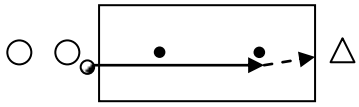
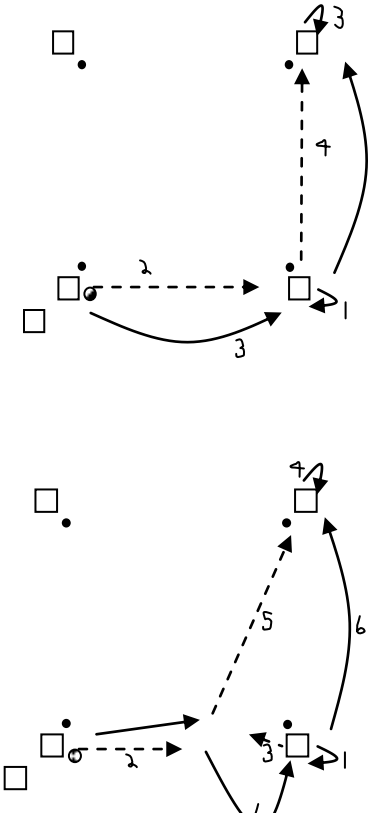


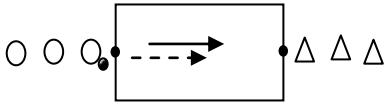
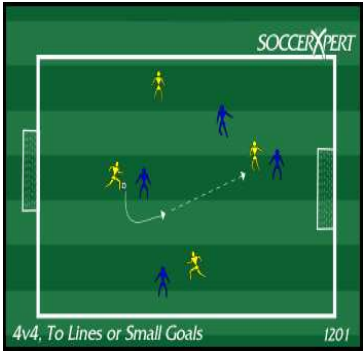
## Background

This basic practice plan can work for all ages. It can be performed as written or is easily modified. It covers the core activities on which all youth soccer players need work. This basic plan can, and should, be repeated often. The specific activities should be cycled so that a given activity is not done more than once every 3 practices (except for the ending scrimmage).

(some soccer "vocab" words are marked with a \* and defined at the end)

## The "Can't Miss" Practice Plan

Activity	Instructions	Coaching Points
	<p>players in 3s, 1 ball per group, 3 zones, (8yd passing, 8yd dribbling, 8yd passing). Player 1 dribbles through dribbling zone then passes through passing zone to player 2 who dribbles through dribbling zone then passes through passing zone to 3, etc.</p>	<p>Keep the ball close, but not under body, push ball in direction of movement, head up to scan the field, use different surfaces of foot: instep, outside, laces.</p>
	<p>Dutch square* #1, 2 - 8x8 grids, 5+ players per grid: need 2 players at A, 1+ players at B, C, D, ball at A.</p> <p>#1. check, receive (need 2 at A) (square pass*, move to next pos)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- B checks away then rcv pass from A. A moves to next position.</li> <li>- C checks away then rcv pass from B. B moves to next position. continue</li> </ul> <p>#2. check, receive, lay off* (need 2 at A) (square pass, lay-off, square pass, move to next pos)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- B checks away then rcv pass from A. A follows pass moving slightly to middle.</li> <li>- B lays ball back to A. C checks away and A passes to C and moves to B position. B moves toward C slightly to middle.</li> <li>- C lays ball back to B. D</li> </ul>	<p>check away* before rcv, jog in place as ball is coming, lift foot to contact ball in center to trap*, trap in direction of next pass, plant foot pointing toward pass direction, 2-touch*, all passes solid (not too fast) and accurate (to correct foot of receiver)</p>

	checks away and B passes to D and moves to C position. C moves toward D slightly to middle. continue pattern	
1v1 	8x16 yd grids, players at end of each grid, balls at one side. #1. basic 1v1 - defender passes to attacker and closes. attacker tries to dribble to other end line. #2. basic 2v1 (can adjust grid if needed)	positive first touch* - move to space behind D, don't stop moving, cut-off D by moving body between D and ball, attack standing leg*, 2v1: make defender commit*
2v2 - 4v4 	8x16 yd grids, players at end of each grid, balls at one side. basic 2v2 - defenders pass to attackers and close. attacker tries to complete pass to partner over other end line. - increase grid and sides to 3v2, 4v2, 3v3, 4v3 or 4v4 as appropriate	side and overlap runs to overload D*, don't look only to penetrate*, timing, split D*, dribble to create space/opportunity, Heads up, Passing pace and accuracy, Communicate, combine with outside players, Move toward ball to receive, Check away/to ball, Diagonal pass on ground
The Game	Simple game, 4v4 or larger, to goal	Just let them play!

