

MEDWAY YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INC.

**PLAYER EVALUATION
SESSION CURRICULUM**

**UNDER – 10 and UNDER – 11
PLAYERS**

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PLAYER ASSESSMENT SESSION
UNDER 10 AND UNDER 11

INTRODUCTION

As in teaching, it is critical that we understand the developmental stage through which our players are going and how the particular qualities of that developmental stage translate to the game of soccer. Only then will we as parents, coaches and evaluators be able to properly teach and train our children. If we fail to understand childhood development, our expectations will exceed our children's capabilities and the process of teaching and learning will be frustrated. In evaluating players in any age group, we must then understand their physical, emotional and intellectual capabilities.

This Evaluation Curriculum deals with children between the ages of 10 and 11. As children develop, so to will their abilities as soccer players. Hence, coaching children at age 10 may vary from coaching children a year older. This Evaluation Curriculum is designed to establish an objective method to evaluate the play and awareness of our players at the U-10 and U-11 age groups. Although the curriculum is the same for all three age groups, our expectations of our older players should be higher than those of our younger players.

Technically, children age 10 and age 11 are still learning to be comfortable with the ball at their feet. Players should begin to look up while they are in possession of the ball. Players should begin to pass with proper technique and proper speed ("pace" or "weight") and they begin to receive the ball with either the proper trap ("cushion") or touch to space away from pressure. Players in this stage of development should begin to dribble at speed, pass over distance and shoot with their laces rather than the inside of their foot.

Tactically, players in this age group begin to understand what is known as the "...*indirect approach to the goal...*" They come to realize that there are more effective methods of attack than the reckless, single player charge to goal. They begin to appreciate the benefits of teamwork and start to make tactical decisions involving group play. These players begin to understand the concept of space. The most effective players display a talent for exploiting space behind the defenders. They pass or make runs to space on the attack and they cover space in defense. Simple combination plays such as the give and goes ("wall pass") and the overlap begins to emerge.

SET-UP

The field should be set up in a grid pattern with cones lined up in groups of 3, each 15 yards apart. See Illustration. All of the Activities in this Evaluation Session can be accomplished within this grid pattern. Players should be divided into groups of 3 at random. Please refer to Diagram 1.

EXERCISES

WARM-UP **BALL CONTROL** **TECHNIQUE** **0-15 min.**

OBJECTIVES

1. Prepare the players physically and psychologically for the demands of the Evaluation Session.
2. To observe the technical abilities of the players. Dribbling should be accomplished with all parts of both feet. The ball should be kept in close proximity to the player's body and there should be an overall ease with the ball. Players should begin to look up as they dribble.
3. To observe how "coachable" the players are. The players should be able to follow directions well and perform all of the tasks in the warm-up without any explanation.

ACTIVITY

Players each have a soccer ball. They are to dribble around a restricted area. The number of the players should determine the size of the area. The area should be restricted enough to place the players under a measure of pressure to control the ball in traffic. The Coach will give various commands to be followed by the players. The commands should be explained and demonstrated to the players before the Warm-up begins. Each task should be performed for approximately 30 seconds and the players then told to resume dribbling.

a. *TAPS*. The players are to stop their ball with the soles of their foot and proceed to "tap" the ball alternately with the soles of each of their feet in a fashion similar to the Mexican Hat Dance. The players' knees should be raised as high as possible and the top of the ball should be lightly touched with the toes. Players should also be encouraged to move the ball slightly with each touch to demonstrate agility and fitness in their ball control.

b. *PING PONGS*. The players stop their balls and ping-pong the ball back and forth between their feet. The players should not swing their legs back and forth to strike the ball. Rather, they should move their feet up and down and slightly chop the side of the ball to the other foot.

c. *CHANGE*. Simply means the players should change directions. This should be done with a simple "drag back". The ball is shopped with the sole of one foot and dragged back as the player turns in the same direction of the foot that is used for the drag. This encourages players to keep the ball at their feet and in front of them at all time. The touch on the ball should be light. The hips should turn quickly and smoothly and the ball should be dragged back sufficiently to have it in front of the player 1-2 feet after the turn. Knees should at all time be bent for balance and to provide explosiveness on the turn.

d. *DRIBBLE AT*. The players should be instructed to dribble at someone else and cut to their right. The players should plant their left foot next to the ball and push the ball to the right using the outside of the right foot, exploding away from other player. Make certain each player is cutting in the same direction. Otherwise the players will collide.

These Warm-up Activities should be interrupted every 2 2 1/2 minutes to stretch. The players should be instructed *NEVER* to stretch cold muscles. They should also be told to stretch *MAJOR MUSCLES* (hamstrings, calves and quadriceps) first. They should also be instructed that stretching should be *STATIC* and involve *NO BOUNCING*.

