

Towsontowne Recreation Council

Carver Center for the Arts
938 York Road, Towson, MD 21204



U-6 Clinic Soccer Program Coaching Manual

Fall 2005

Mission Statement

The Towsontowne Recreation Council Clinic Soccer Program is an age-appropriate, developmentally based soccer program coached by parent volunteers. The emphasis of the program is on FUN for the kids and learning the basic soccer skills of dribbling, passing and shooting through a variety of games and activities and 3v3 soccer games.

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Developed by Matt McErlean**

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Executive Summary The Towsontowne Recreation Council Clinic Program ('Clinic') is designed to create a fun, safe and age-appropriate developmental soccer environment for our U-6 boys and girls (aged six on or after August 1, 2005). The TTRC Clinic Coaching Manual ('Manual') incorporates concepts and practices advocated by the United States Youth Soccer Association, Tony Waiters and various other youth soccer resources.

Using a combination of group activities that facilitate individual skill development and 3v3 soccer games for eight to ten 1-hour sessions over the course of the Fall season, the Clinic offers our U-6 players a lot of 'touches' on the ball, a requisite component of soccer skill development and most importantly, a lot of fun.

The TTRC Manual is intended to accomplish and promote the following:

- Provide an **accessible guide for new parent/volunteer soccer coaches** of Clinic-aged children.
- Facilitate the **development of parent/volunteer soccer coaches** in TTRC.
- Provide **consistency and continuity in delivering soccer coaching instruction** throughout program.
- Serve as a '**baseline**' document from which ongoing process improvement can be managed.

The Manual presents both summary and detailed information regarding coaching Clinic-aged players, including developmental characteristics and needs, appropriate coaching strategies and the rationale supporting Towsontowne's decision to promote the 3v3 game at this level. A basic practice session format is presented, broken down by Activities Without the Ball, Activities With the Ball and Game Time. The basic session format is developed in detail as **The Sample Practice Session**.

The 3v3 game is presented and organized by **Rules, Roles and Tactics** and includes sufficient detail for parent/volunteer coaches new to soccer to prepare, organize, encourage and manage the game portions of the Clinic sessions. The section titled, **Compendium of Activities and Games** provides fun, easy to present and play games, grouped by the topical soccer areas of Dribbling, Passing and Shooting, with five activities/games for each area. The Compendium includes suggested language for explaining each activity or game to the players, the field setup and/or equipment requirements and coaching points. The Manual concludes with a section on teaching the basic soccer techniques of dribbling, passing, shooting and throw-ins.

Feedback and input from parent/coach volunteers, parents and players concerning both the Clinic and Manual is welcome. We recognize that the Manual – the latest in a series of efforts to improve the Clinic – will continue as a 'work in progress' that requires practical application and evaluative feedback to periodically reassess, rewrite and expand the Clinic program to best meet our children's youth soccer needs.

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TTRC Clinic Program Overview The Towsontowne Recreation Council Clinic Program ('Clinic') is designed to create a fun, safe and age-appropriate developmental soccer environment for our U-6 boys and girls (aged six on or after August 1, 2005). The TTRC Clinic Coaching Manual ('Manual') incorporates concepts and practices advocated by the United States Youth Soccer Association, Tony Waiters and various other youth soccer resources. Using a combination of group activities that facilitate individual skill development and 3v3 soccer games for eight to ten 1-hour sessions over the course of the Fall season, the Clinic offers our U-6 players a lot of 'touches' on the ball and most importantly, a lot of fun.

The TTRC Manual is intended to serve as resource for our parent/coach volunteers and aims to provide an orientation, background information and suggested activities and practices to make our Fall 2005 season a success.

The FEAST Menu: Prescription for Success objectives follow:

The TTRC Clinic coaching

The FEAST Menu

- F FUN** is an essential ingredient for every activity and every practice.
- E EVERYONE** gets equal opportunity for involvement, i.e., equal playing time.
- A ACTIVITY** is at the core of each practice and affects all the other parts of the FEAST. Lecturing 5 & 6 year olds NOT allowed.
- S SKILL** development is the heart of the matter. Kids get greater enjoyment of soccer through greater accomplishment.
- T TEAM PLAY** must be included in every session, because we are teaching a team sport.

Just like any other **FEAST** we would offer to five and six year old children, we have to:

- Be careful NOT to give them more than they can digest at one time.
- Make sure the fare is not too rich for young taste buds.
- Be careful not to offer too varied a diet too soon.

Our goal is to find a way to make spaced repetition – the keystone component to learning, acquiring and perfecting any new motor skill – fun and palatable for our kids.

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Ten Goals of the TTRC Clinic Program Towsontowne Recreation Council has identified 10 goals for The Clinic Program, four goals each for the kids and parent/volunteer coaches and two for the parents/guardians of Clinic Kids:

Ten Goals

Goals for the Kids

1. **FUN** Provide our children with an experience and environment that is fun and magical.
2. **GROUPS** To help our children understand the concept of playing in small groups or teams.
3. **PASSION** To foster in our children a passion for games in general and soccer in particular.
4. **TECHNIQUE** To teach our children fundamental soccer techniques.

Goals for the Parent/Volunteer Coaches

5. **FUN** To remind ourselves why we want to coach.
6. **WHO** To always remember who it is we are coaching and for whom the program was designed.
7. **PASSION** To excite our parent/volunteer coaches about the game.
8. **COACHING** To help our parent/volunteer coaches develop proper coaching technique and to develop a pool of coaching talent to facilitate the ongoing soccer development of our children.

Goals for the Parents

9. **FUN** To provide our parents many opportunities to see their children grow, learn and have fun in an upbeat, exciting environment.
10. **QUIET** To teach our parents positive, supportive and responsible sideline behavior. Screaming instructions or directions from the sideline is detrimental to all of our children. Be supportive, but BE QUIET, unless it's to cheer.

U-6 Characteristics: Who Are We Dealing With Here? Children have three main areas of soccer development. They are Psychomotor, Cognitive and Psycho-social Development. Please note that for any individual child there can be a swing plus or minus 1-3 years from their chronological age in any or all of the three developmental areas.

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Short definitions for each are:

Developmental Area	Definition
Psychomotor Development	The process of gaining physical skills as related to the mental ability of the child to recognize cues and respond with the correct action. More simply, this is their <u>movement</u> development.
Cognitive Development	Synonymous with mental development. This area includes memorization, creativity and problem solving.
Psycho-Social Development	The development of relationships with others from individual awareness to pairs to small groups to large groups.

Following is more detail on each of the three developmental areas;

Psychomotor Development Issues

- Progress in motor development starts with the head and moves downward to the feet and from the center of the body outward.
- Players are easily fatigued, but recover rapidly. Heart rates are around 90 beats per minute. Players need more frequent breaks at this age.
- Body segments grow at different rates, center of gravity might be high which can lead to a lack of balance. You may see them fall down for no apparent reason.
- Differences between boys and girls are marginal.
 - Weight range for boys and girls is approximately 30-50 lbs.
 - Height range for boys is 35 and 45 inches and 37 to 45 inches for girls.

Cognitive Development Issues

- U-6 Players are very literal.
- Play consists (or should consist) of a high degree of imagination-based and pretend activities.
- Only capable of understanding simple rules and instructions.
- In problem solving situations, can focus on only one task at a time.
- Process small bits of information at a time. Long sequential instructions do not compute!
- Undeveloped and immature understanding of time and space relations, i.e., out of bounds lines, sense of passage of time, etc.
- Just beginning to use symbols to represent objects. Concept of 'positions' is beyond this developmental stage. Trying to either teach or insisting on positional play is worse than a waste of time: it only serves to frustrate children without any redeeming benefits.

Psycho-Social Development Issues

- U-6 Players develop self-concept, body awareness, and self-image through movement.
- Players are egocentric and experience the world only from this perspective. A 4v4 game is perceived as a game of 1v7. The player with the ball tries to keep it away from opponents and teammates alike because touching the ball lets them feel like they are playing the game.
- 5 & 6 year old children need generous amounts of praise and to be able to play without pressure from coaches or parents. **The need for positive reinforcement CANNOT BE OVEREMPHASIZED.** Correction has its place, but affirmation should be served up in response to efforts and not held back until results are in evident.
- The most influential person is most likely their mother or significant parent or guardian. This is an important reason to that parents are requested NOT to coach or talk to their children during practice sessions.
- 5 & 6 year olds may verbalize the word ‘team,’ but do not yet actually understand group or collective play.
- Effort equals ability, i.e., if a kid tries hard, gets all sweaty and has dirt on their knees, they think they played well. And they are correct. Our principal coaching task is to get them involved and making efforts. Emphasize process (effort) over results (outcome).
- A child’s universe is simple, i.e., ‘me, my and mine’. They know their house but not the neighborhood they live in.

TTRC Clinic Social Concepts

To work within a group setting, it is important that coaches and parents alike stress two psycho-social concepts. They are: 1) **Pay Attention, Please** and 2) **Cooperation** as defined below. Paying attention and cooperating are the skills that are fundamental to a host of human interactions beyond constructive involvement in youth sports. Specifically, we define them as:

1) **Pay Attention, Please**

- **Look** at the Coach.
- **Listen** to the Coach.
- **Mouth** Closed.

As a visual cue to ask the players to Pay Attention, Please, coaches should hold their left ear lobe between their left thumb and forefinger. As players see this, they should do the same until all of them are doing so, indicating that they are paying attention.

2) **Cooperation**, defined as *'Doing what you are asked...'*

- The **First Time** you are asked,
- **Right Away**, and,
- **Nicely**.

Coaches need to take the time to discuss these terms and definitions with both players and parents as they clearly define the coach's expectations. Parents should be provided with print copies of the definitions and asked to reinforce the concept with the children at home during the week.

Implications of U-6 Developmental Stage: What Can You Expect? When you know what to expect, you will naturally be more effective in dealing with the myriad situations that come up during the season. Parent/volunteer coaches should be prepared to expect behaviors during practices and games like those listed below. Being prepared makes it easier to relax and in turn, allow us to enjoy the unpredictable nature of the children even more.

- Most players cry immediately when something is hurt. Expect some to cry even when something is not hurt.
- No matter how loud we shout, or how much we 'practice' it, they cannot or will not pass the ball.
- Somebody will come off the field in need of a toilet. Somebody will stay on the field while in need of a toilet.
- The only player to hold a position is the goalkeeper (if you play with one). Don't even consider teaching positional play.
- Twenty seconds after the start of a game, every player will be within 5 yards of the ball. The technical term is 'swarm.' 3v3 play is designed to minimize this problem.
- Several players will slap at the ball with their hands, or pick it up. Several parents will yell at them not to do that.
- A model rocket launched from a nearby field will get 100% of 99% of the players' attention. Don't fight it: stop whatever you are doing and go watch for a couple of minutes!
- During a season, expect to tie a minimum of 50-100 shoe laces.
- Guaranteed, the kids will do something absolutely hysterical. Make sure that you laugh!

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Coaching Strategies that Respond to Player Developmental Requirements Having identified the developmental characteristics of Clinic players, we can more readily turn our attention to the coaching strategies appropriate to those characteristics:

Because Children:	Coach Needs To:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have short attention spans. • Attend to only one problem at a time. • May understand simple rules. • May or may not understand or remember: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What lines mean on the field. ○ What team they are on. ○ What goal they are going for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep demonstrations and explanations concise but repetitive. • Be patient and laugh with them as they get 'lost' on the field.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are easily bruised psychologically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid criticism, offer hints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need generous praise and to play without pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shout praise often. • Encourage processes not outcomes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer 'parallel play,' i.e., will play on a team, but will not really engage with their teammates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus most of each practice on activities where everyone has a ball.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are very individually oriented -- me, my and mine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet players by name and use their names OFTEN. • Use image language that promotes sense of ownership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are constantly in motion but with no sense of pace. They will chase something until they drop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure activities around the ebb and flow of energies that are easily fatigued but recover rapidly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have limited physical coordination. • Love to run, jump, roll, hop, etc. • Need to explore qualities of rolling ball. • Catching or throwing skills not developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide well-rounded activities that can include non-soccer specific movements. • Employ games or activities that require balance.

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Coaching Points: What We Think We're Doing Remember that at the Clinic age, few if any kids are at the soccer field by choice. If as coaches we give them something to get excited about, in time they may come to the game because they actually want to do so. To foster and promote a fun and engaging youth soccer environment:

- **Every** player gets his or her own size #3 ball.
- **Spaced** repetition is fundamental to skill acquisition. Balancing repetition with novelty on the border of boredom is challenging. If you are having fun, chances are the kids are, too.
- **Every** session should be geared around touching the ball LOTS! Involve the ball in as many activities as possible. Basic movements such as running, skipping, hopping, etc. need to be emphasized. If these can be done while kicking, catching, rolling, or dribbling a ball... all the better!
- **Training** for U-6's should not last for more than one hour. This is primarily due to attention span and physical fatigue considerations. Training once a week is plenty. More than this can quickly lead to burnout...theirs and yours!
- **Plan** for several short drink breaks, especially in warmer weather. Their 'cooling system' is not as efficient as in older players.
- **Team** play and passing is an alien concept to U-6's. They know that if they pass the ball, they may *never* get it back. In fact, expect them to steal it from their own teammates. Do not get uptight if they do not pass, let them dribble to their heart's content.
- **While** kids may have close birthdays, levels of physical and/or mental maturity may vary as much as 36 months! Soccer activities need to accommodate these individual differences.

Program Rationale: Why Fun Activities and The 3v3 Game Format? We hold certain truths to be self-evident. On the other hand, several major studies that examined the reasons children stopped participating in youth sports indicate that the number one reason to be: 'It wasn't fun anymore.' The TTRC Clinic Program reflects concepts developed in the following topical areas:

- **The Argument for Small Sided Soccer**
- **Age Appropriate Activities**
- **Skill Development is Key**
- **Soccer Is A Game Of Decisions**
- **Soccer is a Game of Small-Sided Games**
- **Why 3v3 and NOT 4v4?**

The Argument for Small Sided Soccer

The US Soccer Federation, through all 55 State Youth Soccer Associations, as well as the National Staffs of international soccer powerhouses, such as Holland, Germany, England and Brazil, have all adopted 3v3 format for U6 players. The elemental features of 3v3 Soccer are fewer players on the field and smaller fields, accompanied by simpler rules

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and shorter playing periods. More importantly, as the ‘lowest common denominator’ 3v3 Soccer retains the essential elements of the 11v11 game:

- A ball
- Team Play: Teammates & opponents
- Realistic pressure
- Appropriate space and Guidelines/rules
- Direction of play (attacking & defending)
- Combination of length and width on the field

The reasoning that supports the universal movement to 3v3 Soccer as the most appropriate and beneficial developmental tool for youth soccer players recognizes:

- That the 11v11 game generally consists of smaller games within the larger one,
- Two teams of 3 players each (attack and defense) provide the basic elements of the larger game, and,
- Focuses on desirable results in five developmental areas.

Specifically, 3v3 Soccer fosters the development of:

Developmental Area	Positive Impact of 3v3 Soccer, by...
Individual Soccer Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased number of touches on the ball per player, leading to faster acquisition of ball handling skills.• Increased opportunities for dribbling, passing, shooting, winning the ball, blocking shots, scoring goals and running after the ball, all of the technical elements of the game.• Increased competitiveness in field play and playing under pressure, while reducing competitiveness associated with the game outcome.• Eliminating formal positions, allowing children to learn, play, and gain experience in basic attacking and defensive roles.
Tactical Applications & Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased opportunities for more involved playing time in both attacking and defensive roles.• Increased opportunities to make more decisions and solve problems in the transitional game -- attack to defense, defense to attack.• Reducing the number of players on the field, which clarifies and simplifies the number and type of tactical choices.
Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More involved and uninterrupted play.• More energetic workouts due to playing both attack and defense.• More actual playing time.

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Developmental Area	Positive Impact of 3v3 Soccer, by...
Fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More success experienced in all aspects of the game by all involved.• More opportunity to score goals, less restrictive (simpler rules).• Fewer stoppages of play for instruction.
Self-Esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing the role and importance of each player in the game.• Lowering the player to coach ratio and raising quality of attention paid to each individual.• Requiring the development of concentration.

Age Appropriate Activities

Forcing a child to play games or engage in activities more advanced than their developmental stage has been compared to trying to teach a child to read before she is developmentally ready. It can be accomplished on some level, but it's generally hard to do, not much fun for anyone involved and runs the risk of forming long term and deep rooted resentment.

We do our children (and ourselves) great disservice when we attempt to treat them as 'mini-adults.' By doing so in youth sports, we condemn them to a 'forcing a square peg in to a round hole' watered-down adult experience, trying to serve an over-prepared, over-rich and heavy meal instead of a **FEAST** they can relish.

