BUILDING WINNERS FOR LIFE
YOUTH SUPER SPORTS
Soccer Practice Plans for Coaches
Rookies Level 1

PENINSULA METROPOLITAN YMCA
YMCA Youth Sports Pledge:
I pledge to play the game - the best I can, to be a team player, to respect my opponents, the rules and officials, and improve myself - in spirit, mind and body.
Thank you for agreeing to be a YMCA Youth Super Sports coach. With your effort and enthusiasm you will find the challenge to be very rewarding. There are 2 objectives for these plans:

1. To offer a progressive series of practices that gradually build on previous practices and/or game experiences.
2. To maximize the potential for children to have a positive and beneficial experience under your leadership.

Each plan has been laid out to include 5 components:

* Purpose
* Fitness concepts
* Tactics and skills
* Rules and traditions
* Character development concepts

Your YMCA staff person is readily available to assist you to ensure the objectives of Youth Super Sports are successfully accomplished.
**Purpose:** The objective of today’s practice is for the players to be able to play a 3v3 game of soccer while adhering to the boundaries and simple start and restart rules.

**Warm-Up:** (5 to 10 minutes) Players free kick or dribble in a space (one ball per child) using no more than half a field. Next, have the players dribble or kick at targets (cones) spread out across half a field.

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**Well-Being Circle**

**Equipment:**
- 1 soccer ball per player
- 2 portable goals
- 1 cone (or other marker) per player
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams

**Discussion**

**General Wellness & Flexibility**

(5 minutes)

Following the warm up, gather players to discuss general wellness and that soccer is exercise that helps keep them fit. Explain that stretching can prevent injury.

**Activity**

- Jump up and down 10 times.
- Run really fast to the soccer goal and back.
- Lean over and touch toes for 10 seconds.
Practice 1

Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)

Goal: The players learn they have to attack the goal (or cone) to score. Each team attacks a different goal.

Now it is time to play a game. Allow the kids to play for a while, then pause the game and ask the kids a series of questions about the goals of the game.

Skill Practice 1: 1v1. Each player kicks the ball and tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not their hands.

Games Approach #2 (10 minutes)

Goal: The players learn that they can work with others on their team to score a goal. (Use a goal or cone.)

Allow the kids to play for a while, then pause the game and ask the kids a series of questions about the goals of the game. What are some of the tactics and skills they need to be able to succeed in the game?

Skill Practice 2: 2v2. Each player kicks the ball and tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not their hands.

Coach’s Point

In games 1 and 2, watch that players don’t stray too far from their cones or goals and into other kid’s games.
Games Approach #3 (20 minutes)

**Goal:** Players learn appropriate ways of restarting the game when the ball goes out of play.

**Description:** Allow the kids to play for a while, then pause the game and ask the kids a series of questions about the goals of the game.

**Skill Practice:** 3v3. Each team of 3 tries to score into a small goal. For each pair of teams, mark a playing area no larger than 50ft. by 30 ft. Make sure the kids are working on passing back and forth to get to their goal. Have the kids work on throwing the ball in when it goes out of bounds.

Character Huddle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea:** Discuss the character values; caring, honesty, respect and responsibility; that make someone a good person and a good teammate. Gather your players and have them give you examples of character values. An example of caring may be helping someone when they fall. Respect may be to listen when the coaches are speaking.

Wrap-Up: Make some positive comments about the practice. Remind them of the next practice day and time. Give a sneak peek of next week’s practice; to play soccer with control.
**Purpose:** To play a 3v3 game, focusing on controlling the ball (as opposed to kicking it anywhere.) The objective is for players to be able to move with the ball (dribble) during the 3v3 game.

**Warm-Up:** (5 to 10 minutes) Have players practice close dribbling. Tell players to “keep the ball close when you run,” as they practice. Also, tell players that you will blow your whistle occasionally during practice. When you blow the whistle, they should stop and put a foot on the ball to show they have it under control.

**Well-Being Circle**

**Equipment:**
- 1 soccer ball per player
- 2 portable goals per team
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams

**Discussion**
- Cardiorespiratory fitness
  - (5 minutes)
  - Explain to the kids that when they run during soccer, their heart beats faster. This makes their heart stronger.

**Activity**
- Have the children put their hand over their heart to find a heartbeat.
- Then, run with high knees for 15 counts, all counting together.
- Have them stop and feel their heartbeat again.
Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)

**Goal:** The players learn to control the ball.

**Description:** 3v3. Review the following rules during the game.

- What constitutes as a goal.
- No use of hands during the game.
- How to start and restart the game.