RELAY RACES RUNNING WITH THE BALL AT SPEED 15-30 MIN *TECHNIQUE*

OBJECTIVES

1. To observe the ability of each player to run with the ball at speed. Touches should be with the laces, *NOT THE INSIDE OF THE FOOT*. The heel should be raised; the foot should be nearly perpendicular to the ground and the knee over the ball. At the touch, the player's foot should be turned slightly inward. The head should be up and the player should demonstrate he or she has good vision of the field.

DEMONSTRATION: This technique should be demonstrated to the players briefly before the Activity. It should be explained that dribbling with the laces enables the player to change speed and direction quickly - to *EXPLODE* into space. It also enables the player to shoot quickly.

2. To observe each player's sense of team. Are they vocal in their support of their "teammates"?

SET-UP

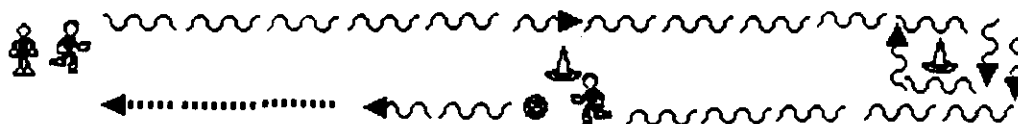
The players are set up in teams of 3 at a cone at one end of each 3-cone station.

ACTIVITIES

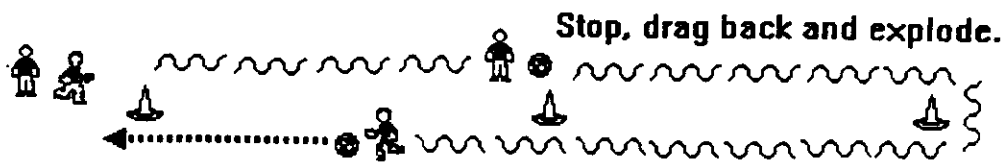
A. One at a time, each player in turn dribbles at speed to the far cone at the other side of the grid, around the far cone and back to the line, passing to the next player in line. Each player should perform the task 2 times.



B. The same as above except, once each player reaches the cone at the far end, he or she dribbles around the cone in a full circle, keeping the ball close to their feet, and returns to the line. Each player should perform the task 2 times.



C. One at a time each player dribbles at speed to the middle cone, stop the ball with the sole of his or her foot, drag it back and explode straight ahead again, around the far cone and back to the line as before. The older players may be instructed to perform the stop, drag back and explosion on the way back to the line as well.



LINES OF THREE PASSING AND RECEIVING 30 - 50 MIN. *TECHNIQUE*

SET-UP

The players remain at their groups of 3 at their 3-cone stations. One player is at each outside cone and one player is at the middle cone.

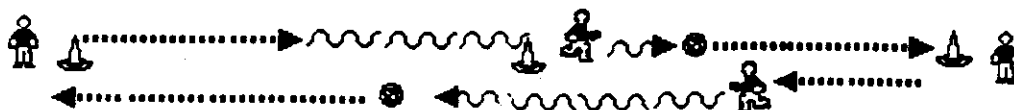
OBJECTIVES

1. Observe the ability of each player in making short accurate passes while moving. The hips and body should be turned slightly, the knee of the passing leg should be bent and the heel raised; The toes should be raised toward the shin and the ankle locked. The foot should be a hard, flat and stable surface. The ball should be struck at or above the mid-line ("equator") of the ball. Passes should remain on the ground.
2. To observe the ability of each player to properly receive passes whether it is by trapping, cushioning or touching the ball to space away from their bodies 2-3 feet in order to facilitate a return pass.
3. To observe the ability of each player to pass the ball with power. This is the same technique used in shooting. The ball should be struck with the laces. The heel should be raised, the knee over the ball and the striking foot bent slightly inward. The player's chin should be down to their chest and their head should remain perfectly still. The player should strike the ball and follow through the shot low with his or her toes pointing down to the ground. Passes should be low and hard, **NOT** high and lofted.

ACTIVITIES

A. The players are in groups of 3. A player is on each outside cone and 1 player is at the middle cone. The player in the middle has a ball. He or she dribbles toward a player on the outside. As they near the outside player, they pass the ball, using the inside of their foot (a short accurate pass). The player on the outside returns the pass with a single touch (younger players may be given 2 touches). The player in the middle receives the return pass, turns and dribbles toward the far cone where the same passing sequence is repeated

DEMONSTRATION: Proper passing technique should be demonstrated. Also, the players in the middle should be encouraged to turn sideways once they pass the ball to the outside player so they will be able to receive the return pass on their down field foot facing down field.