## Details

This plan is designed to work on the key areas for soccer players of all ages. Players should get hundreds of touches on the ball each practice.

The key activities in the core plan are: dribbling and ball control, passing and receiving, 1v1 play, small group play (2v2 through 4v4), and the game.

Since this is a basic practice plan, there are a number of other important topics which are not included such as: shooting, crossing\*, and set plays\*. While occasional or regular practices can be devoted to these topics, these situations can easily come up during the core practice. Alternatively, activities focusing on these topics can be substituted into the core plan.

Some of these activities may seem a lot for our youngest players, but they need to learn to be proficient at these techniques. One of the best ways to turn these activities into "younger" activities is to give them fun names (really... I'm serious!). Such as: ball handling = Xtreme street moves, or 1v1 = Gladiators!

Here's a simple rule of thumb... If the kids are having fun and what they're doing looks like soccer... then it's all good!

## Variations

There are endless variations to the activities listed in the core plan. The variations are limited only by the coach's creativity or google-searching skills! The appendix lists a number of variations for each activity (except for the final game... almost every practice should end with a regular game, though the game can be modified as needed).

## Additional Resources

Additional practice plans can be found online. Two good resources are: <http://www.bjb.org/soccer/coachinfo/> and Matt's Plans <http://www.ramonasoccer.com/ramona-soccer/coaches/matt-callahan-drills.html>

## Appendix: Variations

### Dribbling/Ball Control

\*\*Cutting - 2 grids 10x5, each player with a ball (3 1yd channels)

```
** > **  **
^      v    ^
**   ** > **
```

start wide of grid, cut across channel, out other side, then up to next channel, accelerate through channel

1. inside foot dribble, inside cut
2. outside foot dribble, laces cut
3. inside foot dribble, cut behind standing leg
4. outside foot dribble, pull-back cut

Coaching points: sharp rt-angle cut, accelerate after cut, keep ball close enough for control but far enough to keep pace

grid of cones approx. 5 yds apart, players with ball behind first cones

```
xxx*  *  *  *
xxx*  *  *  *
xxx*  *  *  *
```

#1. 1st gap-move ball using all of sole of both feet; 2nd gap-quick taps 1 touch per step; 3rd gap-sideways roll with back foot, tap back with inside of front foot. when 1st player reaches first cone, 2nd player starts.

#2. pull-roll Coervers - every player at a cone with a ball. 30 sec. each:

a. roll forward and back, alternating right and left; b. roll side and back (to left with rt foot, to rt with left foot); c. pull back-push, alternating feet

#3. tap Coervers - as in #2, 30 sec each. a. tap-tap. b. 3 taps, touch. c. 3 taps, roll out. d. 2 taps, roll in. e. roll in/roll in. f. squeeze-push coaching points: go slow

at first. cuts must be at rt angles. keep the ball close. once the technique is down then accelerate after the cut.

obstacle dribbling: groups of players at each end of cone course:

```
* *  
* * * *  
* *
```

- a. dribble, cut left, cut right, cut left pass to first player on far line (reverse)
- b. dribble, roll left, cut right, roll left, pass (reverse)

\*\*moves and ball control - players in pairs at one side of a 10-15 yd long grid. 1st player does move, pins ball on far line and sprints back, then 2nd player sprints to far line, does move and pins ball on close line, continue

- a. laces tap-tap - 2 consecutive taps forward with rt foot laces, then 2 left
- b. push-roll - push ball forward with outside of rt foot, then with bottom of rt foot roll ball sideways to left foot
- c. inside-outside - same foot, tap inside then outside, step in between each touch
- d. Maradona - rt sole touch, spin to left, left sole pull, rt touch
- e. taps and circle - 5 taps/steps forward then outside 360 turn with same foot, then other foot
- f. side roll/cut back - side roll with back foot, cut back with inside of front foot
- e. tap-tap-pull-push - rt tap, lt tap, rt pullback/push, continue with left
- g. side roll-tap-tap - rt side roll, lt tap, rt tap, continue

coaching points: go slow at first. cuts must be sharp. sell the move. keep the ball close. once the technique is down then accelerate after the cut.

