



Junior football

coaching manual



Primary
school



Junior football

coaching manual contents



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Introduction

Junior football
coaching manual



“We wish to change our nation’s children by instilling in them the desire to be more active, not just now but for all their lives. We aim to achieve this by teaching each child a competence in and passion for at least one sport. This we will do by building a sports coaching culture for our children ...”

Many factors in modern society have resulted in children and adults becoming increasingly inactive and this has had an alarming effect on their health. Regular physical activity plays an important role in the prevention and treatment of many lifestyle-related diseases, such as coronary artery disease, strokes and type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent diabetes). Sports are a great way to encourage children to get more physically active and healthy, and that’s why Discovery Vitality has developed a series of sports coaching manuals for primary schools in South Africa.

The purpose of the Junior football coaching manual

This manual provides teachers and coaches with relevant information on how to coach football so that children get the maximum benefits from playing the sport – getting physically active, healthy and fit. The focus of the manual is on developing the basic skills needed for juniors (up to the age of 12) to become competent football players. The main focus is on providing exercises and drills to help you plan your practice and develop skills, rather than to give a comprehensive framework of the rules and tactics of the game.

Professor Tim Noakes of the Sports Science Institute of South Africa has a dream to make South African children the fittest in the world by 2020. He believes that through initiatives like the Vitality Schools Programme we can reach this goal. You too can play a part in making this vision a reality!

Teach children the beautiful game of football

The aim of the game is to score more goals than the opposing team. There are generally two phases of play: attack and defence. During attack, the team that has the ball must move it upfield towards the opponents’ goal and score. Defence happens when the other team has the ball and the defending team must try to get the ball away from them and stop them from scoring. Players use skills such as passing, shooting, dribbling, trapping and tackling.



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Understanding the game

The aim of football

The aim of the game is to score more goals than the opposing team. There are generally two phases of play: attack and defence. During attack, the team that has the ball must move it upfield towards the opponents' goal and score. Defence happens when the other team has the ball and the defending team must try to get the ball away from them and stop them from scoring. Players use skills such as passing, shooting, dribbling, trapping and tackling.

Safety

Football is a fairly safe sport as long as it is played according to the rules. Remove reckless or dangerous play and encourage players to learn proper tackling techniques. This includes avoiding tackling opponents from behind or unnecessary aggression during tackles. It is important not to tackle with studs showing or with both feet. Learn more on tackling techniques in the Drills section.

Children should learn fair play from a young age, which involves sticking to the rules of the game; in particular, players should never be allowed to:

- Commit dangerous tackles
- Argue with the referee or other players
- Simulate being fouled.

Planning your practice

Practice frequency and duration

When trying to encourage children to participate in sport, it is essential that sessions are fun. Training is not necessarily about quantity but rather quality, so we suggest that you have approximately two one-hour sessions a week.

Putting the practice together

As the coach, use your imagination and creativity to get the most out of your practice time.



It is helpful to stick to a framework that will help you cover all the important aspects of football training. The table below summarises the framework for how to set up a good practice session:

Phase	Description and principles	Length
Warm-up*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective is to prepare players physically and ease them into activity Should be done with the ball – more enjoyable and helps skills development Should be lively, fun, engaging and instructional 	About 10 minutes, consisting of four of the available activities
Skills development and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific attention is paid to individual players and skills training Skills include passing, running, tackling, shooting, positional play and teamwork 	30 minutes, consisting of six of the available skills drills (see next section)
Match / or game time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A short match is a great way to end off a practice session and expose players to proper play Small-sided (5-a-side) games or 'attack vs. defence' matches work well 	15 minutes
Warm-down*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to get all players together at the end and reinforce key lessons of the practice Also helps to ease players out of activity 	5 minutes
All phases have drills and training games you can use to make sessions fun and enjoyable for your players while also helping you teach the skills properly. The drills are explained in the following sections.		
		Total 60 minutes

* Refer to the General coaching manual for a list of dynamic and static stretches.



Warm-up drills and activities

These warm-up activities should be fun and ease players into activity. All involve the ball and some of them also include skills like passing and trapping the ball. Players should master these skills before doing the warm-up activities. If they have not, rather focus on activities that do not involve these skills. Start at a slow pace and then increase intensity levels as players grow more confident. More examples of these activities can be found in the General coaching manual.

Simon says

Set up

- Form a 20 - 30 m circle using cones.

How to do the activity

- Have the children jog around the outside of the circle
- Shout instructions such as 'left', which means everyone touches the ground with their left hand
- If you shout 'right', they must touch the ground with their right hand
- If you shout 'up' they put both hands up and jump in the air
- Call 'down' and they touch the ground with both hands.

Progression

- Change things around - shout 'left' and they must touch the ground with their right hand, 'down' and they must jump up in the air and so on.

Simple Simon

Here you can be creative and find enjoyable activities for children to imitate.

How to do the activity

- Players jog on the spot with the ball in front of them
- Stand in front of players so that they can copy what you do. Do not give verbal instruction (for example, go down on one knee, hop on one leg, bounce the ball, etc).



Ball relays

Set up

- Place two cones 20 m apart.

How to do the activity

- Divide players into two equal groups
- Players run a relay race where each player carries the ball to a cone, places the ball next to the cone, and runs back to the other cone to 'tag' his or her teammate into the race
- The second person fetches the ball and returns it for the next player to run with it.

Progression

- To increase difficulty, players can dribble the ball to the cone (see activities for dribbling on page 25). Or players can do an exercise, such as push-ups or jumping jacks, at the cone.

Juggling

This is a good drill for developing eye-hand coordination and for improving skills, ball control and confidence on the ball.

Set up

- Players form a circle with about 2 m between each player.

How to do the activity

- Players juggle the ball first with the foot and then with the thigh (and possibly the head if older and more skillful).

Coaching points

- Make sure that players touch the ball with the top of the foot where the laces are. The most common mistakes include bending the legs too much and bringing the knee up – the idea is to flick the foot and not bend the knee.

