team and number each player of each team 1, 2, 3 etc. Put 4 goals out (a goal being 2 cones close to each other) then throw a ball out and call a number. Those 2 players go out and play for 20 seconds. They score points by kicking through the cones, so yes they can challenge each other.

Shoot on Coach (3-5 minutes)

Make two goals with 2 flags (or pop up goals) and have the coach and assistant (or parent) sit down in the middle of the goal and be goalkeeper! Kids take it in turns to try and score goals on whichever goal they choose. Of course the coach lets them all score lots!

Simple Body Fake or Trick! (3-5 minutes)

All kids/players love to learn new tricks! Instructor can use their favorite trick or any Coerver move as long as they break it into very small steps. I prefer to teach tricks without the ball first!

Get all participants to stand 3 steps back from their ball to learn the foot positioning first before complicating things with the ball! Lift the left foot up, take a small diagonal step forward (to the left), bend the left knee and drop the left shoulder down. Then lift the right foot up and take a quick hop diagonally forward to the right. When the ball is involved, on the hop push the ball forward in the same direction with whichever part of the foot is comfortable, preferably the right hand side of the laces of the right shoe. Let them practice on their own for 30 seconds. Do not spend long on this exercise. Some players will understand the concept and this will begin to rub off on the players around. I have had a 3 year old do this fake at camp and remember it the next day! Only spend 3-4 minutes on this then move onto another high intensity activity.

Scrimmage (10 minutes)

Always end up with a 3v3 game at the end. Pick 2 teams and each have an adult leader to facilitate the team picking a team name. Hands in – team cheer ‘1, 2, 3, GO <‘scary tigers’ or whatever kids decide>’. At kindergarten level don’t be afraid to put 2 or 3 balls on the field at a time to make sure all kids are involved. Work towards only having one ball on field as that is what they will play on Saturday! Make sure they know each other’s name!

Don’t worry about playing 2v3 or 3v4. Make sure no kid is sitting out!

Remember to give them plenty of water breaks! If in doubt, fall back on one of their old favorites!

Mike Smith
Oregon Youth Soccer Association
(503) 626-4625