Skill Development Is Key

Skill development enhances self-esteem. For U-6's the 'effort equals accomplishment' focus is fundamental and entirely appropriate. Moreover, skill development is supported by process goals, how many times an activity is attempted, how much attention is employed, the level of effort, etc. These are all things over which a U-6 player can exercise some control. And it is the exercise of that control that has the positive impact on self-esteem and leads naturally to developing self confidence. When you add in the axiom that 'technique precedes tactics' and with the knowledge that most of 'tactics' and 'positional play' are beyond the U-6 developmental scope, we come back to 'fun activities, everybody with a ball, lots of touches' as the appropriate way to go.

Fun is pivotal. If it is not 'fun,' kids will not continue to play a sport, at least not past the time that parents are making the participation decision for them. Skill development is a crucial aspect of fun; it is more important than winning even (or perhaps especially) among the best athletes. The most rewarding challenges of sports are those that lead to self-knowledge. Intrinsic rewards are more important in creating lifetime athletes than are extrinsic rewards.

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For a 5 or 6 year old, controlling the ball is the first order of business. Learning the parts of the foot and parts of the ball provides both an orientation and framework in which the technical aspects of soccer can be experienced, organized and acquired. The Clinic focus is on the fundamentals of dribbling, passing, shooting and throw-in technique, treated in detail in the section titled, ‘**Teaching Soccer Technique.**’

A major reason we don’t ‘just play the game’ is that in any soccer match, there is a limit to how many touches on the ball can occur. The fewer the number of players, the more touches they will have. Studies have been done comparing the number of touches on the ball players have in 11v11 soccer games versus assorted small-sided games. When compared to a 7v7 game, for example, the players in the small-sided game were found to have 12 times as many touches on the ball as their counterparts in the 11v11 game. At the 3v3 level, the number of touches again goes up exponentially.

It follows that smaller team size leads to greater individual playing time with more opportunities to play the ball and therefore the greater development of players through the experience. In practices, a smaller team means more attention from the coach and more opportunities with the ball. This helps even the youngest player to stay connected to the game, reduces player inattention and makes it more fun for all.

Playing small-sided soccer games means more exposure to attacking and defending situations, promoting skill development. We want our young soccer players to have more opportunity to play on both sides of the ball.

More Opportunities!

Attacking Opportunities

- Dribbling to take on defenders
- Dribbling to protect the ball
- Dribbling into open space
- Receiving
- Passing
- Heading
- Shooting and Finishing

Defensive Opportunities

- Challenging for the ball
- Recovery runs
- Intercepting the ball on a pass made by the other team
- Stealing the ball from the opponent
- Stopping shots on goal

Soccer Is a Game of Decisions

It is axiomatic that the fewer players on the field, the less complicated the decisions (tactics) involved to solve the problems presented by the game. The 3v3 game format represents the essence of soccer, essentially reducing the game to the lowest common denominator, the offensive/defensive triangle. The youngest soccer players must focus most of their attention on maintaining ball possession or the ball’s location if a teammate has possession.

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By keeping the game simple (3v3 format), the number of decisions this player has to make is reduced to;

- Do I dribble the ball?
- In which direction and why?
- Where and when do I shoot for a goal?

As players progress in maturity, experience and technical ability they are ready to make more decisions;

- Do I pass the ball?
- If so, to which teammate?
- Should I pass to their feet or space?

Finally, the more abstract decisions;

- Where and why do I move without the ball?
- Who can I pass the ball to so that it can be moved up the field or into a better position?

The complexity of the game needs to grow at a pace appropriate to the player's developmental stage and technical abilities if we want them to make good, i.e., successful tactical decisions. At the U-6 Clinic level, the 3v3 game facilitates that development.

Soccer Is a Game of Small-Sided Games

The full game of soccer is primarily a series of quick and short small-sided games. With the (sometime) exception of corner kicks, soccer is never played with 11v11 all in the same part or third of the field. Rather, it is essentially a game of shifting (at most although often less) 3v3 or 4v4 contests as the ball is moved up and back on the soccer pitch. Usually it's 3v3 or 4v4 in the defensive half, moving to a different 3v3 or 4v4 in the midfield third to a 3v3 or 4v4 near the opposing goal and back again in succession throughout the game.

You can see this at the highest levels of the game by watching any professional match on television. At any time during the game, count the number of players in playing proximity to the ball. You are most likely to see 3, 4 or at most 5 players from either team at a time. Viola! There is the small-sided game within the game. Utilizing the small-side game in practice is common throughout all levels of soccer. More touches equals more practice. More practice equals more skill development.

Why 3v3 and NOT 4v4?

The appropriateness of 3v3 as opposed to 4v4 Soccer at the Clinic level is directly related to the limited spatial awareness and development of the U-6 player. The 3v3 game introduces the young player to basic shape and concept of the triangle -- 1st Attacker with Wide Support (width) and Rear or Forward Support (rear or forward depth), but not both simultaneously -- without the distraction of other players on the field. The basic

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Attacking Triangle is matched against the Defensive Triangle formed by Pressure, Cover and Balance Defenders, which makes 3v3 the ‘lowest common denominator’ of soccer, i.e., the smallest teams which can be fielded where the game remains essentially the same.

At 4v4, the triangle is replaced with the diamond as the basic shape. However, the number of triangles involved in the diamond shape represents a four-fold increase of the 3v3 triangle. This is a staggering increase in complexity for five and six year olds. Even the most cursory observation of U-6 4v4 play reveals, not an appreciation for the increased ‘opportunities’ offered by the additional player, but the simpler, more expedient solution (the Six-Year-Old Solution) of at least one and usually two, of the four players essentially hanging back protecting the goal for the wrong reasons. U-6’s quite literally cannot see the options involved with pursuing the attack or defending with 4 players. It requires a level of spatial awareness and abstract thought that is beyond their developmental stage and which they have yet to master. 3v3 offers the clarity and simplicity that leads to superior results.

Injury Prevention and Care Injuries are always possible in youth sports and soccer is not exceptional in this regard. Prevention is first line of defense in the treatment of athletic injuries. Use the following as a guide;

- Shin guards are mandatory.
- Jewelry or any other hard objects on their person EXCEPT shin guards is not permitted.
- Make sure cleats fit properly. Tell parents to resist the urge to buying cleats ‘big enough to grow into!’
- Get the proper shoe for the playing surface, cleats for the Clinic.
- Make sure each player brings water to the sessions and drinks often!
- Verify that a medical release was signed and submitted. **ASK THE PARTENTS/GUARDIANS AGAIN** at the first session to let you know of any condition or issue for their child that has a bearing on coaching, **WHATEVER IT IS.**
- For treating most injuries, use the **R.I.C.E. Method**;

Rest	Remove them from the game/practice.
Ice	Apply ice to injured part for 20 minutes.
Compression	Apply a compression bandage to the injured area.
Elevation	Elevate the injured part).

The Basic Session Format: Plan for a Successful 50 Minutes It is useful to remember that very few U-6 players are playing soccer strictly by choice. At least initially, parental interest drives attendance. Five and six year olds may have or may develop independent interests in soccer, but the first coaching objective needs to be getting organized for fun. A priori of coaching youth soccer, the coach MUST do two things, each of which is related to the other. The coach must be organized and must arrive at the field early.

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Organization *Each Coach MUST come to the field prepared and organized.* She should know exactly where the session is in her curriculum and should know which activities and games will be played. Each Coach should have the games for each session outlined on an index card, clipboard or something similar to use as a guide and reminder on the field. Each coach should look like a coach, dressed to play. **Whistles are inappropriate** for Clinic aged children and should not be used at any time.

Punctuality *Each Coach MUST be punctual, which means arriving AT LEAST 15 minutes before the scheduled start* of practice for field set up and to greet the players as they arrive. Saturday mornings can provide a Coach with many challenges in leaving home, but we must always remember the task at hand is far more important than additional sleep or a second cup of coffee.

During the eight to ten week season, the basic format for each session is;

Topic	Purpose	Time
Activities Without the Ball	Warm-up, fitness and fun.	10-15
Activities With the Ball	Technique training through topically oriented games.	15-20
Game Time	3v3 soccer game with minimal coaching.	20

Successful dolphin trainers report significantly higher levels of cooperation and results when, prior to attempting to elicit specific behaviors, the trainers get into the water and play with the dolphins, demonstrating that they (the trainers) mean them (the dolphins) no harm. As a Clinic coach, making an effort to be engaging, playful and funny with kindergarten aged children serves the same purpose. Using children's first names (early and often), smiling broadly, making one less imposing (kneeling down to speak with a three and a half foot person eye-to-eye) and finding things to compliment (cleats, uniforms, haircuts, hair ribbons, etc.) are part of the youth coaching job description. Having a joke or something pleasant and funny to say at the beginning of the session sets the tone. Similarly, the first activity selected can impact the remainder of the session.

The basic practice session format is presented here. The **Compendium of Activities and Games** ('Compendium') contains more activities for coaches to utilize in their sessions. A balance between repeating activities and some new materials usually works best. However, each coach is responsible for their practice sessions. The fifty 'programmed' minutes allows for breaks and movement between topics. Each area is treated in more detail below.

Activities Without the Ball

This portion of the session should include fun, warming up, fun, fitness and more fun. Following is a suggested list of **Activities Without the Ball** that meets these criteria and lasts about 15-20 minutes. While the titles are intentionally descriptive, more detailed instructions appear in the section below titled, **The Sample Practice Session**.

- Run Up, Give Me Five and Run Back
- Hop Like Rabbits, Feet & Knees Together
- Slide to the Side, Keep Your Shoulders Facing Me
- Do The BIG Walk: High Step, Knee Up, Lunge
- Cooperation Run: Hold Two Hands, Go as Fast as You Can.
- Walk/Run Backwards, Head Up, Arms Out, How Many Fingers
- Helicopters: Arm Swing and Torso Twist (Stiff and Loose)
- Toe Raises
- Pickup Your Leg, Slap that Knee, Pickup Your Leg, Slap that Knee
- Walk in Place, Bring Your Elbows to Knees
- Duck, Duck Goose or Tag Game

Activities With the Ball

This portion of the session focuses on technique, dribbling, passing, shooting and restarts. A sample dribbling session lasting 15 minutes could include;

- Change Your Feet at the North Pole (Numbers, ABC's, Jack and Jill, etc.)
- Walk Your Dog on a Tight Leash
- Run Your Dog: Kick and Run
- Red Light, Green Light, Change Feet Three Times

Game Time

The 3v3 game offers the best and most appropriate combination of technical and tactical learning and training opportunities for U-6 players. For technical development, 3v3 features the highest number of touches on the ball for each player. This means it is the game format under which the greatest number of spaced repetitions can be accumulated while still playing the game of soccer. Tactically, 3v3 offers the clearest, as well as age-appropriate, situations in which to learn and practice the basic elements of attacking and defensive soccer.

With 11-12 kids per group, the 3v3 games will require rotating players in. It is suggested that this be accomplished by having half the group play a five minute game and then alternating with the remaining half of the group, making adjustments for less than twelve total players (four complete teams of 3). The field layout is 30 yards long by 20 yards wide, with cones marking 1) the four corners of the field; 2) the halfway line; and, 3) the rectangular keeper's area with cones on the touchline 6 yards from each endline. Goals

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are 9 feet wide, centered on the endlines and marked with 5 foot high poles or flags. No other cones are required for the field layout.

During the 3v3 games coaches should observe the following;

- Organize and supervise...and let them play.
- **KEEP COACHING COMMENTS TO A MINIMUM.**
- Keep encouragement and praise at a **MAXIMUM.**
- It is particularly appropriate to **COMPLIMENT** any and all executions of that day's technical topic **REGARDLESS** of the quality exhibited. Praise the effort, which will lead to repetitions, which in turn will improve the technical execution.
- Parents are encouraged to cheer, but may not coach or give directions to the players.
- Scores will not be kept. If questioned by the players about the score, the appropriate answer is: 'I don't know –we're not keeping score today, we're just having fun.'
- No adults – coaches included – are allowed on the playing field during play, other than commonsense exceptions. These include restarts, player injury, etc.
- When there are more than 12 players, rotate the additional player/s in a way to accomplish approximately equal playing time, without disrupting the flow of the game.

The 3v3 Game is treated in detail in the next section, titled '**The 3v3 Game Rules, Roles & Tactics.**'

The 3v3 Game Rules, Roles & Tactics The following material is adapted from Tony Waiter's '*Microsoccer: Coaching 6, 7 and 8 Year Olds.*' Please note that what is presented here represents material geared more for the coaches' understanding than hard and fast didactic procedures for the players.

There is nothing revolutionary about the 3v3 game or its practices. It is a method of introducing soccer to young children that specifically addresses the needs of the beginning player. From there it allows for a natural progression, growing and developing in tandem with the players into the larger team games. In reality, it is the most common version of soccer, played around the world in unstructured and unsupervised settings. Our adaptation has much more to do with socio-economic and cultural influences than changes to the game itself. The objective is to secure and enhance player enjoyment through fun and involvement. A quote from Tony Waiters about the practicality and utility of 3v3 soccer for U-6's:

'It might be regarded as the BGO -- Blinding Glimpse of the Obvious!'

3v3 Soccer Rules

1. **Field Size** The fields are approximately 30 yards x 20 yards but the size can be adjusted over a period of time by trial and error, with the dimensions varying according to the players abilities. Since the Clinic cannot line the fields, the use of existing field markings and/or cones is acceptable and suggested.
2. **Field Markers** Marker cones are placed at the corners of the field, on the touchlines, six yards out from goal lines and at the half lines. The six yard markers form an imaginary line for the goalkeeping zone. The goalkeeper can handle the ball inside the six yard zone, but may and should be encouraged to play beyond the line as a regular field player, using feet and body but not the hands.

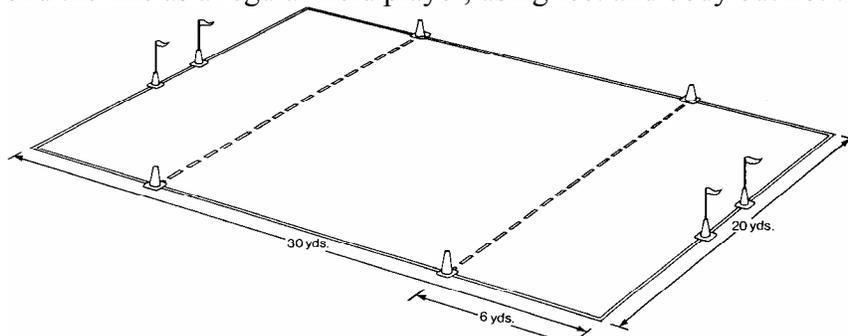


Figure 1: 3v3 Soccer Clinic Field Dimensions

3. **Goals** Goals are set up using corner flags or poles, nine feet apart, centered on the endlines. An ideal method is to use poles or corner flags inserted in large cones.

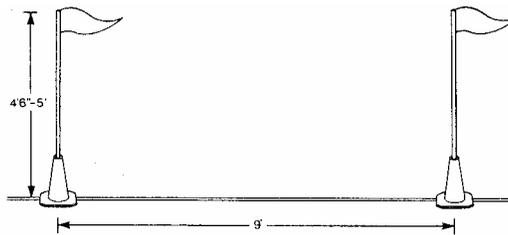


Figure 2: 3v3 Soccer Clinic Goal Dimensions

4. **Scoring** Goals can be scored from anywhere but the ball must pass below the imaginary line across the top of goals, i.e., approximately five feet above the ground or lower.
5. **Referee** The coach referees, or appoints an assistant or a parent. Referees should, in so far as possible, stay off the field of play, following the play/ball, but staying near the touchlines.
6. **Time-outs** Time-outs may be called frequently, perhaps every two or three minutes, when substitutions are required.
7. **Goalkeepers** Each team has a goalkeeper, but the goalkeepers are changed at each time-out on a rotating basis so that 'equal time' is established for the

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- goalkeeping function. **Alternatively**, coaches may experiment with playing without goalkeepers (see **Roles** below).
8. **Team Composition** The composition of the four (3 player) teams should be maintained within each practice session, but should not be the same for each practice session. Generally, skill parity is a good goal, but remember that 5 and 6 year olds – not unreasonably – want to play with their friends, too. Teams should rotate after five minute games.
 9. **Ball Out of Play: Restarts** When the ball goes out of play, the game is re-started by one of the following ways, determined by how the ball goes out of the field of play:
 - a) **Over the touchlines:** throw-in (or kick-in, at the discretion of the coach).
 - b) **Over the goal line:** goal kick (taken from anywhere in the goalkeeper handing zone) if the attacking team last touched the ball or corner kick if defending team last played ball.
 - c) **After a goal is scored:** re-start the game with a goal kick. Alternatively, place the ball on an [imaginary] center spot, and re-start there.