Variations

- Throw the ball into the air about head height and allow it to bounce. After it bounces, players must move to the ball and tap it up in the air using their feet. Catch the ball and repeat the exercise – this is the one-bounce juggle
- The same as the first drill, except this time don't allow the ball to bounce – tap it straight up and catch it. This is the no-bounce juggle.

Progression

- As skill levels improve, try and kick it twice and then three times or more before catching it. Focus on doing this with both legs.



Ball gymnastics

This activity helps players focus on balance, control and keeping the ball close to the body.

How to do the activity

- Players stand with the ball in front of them and then roll the ball with the bottom of the foot, first forwards and backwards, then from left to right, and then in a circular motion
- This is done with both feet.

Tick-tock

This activity is a starting point for learning how to dribble and control the changes in direction during a match.

How to do the activity

- Players stand with a ball on the ground between their feet and gently tap it from one foot to the other
- Balance is essential.

Progression

- Build speed slowly.

Tick-tock forward

This activity provides a basic starting point for dribbling the ball.

How to do the activity

- This is the same as the previous drill, but players now move forward while passing the ball from one foot to the other
- Emphasise control.

Progression

- Walking speed at first, running later.



Pass and stop

This drill requires that players are competent at passing and stopping the ball.

Set up

- Have players pair up and stand facing each other 3 m apart.

How to do the activity

- Player 1 passes and player 2 stops the ball
- Player 2 runs backwards and player 1 runs forwards, and the ball is passed again
- Repeat for the length of the field and then return with player roles switched.

Wall game

This drill also requires players to be competent at passing and stopping the ball.

Set up

- Divide players into groups of three or four.

How to do the activity

- One player stands about 5 m from the others and is the 'wall' (player A)
- Each of the other players (B, C and D) passes to the 'wall' who stops the ball and passes it back
- Player B stops the ball and runs to the back of the group
- Player C then has his turn
- Once all players have gone, player B becomes the 'wall' and player A falls in with the group.

Skills development and training

Skills development and training should be the focus of your practice sessions so that the basic skills of football can be taught. The aim with young players is to spend about 70% of the time focusing on skills development and only 30% on competition. This way, training is fun and stimulating and not too competitive. It is important that players don't wait in lines where they get bored – you should have a 'no queue' policy towards your practices! Make it a priority to teach the skills on both the left and right feet. Remember to get creative.



Attributes of a good player

A good football player has skills that include:

- Speed
- Endurance
- Agility
- Coordination
- Vision and decision-making ability
- Strength
- Explosive power for acceleration
- Balance
- Ability to communicate on the field.

Football skills

Skills for football include individual skills and defensive and attacking skills.

Individual skills include:

- Passing a ball
- Receiving a ball
- Dribbling.

Attacking and defensive skills include:

- Tackling and defending
- Shooting
- Heading.

Each skill is explained in more detail in the next section.

Teaching correct technique

1

Passing and receiving the ball

Controlling the ball is the key to successful football. Passing and receiving are the most frequently used skills for controlling the ball. Every player must develop these techniques to learn more advanced skills. An effective pass should be received and controlled by a team mate; that's why passing and receiving the ball are always taught simultaneously. The drills below help to teach these two skills.

Passing

The pass in football is a simple adaptation of the kick, explained in the Physical activity skills manual. The difference is that, to pass accurately, players must strike the ball with the instep of the foot. The technique is explained on the next page:



- Stand behind the ball and slightly to one side
- Step forward and place your non-kicking foot next to the ball and aim it towards the target
- Swing your kicking leg back, bent at the knee, before bringing it through to make contact with the ball
- You will have to rotate the kicking leg to the outside so that contact with the ball is made roughly beneath the inside ankle on the instep
- Follow through in the intended direction of the kick
- It is important to make sure that the body weight is forward and over the ball when kicking
- Make sure that your head is directly above the ball so that you can keep the ball down
- Follow through in the intended direction of the kick
- It is important to make sure that the body weight is forward and over the ball when kicking
- Make sure that your head is directly above the ball so that you can keep the ball down.

Figure 1 shows the correct technique

Figure 2 shows the incorrect technique (do not kick with the toes)



Control

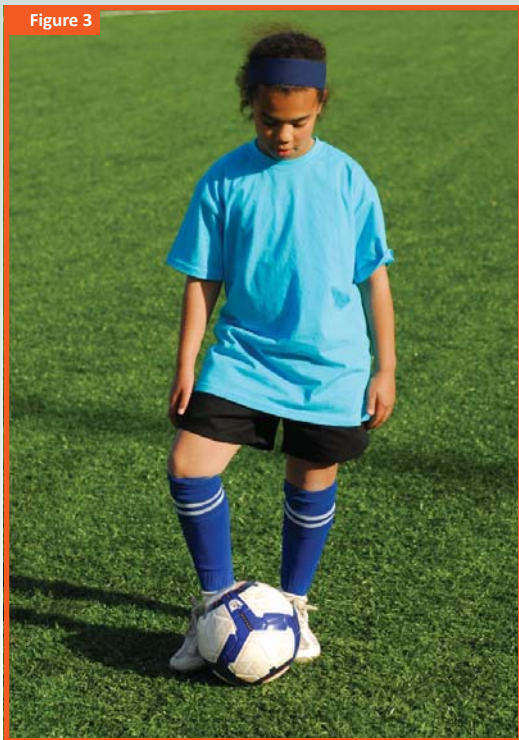
Foot control is the technique used to receive the ball after a pass. The most important aspect of good foot control is the first touch. It gives players time and space to move with the ball and find the best pass. The method is described below:

- Move your body directly into the path of the rolling ball
- As the ball approaches, prepare to receive the ball by positioning your foot in its path as though you were going to block the ball



- Allow the ball to meet your foot. When controlling, it is best to strike the ball with the instep of the foot
- Depending on the speed of the ball as it rolls towards you, you will have to relax your leg and foot to allow some 'give' (like catching an egg). This prevents the ball from bouncing off and away from you
- It is important to keep your eyes on the ball until contact is made
- When teaching this movement, encourage players always to move towards the ball rather than waiting for it to arrive at them.

