



**CHALLENGER CLUB TRAINING  
NORTH EAST YOUTH SOCCER  
U6-U10 COACHING CLINIC**

## Introduction

When coaching any age group you must have regular well planned training sessions which follow a consistent philosophy that focuses on developing players opposed to focusing on team play.

In this booklet Challenger has worked to provide a series of positive steps in being a coach as well as how to structure a session and example practices.

Documented in this player development booklet we will cover the following areas:

- **POSSIBLE 8 WEEK TRAINING SESSION**
- **COACHING CODE OF CONDUCT**
- **STRUCTURE OF A SESSION**
- **PRACTICE SESSIONS**
- **CONCLUSION**

But just to let you know this is not only Challengers view on developing players it is shared by some of the top coaches from the UK

*“Our aim is to develop the players technical at this young age so that when the move on to the next level they have no basic weaknesses”*

**Alan Boyd - Glasgow Rangers Football Club Youth Team Coach**

*“I feel at this age the key aspect to develop is technical ability”*

**Warwick Rimmer – Tranmere Football Club Head of Youth Development**

During these young years we learn to do so much (reading, writing) and we also develop our own personal quirks, skills and mannerisms. We more often than not carry these through to our teens and even later life.

**This is why the development of the player’s technique is the key aspect which we must strive to improve and develop.**

With this it is crucial that when designing your coaching sessions they are set out to help familiarise the player with the ball and the basic skills of the game.

*“For each person to learn a skill and have it as an automatic response they must repeat the skill 5 thousand times!!! “*

**Greg Patterson – SFA Youth Development Officer**

## **Possible format for 8 week Team Training Session**

This following is a guide for the for an eight-week team training-coaching block. The guide is split into three stages as follows:

**Early Touches (age 5-8):** At this young age the players must work to improve their technical ability, this guide of sessions will look at primarily improving the player's technical ability and improve their understanding of the game.

Within the foundation level a 3-session cycle system is used. This method of development is used to improve the team's technical ability.

For example:

- **Wk 1 Passing, Turning and Control**
- **Wk 2 Dribbling, Running with the ball and Defending.**
- **Wk 3 Heading, Shooting and Goalkeeping**
- **Wk 4 Passing, Turning and Control**
- **Wk 5 Dribbling, Running with the ball and Defending.**
- **Wk 6 Heading, Shooting and Goalkeeping**
- **Wk 7 Passing, Turning and Control**
- **Wk 8 Dribbling, Running with the ball and Defending**

The process of this cycle is continued using different sessions each week on all the above aspects.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

In this section we cover many of the basic coaching techniques which should be implemented when carrying out a session. These techniques will allow your session to flow from practice to practice and also help maximize the development of the players you are coaching.

**Above all it is about providing a professional coaching session**

### **Manner**

The coach's manner is the key to success when working with children. A good understanding of children is just as vital as knowledge of soccer. The following points are vital when working with youngsters:

- Patience
- Understanding
- Encouragement
- Showing good examples
- Setting realistic objectives
- Remember you are coaching children not skills

### **Time Management**

Children can become frustrated easily. When setting up your sessions allow for the next progression and think ahead. The less time you spend setting up drills the less chance there is of your players becoming bored and frustrated.

### **Dress**

Always in Challenger uniforms which must be clean and presentable. No other kit is acceptable e.g Nike, Puma etc

### **Preparation**

Every effort should be made, before the start of the session to prepare the area to be used. Apart from being efficient in terms of time this reinforces to players that the coach is paying attention to detail and giving his best.

### **Proper Management of Area**

When attempting to acquire skill, children need space. Intrusion by other children into their working area can hinder learning. Proper use of the whole area is very important.

### **Demonstration Position**

The following points should be adhered to when demonstrating a skill

- Select a suitable demonstration position where you can see every player. Do not begin to speak until all players are in front of you and standing still. Players nearest you should crouch down
- Do not speak into a strong wind
- Players should not be asked to look into the sun, it is better that the sun is in the eyes of the coach.
- Speak with authority. Only one person speaks at a time

### **Speaking When Still**

If demonstrating personally do not, if possible speak when you are moving. A short explanation before and/or after is better to allow your coaching point to be conceived by the players.