Note: Goals cannot be scored directly from a goal kick, a throw-in, a kick off or a free kick. There are no penalty kicks.
 10. **Foul Throw-ins** When a foul throw is committed, the referee explains the correct method and the player re-takes the throw, up to a total of three times, at which point play continues, whether or not a foul throw is committed.
 11. **Extra Balls** Because of the small field size and the end-to-end nature of the game, the ball may go out of play frequently. Coaches may encourage parents to participate as ‘ball parents’ to facilitate the flow and the enjoyment of the game. Additionally or alternatively, extra balls can be placed behind the goals (several steps away from the field of play) and used to restart play immediately rather than chasing ‘the game ball.’ Players should be encouraged to use ‘any ball that is round.’
 12. **Parental Attendance & Sideline Behavior** Practice sessions (including games) should not last longer than 60 minutes. Parents are encouraged to stay for both practices and games. Parents may not coach players (their own included) from the sidelines and are requested to keep all communications at or near the practices and games positive and encouraging.
 13. **Infringements** Players of Clinic age are completely (er...relatively) honest and do not commit deliberate fouls. Tripping, handling, etc., warrant an indirect free kick (ball must be touched by two players before a shot can be taken) which encourages passing, cooperation and team play.
 14. **Distance from the Ball at Restarts** For indirect free kicks, corner kicks and goal kicks and throw-ins, all opposing players must be at least five yards from the ball.

No Scores Or Team Standings Kept Coaches are encouraged to respond to the question *'What's the score?'* with the answer *'I don't know – we're not keeping score for this game, we're just trying to have fun.'* This answer should not be delivered as a reprimand, but rather matter-of-factly. To develop confident players, we need to let them play without fear of failure. The entire reason we do not keep score is so that it doesn't matter if one team or one player gives up one or many goals. Initially, we want to promote the joy of competitive team sport without worry of winning or losing. Clinic coaches should focus mainly on teaching the players **how to score goals**, as opposed to emphasizing how to prevent goals.

3v3 Player Roles

The 3v3 soccer game is fundamental and foundational soccer, a format in which every player has a key role. In 3v3 play at the U-6 level, we can easily assign **Roles** to the attacking team. They are:

- 1st Attacker (Attacker in Possession)
- Supporting Attacker/s (Forward, Lateral Support and/or Rear Support)
- The Keeper/Sweeper (Rear and/or Lateral Support)

Attacking Team Roles While any 4th grader should be able to answer the question, *'What shape is suggested by three points?'* Clinic-aged players are a few years (chronologically and developmentally) short of answering, *'A Triangle!'* The Attacking Triangle:

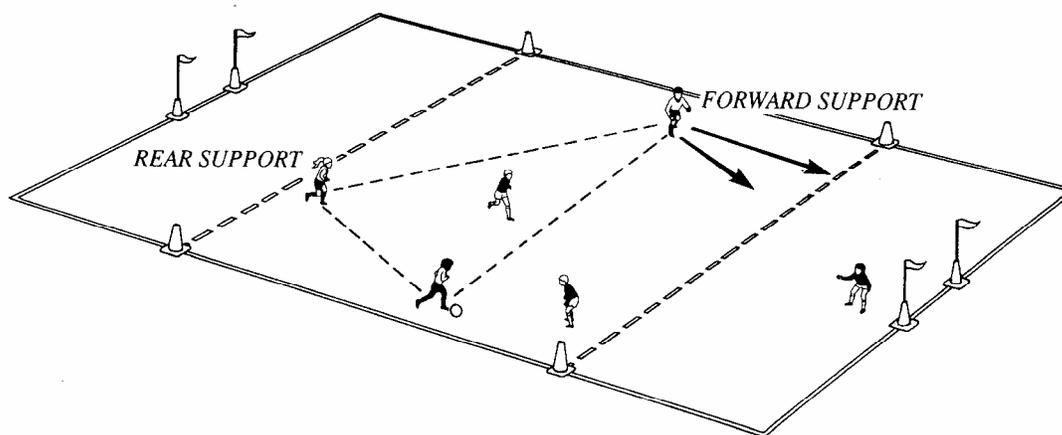


Figure 3: The Attacking Triangle
1st Attacker w/2 Supporting Attackers
Lateral and Forward Support
Rear Support

1st Attacker The 1st Attacker is the player in possession of the ball. When the ball is passed, the receiver (or interceptor) becomes the new 1st Attacker. The objective of the game of soccer is to score more goals than your opponents. The objective of the game devolves into two objectives when a team is on attack (possesses the ball):

- Maintain possession of the ball, and,
- Create/take shots on goal.

It is not suggested that the coach burden young minds with this much detail: you'd be telling them more than they want to know at U-6. Similarly, every possible scenario of advancing the ball up the field requires the tactics of passing combination play (excepting the lone attacker on a breakaway). Efforts to make distinctions or coach combination play – wall passes, overlaps, crossovers, etc., at the U-6 level are worse than useless. It will absorb valuable and limited time, confuse all if not most of the players and worst of all, have a negative impact on the amount of fun. However, be assured that even without the nomenclature or explanations, the players will find the overwhelming majority of combination plays by themselves, just by playing 3v3 soccer.

Here are **four coaching points to stress to the attacking team** before and during the game:

- **Pass the ball to Your Color.**
- **Run to a New Place** after every pass (later shortened to '**Pass and run**').
- **Make Big Triangles** with your colors/teammates.
- **Shoot the ball in the Zone** (the six yards in front of the goal).

The players will easily memorize the four coaching points with the sentence:

Please Pass and Run to Make Big Triangles, Shoot in the Zone.

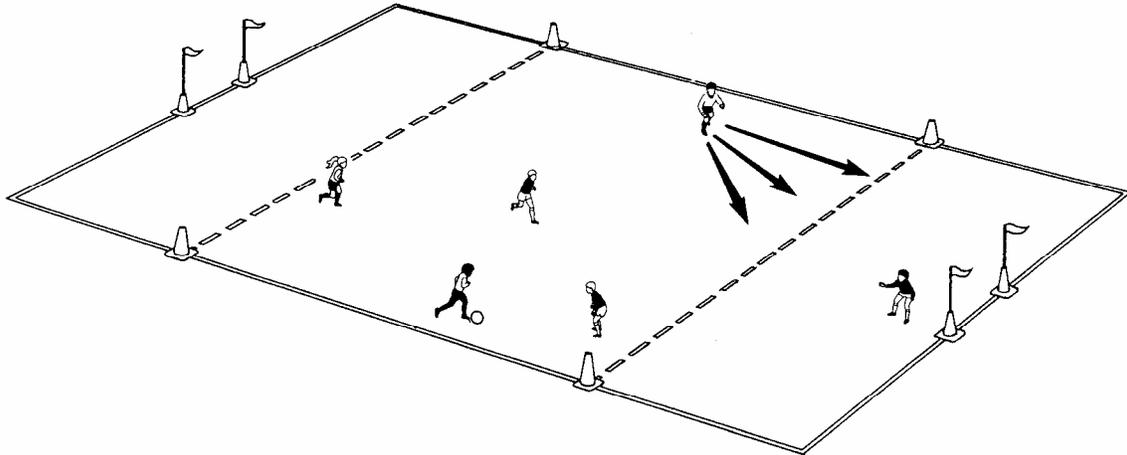
An effective method for demonstrating and teaching Make Big Triangles is presented in the Teaching Soccer Technique: Passing section below.

Supporting Attacker The important concept for the Supporting Attackers is to 'help the kid with the ball,' and takes three forms, covered by the coaching points:

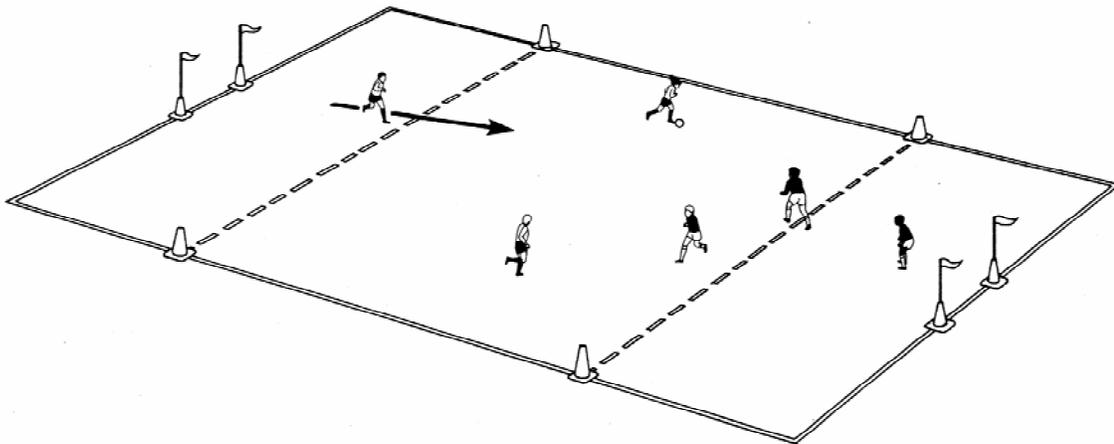
- **Make a Big Triangle** with your colors/teammates.
- **Get Open** for the Pass.
- **Call for the Ball.**

For the Supporting Attacker players:

Make a Big Triangle, Get Open and Call for Ball.



**Figure 4: Supporting Attacker (Forward)
Option to Pass to Space in
Front of Receiver**



**Figure 5: Supporting Attacker (Rear)
Moving Up to Provide Rear Support**

Specifics on demonstrating how to get out of the receiving shadow (Get Open) are also presented in the **Teaching Soccer Technique: Passing** section below. The Supporting Attackers can be encouraged to make adventuresome runs into space to receive the ball in advanced attacking positions, i.e., nearer the goal.

Defending Team Roles The Defending team's **Roles** in 3v3 soccer include;

- 1st Defender (Player Pressuring the Ball)
- Supporting Defender/s (Cover/Marking Attackers not in possession)
- Keeper/Sweeper (Using hands in the 6 yard goalkeeping zone)

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1st Defender The 1st Defender is the player on the team without possession who is closest to the ball. Her job is to:

- **Stay Between the Ball and the Goal.**
- **Win the ball back.**

Supporting Defender/s The most abstract role concept at this developmental stage is the Supporting Defender role. That's because it involves simultaneously evaluating the positions of the ball, the Supporting Attackers and the Supporting Defender on the field. At higher levels of the game, the Supporting Defender is responsible for directing the 1st Defender's actions, providing Cover (assisting the 1st Defender should the 1st Attacker beat them on the dribble) and watching for and responding to runs by Supporting Attackers near the ball. Perhaps the **best coaching points for Supporting Defenders:**

- **Stay Goal Side** (of the ball and Supporting Attackers).
- **Steal the Pass.**

All defenders should to be coached to drop towards their goal to help their teammates when the ball is lost. (Note: Technically this is part of the 'transition game' but is presented as an aside here rather than complicate matters with another topical section.) A perfectly acceptable, viable and *suggested* alternative is not to coach the supporting Defenders at all. In any event, coaches are urged not to spend too much time or energy on the matter.

Keeper/Sweeper The first issue in determining the role of the keeper/sweeper in 3v3 soccer is whether or not to even have a Keeper/Sweeper 'position.' There are considerable and reasonable arguments that support NOT having a keeper at the U-6 level. The principal one involves the cost/benefit comparison of avoiding the complexity of differentiated activities at this tender age versus a more challenging and (perhaps appropriately) competitive game.

Coaches should be aware that 3v3 with Keepers is more accurately 3v2 plus Keeper, that is, three attackers against two field defenders and a Keeper. This situation is described as 'numbers up for the attack,' meaning that the attackers have a relative advantage over the defending team. This is not quite the same as 3v3, which features three attackers against three field defenders with none designated as Keeper with the differentiated activities (i.e., use of hands) of that position.

The point here is that the Clinic program features at most, less than 3 hours of 3v3 soccer over a two month period (20 minutes times 9 sessions equals 3 hours of total game time divided by 3 players per team, say 1 hour as Keeper per player per the entire Fall season). If (ideally) equal playing time is accomplished for all players in all positions, is one hour in two months really important, necessary and/or helpful? Coaches are welcome to decide this issue on an individual basis with the following suggestion: make the decision to either use Keeper/Sweepers or play 3v3 with no goalies prior to the start of the season and stick with their decision throughout the program. The remainder of this section assumes (but does not advocate) the use of a Keeper/Sweeper.

The Keeper/Sweeper can play a vital role in the success of ‘team play’ in 3-a-side soccer, on both the defensive and attacking side of the ball. Keeper/Sweepers must be encouraged and coached to be actively involved in both phases of play throughout the game.

On defense, the Keeper/Sweeper will start out as a supporting defender, i.e., not putting pressure on the 1st Attacker (possessing the ball), but goal side and usually marking one of the Supporting Attackers. As the ball moves closer to the goal, the Keeper/Sweeper role changes. Once inside the 6 yard goalkeeper’s zone, her job is to prevent the ball from going into the goal. Most often this involves protecting the goal (i.e., no longer marking an opposing player) and using her hands to collect the ball. After a shot on goal, the Keeper/Sweeper initiates the attack with either a goal kick or by dribbling or throwing the ball out of the goalkeeper’s zone.

On attack, the Keeper/Sweeper can take the role of the 1st Attacker (a potentially risky proposition) or that of Supporting Attacker. Most often she will move out of her zone to give rear support. The Keeper/Sweeper should be made explicitly aware that she can only use her feet outside the Keeper’s zone. In providing effective rear support, the Keeper/Sweeper must do so without venturing so far he puts her team at risk of a quick counter-attacking goal. She has to always keep in mind that she is the only one who can handle the ball. But there is no reason why she cannot move in support outside her zone, and move backwards to the goal as soon as the opposition wins possession.

Coach’s Role in 3v3 Games Children learn by playing. The 3v3 soccer game is a ‘mixed learning’ environment in the sense that while there are clear objectives and rules, there is also plenty of room for ‘disorganized’ or unstructured learning to take place. Clinic coaches are encouraged to recognize the inherent truth in the old adage, ‘the game is the best teacher.’ While the game may indeed be the best teacher, as adults, coaches (especially new youth soccer coaches) can sometimes be frustrated by pace of disorganized learning. However, it is important to let the flow of play develop and not intervene either too soon or too often – what you have to impart is rarely more important than a five or six year old having fun.

The developmental ‘room’ 3v3 soccer gives each player is lots of touches on the ball and virtually continuous opportunities for either attacking or defensive activities. Together, the small-sided teams and simple nature of the game preclude the need for adult/coaching intervention. Stated differently, the coach will be most effective by organizing and supervising the game and then encouraging and praising the players and...letting them play.

3v3 Soccer Tactics

As with the 3v3 soccer **Roles** described above, the inclusion of 3v3 Soccer Tactics in the Clinic Manual is more for the orientation, background, knowledge and development of the coaches, than necessarily as knowledge to be transferred in the U-6 season. It can be thought of as being analogous to a teacher staying ‘one chapter ahead’ of the class in the Instructor’s Manual. There is a compelling argument to be made that of the three 3v3 soccer components in this section, **Rules, Roles and Tactics**, the only essential

component is Rules and even here there is considerable flexibility. Once the field is set-up, the object of the game explained, the rules stated, the players would arrive at the roles and tactics just playing the game over time, just as they have throughout the world and throughout the ages.

A detailed comparison of youth sports teaching methodologies and socio-economic-cultural models is not necessary to make the point here. Coach the tactics as part of teaching technique, but don't stop a kindergarten-aged game to discuss the relative merits of playing zone versus man-to-man marking. Take the opportunity to watch and observe, and improve your own understanding of basic tactics in the game. Do not feel obligated to share all of it with the players.

Having identified the Attacking Triangle in the **Roles** section, the following discussion of tactics focuses on the tactics involved with Restarts in the game. The term 'Restart' is used for all situations where play initially begins or when it starts again (also described as 'dead ball situations') including;

- Beginning of the game
- After half-time
- Stoppages

Restarts are required when the ball goes completely over the end line;

- Corner kicks (last touched by the defending team)
- Goal kicks (last touched by the attacking team)

Or over one of the touchlines;

- Throw-ins

Penalty kicks are also restarts, but there are no penalty kicks awarded in Clinic 3v3 Soccer. Penalty kicks are too severe a punishment for U-6 and should be introduced at a later age. For Clinic, only free kicks after an infringement, such as handling or tripping, will be awarded, which brings us to the final restart type:

- Free Kicks

All free kicks will be 'indirect,' which means the ball must be passed to and touched by a teammate before a shot on goal can be taken. Indirect free kicks are appropriate for Clinic aged children, because they encourage the players to think in terms of passing and, therefore, cooperating with one another. Cooperation should be coached as the underlying theme in the three restarts required after the ball goes out of bounds; the corner kick, the goal kick and the throw-in, each of which will be examined in more detail. Each of these restart types require some explanation and coaching for young players to understand how to take advantage of possession. For Clinic 3v3 soccer, opposing players must stand at least five yards from the ball for restarts (as opposed to 10 yards in the later youth and adult games).