\*\*Warm-Up

```
1:* * * * 2:  
* * * * * C  
* * * B  
A B * A
```

1. dribbling: 10 cones per group, players w/ ball at A and B. 1st player dribbles straight up the middle channel then cuts (A left, B right) with a move through the side channel, then cuts back toward the beginning and goes to end of other line. Moves: inside of foot; outside of foot; lunge away then outside of foot; scissor away then outside of foot; inside foot step-over, other foot drag, inside of 1st foot; inside foot far step-over, outside of other foot.
2. passing: i. B checks, A pass to B, A to B line, C moves toward A line, B passes to C, B to C line, C continues to A line.  
ii. (pass, lay-off, pass) B checks, A pass to B, B layoff to A, C moves toward A line, A passes to C, B to C line, A to B line.  
iii. (pass, overlap, pass, pass) B checks, A pass to B, B moves centrally, A overlaps B, B pass to A, C moves toward A line, A pass to C, B to C line, A to B line.

## **Passing/Receiving**

\*\*Passing/Receiving

grid of cones 5-10 yds apart, 4-6 players and 1 ball per 2 cones

CA\* \*BD

#1. dribble, check, pass, receive

- A dribbles, B checks away, then rcv pass from A. A curves to end of B line.

- B dribbles, C checks away, then rcv pass from B. B curves to end of C line.

continue

#2. dribble, check, pass, give & go

- A dribbles, B checks away, then rcv pass from A. A moves to left and rcv 2-touch pass from B. B moves toward C and rcv 2-touch return pass from A. B curves to end of C line, A passes to D and curves to end of line. D dribbles... continue.

alt: other side

#3. dribble, check, pass, 1-2, overlap

- A dribbles, B checks away, then rcv pass from A. A moves to left and rcv 2-touch pass from B. B overlaps A while A passes to D. D passes to overlapping B. B passes to C. B goes to end of C line, A goes to end of D line. B dribbles...continue.

alt: other side.

Coaching points: check away before rcv. jog in place as ball is coming. lift foot to contact ball in center to trap. trap in direction of next pass. plant foot pointing toward pass. 2-touch. all passes solid (not too fast) and accurate (to correct foot of receiver)

\*\*Concentration - players in pairs, behind cones 5 yds apart, 1 ball

A B

\* \*

A passes to B, B traps to other side of cone with 1st touch, passes back with 2nd touch. continue.

Contest - max # of cycles in 1 min. pair with most get to rest. if player makes mistake then pair does pushups. Score/rank for points.

alt: use non-dominant foot.

coaching points: accuracy over speed. lift foot to contact ball in center to trap. trap in direction of next move.

Gate passing. 2 players, 1 ball, 2 cones set up as a 2yd gate, players on opposite sides of the gate. All passes 2-touch.

1. pass, tap, pass. 1->2 through gate. 2 touches ball to side, outside of a cone. 2->1. 1 touches ball to side. 1->2. continue.

2. pass far and close. move 1 step backwards after each pass until about 15yds apart. Then move 1 step closer after each pass. 2-touch for long passes, 1-touch for short passes.

3. pass and run. 2 turns away, runs 3 steps, turns back and calls for ball. 1->2.

Then 1 turns away, run 3 steps, turns back and calls for ball. 2->1. continue.