### **Immobilize all Soccer Balls**

When speaking to the children, the coach must command the attention of the whole group. The ball at this time is a distraction and must be still and if necessary, kept out of the reach of the children

### **Maximize Participation**

Provide the players with as many opportunities as possible to repeat the skill, organize the participation groups into small, manageable numbers.

### **Action as soon as possible**

Avoid long winded explanation of the activity and remember a picture paints a thousand words.

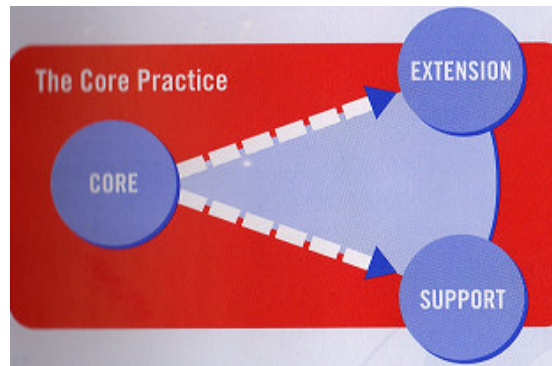
### **Active Coaching**

To often coaches organize a skill practice or drill and then relax and admire their work. Once the group is working it is essential that the needs of the individual are addressed. Be active and coach.

## Adaptation of Practices

It is commonplace for coaches to give practices to players which do not take account of the varying abilities within the group. Too often the activities the children are involved in are tailored to the middle ability range of the group leaving the higher skilled players and the less skilled players feeling frustrated or bored.

It is the responsibility of the coach to try and present skill practices in such a way that the players can experience a realistic challenge at their own level. A good coach should be aware of the need to adapt the core standard practice which is being run to meet the needs of all players being coached.



**Core:** Standard Drill which is given to the group

**Support:** Players who may be struggling with the drill are given additional help in Performing the drill

**Extension:** Those players who need a greater challenge are given additional points to incorporate in the drill.

These adapted practices should be introduced in a low key, discreet fashion while the others in the group are working. It is very important that the coach re- evaluates regularly to give the children the opportunity to reach their potential.

However support practices may only be needed for a short time only and players should be therefore be encouraged to move on whenever they feel confident enough to do so.

The following list of strategies should be helpful when adapting practices:

- The strategic use of different body parts e.g. inside/outside of the weaker/stronger foot
- Modify the distances involved
- By introducing or eliminating a bounce of the ball the time available can be lengthened or shortened accordingly.
- Taking more/ fewer touches
- Increase/ Decrease time
- Vary the height of the ball
- Increase/ decrease target dimensions

## EARLY TOUCHES

## AGES U5-U10

## SESSION STRUCTURE

Following the structure of the session set out on the previous page:

### **Warm up**

***Touch Technique (TT)*** - Players moving with the ball in a set area. Players use this period to familiarise themselves with the ball while preparing the body for physical activity. Coach instructs different skills and moves with the ball for the players to do (this must always challenge the players but be age appropriate). If 1 player in the group can perform a skill or turn then challenge other players to do so.

***Dynamic Stretching (DS)*** - At this age level this is done very lightly but **MUST BE DONE**. These are soccer related moves e.g flicking heels up, knees up. Also, players jogging then stepping into a forward stretch or moving backwards to a quad squat stretch.

### **DRILL - UNOPOSSED**

The first activity that any player regardless of age or ability is introduced to is an unopposed drill. This allows the player the opportunity to learn the skill without pressure and helps build confidence.

### **DRILL - OPPOSED**

The next activity must place the player under pressure. This pressure can come in many forms e.g. defender, time constraint. One very useful tool is the inclusion of competition and having the players challenged by playing against each other. Many a short drill can be adapted to include “playing for points” and a “ladder system” introduced where players play against partner then move up or down to play against other players.

### **FUN GAME**

Most importantly it must be remembered that the players at this age are still young and the inclusion of a fun game introduced towards the end of the skill. Most of us will know these games crabs on the beach, cowboys and Indians etc. These games are again dependant on the age group and ability level. If you the coach feel the team would be better with more time spent playing small sided games then please do so.

