

Practice Plans Ages 4-6

Week 2

Leave all available soccer balls out on a line. As players arrive introduce yourself and ask them to go pick a ball. Allow for 5-10 minutes of “goofing off”. These guys are young, and it may be their first time with a soccer ball. Give them a few minutes to get comfortable. Encourage them to only use their feet, but don't stress. Practice hasn't officially started.

Once all players have arrived or you feel they've had enough time for playing call them all in for a basic stretch. Use this opportunity to chat with them. Ask them a combination of soccer and fun questions to get them comfortable speaking with you.

Every practice should start this way. Repetition helps at this age. It allows them to learn, by the time we are done stretching, practice has started.

Stretch Suggestions

Spread your feet and lean to one side.

Go down like a dog.

Batman or butterfly. Ask are you a batman or a butterfly?

Chicken wing – this is the best opportunity to chat loosely. Both legs.

1 leg with 2 helpers

1 leg with 2 new helpers

Tip toes with 2 new helpers

Water

There should be roughly 40 minutes left. You do not want to toss too much at them. They can only comprehend so much. Focus on 2 drills that focus on the same skills.

Game 1 – Whichever Game from Week 1 worked the Best. Repetition is crucial at this age.

Water

Game 2 – Superhero/Animal/Random Dribbling

We still want to piggyback off Week 1 (Looking Up and Dribbling to an Opening). We are only playing 1 new game this week and we want it to be related yet different.

Have each player get 1 ball and start on 1 side of the field with their ball on the line AND their foot on the ball (be lenient with the foot on the ball, it is a difficult skill). Have them choose “what they want to be” and dribble to the other side. This requires some imagination on your part so be prepared. I like to use the categories I listed above. Game example listed below in **Coaching Points Game 2**.

Examples.

Superman – Dribble with one arm out and the other half extended – the way Superman flies.

Spiderman – Dribble while using your arms to shoot webs – the way Spiderman swings.

When in Doubt – Ask the Player! They can certainly give you an idea of how to do it.

It’s ok to be silly here, have the kids crawl, or jump, or slow-mo. Don’t get caught in the silliness of it for too long. We want them to be dribbling with their feet as much as possible.

Coaching Points Game 2

The game might appear to be nonsense at first glance. It is actually very valuable when we focus on the right things. You want to coach the kids on their spacing. They shouldn’t be bumping into each other or having their soccer balls cross into each other. We are trying to develop our spacing from the players around us. In order to do that the kids will have to use BOTH POINTS from last week. Look Up, and Dribble to the Openings. We want to maintain a straight line and control. It will take time, but we will play this game again.

I also use this game to develop “Listening Ears”. I have all the kids start with their ball on the line, and their foot on the ball. These are required before I choose who picks our next superhero or animal. I will even go as far to say, Addie is on the line. Addie what do you want to be? First, it helps reinforce names, and it helps reinforce good behavior.

Addie was on the line, Addie got to be a giraffe. I should be on the line so I can pick next. This is essential. We are developing more than soccer skills by doing this. Listening skills have life long lasting benefits. Dribbling like Superman does not.

How to increase the Challenge?

Time them. 10 seconds, 8 seconds, 6 seconds. Anything less than 5 seconds is “Grown-Up speed”. Watch them rise to the occasion when you tell them that.

Water.

Scrimmage. You can’t beat an old-fashioned scrimmage. A 30-minute game to end practice is a coach’s favorite and a player’s favorite. Nothing can simulate the game like the game. Throughout the scrimmage coach for the points of focus. **Looking Up** and **Moving to the Opening** and now **Spacing**. Your team should be large enough to scrimmage itself either 4v4 or 5v5. If not, ask the team next to you. They should be the same age group and division.

End Practice

Re-enforce names at the end for both yourself and your teammates. Ask them questions about your coaching points from practice.

When I'm looking down, where do I look next? UP!

When I have the ball, do I dribble towards the other players, or around them? AROUND!

Should we be running into each other while playing? NO! Should we keep our Space? YES!

Break it down with a team cheer.

Good job Coach.