**Skill Practice 1:** (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to control the ball while dribbling. The players can practice controlling the ball by dribbling on their own and changing directions when you call “turn.”

**Coach’s Cue**

“Keep the ball close.” “Use the inside and outside of both feet.” “Push the ball gently.”

**Skill Practice 2:** (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to control the ball with the inside or the outside of foot while dribbling. Then have players dribble individually while you call for them to turn and use the inside or outside of their foot.

**Coach’s Cue**

“Turn, inside.” “Turn, outside.”
**Practice 2**

**Skill Practice 3:** (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move the ball to avoid an opponent. Each player dribbles with control to avoid an opponent (coach.) The players move freely with the ball, but must avoid you.

**Games Approach #2** (15 minutes)

**Goal:** Players learn to avoid opponents when they have the ball during game play.

**Description:** 3v1, 3v2, or 3v3 (based on skill proficiency of players.) Players control the ball while running. Rotate players so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

**Character Huddle** (5 minutes)

**Key Idea: Responsibility**

Gather into a group. “I want us all to pretend we’re eggs. If we bump into each other, we will break. Let’s move around the field being eggs. Don’t bump each other or we’ll break!” Continue for about one minute. “We were all careful not to bump each other so our ‘shells’ wouldn’t break! That was great! You were responsible for your moving. When we’re careful of each other, we’re responsible for our space and other player’s space. This shows responsibility during practice and games.”

**Wrap-Up:** Make positive comments about practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice; playing as a team.
**Purpose:** To play a 3v3 game as a team, focusing on passing to teammates. The objective is for players to be able to advance the ball by passing to teammates.

**Warm-Up:** (5 to 10 minutes) 1v1. Each player tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not hands. Players free kick or dribble in space (one ball per child,) using no more than half a field.

**Well-Being Circle**

**Equipment:**
- 1 soccer ball per player
- 2 portable goals per team
- 1 cone per team
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams

**Discussion**
Muscular Strength and Endurance: (5 minutes)
Explain to the kids that during soccer they use different muscles and when they use these muscles they become stronger.

**Activity**
Gather the children in a circle. Have them run in place for 30 seconds. Time them, and give them a countdown of time remaining.
Prompt questions like, “What part of the body did we just use when we ran?” or “What part of the body did you use the most.”
Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)

Goal: The players will work with a teammate to score.

Description: 2v2. Players kick to cones or small goals.

Coach’s Point

Help each other.

Skill Practice 1: (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to pass accurately to a partner. Practice passing accurately to a partner both when stationary and when moving the ball.

Coach’s Cue

“Get close to the ball.” “Face your partner.” “Turn your foot out.” “Follow through toward your partner.”

Skill Practice 2: (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to move to support a teammate with the ball. Practice moving to support a teammate with the ball. Tell partners to practice getting the ball from one end of the field to the other without running with the ball. After they practice passing the ball and score at the other end, they come back.

Coach’s Point

Notice that some players need more attention than others in skill practice. Observe which pairs are struggling and provide them with a little extra help.
Games Approach #2 (15 minutes)

**Goal:** Players learn to pass and move ahead during a game.

**Description:** 3v1, 3v2, or 3v3 (based on skill proficiency of players.)
Each team of 3 tries to pass often during the game. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

Character Huddle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea: Honesty**

Gather children into a group near 2 cones about 10ft apart. Ask them, “Can you touch the ball with your hand in soccer? Even if it’s an accident? Those of you who think it’s okay to touch the ball, stand by this cone. Those who think it’s not okay, stand by this one.” Wait for children to choose. Then ask them why they chose the cone they did. “Touching the ball with your hand, even if it’s an accident is a foul. What should you do if that happens? Those of you who think your should raise your hand and give the ball to the other team, go stand by that cone.” Wait for everyone to finish choosing. “It’s important to be honest about fouls. If you touch the ball with your hand, even if nobody sees it, raise your hand and give the ball to the other team.”

Wrap-Up: Make positive comments about today’s practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice; keeping possession of the ball.
**Practice 4**

**Purpose:** To keep possession of the ball, focusing on passing and receiving. The objective is for players to be able to receive the ball and dribble it under control during game play.

**Warm-Up:** (5 to 10 minutes) Repeat Skill Practices 1 and 2 from practice #3.

**Well-Being Circle**

**Discussion**

Safety & Equipment (5 minutes)

Explain to the players why they wear equipment such as shin guards. Talk about the importance of protecting their bodies.

**Activity**

Bring a small piece of cardboard or a clipboard to use as a shield. Have a child kick the ball at you at medium effort. Allow the ball to hit your legs. Then put the board between you and the child kicking, and have the child kick again. Explain how the board is just like their shin guards. Give each child a turn to kick the ball.