### **SMALL SIDED GAMES**

Players learn through playing small sided games as this allows more touches of the ball which in turn increases all their technical abilities. Teams of only 3 players per team.

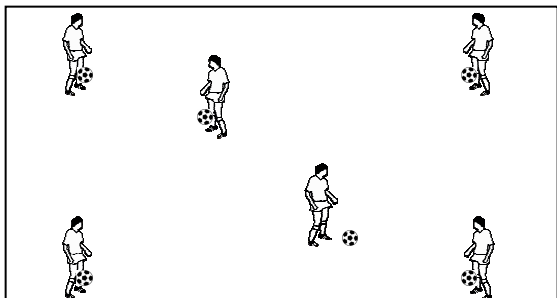
### **COOL DOWN**

It is important that each player and team get into the habit of cooling down after they take part in physical activity. This involves light jogging down to a walk and **static stretching**. At this age only basic stretching is required and should not be extensive

### Unopposed

Dribbling: Moving with the ball

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Each player has a ball and is allowed to dribble around the grid.
- The coach calls out A part of the body which the player must put on the ball

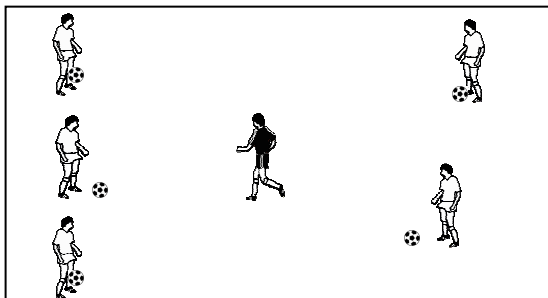
#### Coaching Points

- Players should keep the ball close to them and have lots of little touches
- Head up and look for space
- Squish the ball when stopping

### Opposed

Dribbling: Moving with the ball

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Each player has a ball except shrek who has to steal there ball away
- Players have to dribble with ball and avoid Shrek, if they stop the ball with their feet on the ball, Shrek cannot get their ball
- If players allow the ball to get away from them and Shrek gets it they are now caught and must hold ball above their head. They are released with another player putting the ball through their legs

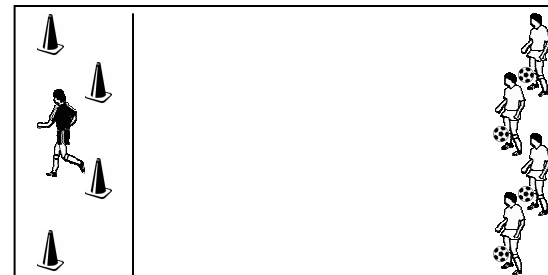
#### Coaching Points

- Players should keep the ball close to them
- Keep their head up and look for space
- Be going at a pace which allows them to stop the ball

### Fun Game

Dribbling: Moving with the ball

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Each player has a ball and attempts to dribble down to the giants layer and steal his clothes
- Giant pretends to be asleep but when he wakes up players must fezzes. If frozen then the giant cant see them or take their ball.
- If players move giant can chase them back to their base

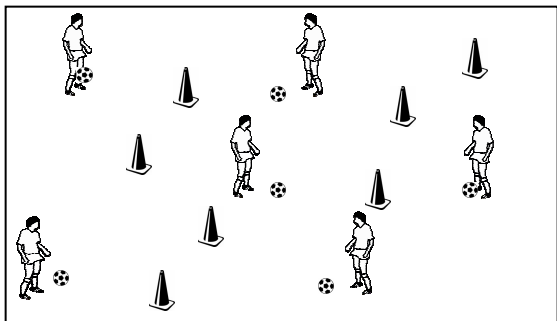
#### Coaching Points

- Moving with ball using both sides of feet
- Put foot on ball when standing still
- Keep the ball close when dribbling
- Have head up at all times to watch for the giant waking up

### Unopposed

Shooting

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Players dribble round and try and knock down as many cones as they can.