Figure 3



2

The lofted pass/aerial kick and receiving a bouncing ball

The lofted kick is the football skill used to play the long ball, cross the ball into the penalty area, take a corner kick and clear the ball from defence. When a team mate receives a lofted pass, they must control it using the same method described previously. This time they have to judge the height, direction and speed of the ball as it is bouncing. Both techniques will now be described.

Lofted pass

A lofted pass uses the same basic kicking technique as the pass, but with two subtle differences: you must lean back slightly and you must make contact low down on the ball to generate lift. It is important to get distance, accuracy and height from the kick. The objective is to kick the ball high enough to clear any opposition players.

- Beginners sometimes find it difficult to balance properly. Don't fall too far to the side as you kick
- Use the non-kicking foot as a firm anchor slightly behind the ball and put your opposite arm out for balance.

Control of the bouncing ball

The lofted pass is of little use if the player receiving the ball cannot control it. Control is achieved through a modified control technique.

- Get your body in line with the approaching ball
- Depending on the height, use a different part of your body to control the ball
- If the ball is low (knee height or lower), use the foot (see Figure 4).
- If the ball is higher than the knee, use another body part to block the ball like the thigh or chest (see Figure 5 and 6).

Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



**3**

Dribbling and running with the ball

Dribbling and running with the ball is a very personal skill, so encourage players to develop their own style. There are certain techniques that you should teach to develop good habits and individual style.

Running with the ball

- Running with the ball is impossible if the player has poor ball control
- Begin by walking with the ball and emphasise ball control rather than speed. As this improves, increase the pace
- The basic technique when running with the ball:
 - Keep the knees slightly bent at all times
 - Always keep the head level and looking at a point a few metres beyond the ball.

Dribbling

- Dribbling is the skill used to dodge opponents
- This is done by changing the direction of the ball – the player with the ball uses the inside or outside of the foot to create a 'zigzag' pattern and swerve around defenders
- It is equally important to teach players how to stop the ball after dribbling using the inner part of the foot.

4

Tackling and defending

The block-tackle technique is an essential skill that allows you to compete for the ball. The most important aspect of defence and tackling is attitude: players must be determined to win the ball.

The tackle situation can easily lead to giving away free - kicks and fouls for rough or dangerous play. The following three key principles will help to prevent this:

- Make side-to-side, shoulder-to-shoulder contact only – never tackle from behind or run quickly into opponents from the front
- Keep the elbows tucked in
- Play only the ball.



Players should learn when to attempt a tackle, what type of tackle to attempt and when to jockey instead of tackle.

The block tackle

- Start by anchoring the non-tackling foot firmly on the ground
- Make firm contact with the ball with the other tackling foot
- The inside of the foot is used for tackling
- Get the head down over the ball as much as possible
- It's important to put the full weight of the body behind the ball
- As with any tackling skill, timing is crucial. Try to tackle when the opponents are off balance or have allowed the ball to go too far in front of them
- Another good time to tackle is when your opponent looks down at the ball.

Figure 7





The sliding tackle (also called the recovery tackle)

- The sliding tackle is used when the player with the ball is slightly in front of or next to the player who must make the tackle. The player must try to reach out across the opponent to win the ball
- Get into a good position, which means get diagonally next to the player with the ball
- It's best to tackle with the foot that is furthest from the ball
- Use a square position with your leg going out to the side rather than straight in front of you
- Timing is vital. Watch the ball carefully, try to anticipate your opponent's move without being distracted and always go for the ball
- If you get a foot on the ball first there is no foul, but if you miss the ball you will give away a free kick or be left behind the play
- The defender cannot go through the attacker (take the attacker's leg out) before making contact with the ball.

Figure 8



Jockeying

Sometimes attempting a tackle is risky because the defender could give away a foul or allow the attacker to dribble past. In such instances, the defender should jockey the attacker, which means they should remain between the attacker and the goal. The defender should be close enough to make it difficult for the attacker to shoot or pass forward. While jockeying, the defender must watch the ball and not the attacker's feet.



When to jockey rather than tackle

- When there would be little cover defence against the attacker if he were to dribble past the defender
- When it is difficult to tackle without committing a foul (for example, when the attacker has his back to the defender and the goal).

5

Shooting

The key to good shooting is accuracy. While a powerful shot may beat the goalkeeper, it won't score a goal if it's inaccurate (unless there is a deflection).

Shooting techniques

Any ball that goes towards goal can be considered a shot, including the passing technique. Nevertheless, the most effective technique for shooting at goal is to drive through the middle of the ball so that contact is made with the top of the foot where the laces are. This is a modified pass technique.

- Like the pass, place the non-kicking foot next to or slightly behind the ball
- Swing the kicking leg through more powerfully and keep the foot straight
- Keep the head down so that the ball stays down, and extend the toes out in front of the foot
- The knee of the striking leg should be over the ball at the point of impact. The player's weight must go forward to keep the ball low
- The head must be over the ball, with eyes focusing on the ball as it is struck.

Figure 9



Figure 10





Heading the ball

Heading is mainly used to pass, clear or shoot a high ball with the first touch. It is especially useful for defending. When the ball is travelling in the air towards the goal, there is often not enough time to control the ball and clear it. In such instances, the head can be used to clear the ball away from the goal. Heading the ball is also useful for controlling a bouncing ball or lofted pass the player cannot control with legs or chest.

Older children begin to learn the skill of heading the ball so that they can use it to score goals or defend free - kicks and corners. Some people believe that young children should not even be shown how to head the ball, and that excessive use of the head can lead to injury. Still, there will be occasions where children might need to head the ball, so we recommend that you at least teach them the basic method without overdoing this aspect of the game.

The most important point about the header is that the ball must make contact with the forehead, not the top of the head. Figure 11 shows the correct contact between ball and head. The player must keep his eyes on the ball at all times, and must use his neck and back muscles to provide the force behind the ball. Many young players make the mistake of closing their eyes and jumping into the ball so that it strikes the top part of the head. This technique must be corrected. Children must learn to watch the ball, remain balanced and make contact with the ball on the forehead.

Figure 11



Defensive vs attacking headers

The aim of a defensive header is to clear the ball away from the goal area and the attacking players. The ball should be headed either out of play or away from goal. Junior players should not header across their own goal or back towards the goal.

