

MEDWAY YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INC.

PLAYER EVALUATION
SESSION CURRICULUM

UNDER – 12, UNDER 13 and UNDER – 14
PLAYERS

MEDWAY YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INC.

PLAYER ASSESSMENT SESSION
UNDER 12, 13 AND 14

INTRODUCTION

During this period of time, players begin to define their own sense of commitment to the game of soccer. Some will choose soccer as their primary athletic endeavor while others enjoy the game, but have more favored pursuits. It is during this period that players develop tactical awareness of the game and "soccer instincts". For the most part, these players will be playing at the 11 v. 11 level. Hence, Player Evaluations will center more on these aspects of the game than on the purely technical. Although the exercises are the same for these three age groups, more emphasis should be placed in the Evaluation Sessions on the technical activities whereas the older players should be placed in match-related conditions for longer periods of time.

Technically, children age 12 through 14 should have sound technical abilities. They should be comfortable with the ball at their feet and should be able to look up while dribbling. They should be able to use both feet with some degree of success. Players should dribble comfortably with their laces rather than the inside of their foot. They should possess the ability to explode or change direction in their dribbling. 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. Passing and receiving skills should be well developed so that flighted balls should pose little problems.

Tactically, players in this age group begin to understand the concept of space. On the attack they should begin to exploit the space behind the defenders on the dribble, with passes or through balls and with quick and accurate shooting. Combination plays such as wall passes (give and goes), take-overs and overlaps should become routine. Defensively, players should understand the principles of delay, cover, tracking and concentration. They should begin to appreciate their role as a member of a team, rather than simply as an individual. Communication both on the attack and in the defense should be clear and effective.

SET-UP

The field should be set up in a grid pattern with cones lined up in columns of 3, each 15 yards apart. The columns should be 15 yards apart. 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

0-10 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.

e. *STEP OVER*. The players should be instructed to dribble at another player

and perform a step-over, cutting the ball to their right.

These Warm-up Activities should be interrupted every 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 10 - 20 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.

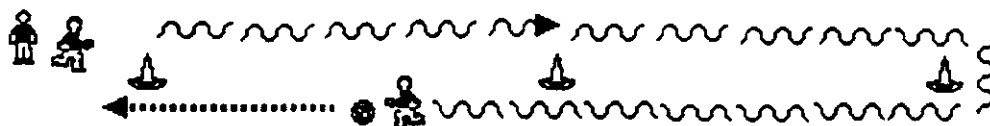
2. To observe each player's sense of team. Are they vocal in their support of their "teammates"?

SET-UP

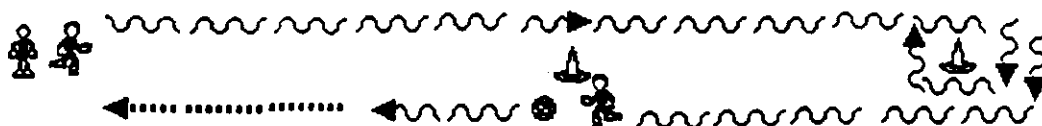
The players are set up in teams of 3 at a cone at one end of each 3-cone station.

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.

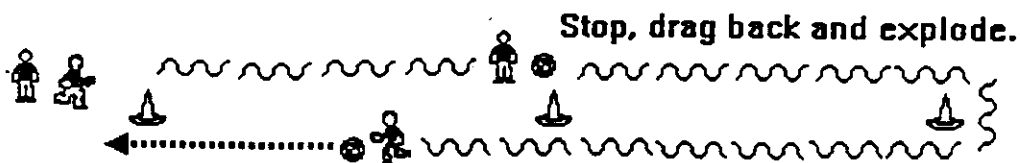


B. The same as above except, once each player reaches the cone at the far end, he or she dribbles around the cone in a full circle, keeping the ball close to their feet, and returns to the line. Each player should perform the task 2 times.



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 20 - 30 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.

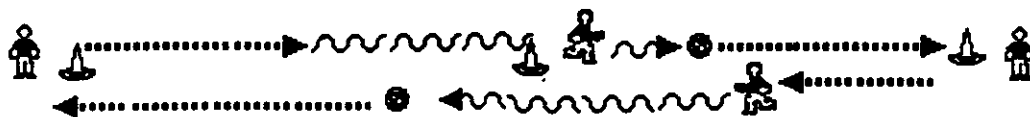
OBJECTIVES

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.

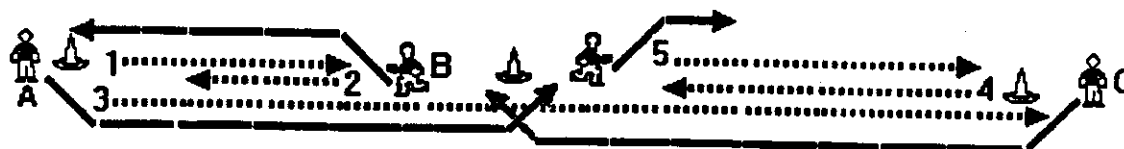
ACTIVITIES

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.



2 v. 2

COMBINATION PLAY TACTICAL

30 - 50 MIN.