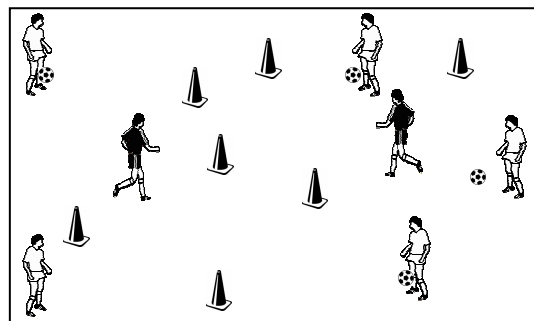
#### Coaching Points

- Preparation, contact and follow through
- Head over the ball
- Knee over the ball
- Target
- Work on moving with ball before hitting

### Opposed

Shooting

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Players are in 2 teams now with one team trying to knock the cones over and the other team having to put them back up
- Coach counts the number of cones standing up versus down to decide which team wins
- Teams then switch roles

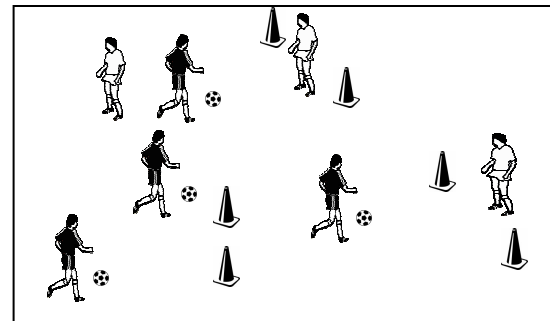
#### Coaching Points

- Preparation, contact and follow through
- Accuracy of shot into corners
- Head over the ball
- Knee over the ball
- Head up looking for cones

### Fun Game

Shooting

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Players are split into 2 teams
- Several Goals are laid out on the field
- Team with the ball have to run round and score as many goals as they can in 30 seconds
- Other team have to move around and try and stop their shots by becoming a goalkeeper. (but they must keep moving round)

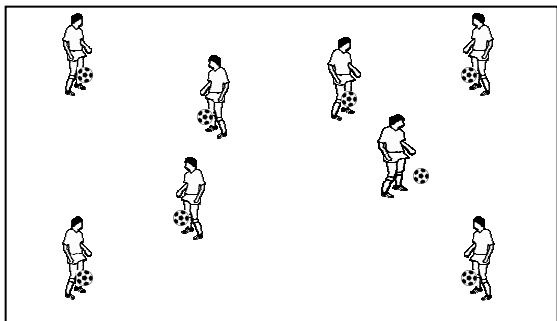
#### Coaching Points

- Head up and look for the open goal
- Drive towards space and open goal
- Have ball out from under your feet
- Preparation, contact and follow through
- Aim for corners

### Unopposed

Shielding: Protecting the ball

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Each player has a ball and is allowed to dribble around the grid.
- The coach calls out instructions for players to get into a shielding position
- Coach can change the call to a certain buzz word for the children e.g shark attack

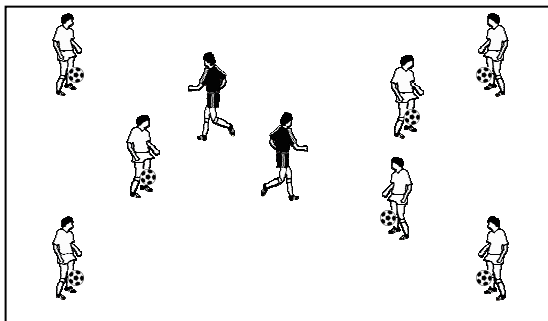
#### Coaching Points

- Players should keep the ball close to them
- Must have their body side on to the ball and with on open stance
- Knees bent with a low centre of gravity
- Arm up and bent at the elbow to help balance and provide additional protection
- Encourage players to nudge the ball whilst in the position

### Opposed

Shielding: Protecting the ball

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Each player has a ball except a designated number of defenders/ sharks
- Players have to dribble with ball and avoid defender/ Sharks if approached they must stop the ball with their feet and get into a shielding position.
- The defending player can try and get the ball for 3 seconds before moving on to another player