The aim of the attacking header is to score directly or set up a team mate to score.

Different techniques for attacking and defensive headers

- With a defensive header, the player should aim to header the ball up so that the ball leaves the forehead at an upward angle
- With an attacking header, the player should aim to header the ball down so that the ball leaves the forehead at a downward angle.

Goalkeeping skills

The goalkeeper carries a huge responsibility for the team because he is the last line of defense.

Learning the basic techniques for goalkeeping is therefore essential. Goalkeepers need to be brave and committed since they are expected to dive in the air to catch the ball; they may also need to dive at attackers' feet or jump above other players to catch or punch the ball away.

The following skills need to be practised:

- Make sure the player gets his body behind the ball when it is coming towards him
- The player should be on the toes ready to move in any direction, and watching the flight of the ball before making a decision on how to save it
- The player must try and get into a position to close down the angle of a shot coming from an attacker
- Good communication with the other players in the team, specifically the defenders, is key
- The player must have soft hands to cushion the impact of the shot
- When catching the ball, he should catch it with the hands in a 'W' position to prevent it from slipping out. The 'W' position involves putting thumbs together behind the ball, palms facing up and fingers spread out and facing up. The letter 'W' is formed by the thumbs and the pointing fingers
- If the goalkeeper has to come out and make a save, ensure he stays standing for as long as possible so as to create a bigger presence and cut down the attacker's angle.



Activities

All the activities below can be used to help you design practices for your team. See the diagrams for more instruction on how to run each activity. As you grow in experience and knowledge you'll be able to modify some of these activities and make them more challenging and exciting for players. Pay very close attention to the proper technique for each activity.

Activity summary

The table below shows all the activities explained in the following section, indicating which skills can be taught using each activity.

Drill letter and name	Passing	Controlling	Dribbling	Tackling	Shooting	Positional play	Goalkeeping
A. Pass and control	✓	✓					
B. The passing name game	✓	✓					
C. Turn and stop drill	✓	✓				✓	
D. Dribbling slalom			✓				
E. Get 'em	✓	✓	✓				
F. Tackle square			✓	✓			
G. Tackle line			✓	✓			
H. Sharks and minnows		✓	✓	✓			
I. Shooting teams			✓	✓	✓	✓	
J. Positional play	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
K. Stopping a shot							✓
L. Goalie wars							✓



Cones



Players



Pass and control

This is the most basic drill for teaching passing and controlling of the ball. You can include this in warm-up activities once players become familiar with it.

Set up

- Divide players into pairs with one ball for each pair.

How to do the activity

- Players pass to one another from a 1m distance
- The receiver controls the ball with the first touch and passes it back with the second touch
- The players should do this drill for about two to four minutes.

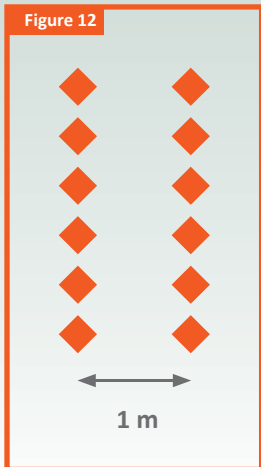
Coaching points

- Pass accuracy
- Good first touch control by receiver
- Emphasis on kick technique – side of foot
- Use both feet.

Progression

- Increase distance between players by 2 m, 4 m, 6 m and 10 m.

Figure 12





The passing name game

This is a good game to practise passing and controlling skills, and it also teaches players to think while they play.

Set up

- Divide players into groups of five with one ball for each group.

How to do the activity

- Players pass to one another from within a circle formed by the group
- The receiving player must shout out the name of the player they will be passing to next before they receive the ball.

Coaching points

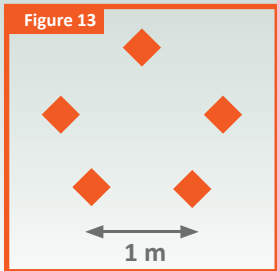
- Pass accuracy
- Good first touch control by receiver, positioning the ball correctly to pass to the player whose name has been called out
- Two touches each time – one to control, one to pass
- Make sure players use both legs
- Teach players to look up at the target when passing.

Progression

- Instead of the receiving player calling a name, the player who has just passed the ball calls out who the next pass must go to
- Increase the size of the circle so that there is a distance of up to 5 m between players.



Figure 13





Turn and stop drill

This drill also teaches passing and controlling of the ball.

Set up

- Divide players into groups of three with two balls per group.

How to do the activity

- Player A passes to player B (in the middle), who controls the ball and passes it back to player A
- Player B then turns around to receive a pass from player C before controlling and passing it back to player C
- Continue for two minutes, then change the player in the middle.

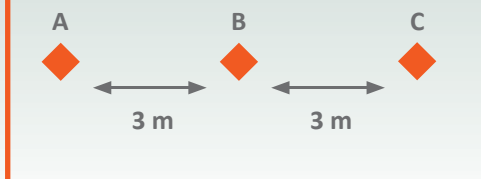
Coaching points

- Pass accuracy and control by all players, especially player B
- Ensure players pass and receive with both feet.

Progression

- Increase distance apart by 4 m, 6 m, 8 m and 10 m.

Figure 14





Dribbling slalom

This drill also teaches players how to change direction while dribbling.

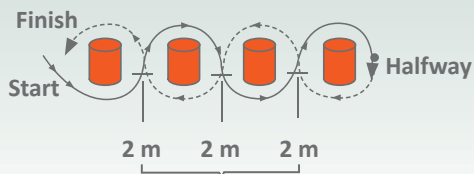
Set up

- Divide the team up into groups of six
- Set up a line of between four and six cones, about 2 m apart.

How to do the activity

- Players line up behind the cones and then take turns to dribble in a zigzag pattern between the cones (like a slalom skier)
- Once the players have reached the last cone, they must do a full circle around this cone before returning to their team mates. They then pass the ball to the next player and join the queue for their next turn.