**Equipment:**

- ✓ 1 soccer ball per pair
- ✓ 2 portable goals or cones per team of 3
- ✓ A small piece of cardboard or a clipboard
- ✓ Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams
Practice 4

Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)

Goal: Players learn to move the ball down field by passing.

Description: 3v3. Each team of three tries to pass often during the game.

Coach’s Point: Emphasize and encourage passing in the game. Freeze the game each time good passing, receiving, and dribbling with control happens.

Skill Practice 1: (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a pass and control the ball. Practice receiving passes and controlling the ball. Place players in groups of 3. Each group passes in a triangle formation while focusing on receiving the ball.

Skill Practice 2: (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a pass and move with the ball under control. Practice receiving passes and moving with the ball under control. Place the players in groups of 3 in a triangle formation. Each person receives the ball and dribbles a little before passing.

Games Approach #2 (15 minutes)

Goal: Players learn how to receive the ball and dribble under control.

Description: 3v1, 3v2, or 3v3. Each team of 3 tries to pass often during the game. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.
Character Huddle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather children in a circle. Stand in the middle of the group with a ball. Pass to each child and give him or her a turn to pass back to you. “I am going to pass the ball. If a pass comes to you, pass the ball back to me.” Work around the whole circle. Talk to the children about playing and learning when they come to practice. “Who had a turn to touch the ball? I made sure everyone had a chance to touch the ball. Raise your hand if it felt good to be able to have a turn. How would you have felt if you did not have a turn? We need to share the ball and take turns so everyone can learn and play. Sharing and taking turns shows you care.”

Wrap-Up: Make positive comments about practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice; supporting your teammates.
**Practice 5**

**Purpose:** To keep possession of the ball by supporting teammates who have it. The objective is for players to be able to move to a good position to receive a pass when a teammate has the ball during a game.

**Warm-Up:** (5 to 10 minutes) Repeat skill practices 1 and 2 from practice #4. Use skill practice 2 with the more advanced players.

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**Well-Being Circle**

**Equipment:**
- 1 soccer ball per team of 3
- 2 portable goals or cones per team of 3
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams

**Discussion**

**Healthy Habits**

(5 minutes)

Explain to the kids the importance of eating healthy and getting enough sleep and how this effects their energy. “When you don’t eat healthy foods and you don’t get enough sleep, your body moves slowly.”

**Activity**

Gather the children.

“Pretend we have no energy to move because we didn’t eat enough healthy foods or get enough sleep.”

Begin to move slowly and encourage the children to follow. “Everyone stop. Now pretend to fill your bodies with healthy foods and go to sleep. When I say ‘Wake up!’ you can move faster because you have energy and enough rest. Now, run around quickly.”
Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)

Goal: Players try to help teammates.

Description: Each team tries to have teammates help each other during a game.

Coach’s Point
Show an example. Put a defender in front of the player with the ball so that the player who wants to receive the ball has to move away into space.

Skill Practice 1: (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to stay in a space to receive passes. Have the players practice this by making teams of 3 unopposed. Each team tries to make 4 passes as it moves to the end of the field.

Coach’s Cue
“Pass and move forward into space.”
“Receive and pass to a teammate.”
Coach's Cue

“Move the ball away from me.”

Skill Practice 2: (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to create a passing lane away from the defender. Practice moving to create a passing lane away from the defender. Create teams of 3. You oppose each group for 1 or 2 passes, then move to the next group when it begins.

Coach’s Cue

“Move away from me so he (she) can pass to you.” “Pass the ball by me.”

Skill Practice 3: (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move the ball to avoid an opponent. Each player dribbles with control to avoid an opponent. The players move freely with the ball.

Coach’s Cue

“Move the ball away from me.”

Games Approach #2 (15 minutes)

Goal: Players learn to pass the ball effectively before shooting at the goal.

Description: 3v1, 3v2, or 3v3 – Each team tries to pass the ball 3 times before shooting at the goal. Rotate players so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

Coach’s Point

Freeze the game occasionally to show players where good supporting positions are. Watch that players don’t try to support by getting too close to teammates who have the ball. This only makes the game more crowded, so encourage them to stay in a space to receive passes.
Character Huddle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the children into a group about 10 ft from 2 cones that form a goal. “Let’s pretend we’re playing a soccer game. Watch what I do with the ball.” Tell a child in the group you’re passing to him. Make a bad pass. “That pass wasn’t very good, was it? What would you say to me so that I don’t feel bad about the pass?” As they respond, have each player who makes a supportive comment take an open shot at the goal. If players make non-supportive comments, encourage them to change their words to become more supportive. “It’s very important to support your teammates, especially when they make mistakes. Saying something that makes someone feel good shows you care.”