4. receive and turn. 1->2. 2 receives the ball turning away, dribbles 3 steps, turns back. 2->1. continue.

coaching points: head up, clean passes, good first touch in correct direction, pace

\*\*Passing warm-up – 6 player Dutch square #1, 2 and 3

2 15x20 grids, up to 9 players per grid: min 2 players at A, D,

1 player at B, C, E, F, ball at A

F D  
E  
B  
A C

#1. check, receive, pass and move

- B checks away then rcv pass from A. A follows pass to B position.
- C checks away then rcv pass from B. B follow pass to C position.
- C dribbles toward D. D checks away then rcv pass from C. C follows to end of D line. continue pattern.

#2. check, pass, lay off and move

- B checks away then rcv pass from A. A moves toward C.
- B lays off ball to A. C checks away then rcv pass from A. A curves back to B position, B curves to C position.
- C dribbles toward D. D checks away then rcv pass from C. C follows to end of D line. continue pattern.

#3. double give and go.

- B checks away then rcv pass from A. A moves toward C.
- B lays off ball to A. C checks away then rcv pass from A. A curves back to B position, B curves to open space near C.
- C give and go with B. B curves to C position.
- C dribbles toward D. D checks away then rcv pass from C. C follows to end of D line. continue pattern.

Var: same pattern to the left. same pattern with ball starting from A and D at the same time.

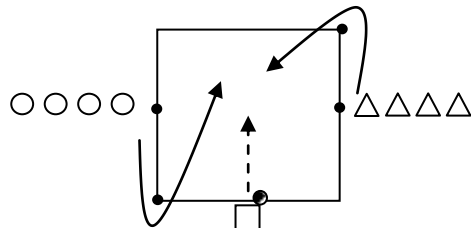
Coaching points: check away before rcv. jog in place as ball is coming. lift foot to contact ball in center to trap. trap in direction of next pass. plant foot pointing toward pass. 2-touch. all passes solid (not too fast) and accurate (to correct foot of receiver)

**1v1**

\*\*circle of goals

1. players in pairs, 1 ball per pair, 5 or 6 cone gates around outside of a 20 yd circle (or center circle). 1st player w/ ball
2. Go - player tries to dribble through as many gates as possible in 60 sec. Partner shadows. switch. can't dribble through the same gate twice in a row.
3. Next - light pressure
4. Next - full pressure
5. count # of gates

coaching points: heads up, use your moves, simple works, unbalance the defender by getting him to lean one way then cut the other



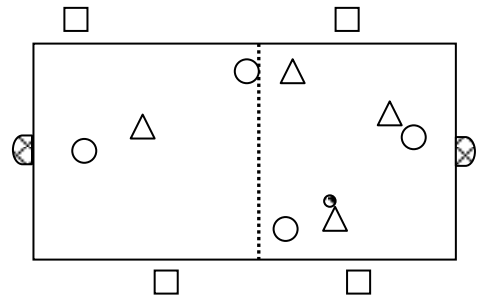
\*\*1v1

1. 2 10x15 grids, half the team at each, half the players at the end of each grid
2. coach plays ball to middle, 1st player from each side runs around far cone then comes out and plays 1v1, dribble across far end line, go to end of line

3. Next – as before but dribble across near endline

4. Move to 2v1

coaching point: positive first touch - move to space behind D, don't stop moving, cut-off D by moving body between D and ball



### 2v2-4v4

\*\*4v4+4 - 30x20 grid w/ pugg goals, 3 teams of

4. 2 teams play 4v4 to pugg goals. other team

around outside of area, can be used for 1-2 or

give-and-go passes. play 2 min. give 10 sec

countdown. At end of 2 min teams switch but ball is still in play so team that reacts

faster has advantage. Score/rank for points. (team that scores the most get to

watch their teammates run a killer!) OR 2 games of 4v4

alt: can changes teams if needed

coaching points: control the ball, accurate passes and traps keep possession, try to

score on game transition, passing and control. shoot when you can see the goal

clearly.

\*\* 2v2 and keep-away - 2 groups.

- group A (8 players) play 2 2v2 games to pugg goals. Change teams as needed.

- group B plays +3 keep-away on 20x20 grid (5v2, 6v3, etc). Place a cone 20 yds away. If O completes 6 passes then D sprints around cone. If D intercepts and completes 1 pass, O sprints around cone. switch players around.