Corner Kicks The [small] size of the field in Clinic 3v3 makes the Corner Kick an important restart when the ball goes out of bounds across the end line (goal line) last touched by the defending team. With larger fields, most young legs do not possess the strength to kick the ball into the goal area from the corners. Although one viable approach is to just let the Corner Kicks take place without any coaching or direction, Corner Kicks can be reasonably choreographed even at the Clinic level, focusing on the following points;

- Developing an understanding between the kicker and receiver.
- Positional awareness by both the lateral and/or forward Supporting Attacker and the rear Supporting Attacker.
- Timing of the run by the receiver.
- Accurate passing by the kicker.
- Shooting at goal.
- Finishing in goal.

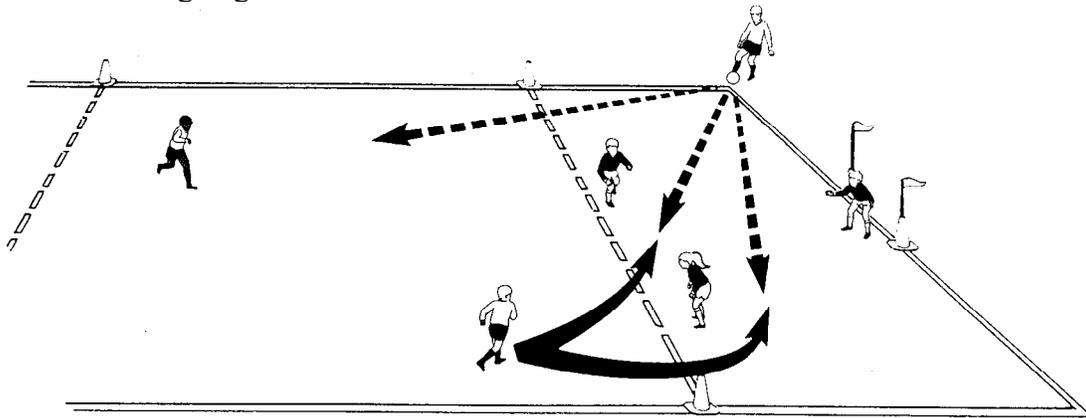


Figure 6: Corner Kicks
Understanding Between Players
Accuracy of the Kick
Timing the Run

Coaches are reminded again not to get too caught up in coaching or teaching at the expense of letting the players play.

Goal Kicks Goal kicks are the appropriate restart when the ball goes out of bounds over the end line last touched by the attacking team. The Keeper may take a goal kick from anywhere inside her six yard zone. The ball must be stationary and on the ground when kicked.

The Keeper should be encouraged to produce a positive attacking situation from the kick. Just pounding the ball forward and hoping often leads to turning over possession at all levels of the game. It is generally advantageous to take the kick from the front of the Keeper's zone (closest point to the opponent's goal), but it is also appropriate to encourage quick goal kicks to take advantage of surprise or before the [formerly] attacking team has dropped back to defend their goal.

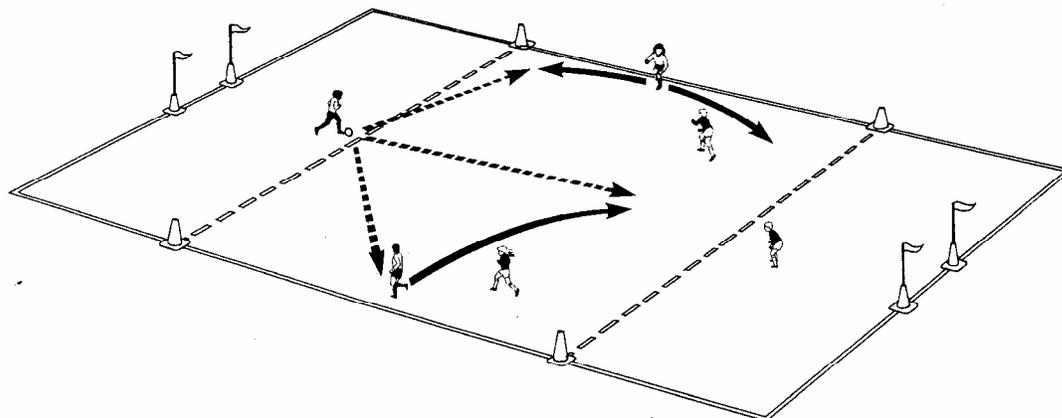
The effectiveness of the goal kick will depend to a great extent on the two outfield players. These two players should take wide positions on opposing sides as a starting

point, which offers the greatest number of options for the attacking team. Half-way up the field is a good rule of thumb and places the two attacking players not too close to their Keeper while not so far up the field as to make it too difficult or impossible for the goalkeeper to get the ball to one of them.

The Keeper's options include distributing by kicking the ball as a:

- **Pass to feet**
 - Of an unmarked wide player at the half.
 - Of a player short of the half but still holding the wide position.
- **Pass to space** (obviously more involved, and therefore, difficult)
 - Down the middle for one or both players positioned wide to run on to for a shot at goal.
 - With the space created by one player who has run short, enabling the other player to make a diagonal run forward for a longer kick.

Do not be overly concerned about coaching different options for the Keeper/Sweeper's ball distribution. The important fundamental coaching point is to get the attacking players to split WIDE positions. This is to a) prevent an immediate counter attack directly in front of the goal and b) to force the defending to cover more field space. The different options become apparent to the players as they play and learn by trial and error.



**Figure 7: Keeper Options Distributing the Ball
Goal Kick or After Collecting Ball
Supporting Attackers Split Wide**

- 1) Left or Right Distribution With or Without Checking to Ball, or,
- 2) Split Defense With Through Pass Up the Middle for Either Supporting Attacker to Run On To

When the keeper collects the ball in her hands during regular play, it is not a dead ball situation requiring a restart by goal kick. The Keeper can play the ball forward out of the Keeper's Zone by;

- Kicking the ball from her hands (punt),
- Throwing – (overhand or by rolling the ball), or
- Dropping the ball to the ground and passing or dribbling forward

to start the attack. Whichever way the Keeper chooses to start the attack, the two outfield players should position themselves split wide to give her the most options.

Throw-ins Throw-ins can require a fair amount of demonstration and practice to master (see **Teaching Soccer Technique: Restarts**) as this particular restart often presents the most difficulties to young players. After mastering the technique, the throw-in options are:

- Ball thrown forwards down the line for a Supporting Attacker to turn and go for the goal.
- Ball thrown to the feet of an attacking player up field who can either turn and shoot or combine with the thrower moving up in support.
- Ball thrown into the Keeper's Zone, arriving at the same time as a supporting player making a forward run, for a shot at the goal.
- Ball is thrown to rear Supporting Attacker or Keeper (the safe option).

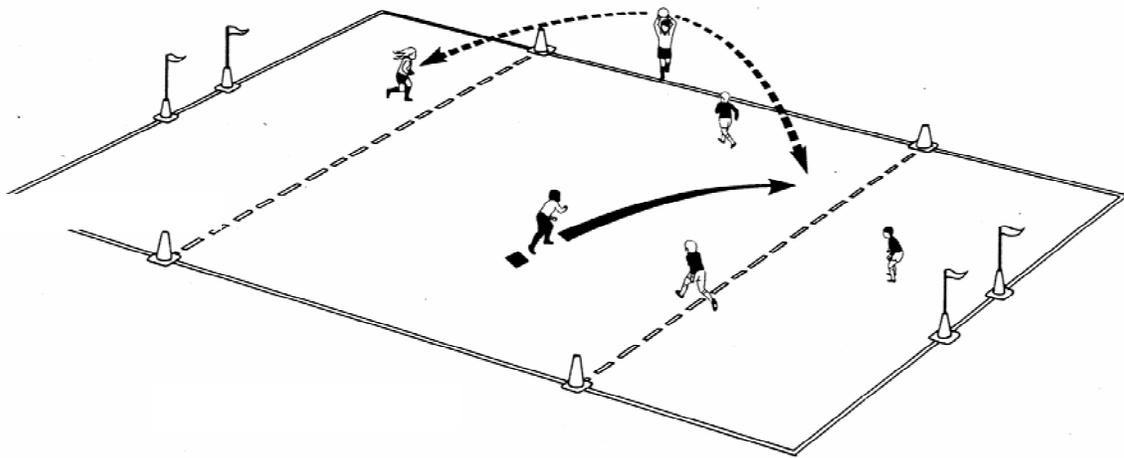


Figure 8: Throw-in Options (Up/Down/Safety First)

- 1) Up the Field/Down the Line to Space in
- 2) Safety First Ball Back to Keeper

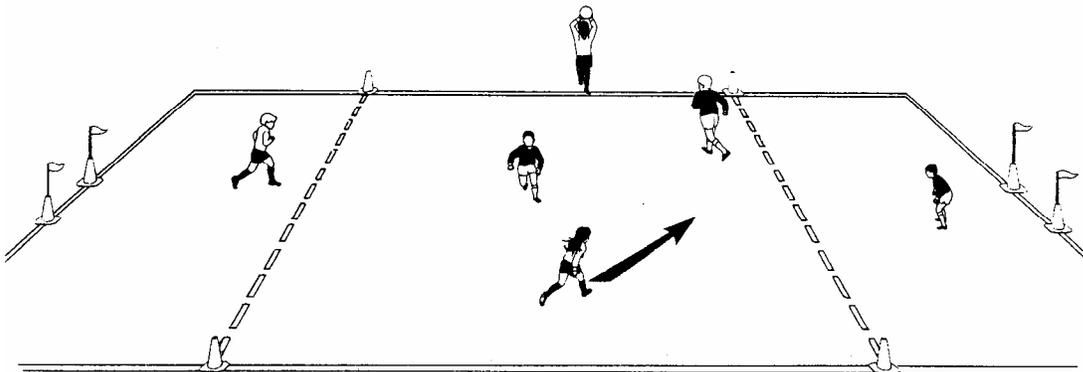


Figure 9: Throw-in Options (Run On To)
Throw-in for 1st Attacker to Run On
To Ball for Shot on Goal

Without belaboring the point, the receiving players can be coached to immediately pass the ball back to the thrower and then run up field.

A final word from Tony Waiters:

*'This tactical summary of 3v3 Soccer and its practices is included in this segment to help broaden the coach's knowledge. Do not feel that all this knowledge must be passed on to young players. **The coach's main role is to organize, supervise, encourage and praise players.** Only when the coach fully understands the information should she attempt to coach the players. Let them play!'*

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The Sample Practice Session

Activities Without the Ball

Run Up, Give Me Five and Run Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Line players up evenly spaced along end line.• Coach stands on 6 yard line and says ‘Run up, Give Me Five and Run Back. Be careful when you turn around.’• Repeat at Half, Attacking 6 and opposite goal line.
Hop Like Rabbits, Feet & Knees Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Line players up evenly spaced along end line.• ‘Who knows what bunnies/kangaroos do?’• ‘Feet together, hop like bunnies!’ to opposite goal line.• Start again from opposite goal line and return.
Slide to the Side, Keep Your Shoulders Facing Me	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Line players up evenly spaced along end line.• Coach stands on either touchline.• ‘Turn towards me, keep your shoulders facing me, toes pointed at me.’• ‘Make a noise like a horse. Slide your feet.’• Start again from opposite touchline facing same direction.
Do The BIG Walk: High Step, Knee Up, Lunge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Line players up evenly spaced along end line.• ‘Who likes Silly Walks?’• ‘Take Big Steps like this.’ (Demonstrate lunge step.)• ‘Ready? Go!’• Start again from opposite touchline.
Cooperation Run: Hold Two Hands, Go as Fast as You Can	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Line players up evenly spaced along end line• Using each player’s name, say ‘Lucy hold two hands with Rachel.’• ‘When I say ‘Run’ keep holding two hands, run as fast as you can without falling down to the other goal line and stop. If your partner falls down, help her up and keep going.’• ‘Ready, Go!’• Start again from opposite touchline.

Towsontowne Recreation Council

<p>Walk/Run Backwards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line players up evenly spaced along end line, facing backwards. • Put Assistant or Parent at other goal line as Spotter. • ‘Put your arms out like this (Coach holding arms about 45 degrees from body), keep your head up looking at me and walk backwards. When I say stop, STOP!’ • ‘Ready? Go!’ • ‘Head Up, Look at me! How many fingers?’ • Start again from opposite touchline to return.
<p>Helicopters: Arm Swing and Torso Twist (Stiff and Loose)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line players up evenly spaced along end line, facing backwards. • Ask every other player to take 3 steps forward. • ‘Put your feet outside your shoulders and your arms straight out like Patrick Starfish!’ • ‘Turn to the side and look all the way behind you. Turn back to the other side.’ • Repeat 5-10 times. • ‘Okay, now turn the same way, a little faster and let your arms swing free.’ • Repeat 5-10 times.
<p>Toe Raises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Feet touching, knees touching, rise up on tippytoes!’ • Repeat 20 times.
<p>Pickup Your Leg, Slap that Knee, Pickup Your Leg, Slap that Knee</p> <p>&</p> <p>Make a Noise Like an Airplane</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Pick up your leg like this (Coach raises leg so thigh is parallel to ground and balancing on other foot).’ • ‘Slap that Knee! Say ‘Good morning, Knee!’’ • Continue slapping knee. • ‘Now put that foot down, pick up the other one and Slap THAT Knee!’ • ‘Okay, put that foot down, pick up the first leg, Slap that Knee. Now stick that foot straight out in front of you. Hold it!’ • Coach demonstrates while talking, sticking arms out to the sides for balance. Hold for several seconds. • ‘Now, take that foot, stick it straight out behind you and make a noise like an airplane!’ Hold for several seconds. • Repeat with other leg.

Towsontowne Recreation Council

Walk in Place, Bring Your Elbows to Knees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marching in place, Coach alternates touching right elbow to left knee with touching left elbow to right knee.• Repeat 15-20 times.
Duck, Duck Goose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit players in circle.• One player walks around circle, touching each player on the head, saying Duck, Duck, until selecting who will chase her, she says ‘Goose!’ and tries to run around circle (same direction as she walked) and get seated in the Goose’s spot before the Goose can tag her.• Play until every player has been a Goose at least two times.

Towsontowne Recreation Council

Activities With the Ball

<p>Change Your Feet at the North Pole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players loosely organized in two lines, with space around them, ball at feet. • Coach stands in front, alternating placing her right and left soles (about the ball of the foot) on the Crown/North Pole/Top of the ball at a walking pace. • Continuing, Coach asks ‘Where does Santa Claus live? Right, if it was the Earth, can you put your foot the ball at the North Pole?’ • Coach makes corrections, get players to hold arms out from body @45 degrees for balance. • ‘Who knows about Jack and Jill? When Jack fell down, he broke his....? YES! Crown is right. Everybody touch your Crown. What part of the ball are we touching? Crown or North Pole!’ • Coach uses poems, ABC’s and numbers (1-20 or 30) while changing feet in cadence.
<p>Walk Your Dog on a Tight Leash</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line players up evenly spaced along end line with ball. • ‘Let’s WALK our dogs, keep them close to you, we need to use a short leash. Start walking, towards the other goal line.’ • ‘Use both feet to show your dog where to go.’ • Up field and back 2-3x.
<p>Run Your Dog: Kick and Run</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line players up evenly spaced along end line with ball. • ‘Now let’s RUN our dogs, keep them close to you, we need to use a short leash. Start walking, towards the other goal line.’ • ‘Use both feet to show your dog where to go.’ • Up field and back 2-3x.
<p>Red Light, Green Light, Change Feet Three Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line players up evenly spaced along end line with ball. • At ‘Green Light!’ players begin to dribble balls in one half of the field. • At ‘Red Light!’ players stop ball by placing foot on Crown/North Pole. • At ‘Change Feet Three Times!’ players alternate feet Crowning the ball. • After each direction, players move in different direction.

Compendium of Games and Activities

The key to Clinic Kids Skill Development is for every player to have a ball and play a variety of games and activities. It is a good idea to pick a single topical theme for a practice session, e.g., dribbling, shooting, passing. Several games and activities are presented by topical area for coaches to experiment.

Coaches are encouraged to select and start with the games that seem like fun to them. An important objective is to get the kids involved and playing early and often. To do so, the coach has to be prepared, both in terms of field layout and instructions, with clarity (and brevity) of instructions being key.