Wrap-Up: Make positive comments about today’s practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice; keep-away games.
**Purpose:** To keep possession of the ball in a game, focusing on passing, receiving and supporting under pressure. The objective is for players to be able to keep possession of the ball in the 3v3 game by passing well, receiving the ball effectively and supporting teammates who have the ball.

**Warm-Up:** (5 to 10 minutes) Repeat skill practice 2 from practice #4.

**Well-Being Circle**

**Equipment:**
- 1 soccer ball per team of 3
- 2 portable goals or cones per team of 3
- 1 rubber band
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams

**Discussion**

Flexibility

(5 minutes)

Explain that our muscles stretch just like a rubber band. Stretching makes your muscles more flexible and keeps them from getting hurt.

**Activity**

Bring a rubber band to use as a prop. “This rubber band is like our muscles. When I pull it, it stretches; when I let it go, it pulls back to its original shape.” Have the children reach down and touch their toes three times. “Your leg muscles need to stretch because you use them the most in soccer; stretching makes your muscles more flexible and keeps them from getting hurt.”
Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)

Goal: Players will learn to keep the ball away from the other team and score.

Description: 3v3. Each team tries to pass 3 times before scoring a goal. If they do, give them an extra point for that goal.

Skill Practice 1: (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to create a passing lane around a defender. Practice moving to create a passing lane around a defender by placing the players in groups of 3. Each team tries to pass in a triangle formation with you opposing.

Coach’s Cue

“Move to help your teammate.” “Pass and control the ball.”

Skill Practice 2: (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to support a teammate under pressure. Practice supporting a teammate under pressure by setting up a 2v1 game. The players practice in an area 20ft by 10ft with a small goal. The 2 attackers must pass 3 times before scoring a goal while defended by the third player.

Coach’s Point

Remember to have players rotate in skill practice 2.
Games Approach #2 (15 minutes)

**Goal:** Players learn to keep the ball by good passing, control, and support.

**Description:** 3v1, 3v2, or 3v3. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

Character Huddle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea: Responsibility**

Gather the children in a circle. You’re in the middle of the circle with a ball and try to kick the ball out of the circle. The children will have 2 chances to keep the ball from escaping. During the first turn they’ll use minimal effort, and during the second they’ll use maximum effort. “I’m going to try to kick the ball out of the circle. Everyone work together to keep the ball in the circle. Pretend you are snails that can’t get to the ball fast enough.” Begin to dribble and try to get the ball out of the circle, reminding players that snails move slowly. “This time move like busy bees that fly fast and keep moving.” Repeat the activity encouraging players to be “busy bees.” “When you try to be like busy bees, you’re being responsible to your teammates.”

Wrap-Up: Make positive comments about today’s practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice; shooting at the goal.
**Purpose:** To attack the goal, focusing on shooting a stationary and moving ball. The objective is for players to be able to shoot a stationary or moving ball accurately at the goal during practice and game play.

**Warm-Up:** (10 minutes) Gather the players in groups of 3. Have them play 2v1 in an area 20ft by 10ft with a small goal. They must pass 3 times, then shoot into a goal.

**Equipment:**
- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 2 portable goals or cones per team of 3
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams

**Well-Being Circle**

**Discussion**
Muscular Strength & Endurance (5 minutes)

Explain to the kids that their muscles get stronger as they use them. Kicking builds their leg muscles. Stronger leg muscles mean harder kicks in soccer.

**Activity**

Gather the children in a group. Show them a soft and a hard kick. “Watch how far the ball goes when I kick it two different ways.” Have the players practice both short kicks and long kicks. “You can kick the ball farther when your muscles in your legs are strong. Your muscles get stronger when you practice kicking.”
Practice 7

**Games Approach #1** (10 minutes)

**Goal:** Players learn to attempt shots at the goal.

**Description:** 3v3. Players try to score as many goals as they can.

**Skill Practice 1:** (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to accurately shoot a stationary ball into the goal. Have the players practice accurately shooting a stationary ball into the goal without pressure. Place them in groups of 3. Have 1 retriever and 2 shooters. Each shooter shoots a stationary ball into the goal he or she is attacking.

**Coach’s Cue**

“Get close to the ball.” “Use the laces to kick the ball.”

“Keep your toe down as you shoot.”