Figure 15





Get 'em

Set up

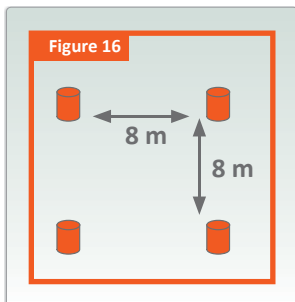
- Eight players play this game
- Measure out a square 8 m x 8 m
- Place a cone at each corner of the square.

How to do the activity

- All players must stay within the square. Player A is 'It' and is the only player to start with a ball
- Other players move within the square to avoid being touched by the ball
- Player A dribbles and tries to touch the other players below the waist with the ball. This player can only touch another player who is within one metre of him
- When hit, players get a ball and join player A
- The game is over when all of the players have been hit. The last player starts with the ball for the next game
- If you think it is too difficult for one player to hit another at the start of the game, start with two players being 'It'.

Coaching points

- Quick movements and sudden changes of direction to catch players off guard
- Deceptive passing of the ball: look one way and pass the other
- Control is more important than power, so use the inside of the foot when passing, and use good technique (as described in the manual and earlier drills)
- Players who are attempting to avoid being caught should run, jump and use zigzag movements to dodge the ball – this teaches movement as well as dribbling skills.





Tackle square

Set up

- Divide the players up into groups of four
- Mark out a square measuring 4 m x 4 m.

How to do the activity

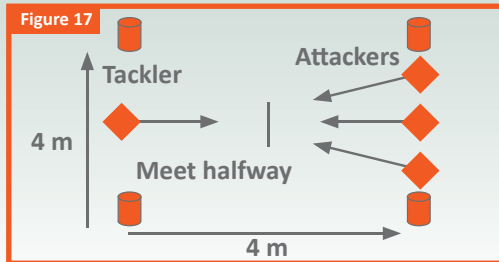
- One player begins on the far side of the square with three players on the opposite side. The single player is the tackler, and the other three are the attackers
- Each attacker takes a turn to run into the square and attempt to dribble the ball around the tackler
- The tackler must also enter the square to meet the oncoming attacker halfway and, using the block tackle, attempt to disrupt the attacker and win possession of the ball
- When first performed, instruct the attackers to run in a straight line and allow the tackler to win the ball. Remember that this drill is not designed to teach dribbling skills but block tackles, so it is important that both players learn how to cope in a tackle situation
- After the attacker has been dispossessed, he must stand behind the tackler to take over that role
- The tackler needs to make two tackles in a row and then join the attackers.

Progression

- Once players become more skilful, attackers can attempt to dribble past the tackler, making the game more challenging
- Each player takes turns as the tackler.



Figure 17





Tackle line

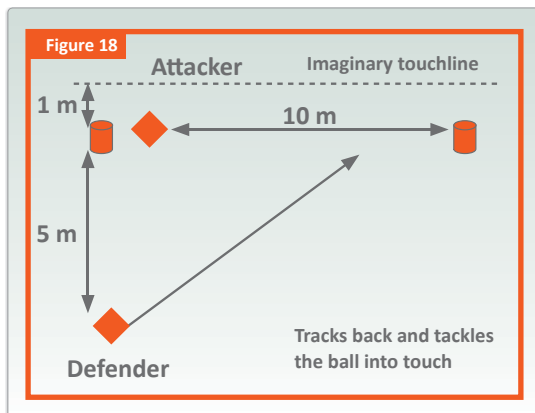
This drill is designed to teach the sliding tackle.

Set up

- Divide players into pairs, with one player acting as winger and the other as a defender
- Place two cones 10 m apart from one another and have an imaginary touchline running parallel to a line between the two cones, 1 m away .

How to do the activity

- The winger should dribble from the first cone and attempt to reach the second cone with the ball under control, without being tackled
- On the opposite side of the imaginary touch line, the defender starts level with the winger and the first cone, 5 m away from the first cone
- The players should leave the starting position at the same time
- It is very important to emphasise correct timing. So, first teach the skill by making players walk and by telling wingers they must allow the tackler to win the ball. Once players become more competent at this skill, they can begin to run and try to avoid being tackled.





Sharks and Minnows

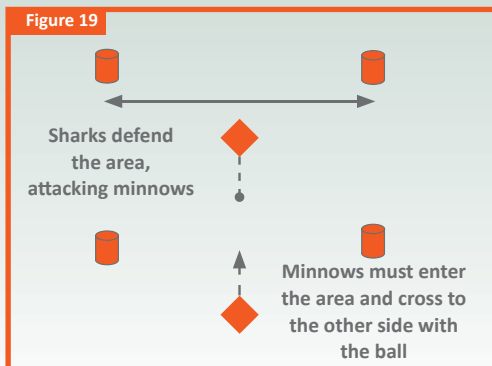
Set up

- Mark out an area adjusted to size depending on the number of players you have available. For eight players, an area with dimensions of 10 m x 10 m is appropriate. For every extra player, add 2 m to each side of the square.

How to do the activity

- Half the players have balls and are minnows, and the rest do not have balls and are sharks
- The minnows start at one end of the area and must dribble across the area and across the opposite goal line without losing possession of their balls. The sharks defend the area, trying to kick the minnows' balls out of the defined area
- Minnows who retain possession turn around and go back for round two. minnows that lose their balls join the sharks for round two. The last successful minnow is the grand champion.

Figure 19





Shooting teams

This drill combines defensive practice with shooting. It uses all the players, including the goalkeeper. Players must master the shooting techniques before attempting this drill.

Set up

- Create three teams each consisting of between four and seven players
- One team attacks, one team defends and the third is a ball-retrieving team.

How to do the activity

- Stand at the edge of the penalty box with as many balls as possible
- For two minutes, throw, bounce or roll a ball into the penalty box
- The two opposing teams (defence and attack) must compete for possession of the ball and then shoot to score a goal
- The retrieving team must collect the balls that are shot wide of the goal and return them to you
- After two minutes, the retrieving team gets a turn to shoot and score. Another team then has the job of retrieving for the next two minutes.



Positional play: Teaching and principles

It is important to lay the foundation for proper positional play at a young age. This means that all players should try out every position (attack, midfield and defence). As the coach, you should help children understand how to play these positions.