In general, it is MUCH PREFERRED to find a few games that work well and repeat those games throughout several sessions with small changes. Realize that each new game or activity requires new and/or additional instructions. Give clear instructions, get the players involved and moving, make [simple] corrections or clarifications as you go. If the game isn't working for most of the kids, be prepared to move on and leave it to later to sort out the reason/s it did not work. In this sense, the coach is more like a good master of ceremonies: keep it moving. Some rules of thumb:

- Be nice, be excited and have fun.
- If things aren't working, give it a minute to either happen, make a quick change and be prepared to move on. Even Captain Kangaroo had material that didn't work.
- 70%+ is a good target threshold for player involvement at this age. If overall player involvement is much lower, the group loses too much focus, be ready to change activity

Each activity/game below includes a Title (hopefully descriptive), Purpose/Coaching Points, Field/Equipment and Instructions for Players. Coaching cues – short phrases that summarize instructions are in *italics* in the Purpose/Coaching Points column and should be used repetitively. The Instructions for Players are scripted with the idea of getting the players playing quickly and minimizing the discussion required to do so, another reason that picking a few activities/games for the whole season is generally better than too much variety. Think about meals again: a steady, known and generally bland diet is just fine

Compendium of Games and Activities

Dribbling

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Red Light, Green Light</p>	<p>Dribbling MSP: Moving, Stopping and Protecting the Ball <i>Look Down to See the Ball, Look Up to See it All.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the Foot: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inside ○ Outside ○ Laces ○ Sole ○ Toe ○ Heel • Parts of the Ball: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ North Pole/Crown ○ Nose/Equator ○ Ears/Equator ○ Chin/South Pole 	<p>15x20 (Half field). Ball for each player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're going to drive our balls like cars. • When I say 'Green Light!' Start Driving. Careful not to bump into any other cars or drivers! • I'm going to give you other directions, so listen well while you're driving: • Start/Stop: Green/Red Light • Change Speeds: 1st/2nd/3rd Gear • Change Directions: Forward/Back/Left/Right • Pedals: Right/Left Foot Only • Change Balls • Slap Fives: High/Low/Medium Fives • Traffic Shark: Coach or player without ball plays 'roaming defender' • Obstacle course: one or more cones set at edge of field (or across field) or slalom course

Compendium of Games and Activities

Dribbling

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Geography Dribbling</p>	<p>MSP Dribbling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry Dribbling: <i>To Travel with the Ball, Laces to Nose.</i> • Change Direction/Speed: <i>Explode in a New Direction With a Big First Touch Sprint after the Ball.</i> 	<p>15x20 (Half field). Small cone squares (2x2) in each corner. Ball for each player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we dribble the ball, we can really travel. • Today I feel like traveling to different continents. (Either involve the kids in naming the four corners for different continents or make the selections yourself.) • We all dribble around the middle of the field, it's called TOWSON! • When I call out the name of a continent, everybody has to travel there, okay? • When you get to that continent, crown the ball to stop! (Do a short trial without the balls to make sure everybody understands the game, where the 'continents' are, etc. Alternate between Towson and the continents, throw in a couple of continents in a row, etc.) <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any location or group of nouns – animals, colors, etc. will work. • Ask individual kids where they want to go.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Dribbling

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>CatDog Dribbling</p>	<p>Dribbling under Pressure <i>Look Down to See the Ball, Look Up to See it All.</i></p>	<p>15x20 (Half field). Pairs holding hand. One ball per CatDog pair/team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose partners, hold hands, one person starts as Cat, the other is Dog, but we're going to switch later. • The game is for each CatDog to dribble their ball. Each time Cat touches the ball, she says 'Meow!' Dog touches the ball and says 'Woof!' • If either Cat or Dog can kick another CatDog's ball away, together they say 'Bingo!' BUT you have to keep holding hands. • The other CatDog has to chase the ball and come back on the field. • Keep count of the Bingos! The CatDog with the most when the game ends wins.
<p>Pokemon Dribbling Relay Race</p>	<p>Moving Quickly to the Ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprint to the Ball • Collect the Ball <p><i>Big First Touch</i> <i>Laces to Nose</i></p>	<p>15x20 (Half field). One ball for each player, touching each other in center of field. 4 teams of equal numbers of players, one behind each corner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have four Pokemon teams: Ashes, Surges, Brocks and Mistys. • Each team stands behind one corner of the field, in a line. (Separate teams by names to corners.) • When I say Go! One player from each team runs to the Pokemons (balls) in the middle of the field, dribbles it back to their corner to the end of the line and sits down cross legged with the ball in their lap. • When the last person on the team has dribbled their ball back and sits down, everyone on that team lifts their ball in the air and says 'Pokemon!' to win.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Dribbling

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Yeti/Ice Monster Dribbling Tag</p>	<p>Dribbling MSP <i>Look Down to See the Ball, Look Up to See it All.</i></p>	<p>15x20 (Half field). One ball for each player, except Yeti.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everybody with a ball wants to dribble and stay away from the Ice Monster..the Yeti. • If the Yeti tags a player, that player turns into an ICE X (form ‘X’ with legs spread and arms up and out, which helps other dribblers look up and around). • The only way to thaw out and get back into play is for another player to dribble their ball through the ICE X’s legs (front or back) and unfreeze them. • Then they can dribble around again and stay away from the Yeti. • (Game should continue until Yeti freezes everybody and last frozen player becomes the Yeti or change Yeti’s after 2-3 minutes.) <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more than one Yeti at a time • Yeti’s can pound balls of frozen players to other half of field.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Passing

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Clean Up Your Room Passing</p>	<p>Pass and Move <i>Pointer Foot Straight, Cup Kick</i> <i>Pass and Move</i></p>	<p>15x20 (half field) Two 'sides' separated by 3 foot wide 'No Play Zone.' One cone set wide to either side of field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's time to Clean Up Your Room! • Each team wants to Clean Up Their Room by Cup Kicking all the balls into the other team's room. • After each Cup Kick, you have to run around one of the outside cones and then come back to help clean up your room by kicking another ball over. • You have to try to Cup Kick/Pass the ball into the other room. • First team to pass all their balls into the other team's room wins.
<p>Hungry Monkeys Banana Passing</p>	<p>Passing Accuracy <i>Pointer Foot Straight, Cup Kick</i></p>	<p>Players in pairs, each with 2 Balls and 1 disk cone. Disk cones with one ball resting on top spread around field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do Hungry Monkeys eat? Of course, Bananas! • Each pair/team sets up on opposite sides of a Banana Tree (disk cone with ball) and passes the ball back and forth, trying to knock the bananas out of the tree. • When you knock the bananas out of the tree, run quick like a bunny and put them back so you can try again. • Move back just a little each time after you knock the bananas out of the trees. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set cone markers specific distances away. • Play teams of 2v2 with more banana teams in between.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Passing

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Sponge Bob Passing</p>	<p>Passing while moving. Cup Passing by Jogging Pairs. <i>Lead Your Partner with the Pass.</i></p>	<p>30x20 (full field) 1 Ball per pair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We get two lines of players on the end line and each player in the first line starts with the ball. • The first players in each line start to run slowly up the field, passing the ball with their outside foot (furthest away from their partner) to just in front of the other player. • When the first player passes the ball, she says, ‘Sponge!’ • When the other player passes it back with her outside foot, she says ‘Bob!’ • How many passes can you do for one length of the field? • When you get the far end line, just turnaround (so your other foot is now ‘outside’) and do the same thing coming back. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Outside of the Inside Foot (closest to your partner).

Compendium of Games and Activities

Passing

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Monkey in the Middle Passing</p>	<p>Passing Accuracy <i>Pointer Foot Straight, Cup Kick</i></p>	<p>Make a circle using as few cones as possible (6-8), width dependent on the number of players and how far they can pass. Two smaller circles okay.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everybody stands outside the circle of cones. • Rachel is our first ‘Monkey’ and starts in the middle. • Everybody else tries to pass the ball to someone else around the outside of the circle without Rachel touching the ball. • If Rachel does touch the ball, the last person to touch it before her becomes the ‘Monkey in the Middle.’ <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Monkeys for period of time, instead of switching out based on steal. • Use more than one Monkey at a time. • Use more than one ball at a time.
<p>Cone Head Gate Passing</p>	<p>Passing Accuracy <i>Pointer Foot Straight, Cup Kick</i></p>	<p>30x20 (full field) Random Pairs of Cone Gates, about 1-2 yards wide, placed around the field. 1 Ball per Pair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each pair of players finds an empty cone gate and with one player on either side of the gate, passes the ball back and forth through the gate 3 times and then moves on to do as many gates as you can in 1/2 minutes. • You can’t do the same gate two times in a row. • Keep count of how many gates you do before we call ‘Stop.’ • Pair with the highest number of gates are ‘Cone Heads!’

Compendium of Games and Activities

Passing

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Passing Name Game</p>	<p>Know Your Teammates, Communication and Passing</p>	<p>Make a circle using as few cones as possible (6-8), width dependent on the number of players and how far they can pass. One Ball for Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player with ball points at another player who shouts out their name, ‘RACHEL!’ • Passer says ‘RACHEL!’ and passes the ball. • Play continues with different receiver (someone who hasn’t gotten the ball yet) each time, same sequence: Point, Call out Name, Passer repeats Name and Passes. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As group learns each other’s Names, only Passer calls out Name. • Passer points at player who names a <i>different</i> player to whom the Passer should pass the ball.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Shooting

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Eggs-actly Basket Shooting</p>	<p>Collect Ball, Shoot on Goal <i>Laces to Nose</i> <i>Finish in Goal</i></p>	<p>30x20 (full field). At least one ball per player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everybody take your EGG (ball), place it somewhere on the field and run back to this end line (goal line). • When I say ‘Go!’ Run to a ball (ANY BALL) and dribble it to a BASKET (goal) and shoot it in. • To count, you have to run through the goal after shot. • Then come back on the field to find more eggs and shoot them in the basket, too. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play as Teams. • Alternate Baskets/goals on which to shoot. • Play in pairs where 1st player has to touch ball one time before the other can shoot it. • Play as timed game. • Use shaggers (parents would help get the balls back on the field).

Compendium of Games and Activities

Shooting

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Magic Rope/Moving Target Shooting</p>	<p>Shooting and Field Vision <i>Laces to Nose</i> <i>Finish in Goal</i></p>	<p>30x20 (full field). Six foot rope. Ball for each player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two kids (The Moving Target) hold either end of the rope (waist to shoulder high) and keep it stretched out between them. • They move slowly around the field, keeping the rope up, while everybody else tries to shoot the Moving Target. • You get one point for each ball shot under the rope and between the rope holders (shot doesn't count if the ball touches the holders). • Shooters should look for a new ball immediately after shooting the first one. • For this game, everybody uses everybody's balls. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use parents as Moving Targets. • Decide on 'set' locations for the Target to move towards. • Use beach ball or some other large (or smaller) size different ball as target on field. • Use different numbers of balls. • Add second Moving Target. • Run 'through' goal after shot.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Shooting

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Pimlico Races Dribble & Shoot</p>	<p>Dribble, Shoot and Finish in Goal</p>	<p>30x20 (full field). Ball for each player. Divide into two equal groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One team stands on this end line with their foot on the North Pole of the ball, the other team does the same on the other end line. • When I say ‘Go!’ the two teams dribble past/through each other, take a shot on goal, run around the goal. • Then everybody gets their ball out and stands on the end line ready to go the other way. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At half line, each ‘team’ turns back and moves back to shoot on goal. • Coach uses signal (‘Reverse’) to change target goals.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Shooting

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Soccer Dragon Relay Races</p>	<p>Run to collect ball, Dribble, Shoot on Goal, Finish in Goal</p>	<p>30x20 (full field). Ball for each player, all placed in the center of the field. Divide into four equal groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have some Hungry Dragons here and they eat Soccer Balls! • Each group makes a line starting behind a corner of the field. • When I say ‘Go!’ the first player in each line runs to the middle, collects a ball, dribbles to the goal on their starting side, shoots a ball into the Dragon’s Mouth (shoots on goal), pets the dragon (touches the post) to finish and runs to the back of their line and sits down, saying ‘Go!’ for the next player. • For goals to count, shooter must finish in goal. • Highest team score when last person from last team sits down wins.

Compendium of Games and Activities

Shooting

Title	Purpose/Coaching Points	Field/Equipment	Instructions for Players
<p>Hungry Monkeys Banana Shoot</p>	<p>Shooting Accuracy <i>Laces to Nose</i></p>	<p>Players in pairs, each with 2 Balls and 1 disk cone. Disk cones with one ball resting on top spread around field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do Hungry Monkeys eat? Bananas, of course! • Each pair/team sets up on opposite sides of a Banana Tree (disk cone with ball) and shoots the ball back and forth, trying to knock the bananas out of the tree. • When you knock the bananas out of the tree, run quick like a bunny and put them back so you can try again. • Move back just a little each time after you knock the bananas out of the trees. <p>Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set cone markers specific distances away. • Play teams of 2v2 with more banana teams in between.

Teaching Soccer Technique

Teaching Soccer Technique Common to almost all technical requirements in soccer is the ability to balance on one foot while using the other foot to manipulate the ball. Dribbling, passing and shooting all involve striking a point on the ball with a particular point or surface of one foot while standing on the other foot. Accordingly, the first order of business at the Clinic level are activities that involve shifting weight from one foot to the other, shifting weight from one part of the foot to another or balancing on a single foot, all of which make positive contributions to developing the underlying muscle strength, balance and coordination skills requisite to success in soccer skill execution.

Soccer requires attention to the ongoing development of skills and technique at all levels of the game. What is presented here goes considerably beyond what is required of either a U-6 player or a Clinic parent/volunteer coach. The following technical explanations are intended to keep the coach more than just ‘a chapter ahead of the class.’ The assumption is that the acquisition [by players] of fundamental soccer techniques is facilitated by the coach having detailed knowledge of each technique from which to present, demonstrate and coach.

Dribbling

Dribbling Definition Remember the definition of dribbling by '*Dribbling MSP*':

- **Moving** (including starting movements and changing direction)
- **Stopping**
- **Protecting** ...the Ball.

Why Dribble? If you are dribbling, it means we have POSSESSION OF THE BALL, which means we are on ATTACK. The two things we want to do on ATTACK are;

- **Maintain possession of the ball**
- **Create opportunities for shot on goal**

The Ten Elements of Dribbling An 'element' is 'the simplest part or principle.' The Ten Elements of Dribbling are divided into two groups, the **PRIMARY ELEMENTS** – the four things that take place with every dribbling activity -- and **SECONDARY ELEMENTS** – six things that are not always done with every dribbling activity, but contribute to successful dribbling. At the Clinic level, the Primary Elements are paramount.

The Ten Elements of Dribbling

Primary Dribbling Elements

Explanation/Description

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Starting Direction/Orientation | Determined as 'North' is the way your shoulders face. |
| 2 | Foot Part | Foot striking surface used to touch and move the ball. |
| 3 | Ball Part | Ball part touched by the foot striking surface. |
| 4 | New Direction/Orientation | Direction shoulders face after executing dribbling move. |

Secondary Dribbling Elements

Explanation/Description

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| 5 | Vision | Look Down to touch the ball, Look Up to see it all.
Train towards using peripheral vision keeping ball in lower view while looking beyond and to sides of ball. |
| 6 | Pressure | Field location and the direction of 1 st Defender pressure. |
| 7 | Ball Proximity | How close to your feet to keep the ball? Far enough away to execute the desired movements and close enough to shield and protect the ball if pressured by a defender. Generally, one or two steps is about right, except for carrying and during acceleration. |

- 8 Feints** To separate from 1st Defender pressure. Feints always involve ‘selling’ the opponent on moving in one direction with a subsequent change in direction before they can react.
- 9 Acceleration** Once a feint has created initial separation, it must be exploited by accelerating away from the opponent to increase the separation.
- 10 Player/Team Communication** To maintain possession and create shots on goal, communication in the form of verbal and non-verbal cues is required.

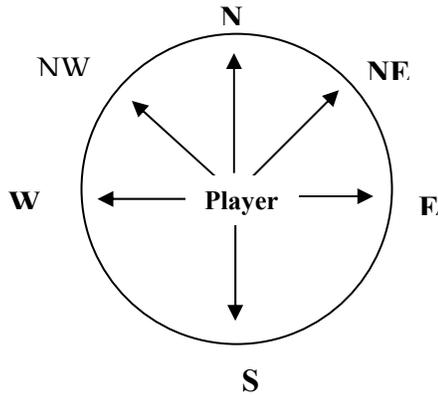
The 11th and 12th Elements are the location on the field in which specific dribbling moves are executed and the direction and nature of defensive pressure faced, respectively. Both are beyond the Clinic level but included here for completeness.

The Dribbling Compass If objective of dribbling is to maintain possession of the ball and create shot on goal opportunities, a player needs to be able to move in any direction with the ball. ‘Any direction’ describes a circle. To clarify the directions involved (the Primary Elements of Starting Direction and New Direction) we use the points of the compass – **North, East, South & West** -- which you can remember by the expression **Never Eat Shredded Wheat**.