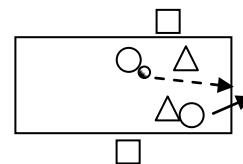
- change groups after 10 min. var: +2 pts for splitting D

coaching points: 2v2 - side and overlap runs to overload D, don't look only to

penetrate, timing, split D, dribble to create

space/opportunity. keep-away: look

for open player, heads-up, communicate, look to split D



\*\*2+2v2

1. 20x10 grids, each group has 3 teams of 2 w/ pinnies.

2. play 2v2 keepaway w/ 2 neutral outside grid who are always on offense

3. complete pass across endline to score

coaching points: Heads up, Passing pace and accuracy, Communicate, combine with

outside players, Move toward ball to receive, Check away/to ball, Diagonal pass on

ground

\*\*1+2v2

1. 20x10 grids, each group has 3 teams of 2 w/ pinnies.

2. play 2v2 keepaway w/ 1 neutral players who is always on offense

3. complete pass across endline to score

coaching points: Heads up, Passing pace and accuracy, Communicate, combine with

outside players, Move toward ball to receive, Check away/to ball, Diagonal pass on

ground

## **\*\*2v2 contest**

1. 10x15 grids, players in pairs
  2. play 2v2 on all grids, score by completing pass to partner across end line
  3. play 2 min. winning team moves up a grid, losing team moves down a grid. tie is broken by player who can do the most consecutive juggles
  4. play 3-4 rounds. Team that wins on grid 1 in last round is the overall winner.
- coaching points: Heads up, Passing pace and accuracy, Communicate, Move toward ball to receive, Check away/to ball, Diagonal pass on ground

## **The Game**

**\*\*Handball - 2 teams, play team handball. 2 steps only with ball. Score with header. This allows players to focus on tactics and movement off the ball without being held back by foot technique. Kids love this game, but don't do it too often!**

coaching points: make runs off the ball. talk. anticipate teammate's runs/moves. think 2 passes ahead.

## **Appendix: Soccer Vocabulary – here are some of the terms used in this document**

1. Dutch Square – a generic name for a passing drill done on a square grid, typically based on the Dutch style of play
2. Square pass – a pass at a right angle, typically directly to the right or left
3. Check, check away, check to – move in a different direction, then quickly back. When trying to get rid of your defender to get open to receive the ball a player can “check away” by moving a couple of yards away from their teammate, then quickly back toward them.
4. Lay off – a light pass, right after receiving the ball, to the passer or another player, typically back in the direction from which the first pass came or at an angle to that pass
5. Positive first touch – a good clean receiving of the ball, making the ball go where you want it to, not where it happens to bounce to
6. Make defender commit – disguise your play so that the defender has to make a decision on who or how to cover. When that defender has gotten into a position from which they can't recover, then make the play.
7. Penetrate – run through the defense
8. Trap – receive the ball by blocking it slow it down, either having it land close to the foot, or in the direction the player wants to move.
9. 2-touch – a restriction to put on players. They get 1 touch to trap/receive the ball and then the next contact must be a pass or shot. Similar instructions are: 1-touch, 3-touch or unlimited touches.
10. Attack standing leg – when a defender lifts one foot to take a step, if the attacker immediately dribbles to the other side the defender will not be able to directly move without falling... try it!
11. Overload D – send more attackers to a part of the field than there are defenders
12. Split the D – pass or dribble the ball between 2 defenders. This typically confuses defenders and can lead to numbers up or shooting opportunities.

13. Numbers up/numbers down – up (down) – when you have more (less) players in a part of the field than your opponent. You can create numbers up drills like 5v2, 6v3, etc.
14. Crossing – a pass from the side of the field to the center in the attacking end of the field. Often this pass goes “across” the goal.
15. Set plays – plays after the game is stopped, such as: corner kick, free kick, penalty kick, throw-in and kick-off. Since the game has been stopped, you have the opportunity to set up a play. These plays should be practiced, especially corner kicks and free kicks in the attacking end (because these are scoring opportunities), and throw-ins (because they happen so often).