The most common positional error you see when young children play football is that they all run after the ball rather than play their positions. It's important to begin teaching them that they must not simply chase the ball. Explain to them that they have specific zones to cover on the field, and that they will all get a chance on the ball.

Good positional play includes:

- Players running away from a team mate in possession, into space, rather than running to him or her
- Players moving off the ball to create good passing angles for team mates
- Players running forward and receiving the ball in space
- Players learning to pass backwards to keep possession and allow their team to move forward.



Teaching these principles is difficult and will take time and practice. Be patient and rather monitor small-sided games, some of which are described below. As the coach, you'll need to be very involved, stopping the game frequently to teach and explain. It will involve a great deal of repetition, and young players will need regular input and encouragement. Some drills for teaching positional play include:

a) 5 vs 1

This drill is designed to help players learn how to move into space for a successful pass. Make players aware of space and the position of their team mates so they can create easier passing angles for themselves.

Set up

- Divide players into groups of six
- One player is designated 'defender' and stands in the middle of a 8 m x 8 m grid divided into four zones (see Figure 20 on page 31)
- The other five players are 'attackers'. They are given one ball between them.

How to do the activity

- The attackers must pass the ball between them while the defender attempts to intercept (just like the game 'piggy in the middle', except in this game there are five players against one)
- Change defenders every minute, even if they are able to intercept the ball. This ensures that every player gets an equal chance at defending and attacking
- For more advanced players, the player in the middle changes when a pass is intercepted or a tackle is made. The player who gave away the ball becomes the player in the middle.

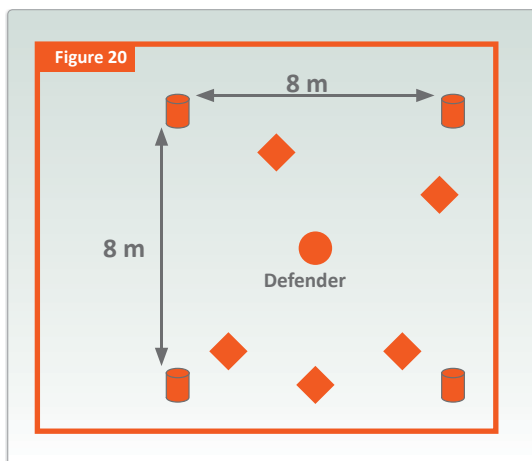


Coaching points

- Remind players that before they pass the ball they can draw defenders by waiting for them to approach. This can create a better angle or space for the pass
- Players that do not have the ball must be moving constantly to create a good passing angle
- Defenders must try to cut down these angles, 'cornering the players', so they can intercept the next pass. Attackers must move to prevent this from happening
- When players receive a pass, they must control the ball to the side and then look up for the next pass
- Players should think about who to pass to before they receive the ball.

Progression

- Challenge players to make at least five successful passes before an interception is made. As they improve, increase this to six, seven and so on
- Have players beat the defender with a dribble and then pass to a team mate.





b) 3 vs 2

This drill teaches the same skills as the 5 vs 1 drill, but is more advanced.

Set up

- Divide players into groups of five
- Set up a small 8 m x 8 m playing area using cones. At each end of the playing area, create small goals using other cones and place them about 2 m apart.

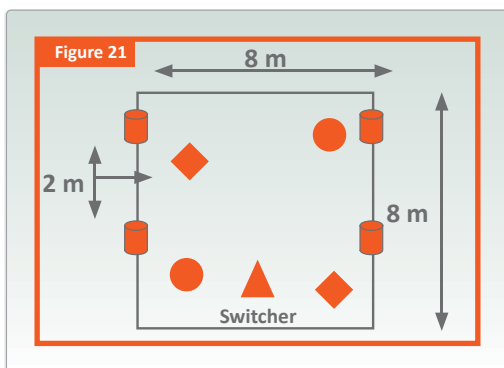
How to do the activity

- Four of the players pair up to play a 2 vs 2 game, while the fifth player is the 'switcher' and will play for whichever team has the ball
- The objective is to pass the ball around until an opportunity comes to pass the ball through the goals and score
- If the team loses the ball, either when it goes out of bounds or is intercepted, the 'switcher' changes sides and plays for the team now trying to score
- Allow play to continue for three minutes before changing the 'switcher'. Once all players have had a chance at being the 'switcher', the activity is finished.

Coaching points

- Players that do not have the ball must move constantly to create a good passing angle
- The 'switcher' holds the key to the game. He is the third player in the team and should therefore create space for other players
- Players should be more focused on passing than scoring, and should pass the ball into the goal. If they shoot or lift the ball in the air when trying to score, the goal is disallowed.





c) The 1-2 pass – also called the ‘wall pass’ or ‘give and go’

In the 1-2 pass drill, a player passes to a teammate and then runs past a defender to receive a quick pass back from the teammate. If done effectively, this is a great way to move the ball through the defensive line using space and movement. There are three key requirements for good 1-2 passes:

- The first pass must be played into the ‘wall’ with speed and accuracy. The ‘wall’ is the teammate who receives the first pass and plays it back to the other player, who runs into space
- The original passer must sprint into the space behind the defender
- The return pass must land in front of the running teammate
- Figure 22 illustrates how the 1-2 pass beats the defender.

Set up

- Divide players up into groups of three
- One player is the defender and the other two are attackers. One of the attackers is going to pass and then run, while the other will play the role of the ‘wall’.



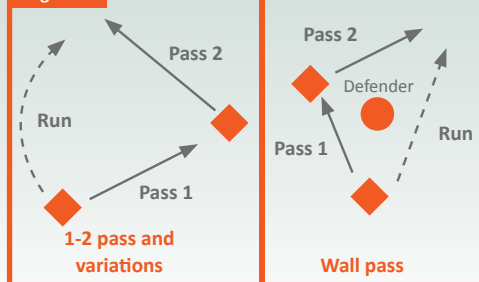
How to do the activity

- As explained above, the first attacker passes the ball to the other attacker. This player then controls it or deflects it directly into the path of the first attacker, who should now have sprinted into space behind the defender
- Initially, defenders should not try and win the ball but rather provide a guide for passing the ball (you may even use a cone instead of a defender).