The main difference between a regular compass (where the arrow points to ‘true’ North) and **The Dribbling Compass** is that **NORTH** is determined by the direction your shoulders are facing when you start the dribbling move, not the direction you are moving in up or down or across the field. The **NEW DIRECTION** is always expressed in relationship to the direction that was **NORTH** at the beginning of the move. For example, if you dribble forward, crown the ball and pull it back in the opposite direction from which you were heading, the Starting Direction is North and the New Direction is South. Or, if facing forward, you brought your right foot across the ball towards the left (Sole Roll: Outside to Inside), moved to the left and pushed the ball forward with your left foot, the Starting Direction would be West and the New Direction would be North.

Now we have a way to categorize every dribbling move, by Starting Direction and New Direction, or N/S and W/N for the two examples above.

Figure 10: The Dribbling Compass



Key to Dribbling Compass

- N** North/Forward (Direction shoulders facing)
- NE** North East
- E** East/Right
- S** South/Behind
- W** Left
- NW** North West

Foot Parts The Primary Dribbling Element of Foot Part is the foot striking surface that makes contact with the ball, either to start, change direction or stop the ball. There are six Foot Parts commonly used in dribbling;

- Cup (Inside of the foot)
- Laces (Instep)
- Toe
- Outside
- Heel
- Sole (Usually Ball of Foot, Sometimes Front of Sole, infrequently Back of Sole)

Ball Parts The other Primary Dribbling Element is the Ball Part touched. The two ‘best’ types of nomenclature (which can be combined) for distinguishing the parts of the Ball touched are a Face and Globe with suggested terms bolded and underlined;

Representation	Ball Part					
	Top	Top Half	Middle	Sides	Bottom Half	Bottom
Face	<u>Crown</u>	Forehead	<u>Nose</u>	<u>Ears</u>	Mouth	<u>Chin</u>
Globe	North Pole	<u>North of Equator</u>	Equator	West/East Equator	<u>South of Equator</u>	South Pole

The Ten Elements of Dribbling can facilitate development in many ways. The Primary Elements and the Dribbling Compass (Starting Direction and New Direction) allows naming dribbling activities according to the actions performed. Including the use of descriptive names, other things useful about the Ten Elements of Dribbling model are;

- Terms that promote demonstrating, learning and retention of dribbling moves
- Better grasp of the concept of ball movement in any direction
- More specific language for analyzing, correcting and perfecting performance
- Improved clarity and consistency in executing (or coaching) individual moves
- Framework/model for categorizing new moves and variations
- Graphical representation to support the idea that best directional option is one that increases the likelihood of maintaining possession (i.e., protecting the ball) or creating a shot on goal

Carry Dribble/Laces to Nose ‘Carrying’ the ball is dribbling it straight ahead (as defined by the direction the shoulders are facing). Carrying is the first ‘step’ in Dribbling MSP, *moving* the soccer ball straight ahead. With experience, the carry dribble is the fastest way of covering ground while maintaining possession of the ball.



Figure 11: Laces to Nose

The coaching cues are:

- **Laces to Nose.**
- **Knee over the Ball.**
- **Prancing Motion Forward.**

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Carry Dribble/Laces to Nose Steps

Step	Description
1	Starting at a walking pace, approach the ball directly from behind.
2	Standing foot pointed straight ahead is planted to the side of the ball, knee slightly bent.
3	The striking foot has the toes pointed straight down (or slightly to the inside) with the heel up. The player should try to curl her toes inside her cleats. The striking leg knee is bent and is directly over the ball.
4	The laces (big bone of the instep) of the striking foot make contact at or slightly above the ball's nose (equator).
5	The movement is both a hop forward off the standing leg and a sharp tap on the ball with the striking foot that finishes with landing on the striking foot. The movement can be described as 'prancing.'
6	The Laces to Nose touch is repeated, small 'sizing' steps will usually be required to get the proper foot placement. Realize that the faster the forward momentum, the farther the standing foot placement ahead of the rolling ball has to be to effect the 'striking leg knee over the ball' contact as the ball continues to move forward after the standing leg is planted.
7	Introduce using BOTH feet for the Laces to Nose Carry Dribble early.
8	Gradually increase speed. Relay races are good.

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Checking the Ball/Magic Hop Steps

Step	Description
1	As the ball is moving forward slowly, plant the standing foot beside the ball and hop forward (off the standing foot) immediately.
2	In the middle of the Magic Hop, lightly tap the Crown/North Pole of the ball with the opposite foot as you pass over it. TAP means TAP. A very light touch on the ball will make it stop. If weight is placed on the ball, several things – none of them good – can happen. The worst is a sprained ankle. Balancing on top of the ball does not promote any useful soccer skill.
3	The momentum should continue forward to land on the Standing Foot with the ball behind you.
4	Quickly turn back to collect the ball and explode away in a different direction.
5	As players mature, they will be able to turn in the air and do a "rooster-tail" type of hockey stop, landing with the foot already turned sideways so that they can immediately push off in the opposite direction.

The **Dribbling Exercise Descriptions** (presented below) represent the majority of physical movements (combinations of foot and ball surfaces) that underlie the overwhelming majority of dribbling moves. When practiced with correct body shape – Gorilla stance, both knees bent – the Dribbling Exercises promote balance, strength and coordination while developing tactile awareness, foot sensitivity and mechanics. When we ask young players to attempt various dribbling moves before they have acquired the requisite balance, strength and coordination to perform the underlying movements, we have not only placed the ‘cart before the horse’ but we have also set up our young charges for failure by failing to equip them with the motor skills they need to do what we ask. The good news is that motor skills will develop very rapidly with consistent use of these exercises.

Dribbling Exercise Descriptions

#	Exercise	Description
<u>STATIONARY Exercises</u>		
1	Bells	Start with ball between feet. Feet placed just outside shoulders, parallel and pointed straight ahead. Keep toes up, heels down. Strike ball just above Equator with Inside of Foot. Move ball back and forth between feet. Keep knees bent with movement from hips.
2	Crown Arouds	Start with Sole on Crown and Standing Leg slightly bent.
3		Simultaneously , bring Standing Leg Sole to Crown and Crown Foot to Standing Leg position in hopping motion (Change Feet!). Hopping movement includes rotating around ball (first counterclockwise). Touch Sole smartly to ball, with enough force to make it slightly out of round. Repeat moving clockwise around ball. Repeat moving clockwise.
4		Start with ball in front of you.
5	Using the same foot and 'small' touches, alternate touching ball just above Right and Left Ears with Inside and Outside of Foot. Movement requires hops on Standing Leg that change the forward direction of the standing foot in an arc of about 45 degrees from side to side. Repeat with other foot.	
6	Sole Circles	Start with standing Leg bent and Sole to Crown.
7		Maintaining contact, move foot & ball in large circles.
8		Moving foot full circle back to starting point counts as 'one'.
9		Repeat clockwise and counterclockwise motions each foot.
10	Sole Roll: Forward and Backward Stationary	Start with ball of foot on Crown and knee directly above ball.
11		Maintaining contact with ball, roll ball forward until heel is in contact with the ball and leg is fully extended. Angle of lower leg changes from 90 degrees to @45 degrees. Roll back to starting position. Repeat with other foot.

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#	Exercise	Description
<u>NORTH & SOUTH Exercises</u>		
12	Sole Push Forward	Similar to <i>Crown Arounds</i> movement. Start with Right Sole on Crown. Push Ball directly forward and quickly change positions of the feet, Ball Foot becomes Standing Foot, Standing Foot becomes Ball Foot. Repeat with Left Sole and continue to alternate feet. Movement combines hop with stepping forward. Ball stays under control throughout and is only moved forward in contact with foot (i.e., ball doesn't roll free).
13	Sole Pull Backward	Reverse of <i>Sole Push Forward</i> Start with Right Sole on Crown. Pull ball backwards and quickly change positions of the feet, Ball Foot becomes Standing Foot, Standing Foot becomes Ball Foot. Repeat with Left Sole and continue to alternate feet. Movement combines hop with stepping forward. Ball stays under control throughout and is only moved forward in contact with foot (i.e., ball doesn't roll free).
<u>EAST & WEST Exercises</u>		
14	Sole Roll: From Inside	Start with ball in front, slightly to right.
15	to Outside	Bring Right Side of Right Foot from just above Left Ear and roll Sole over ball past North Pole to Right in a flipping motion. Repeat with Left Foot.
16	Sole Roll: From	Start with ball in front, slightly to right.
17	Outside to Inside	Bring Left Side of Right Foot from just above Right Ear and roll Sole across ball past North Pole to Left in a flipping motion. Repeat with Left Foot moving to the Right.
18	Step Downs: From	Begin executing <i>Sole Roll: From Outside to Inside</i> , by bringing
19	Inside to Outside	Left Side of Right Foot from just above Right Ear and roll Sole across ball to Left. Just as the Right Foot gets past North Pole, simultaneously Step Down and push ball to Right, back to the Outside. Repeat with Left Foot.

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#	Exercise	Description
20	Step Downs: From	Begin executing <i>Sole Roll: From Inside to Outside</i> , by bringing Right Side of Right Foot from just above Left Ear and roll Sole across ball to Right. Just as the Right Foot gets past North Pole, simultaneously Step Down and push ball to Left, back to the Inside. Repeat with Left Foot.
21	Outside to Inside	

Starting on the next page, titled, **Dribbling Moves Descriptions**, are detailed descriptions of ten moves. The table includes a listing of the Primary Dribbling Elements – Starting and New Direction, Foot Part and Ball Part and the steps involved in performing each move.

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Dribbling Moves Descriptions

#	Direction		Foot Part	Ball Part	Move Name/Action Steps
	Start	New			
1	N	S	Sole	Crown	Forward/Reverse 1. Crown ball. 2. Sole Pull. 3. Turn with ball.
2	N	S	Laces	Nose	Forward/Reverse: Step Across Pivot 1. Step across ball from outside to inside (E to W/W to E) just ahead of ball. 2. Pivot 180 on stepping foot. 3. Laces of other foot to Nose.
3	N	E-W	Sole Outside	Crown Equator	North to East/West Sole Roll 1. Crown ball. 2. Sole Pull. 3. Push ball to outside.
4	N	N	Sole Toe	Crown Nose	Hesitation Crown/Pop 1. Crown ball. 2. Pop ball Nose straight ahead.
5	N	E-W	Toe	Ear	Inside Cut 1. Swing outside leg while turning foot to the inside, coming across body. 2. Toe contacts with Ear so ball moves in 90 degree direction.

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#	Direction		Foot Part	Ball Part	Move Name/Action Steps
	Start	New			
6	E-W	W-E	Sole	Above Equator	Sole Roll <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Moving to side, place edge of trailing foot just above Equator. Roll Sole towards top of ball, releasing at North Pole.
7	N	N-S- E-W	Sole	Crown	Fake Kick <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Swing striking foot as if to strike the ball (laces or toes). Make ball contact w/Sole moving forward & back rest Sole on Crown. Using Sole, roll ball in any direction AWAY from pressure.
8	N	N	Toe	Equator Back	Hesitation Hip Swivel <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bring forward leg toe directly in front of the path of ball while simultaneously turning to side-on position with forward (leading) leg. Immediately turn in the opposite direction. Plant foot that first touched the ball to the side. Strike ball Nose straight ahead with Cup of other foot.
			Cup	Nose	
9	N	E-W	Laces/Toe	Equator Back	Outside Hook/Spin Turn <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bring forward leg laces/toe (turned to the outside) directly in front of the path of ball, making contact with the Equator Back. Continue to turn in the same direction same as #1. When $\frac{3}{4}$ turn accomplished (usually 3 touches), accelerate out of turn movement striking the ball with the Outside of Foot.
10	E	E-W	Sole	North Pole	Step Downs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Moving to side, place edge of trailing foot just above Equator. Roll Sole towards top of ball. At either side of North Pole, Step Down on ball to move it in the direction opposite the Step Down side.

Passing

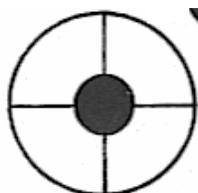
Of the basic soccer skills, teaching the technique of passing represents the biggest challenge for several reasons. The first is the actual physical requirements of the Cup Pass which include simultaneously turning the striking foot perpendicular to the intended direction of the path of the ball while ‘locking’ the ankle. The second reason stems from the tactical issue that passing is really the beginning of team play and communication.

The Clinic coach needs to be aware that these requirements are BEYOND the developmental capabilities of some (even most) 5 and 6 year olds. Some children are not able to open their hips sufficiently to have the standing foot pointing in the target direction with the striking foot at a right angle. Moreover, the concept of passing, which includes *‘Mine, Yours and Sharing’* or more specifically, *‘My Ball, Your Ball and Our Ball,’* does not necessarily come naturally to Clinic-aged children. Even the concept of ‘team’ is abstract and is more often ‘Me versus Everybody Else’ or 1vAll instead of 3v3. From their perspective: *‘Why pass the ball? I mean, it’s not like I am going to get it back!’* The point here is to temper the coach’s expectations to reflect the players’ developmental reality. Be clear, be positive, but above all, be reasonable.

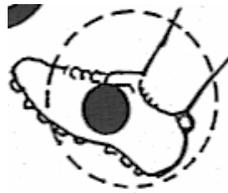
The Cup Pass Using the term ‘Cup’ instead of ‘Inside of the Foot’ makes a powerful distinction, by specifying a point (versus a bigger surface area) for contact with the ball. The term ‘Cup’ is short and ends in a hard consonant sound, which mirrors the physical movement involved. The Cup is located in the area in the middle of the side of the foot, where there is a slight indentation that usually corresponds to the arch. The best way to insure that players understand the exact location of the cup is to have them place one finger on that spot, preferably with their shoes off.



Figure 12: The Location of The Cup



Ball Equator



Cup

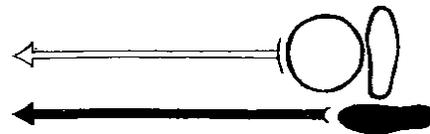


Figure 14: Striking Foot/Standing Foot Positions

Figure 13: Ball Nose & Foot Cup

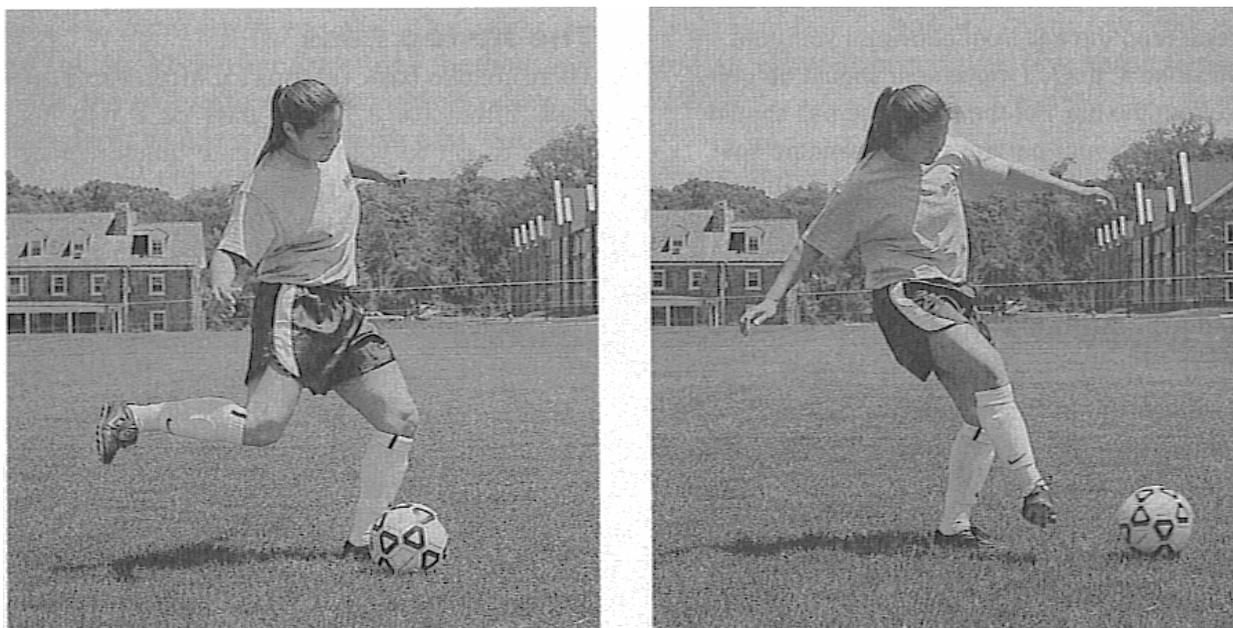


Figure 15: The Cup Pass: Backswing and Follow Through

Additional benefits of employing the term ‘Cup’;

- Makes explicit WHICH PART of the Inside of the Foot is used in the Cup Pass (sometimes called a Push Pass).
- By referring to a smaller and specific area, the player can more easily ‘connect the dots’ between the striking surface of the foot, the part of the ball struck and the Target Line along which they want to pass the ball.