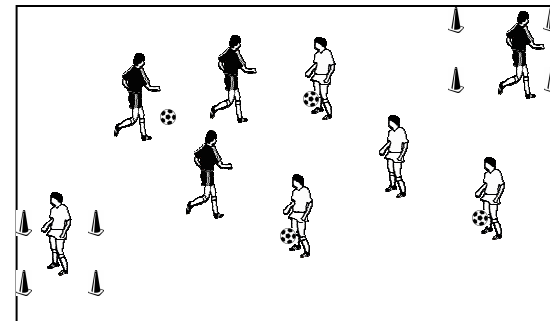
#### Coaching Points

- Players should keep the ball close to them and be in a shielding position
- Keep their head up be aware of where the defenders are
- Nudge the ball to the side to keep control and away from the defender

### Fun Game

Shielding: Protecting the ball

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Players are in 2 teams with each team having a designated defender/shark who does not have a ball
- Players must shield the ball when approached by a defender/ shark.
- Defender has 3 seconds to get the ball, if he does player goes to jail, if not the attacking player gets a point
- Players in jail can be broke out with a tag

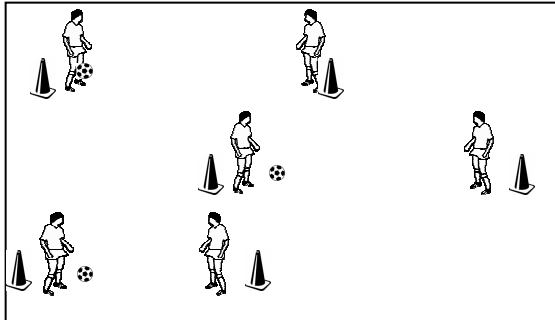
#### Coaching Points

- Moving with ball into space
- Strong shielding stance to protect ball
- Keep the ball close when dribbling
- Have head up at all times

### Unopposed

Passing: Passing and Receiving

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Players are with a partner and stand facing each other.
- One ball between two the players passes the ball to their partner.
- The partner then stops the ball before passing back
- Progress practice by having the player follow the pass run around their partner and back to the start ready for a pass.

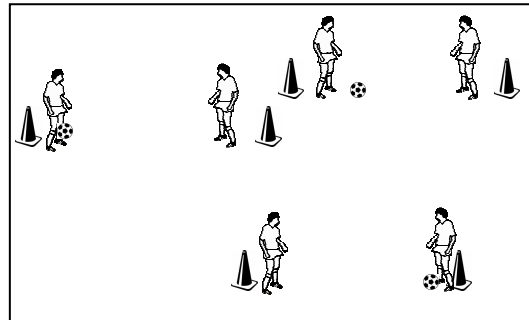
#### Coaching Points

- Players are encouraged to pass the ball with the inside of their feet
- Placement of non kicking foot
- Relax Weight of pass and control
- Face where you want the ball to go

### Opposed

Passing: Passing and Receiving

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- players now follow their pass by running around their partner and back to their starting point

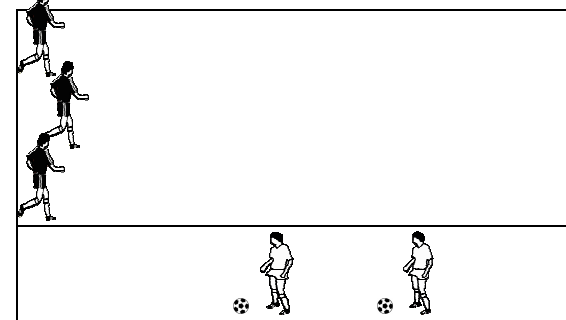
#### Coaching Points

- Use the inside of the feet to pass
- Follow through with kicking foot
- Placement of non kicking foot
- Eye contact when receiving pass
- Wait till the ball is stopped before running around partner

### Fun Game

Passing: Passing and Receiving

#### Organization



#### Implementation

- Cowboys and Indians
- Black team have to run across field to the other side
- Team in white have to hit the player running through between the knee and the foot

#### Coaching Points

- Players have to keep the ball down by using the side foot and getting body over the ball
- Being aware of surroundings by having head up
- Play the ball in front of the players running through

## **Conclusion**

The following booklet guide has been provided as a base for the soccer coaches to then go and implement. It must not be underestimated the role the coach will now play for each of players he or she works with.

The most important person involved in the players soccer lives is the coach and I would hope that you follow this guide in structuring your sessions and in developing the key areas for the young players you will work with.

I hope that you use the information provided and your own knowledge to help make this a positive experience for all the players and for yourself.