Progression

- As players improve, defenders can begin to intercept passes. Players will have to think carefully about where to run and how to manipulate space so they can keep possession of the ball.

Figure 22



d) Coached games

This drill can be used to wrap up the training session. It is a coached game, which means players will play in a game situation with you coaching them. This gives players the opportunity to practise passing, dribbling, controlling and positional play in the context of a game.



Set up

- Divide players into two teams of five players
- The game takes place in half the field – from the halfway line to the goal.

How to do the activity

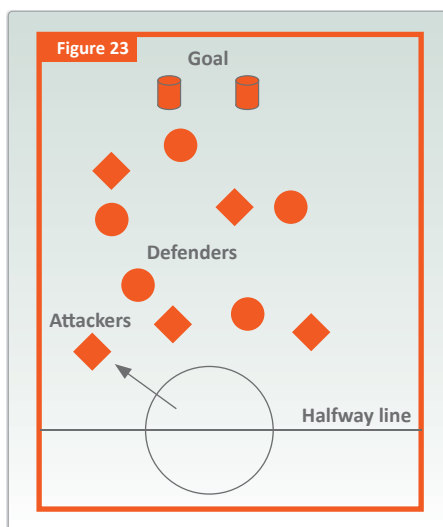
- One of the teams is attack and their objective is to score in the goals
- The other team is defence, who must attempt to win the ball by tackling or intercepting a pass, and then pass it accurately back to the halfway line
- You (or one of your nominated players if you don't want to be involved in the game) stand on the halfway line with four or five balls at your feet. You are the server and will start the game. You will also have to receive the ball from the defensive team if they pass it to you
- The server on the halfway line starts the game by passing the ball to a player on the attacking team
- Attackers try to score while defenders try to pass the ball accurately back to you, the server. You can move anywhere along the halfway line to receive the pass
- The drill is continuous unless you decide to stop the game to make a coaching point.

Variations

- To work more on attacking play, create a 5 vs 3 drill, with five attackers and three defenders. You can do the same for a defensive situation and have three attackers vs five defenders
- You can also create an 8 vs 6 game, which is more like 11-a-side football. In this game there will be less space for players and less time on the ball, so it should only be played if all players are comfortable with dribbling, passing and running into space.

Coaching point

- Pay close attention to technique and to players' positioning on the field. Stop the game at appropriate times to emphasise key coaching points.





Activities for goalkeepers

K

Stopping a shot

Set up

- Three goalkeepers with one ball – if you don't have three specialist goalkeepers, you can include outfield players instead.

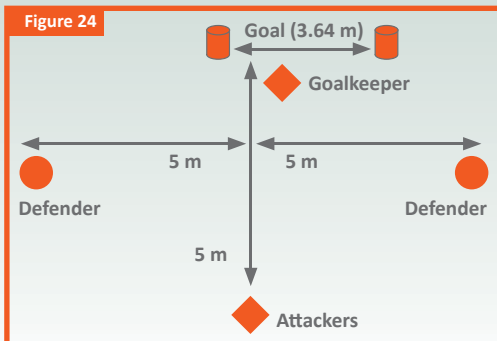
How to do the activity

- Goalkeeper 2 throws, kicks or shoots the ball at goalkeeper 1, who has to make a save
- After the shot, goalkeeper 2 runs into goals while goalkeeper 1 throws the ball back to the penalty spot where goalkeeper 3 is waiting for the ball
- Goalkeeper 3 shoots and goalkeeper 2 has to make the save
- Goalkeeper 1 readies himself by the penalty spot and waits for the ball from goalkeeper 2
- This sequence continues
- The speed and power of the shot/throw will vary according to the goalkeeper's age and ability.

Progression

- Increase the power of the shot/throw
- The shooting goalkeepers can alternate between ground shots and lofted shots
- Have goalkeepers 2 and 3 stand next to each other and let them shoot one ball immediately after the other to increase reaction speed.

Figure 24





Goalkeeper wars

Set up

- Place two goals about 15 m apart
- One goalkeeper goes into each goal.

How to do the activity

- Goalkeepers try to score in the other goal by throwing, kicking or chipping the ball
- The other goalkeeper has to try and stop the ball crossing the line.

Progression

- Speed up the activity so that goalkeepers tire while still having their reflexes and skills tested.

The Warm-down

A good way to wrap up the session is a light warm-down, which includes reinforcing key skills and aspects of the session. Part of the warm-down involves stretches with the ball, while the rest is a review of the skills that have been learnt. You can also give homework so learners can practise on their own. This can consist of developing one of the skills you've taught them that day, such as passing, dribbling or shooting skills. (See the General coaching manual for more information on the warm-down).

Putting it together

To put the practice session together, we gave a number of examples of drills and activities you could choose from. These are guidelines only and you should feel free to adapt the drills and create new ones depending on your players.



Evaluation

One of the coach's most important tasks is to evaluate players. At every practice session you will watch and observe, looking for players who are learning the skills and those who are battling with certain skills.

For you to be a successful coach, it is absolutely vital that you constantly notice which of the players are struggling with skills so you can address problems early. Typically, these problems involve difficulty in executing the key components of a skill and a tendency to fall back into bad habits (like passing the ball by kicking it with the toe instead of the inside of the foot).

The checklist on the next page is a summary of some of the key coaching points that were explained in detail in the skills and activities sections earlier. We recommend that you pay very close attention to all the skill descriptions, but use the checklist as a quick evaluation for individual players.

Checklist

Question	Yes	No
Are players able to pass the ball accurately using the inside of the foot? Can they do this with both the left and right feet? Can they execute both the ground/rolling pass and the lofted pass without kicking the ball with the toe?		
Is every player able to control the ball as it rolls and bounces towards them? Control is achieved when the ball does not bounce off in any direction and is positioned correctly for a pass.		
Do players show good balance and posture when passing and receiving the ball?		
Does each player show the ability to run with the ball while looking up?		
Do players always move towards the ball when it is passed to them?		
Are players able to change direction when running with the ball and stop with the ball at their feet?		
Do players show a good attitude towards tackling and winning the ball back— running towards the ball and not backing away from it, and defending the space without simply lunging in to win the ball?		
Do players use the right tackle technique at the right time?		
Are players able to shoot accurately and powerfully when given the opportunity?		
Do players communicate well on the field by calling out for the ball, creating options for the player with the ball and talking to team mates about positional play?		
Do players run into and create space effectively?		