What’s A Locked Ankle? Joints, such as the ankle, are essentially hinges. Hinges are designed for movement, not ‘locking.’ If you put your hands together, alternating fingers (to look like a door hinge) you can see that a hinge allows movement back and forth. Joints ‘lock’ by engaging opposing muscle groups on either side of the joint. If you start to pull your arms apart from one another (engaging opposing muscle groups on either side of the ‘hinge’) the force dramatically reduces the amount of possible movement back and forth. While this discussion has proven to be helpful with older players, for the Clinic aged ones, bypass the discussion and go directly to the correct demonstration:

Tell the players:

- Turn your foot to the side (a 90 degree angle).
- Pull your toes UP.
- Ask ‘How does that feel? Can you move your foot side to side, holding your ankle still?’ (Below the knee, the Striking Leg should resemble a golf putter.)
- Say ‘Now touch the muscle that feels like it’s working the most.’ (The player should indicate the outside front of their lower leg.) Now, say,

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- Push your heel down.
- Ask ‘Did you feel a different muscle get involved?’ (The answer should be, ‘Yes I did.’)
- Ask them if they can identify/point to that muscle. The player should indicate their calf muscle.
- Ask them if they can feel the difference in their ankle. They CAN!
- Finally, tell the players ‘The Keys to ‘Locking’ your ankle are:

Toe Up PLUS Heel Down EQUALS Ankle Locked.

This sequence also addresses another point that is often unclear to youth players: how far up is ‘Toe Up?’ Once you engage the calf muscle in pushing the heel down, the toe is as far up as it goes. This results in sound striking technique. Good striking technique is easily determined – watch the ball after it is struck. If the ball goes close to the intended target at speed and stays on the ground, most likely all of the components were in place when the ball was struck.

The two most common problems are direction (accuracy) and keeping the ball flat (down). Directional problems are almost always the result of not getting the striking foot square to the Target Line or the standing foot pointing left or right of the target, making follow through along the Target Line impossible. If the ball comes up, it was struck below the equator, rather than on the top half of the ball.

Having identified the proper point of contact on the foot, and the mechanics of the ‘locked’ ankle, the rest of the coaching sequence is:

The Cup Pass Steps

#	Steps	Directions
1	Gorilla Stance	Stand like a gorilla: ankles, knees and hips all slightly bent; feet underneath the shoulders and pointing directly ahead; weight on the balls of the feet.
2	Rotate Striking Foot	Leaving the ball of the foot on the ground, rotate the striking foot until it is at a right angle to the standing foot, with the heel of the striking foot closest to the big toe of the standing foot.
3	Bend the Knees	With feet still pointing to form 90 degree angle, bend both knees, almost like a plie’ in ballet.
4	Head/Eyes Down	Look down at the ball (where it should be), keep the head still, eyes on the ball until after it is struck.
5	Practice Back Swing	Keeping the striking foot turned the entire time, draw it first back and then swing it forward.
6	Repeat	Repeat the movement several times.

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7	Secure/Stationary Ball	Place a ball in front of the player and secure it, either by holding by the sides or wedging it with your foot on the opposite side from the player striking the ball.
8	Strike Secured Ball	Taking one step to bring the standing foot along side and even with the ball, strike the secured ball and say ‘Cup to Nose.’
9	Repeat	Repeating the Cup to Nose touch on the secured ball several times and with both feet.
10	Strike Free Ball	Strike the now unsecured ball forward.

After some practice, break the group into widely separated pairs, standing about 2-3 yards apart. Instruct the players to:

- Pass the Ball, using the Cup of your Foot to Strike the Ball’s Nose.
- Receive the Ball with your Sole on the Crown.
- Pass it back Cup to Nose again.

Variations:

- Change Feet on the Crown 3 times before passing it back.
- Receive with the inside of one foot (toe up), pass it back with the Cup of the other foot.

One of the reasons that Passing is a difficult skill for U-6 to acquire is that, to acquire a sufficient number of spaced repetitions, a competent partner is required. However, since passing is the topic you are introducing, it is unrealistic to expect a U-6 player to be able to do it well...it’s a ‘which comes first, the chicken or the egg?’ conundrum. This is a principle reason to use a stationary or wedged ball to teach the correct foot position. The basic idea is that a stationary ball provides much more immediate feedback to a young player.

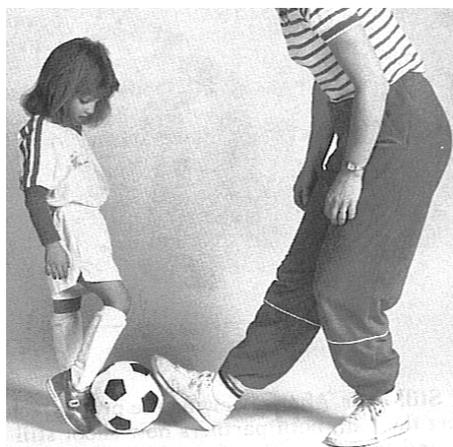


Figure 16: A Wedged/Stationary Ball

Shooting

Shooting On Goal: The

- **Where** (Field location, target areas),
- **When** (Early),
- **What** (Foot selection, ball contact point),
- **How** (Striking and standing leg mechanics), and,
- **Why** (Score one more goal than the other team)

of shooting present a time-honored data organizational model that can serve coaches and players alike on and off the field:

I keep six honest serving-men
 (They taught me all I knew);
 Their names are What and Why and When
 And How and Where and Who.

*Rudyard Kipling
 The Elephant Child*

Shooting Steps: Honest Serving Men

#	Where/What	How/What	Why
1	Field Position	<i>Shoot from Inside the Scoring Cone.</i>	90%+ goals are scored from inside the Penalty Area. For younger players, percentage is higher.
2	Timing	<i>Shoot Early.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shoot Before the Defense can get Organized.</i>
3	Target	<i>Shoot Low.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pick a Spot Where the Keeper's Not.</i> • <i>Shoot Below the Keeper's Knees.</i> • <i>Aim Small, Miss Small.</i> 50% of World Cup scores in two lower corners, 83% in all four corners.
4	Accuracy Before Power	<i>Calm Scores, Excited Misses.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Less Power, Go for Greater Accuracy.</i> • <i>Pass to the Back of the Net.</i> Focus on placement quality over 'just pounding the ball.' <u><i>One exception:</i></u> Take the early shot in 'traffic' when Defenders are blocking the Keeper's view of the field.

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#	Where/What	How/What	Why
5	Striking Position	<i>Ball Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Get a 45 degree angle.</i> <p>Not always the required approach, but generally the player should be approaching the ball from an angle to lean slightly away from the ball to allow fuller extension of the Striking Leg. Generally, hips should be square to the goal/target, i.e., to the direction in which the ball is being struck.</p>
6	Striking Position	<i>Standing Foot</i>	Next to ball, pointed in the direction the ball is to travel.
7	Striking Position	<i>Striking Foot</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Toe Down, Heel Up, Ankle Locked, Strike with the Laces.</i> <p>Knee should be over the ball, and the ball should be struck right through the middle (or just slightly north of the equator) with the Laces for maximum surface connection. Some players will naturally turn their foot to the inside, which is fine. The issue is which position locks the ankle most securely. This appears to vary from foot to foot. When you get a high sailing ball, Standing Foot was too far behind the ball or Striking Foot connected south of the equator.</p> <p>Striking Foot selection: Facing the goal, ‘see’ the line from the center of the goal running back to you. If the ball is to the left of the center line, shoot with the left foot. If it is to the right, shoot with the right foot.</p>
8	Striking Position	<i>Head</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Look Broad Before Striking the Ball, Look at the Ball When You Strike It.</i> <p>Like golf, the Head should be down and still when addressing and striking the ball. Shooters should ‘take a picture’ of the target and then look down and keep the head down until after the follow through.</p>
9	Striking Position	<i>Standing Foot-Side Arm</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Swing Your Arm Across Your Body.</i> <p>The opposite side arm swings across the body as the entire upper torso (but NOT the Head) twists counter to the Striking Foot/Leg. This is the basic power motion for all striking movements.</p>

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#	Where/What	How/What	Why
10	Striking Position	<i>Follow Through</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Take a Short Hop & Land on the Striking Foot.</i> Striking Foot stays pointed after the kick with ankle locked, follow through straight at target. Body weight is moving forward and through the shot, landing on the striking foot.
11	Follow-up	<i>Follow Your Shot To The Goal.</i>	Players must be coached to not only follow-up their shots, but to be ready to shoot any mishandled balls or bounces off the posts or cross bar.
12	Transition Back to Defense	<i>Immediate Pressure on the Ball, Drop Back towards Goal.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When Not in Possession, Get in Position.</i> • <i>Steal the Ball Early and Often.</i>

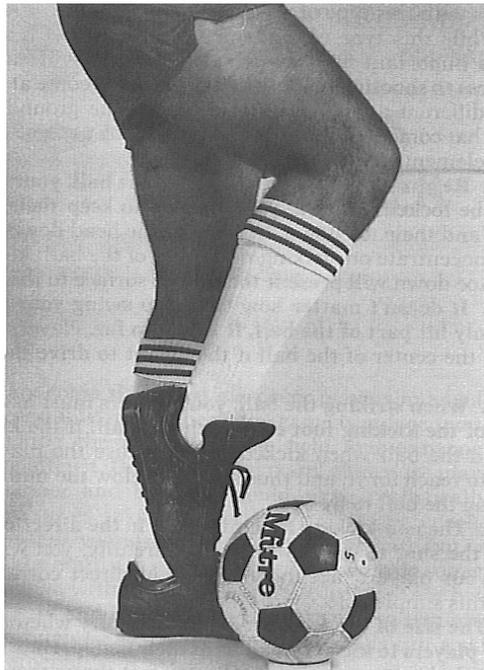


Figure 17: Laces Striking Foot Position

The upper leg (thigh) is the prime muscle group moving the lower leg through the ball on the laces kick. To isolate the muscles and mechanics involved with good shooting technique, the following progression from Seated Laces Striking to Standing Laces Striking (Vertical Punting) to Pairs Laces Volley Drive and Catch is presented below.

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Seating Laces Striking

#	Directions
1	Take off shoes and sox.
2	Sit on the ground, with knees bent and inside the arms and both feet flat on the ground.
3	Point striking foot with toes curling towards sole.
4	Holding ball in two hands, from shoulder height, drop ball on to foot striking upward.
5	Strike ball lightly, without (or minimal) spin.
6	Catch ball in two hands.
7	Repeat.
8	Repeat with other foot.
9	Get two touches/strikes (same and/or alternating feet) before catching ball.
10	Move to Partners serve ball (dropping from standing position) to seated Partner's laces.

Standing Laces Striking: Vertical Punting

#	Directions
1	Take off shoes and sox.
2	Striking leg knee bent and toe pointed straight.
3	Drop ball and strike at about waist-height so ball goes straight up with no or little spin.
4	Ball should go to just above head height in beginning for control.
5	Catch ball.
6	Repeat.
7	Repeat with other leg.
8	Repeat with strike after letting ball bounce and catch.
9	Work up to multiple strikes with bounces, i.e., without catching ball between strikes.
10	Use multiple strikes, alternating striking feet.

The focus in Vertical Punting should be on control as opposed to power. The ball should be struck such that it goes straight up and 1-3 feet above the player's head. However, the players will really enjoy seeing a booming strike straight up in the air and trying it themselves, too. Don't discourage them, but do bring them back to developing control and making sure the toes stay pointed. It takes different players varying amounts of time to acquire skill with the laces strike technique. Correct form is worth the investment of time.

Pairs Laces Drive Catch The next step is to get the players into pairs, have them self-serve balls dropped from shoulder height that are driven straight ahead with a laces strike. When done correctly, the ball should always stay below shoulder level. Encourage the players to place the ball 'Right into your partner's hands.' Correct self service can be achieved by dropping the ball above a raised/bended knee so that the ball 'glances' off the laces.

Moving Balls After establishing the correct striking technique with stationary balls, it is time to move on to rolling balls. The easiest place to start is with balls rolling directly towards the shooter (just like kickball).

The coach or server should stand just to the outside of the goal with the player about 10-12 yards out. The ball should be served at a slight angle towards the middle of the area in front of the goal. Players should be encouraged to use the 'ball-side' foot to shoot the ball.

The 'ball-side foot' is the foot on the side from which the ball is coming. While not of prime importance for balls coming out from the goal line, using the ball-side foot to shoot becomes increasingly more important as the angle starts to shift towards the touchlines. Using the ball-side foot for shooting from a ball delivered from the touchline allows the shooter to keep the ball, the goal and their striking foot in view simultaneously, as opposed to having the ball come across their body (where it can 'get lost' or drop from view) before taking the shot.

After shooting balls rolling towards the shooter, the next easiest shot is a ball moving towards the goal, away from the shooter. These can be done with either a server or with self service, by a dribble touch forward to set up the shot. From here, the shooter can progress to starting further away from goal, and taking the shot from the Carry Dribble. The action steps required to set up the shot from the Carry Dribble follow.

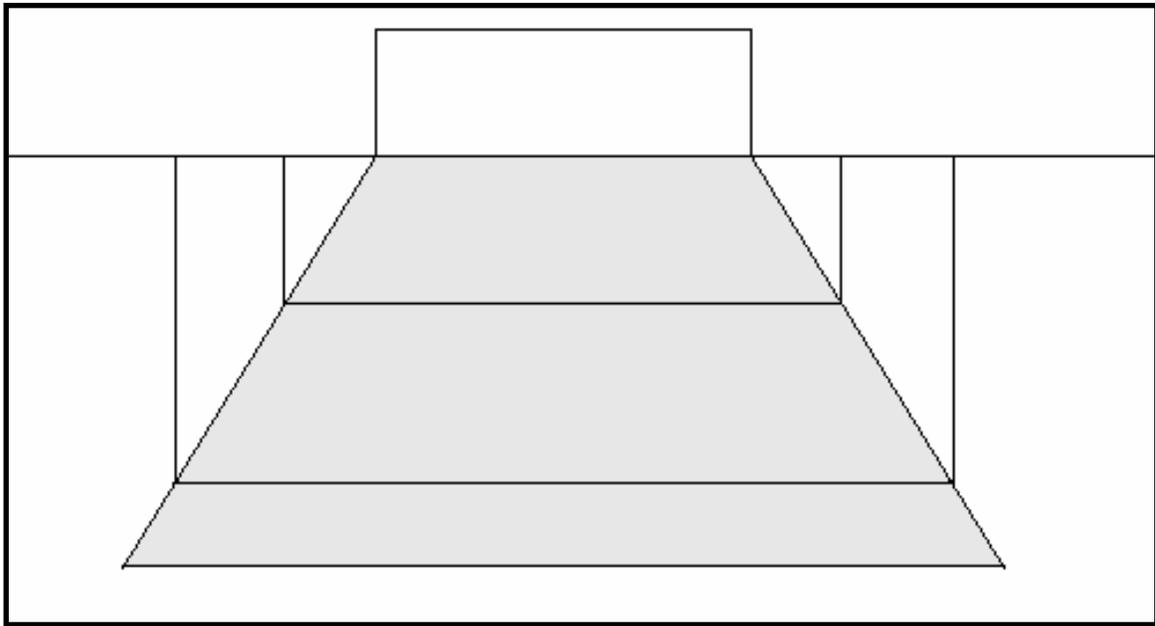
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Shooting From the Carry Dribble/Breakaway Shooting Steps

#	Steps	Directions
1	Big Touch	Big Touch to push the ball far enough ahead to adjust their distance and steps.
2	Long Last Step	A Long Last Step to get their standing foot in front of the rolling ball so that the ball is even with the standing foot and the striking leg knee is over the ball when the strike takes place on the moving ball.
3	Knee Up Follow Through	Bring the Striking Leg Knee Up in the follow through. The Striking Leg should remain on the same side of the body (i.e., not cross the center line of the body) during the follow through.
4	Land on Striking Leg	Land on the Striking Foot after the Shot to ensure complete transfer of power from the leg to the ball.
5	Finish in Goal	Finish in goal to take advantage of any rebounds off the posts or crossbar or keeper miscues.