SET-UP

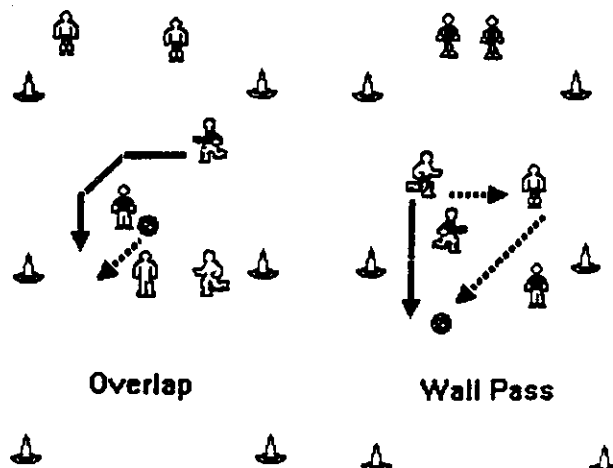
Two groups of 3 players are positioned in a full grid 15 yards x 30 yards. The group of 6 is divided into 3 groups of 2 players each. The activity involves 2 groups playing while the third pair is at rest.

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 on the attack 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 and should look for combination plays with their teammate.
3. To observe the players' defensive instincts and decision-making. To observe whether the players appreciate the concepts of cover and shepherding an Attacker toward pressure.
4. To observe the extent of communication of the players both on the attack and in defense.

ACTIVITY

Simple 2 v. 2 in the area. The Attacking team simply attempts to get the ball behind the Defense and to stop it on the end line of the grid. If the Attacking team is successful, the team out of play comes in on the defense. If the Defense gains possession of the ball, it becomes the Attacking team and the team at rest comes on to defend. Play each round begins by the Defense passing the ball across the grid to an Attacker.



BOXES OF 6 [3 v. 1] CREATING SPACE 50 - 70 MIN. *TECHNICAL and TACTICAL*

SET-UP

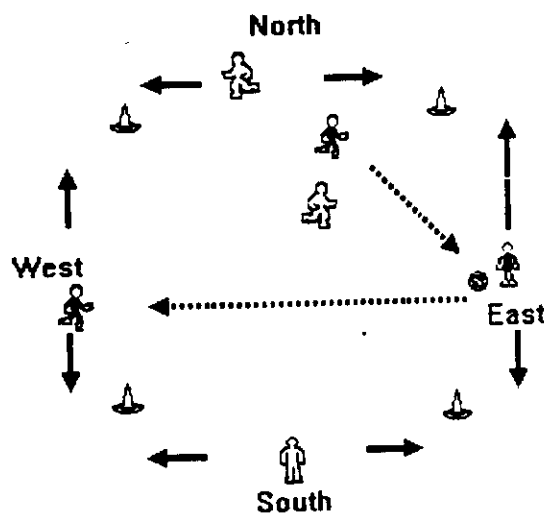
Combine every 2 groups of 3 from the first 2 exercises. There should be groups of 6 players divided into 2 teams of 3 in a single grid 15 yards x 15 yards. One player from each team is positioned in the middle of the grid. The other two players from each team are positioned on opposite sides of the grid. One team will be playing in an East/West direction while the other team will play in a North/South direction.

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 players. Ideally the players in possession of the ball should constantly attempt to find space and pass to space. The player in the middle of the grid should work well passes with his teammates on the outside.
3. To observe the defender's technique and tactical decision-making. 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. Because they are effectively playing 3 v. 1, the defenders must show an ability to make correct decisions with respect to his or her positioning.

ACTIVITY

The game is simply one of keep away. One team plays in an East/West direction while the other plays in a North/South direction. The players on the outside must stay on their lines, but may move up and down those lines. The player in the middle must seek space to provide his teammates with a passing option. The outside players may pass to the middle player or across the grid to each other (through ball). If a defender gets possession, he or she passes the ball to a teammate on the outside and the opposing middle player becomes the defender. The player in the middle should be changed every 3 to 4 minutes.



5 v. 2 POSSESSION PLAY

70 - 90 MIN.

SET-UP

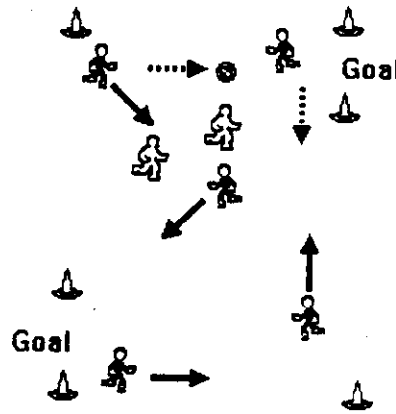
This Activity is played in a grid 15 yards x 30 yards. At 2 opposing corners of the grid are windows (goals) 5 yards wide running from the corner down the side of the grid. The players are divided into groups of 9. There will be 5 Attackers and 2 Defenders involved in play and 2 players (who had just played Defense) will be at rest. A supply of soccer balls should be near the sides of the grid to insure constant play.

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 players. Ideally the players in possession of the ball should constantly attempt to find space and pass to space. The player in the middle of the grid should work wall passes with his teammates on the outside.
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ACTIVITY

The 5 Attackers merely play keep away from the 2 Defenders. The Attackers score a point every time they successfully complete 5 passes in a row. The Defenders can score on the 2 goals at the corners of the grids should they steal the ball. This Activity should be high intensity. Each round should last 1 ½ to 2 minutes. At the end of each round the 2 Defenders step off to recover, 2 Attackers become Defenders and the 2 Defenders who had been at rest come on to play the Attack.



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.