Appendix: Rules, positions and equipment

Managing a game

Matches are controlled by a referee on the field of play, and two assistant referees (also known as linesmen) who help the referee along the sidelines.

Out of bounds

When the ball goes outside the field of play, the game is restarted with a goal kick, a throw-in or a corner kick. A goal kick is taken when the ball goes out behind the goal line, and a throw-in occurs whenever the ball is kicked out along the sidelines. If the ball is touched by the defending team, and then goes out behind the goal line, the game is started with a corner kick and the attacking team plays from the corner flag.

Goal kicks are taken from the small box (also known as the six-yard box) by either the goalkeeper or an outfield player. A throw-in is taken by a player from the team that did not touch the ball last, from the same place where the ball crossed the sideline.

The throw-in

The correct technique for the throw-in is shown in Figure 25. The player must hold the ball with both hands, take the ball back all the way behind the head (not directly above the head) and then throw it to a teammate on the field. Both feet must remain on the ground at all times during the throwing motion. A 'foul throw' is awarded if the player only takes the ball halfway back, or if they jump or stand on one leg in the process of making the throw.

Committing a foul

Foul play is penalised with the awarding of a free kick. Fouls include offences such as pulling on opponents' shirts, obstruction (intentionally blocking the path of an opponent without attempting to control the ball), excessive use of the body, use of the hands, and kicking, tripping or pushing opponents.

When a foul is committed, the game is restarted with a free kick taken from where the foul occurred. If the foul happens in the specific area designated as the penalty box (see Figure 27 on page 41), the attacking team gets a penalty. One player is then allowed to have an unopposed shot against the goalkeeper, taken from the penalty spot.

When players commit repeated fouls, or deliberately foul opponents, the referee can use a card system to punish players. A yellow card represents a warning for dangerous play. A red card means that the player will be sent off for the remainder of the game. It is usually given for deliberate aggressive and dangerous play, such as dangerous body contact. If a player has already received a yellow card and then continues to commit fouls, they may be given a second yellow card, resulting in a red card.

Figure 25





Players

Football is played between two teams, with 11 players on each side. There are also substitute players that can be swapped for an on-field player at any time during the match when there is a break in play. A 'squad' then consists of more than 11 players, with substitutes usually limited to three players who can be substituted into the game for each match.

For junior players, small-sided games such as five-a-side are the best way to teach football so that each player gets more touches of the ball. The field size, set-up and rules should be adjusted for younger players in small-sided games.

Positions

Of the 11 players on the field, one is a goalkeeper. This player defends the goals and usually stays inside an area known as the penalty box. Goalkeepers are the only players that are allowed to use their hands when playing the ball, and only inside the penalty box. The goalkeeper may play the ball when outside the penalty box, but not with the hands. The other 10 players may use any part of their bodies to touch the ball except their hands (except in the case of throw-ins where the ball is dead and they can use their hands). Goalkeepers are differentiated from other members of the team by means of a shirt, which is usually a different colour to that of their team mates.

The 10 outfield players each have a designated position to play in with three main categories of players:

- Defenders, whose role it is to prevent the opposition from scoring
- Midfielders, who give the link between defence and attack, and control the game
- Attackers, whose primary role is to create and score goals.

Equipment

Ball sizes

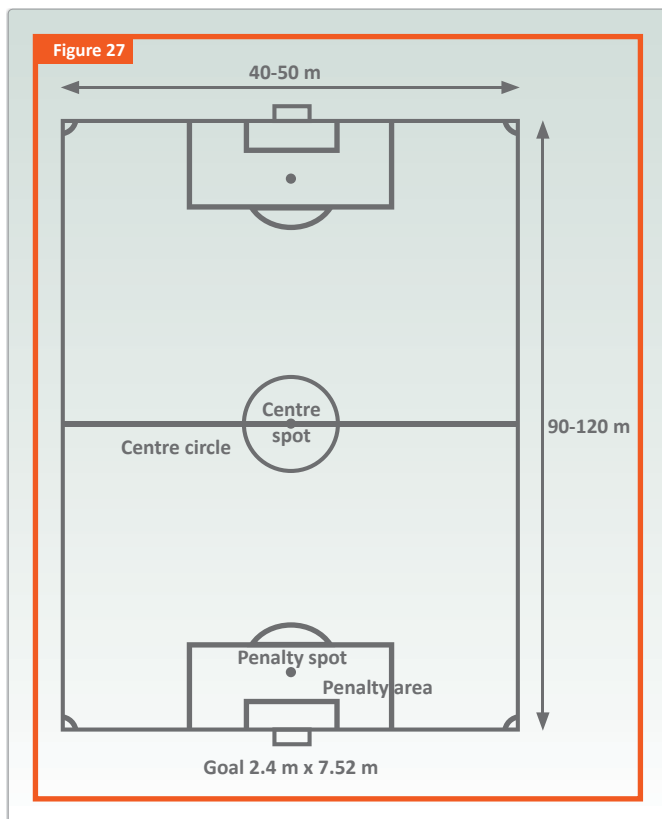
- Children under eight use a size 3 ball
- Children aged 8 to 12 use a size 4 ball
- Children aged 12 and up use a size 5 ball
- It is important for players' development that they play with the correct size ball.

Your coaching sessions will also need:

- A whistle
- A set of 12 cones
- Bibs (two sets of 11 in two different colours)
- One ball for every two players.

Figure 26





Discovery has endeavoured to ensure that all the information contained in this manual is accurate and based on credible clinical and scientific research. Discovery cannot however, be held responsible for any injury, loss or damages that may result from reliance on the information, and by utilising the information you specifically waive any claim it may have against Discovery in this regard. You are advised that each individual has their own unique clinical make-up and while the lesson plans were designed with all individuals in mind, some may respond differently to others.

You are therefore advised to take due caution when participating in any of the activities recommended.

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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