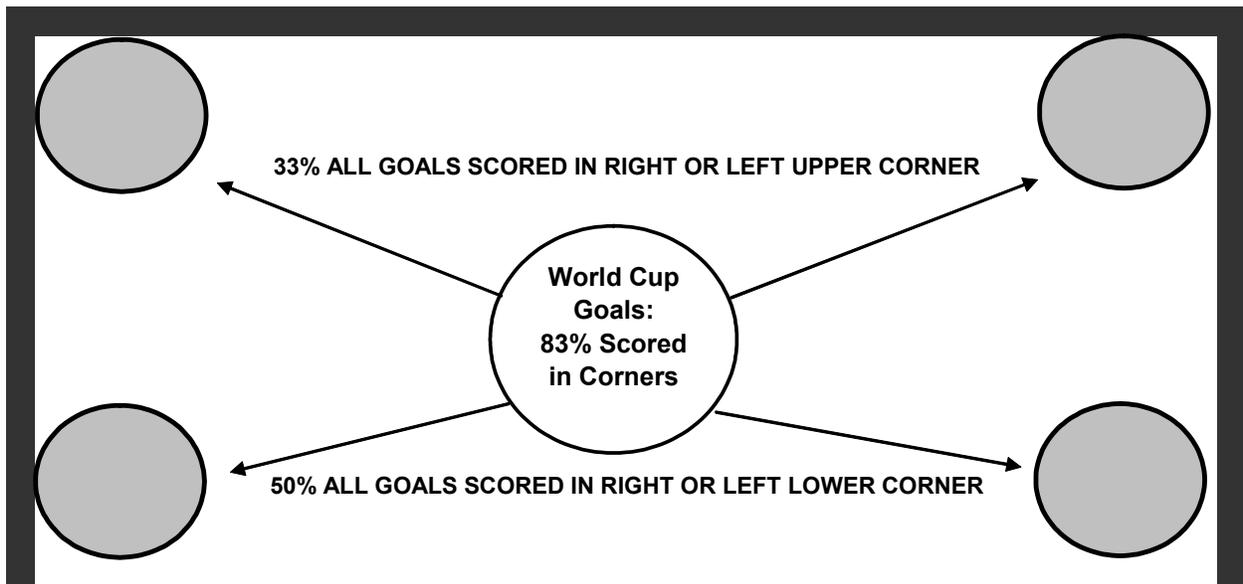
As the shooters develop, the appropriate coaching cues are:

- Shoot Early.
- Shoot Low.
- Pick a Spot, Where the Keeper's NOT.
- Follow Your Shot Into the Goal.



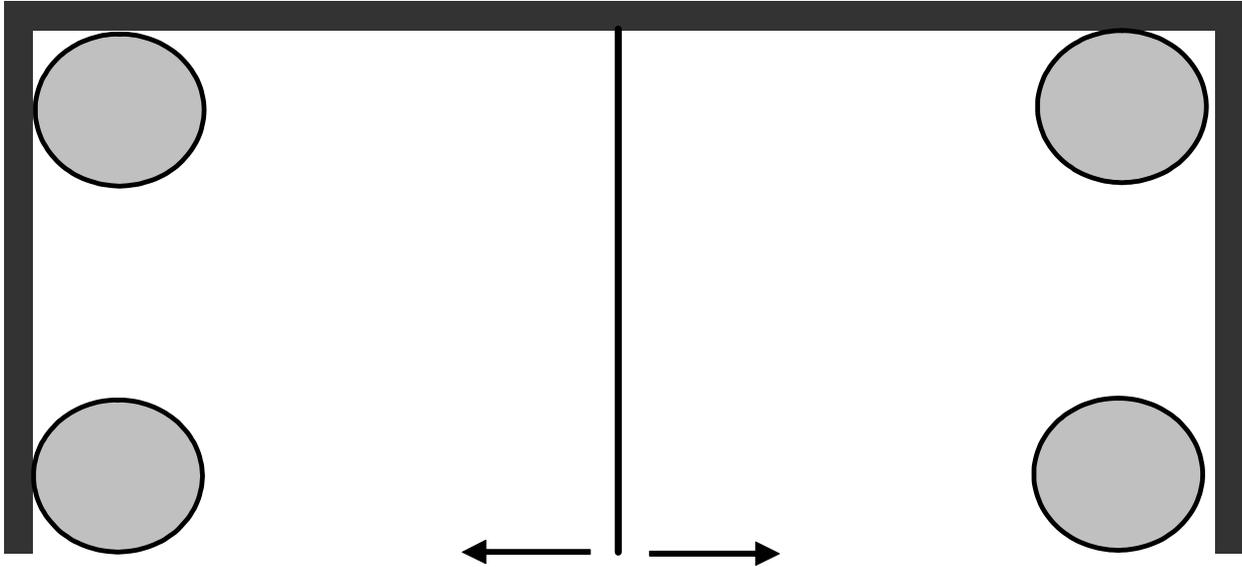
90%+ of ALL GOALS SCORED are struck in the
SCORING CONE ZONE.
(Starting just outside the Penalty Area.)

Figure 18: Field Location for Scoring Goals



Where will you score your goals?

Figure 19: Net Location for Scoring Goals



As you face the goal, find the **CENTER LINE** (from the ball to the goal's center)...

If the ball is on this side of the center line,
Shoot with your
LEFT FOOT.

If the ball is on this side of the center line,
Shoot with your
RIGHT FOOT.

Figure 20: Shooting Foot Selection

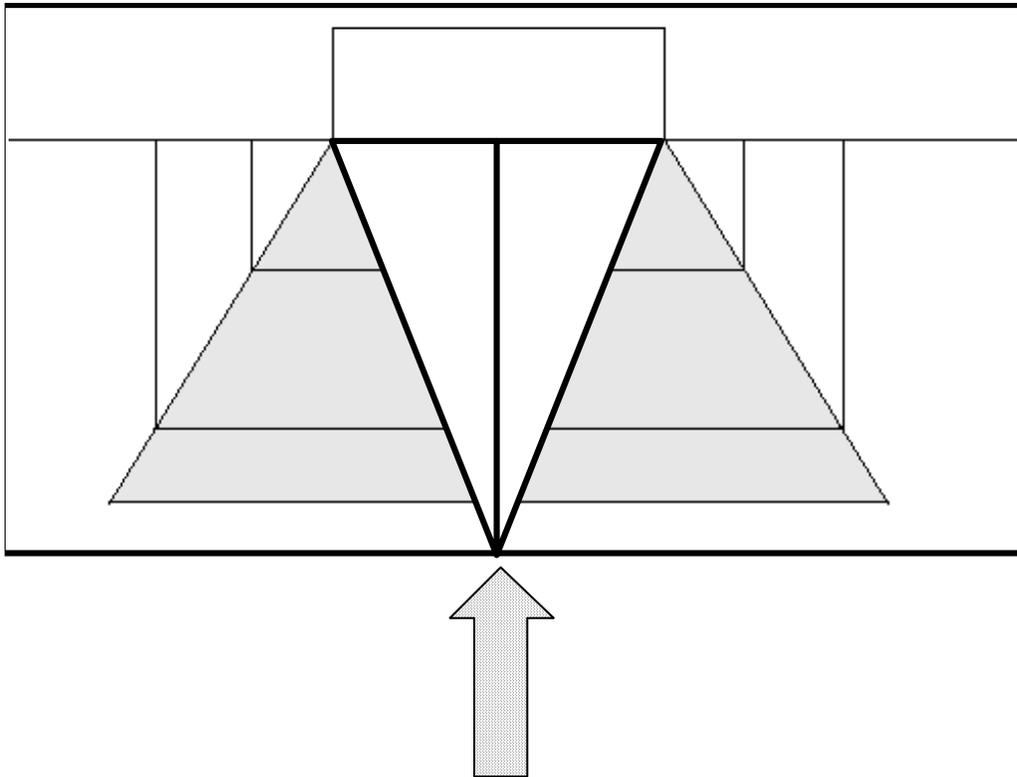


Figure 21: Shooting Angles From Center Position

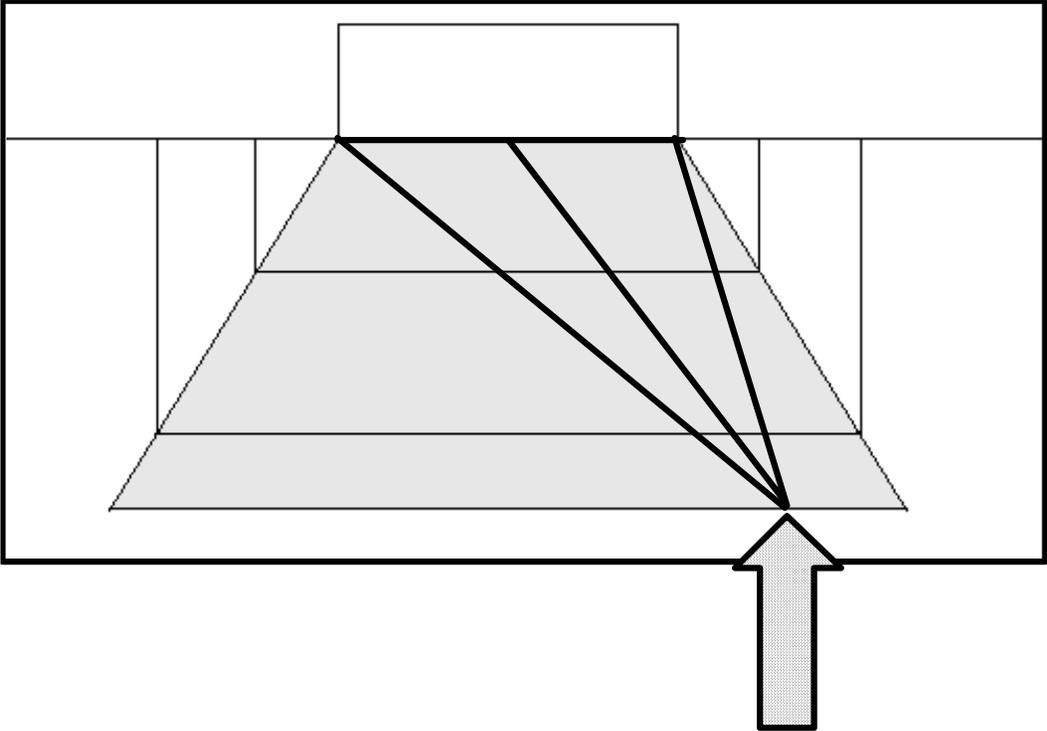


Figure 22: Shooting Angles From Right Side

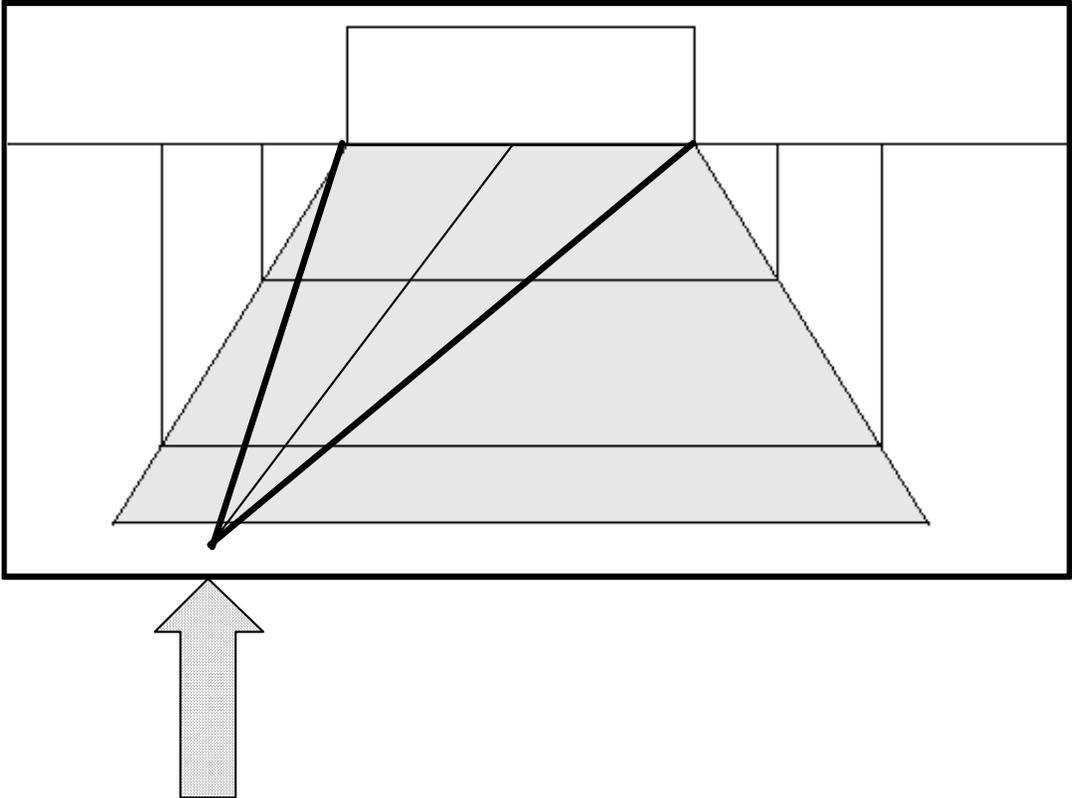


Figure 23: Shooting Angles From Left Side

Towsontowne Recreation Council

Common Shooting Problems

Problem Type	Caused By...	Fixed By....
Erratic shots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to lock the ankle/foot. • Lifting the head while shooting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point the toes, curl them back. • Focus on the NOSE or a specific panel of the ball and watch foot hit through the ball.
Shot rising up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striking foot position below the EQUATOR low on the ball and/or by putting the plant foot too far behind the ball. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Standing Leg Foot next to ball, pointed at Target. • Get Striking leg knee above ball.
No power on shot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By poor leg swing or improper position of plant foot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long last step before planting Standing leg. • Get Striking leg cocked high. • Lean back slightly prior to starting strike. • Follow through with knee coming up and land on Striking leg foot.
Stubbed toes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By poor run angle and/or failure to bend leg of kicking foot and/or failure improper foot angle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a kicking tee (cut bottom off of styrofoam cup or use PVC couplings), use inverted upper half as a kicking tee shorten tee as player improves.

Throw-ins

Throw-ins are the appropriate restarts when a ball has rolled completely over one of the touch lines with possession shifting from the team that last touched the ball before it when out of bounds. A legal throw-in is where the player;

- Keeps both feet behind or on the touchline
- Has both feet touching the ground when the ball is released.
- Holds the ball with two hands and brings it over and behind the head (referees check to see that the ball goes behind the ears) before bringing it forward and releasing the throw.

Throw-in Steps

#	Area	Directions
1	Stance	Stand behind the touch line, with one foot about a step in front of the other.
2	Ball	Hold ball with palms covering the ears of the ball. Pull fingers back and roll ball between palms. Regrip the ball.
3	Backswing	Bring the ball over the head and touch ball to the base of the neck.
4	Throw/Release	Bring the arms forward, releasing ball just after it passes the head, near the top of the arm swing.

For Clinic players, making the throw-in from planted feet is appropriate. As players mature, the throw-in can feature first a rocking motion (back to front) and then a step forward followed by a short hop off the back foot simultaneously with the throw. As the arms come forward, the heel of the back foot comes up while the toe remains in contact with the ground.

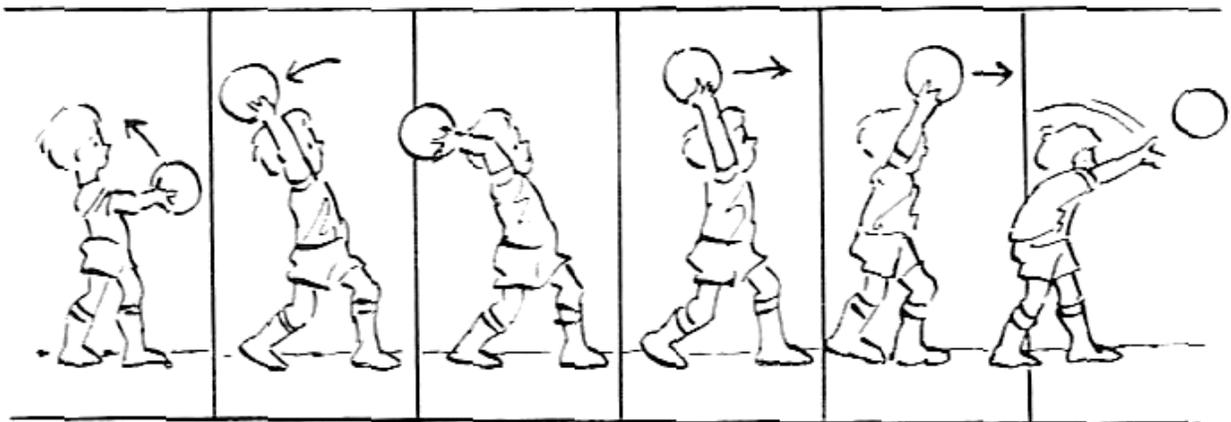


Figure 24: The Planted Feet Throw-in