B. Move directly into this Activity letting the players know that they will now be changing positions. An outside player (A) starts the play with a short pass to the player in the middle (B). The player in the middle returns the pass with one touch to space on one side of A or the other to facilitate A's long ball. A controls B's return pass with one touch and delivers a long pass, with the laces, to the other outside player (C). B moves to A's position on the outside and A moves to the middle. C receives A's long ball, controls it and touches the ball to the space in the middle. A runs on to C's pass to space, passes it back to space to one side of C who delivers a long ball to B. A replaces C and C replaces A in the middle and so forth.



ONE vs. ONE

TECHNICAL and TACTICAL

50 - 70 MIN.

SET-UP

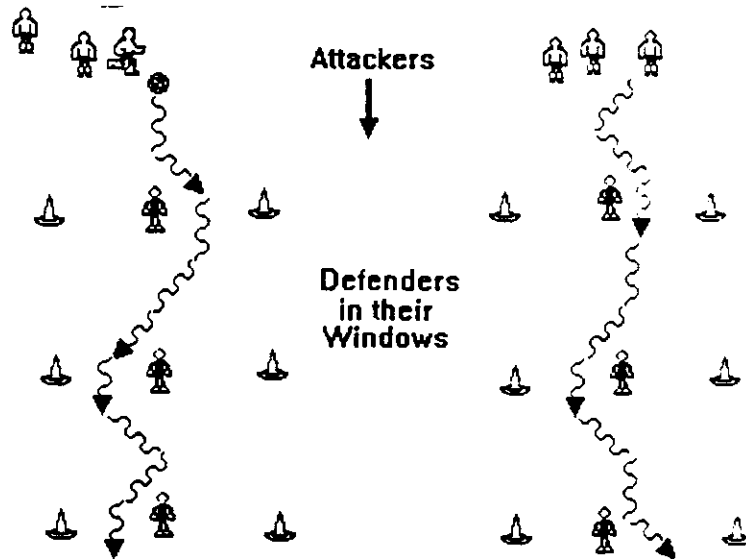
Combine every 2 groups of 3 from the first 2 exercises. There should be groups of 6 players in a single grid 10 yards x 30 yards with a midfield line. The pairs of cones at each end and in the middle of the grid are "windows". A "Defender" is placed in each window. The remaining team of "Attackers" is placed 15 yards away from the first window.

OBJECTIVES

1. Observe the ball control technical skills of each player and the overall confidence they possess with the ball at their feet.
2. To observe the tactical decision-making of the Attacking players. Ideally an Attacker should dribble slowly directly at a Defender using his or her laces. The Attacker must make the Defender choose whether to come at them, defend to the right or defend to the left, then make a move to "penetrate" behind the Defender. Do they use deception (step-overs and feints)? Do they properly guard or "shield the ball when under pressure?
3. To observe the defender's technique. They should be in a well-balanced position, with their knees bent so they can quickly react to changes of direction and speed of the Attacker.
4. To observe the tactical decision-making of the Defender. Defenders should try to force the Attacker to his or her weak foot and should attempt to make the attacker turn his or her back to the goal (the window). This demonstrated an understanding of the principal of defense "delay".

ACTIVITY

One at a time the Attackers dribble at the first Defender. The Defenders must all stay in their windows (between their cones). Regardless of whether the Attacker penetrates past the Defender, he or she proceeds to the next Defender. Once each Attacker has gone through each window the next Attacker in line goes until all of the Attackers have gone through all of the windows. The Defenders then turn around and defend their windows from the Attackers coming from the reverse direction. Once all Attackers have gone through all 3 windows from both directions, switch the Attackers and the Defenders.



4 CORNER SOCCER TECHNIQUE AND TACTICAL 70 - 90 MIN.

SET-UP

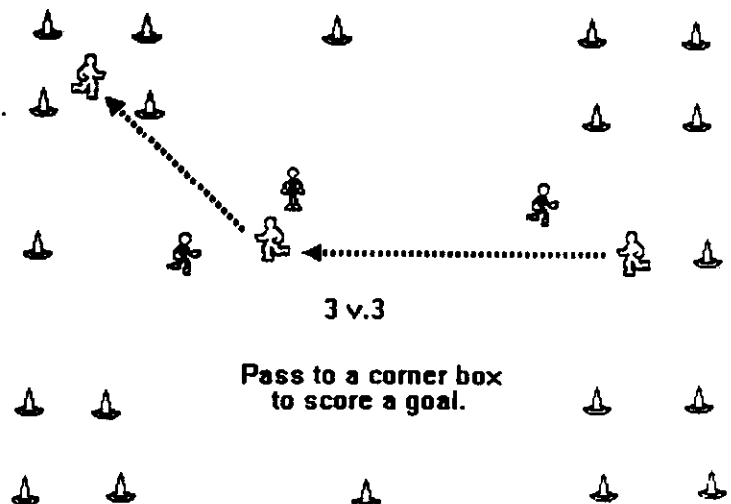
Areas of 20 yards x 30 yards (3 of the original lines of cones). In each of the corners of the grid are "goals", boxes 3 to 4 yards square. Three teams of 3 players. Two teams play at a time. When a goal is scored the team sitting out replaces the non-scoring team.

OBJECTIVES

1. To observe the players' technique and how they apply them under match conditions. Ball control, dribbling at speed, passing and receiving.
2. To observe the players' decision-making under match-related conditions. To observe how each player behaves both on (with) and off (away or without) the ball. Players should demonstrate an understanding of the concept of space. They should look to exploit space with runs or passes. They should move the ball away from pressure. The tendency at this age is to proceed toward the closest goal, regardless of how many Defenders are in the way.

ACTIVITY

Simple 3 v. 3 in the area. Either team can score on any one of the goals in the corners. To score, one player must pass the ball to a teammate inside the goal. The player receiving the ball must stop and control the ball in the goal. If a ball goes out of bounds, play is restarted with a free kick, but goals cannot be scored from a restart.



SCRIMMAGE

90 - 120 MIN.

SET-UP

Teams of 6 players. Full fields and goals.

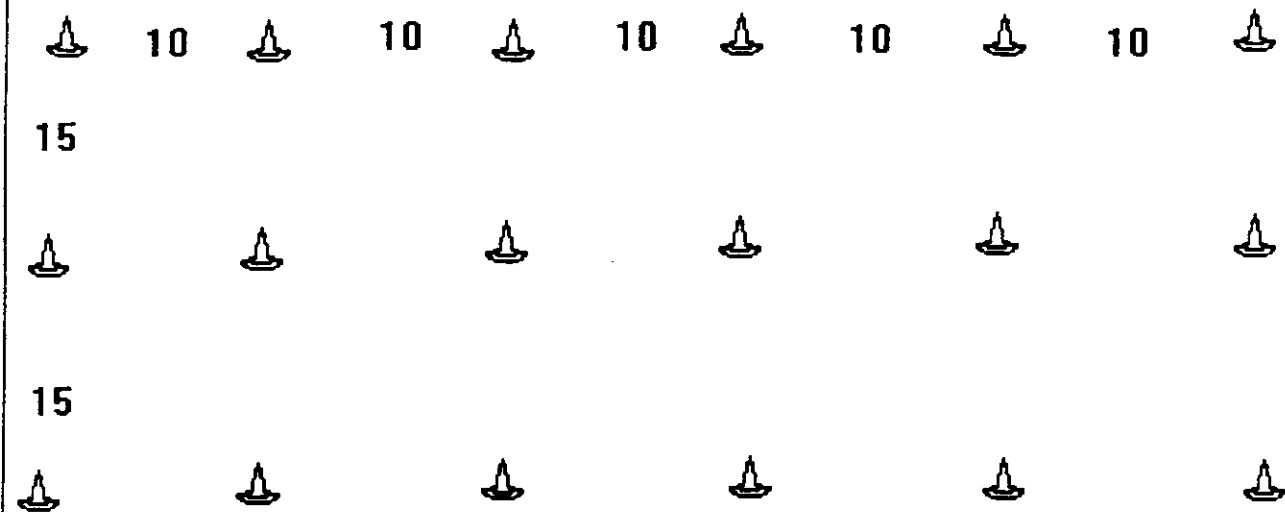
OBJECTIVES

1. To observe players' technical skills and tactical awareness and decision-making under match conditions.

ACTIVITY

Match Conditions. Substitute 1 team every 5 minutes.

INITIAL FIELD SET-UP Under 9 - 11 Evaluations



The Initial Set-up for the U-10 and U-11 Player Evaluations should be in a grid system as shown above. Columns of 3 cones each 15 yards apart. The columns should be 10 yards apart. This grid system will be used, with slight variations, throughout the Evaluation. In the Relay Races and the Lines of three (the first two drills) each column is used for a team of 3. In the 1 v. 1 the teams of 3 in neighboring columns combine to make groups of 6 and the columns of cones remain the same with each group of 6 using two columns of cones. In Four Corner Soccer, three teams of 3 combine in two neighboring grids to play. Finally, the scrimmage should be played on a fully lined field with goals.