**Skill Practice 2:** (10 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to accurately shoot a moving ball into the goal. Practice accurately shooting a moving ball into the goal by placing players into groups of 3. You or one of the teammates rolls the ball forward so the shooters can move in and shoot the moving ball.

**Coach’s Cue**

“Catch up to the ball.” “Shoot before the ball stops rolling.”
Games Approach #2 (15 minutes)

**Goal:** Players learn to shoot accurately in a game.

**Description:** 3v1, 3v2, or 3v3. Emphasize shooting to score. Rotate players accordingly so that they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

Character Huddle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea: Respect**

Gather the children in a group. “I’m going to ask you some questions about things I notice on this team. Tell me if you agree. Do you try to learn new skills at practice? Do you work hard to improve your skills? Do you help your teammates? Do you follow directions? Do you feel good about yourselves when you play a good game?” Listen to responses following each question. “Think about your opponents. What qualities or things do they have or do? Are they the same as you? It’s important to think of our opponents in the same way we think of ourselves. You respect yourself, and you should respect your opponents. They are a lot like you and are learning the same things.”

Wrap-Up: Make positive comments about today’s practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice; shooting under pressure.
Purpose: To attack the goal, and focus on shooting a moving ball under pressure. The objective is for players to be able to shoot under pressure from a defender during game play.

Warm-Up: (10 minutes) Players shoot a stationary ball into a goal.

Well-Being Circle

Discussion
Training & Conditioning
(5 minutes)
Explain to the kids the importance of staying in good physical condition. Talk about how soccer is one way to exercise and there are other things they can do when not playing soccer.

Activity
Gather in a circle. Ask the players what they do after they eat dinner. Encourage them to discuss sleep. “Pretend you are at home. Climb into bed and go to sleep. Now it’s morning and you don’t have soccer practice today. What are some things you can do every day to keep your body in good physical condition?” As a child suggests an activity, have the group act out those activities.

Equipment:
- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 2 portable goals or cones per team of 3
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams
Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)

Goal: Players learn to shoot often.

Description: 3v3. Shooting to goals.

Coach’s Cue “Shoot when you have a chance.”

Skill Practice 1: (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to shoot accurately under pressure. Practice shooting accurately under pressure from a defender. Pair up players. Feed the ball between two players who chase it toward the goal. The first player to reach the ball must shoot as quickly as possible. This teaches shooting under pressure.

Games Approach #2 (15 minutes)

Goal: Players learn to attempt more shots and shoot accurately under pressure during a game.

Description: 3v1, 3v2, or 3v3. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.
Character Huddle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the children in a group. Dump 5 or 6 balls out of a ball bag, leaving them where they stop. “Pretend we just finished an activity in practice and we’re moving on to something else. Everyone walk away from the balls and make a group circle.” Pick up the balls, then go to the group. Dump balls out again. “Now come back and you pick up the balls, then go make a circle. Which way makes it faster for me to get to your circle? What do you think we should do with the balls?” Discuss picking up equipment before doing another activity. “We can have more fun and learn more when we work together. That is a shared responsibility between the coach and the players.”

Wrap-Up: Make positive comments about practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice; guarding or marking your opponents.
Purpose: To defend space, focusing on marking (guarding) opponents. The objective is for players to be able to defend space in a game by marking opposing players.

Warm-Up: (10 minutes) 1v1. Each player tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not their hands.

Well-Being Circle

Discussion
Muscular Strength & Endurance (5 minutes)

Explain to the kids how muscles tighten when they are used and they loosen when they are relaxed. Inform them the name of the muscle in their thigh is the quadricep and it is used for kicking the soccer ball.

Activity
Have the children spread out in a group. Ask them to put their hand on their thigh and bend their leg, then lower it. “Did you feel the muscle get tight when you lifted it up and then relax when it came back down? Try it again 5 times. Muscles tighten, or contract, when you move. You use your thigh muscle, or quadriceps, when you kick a soccer ball. The more you practice, the stronger your quadriceps will be.”

Equipment:
- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 2 portable goals per pair
- 1 cone per player
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams
**Practice 9**

**Games Approach #1** (10 minutes)

**Goal:** Players learn to stop the other team from getting the ball.

**Description:** 3v3. Shooting to goals.

**Skill Practice 1:** (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to follow an opponent. Practice following an opponent. Place the players in pairs, when you call “go,” one player tries to get away from the other. When you call “stop,” the players switch roles, then repeat.

**Coach’s Cue**

“Go.” “Stop.” “Switch.”

**Skill Practice 1:** (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to mark an opponent who is trying to receive a pass. Have the players practice marking an opponent who is trying to get free to receive a pass. Place them in groups of 3. One player feeds the ball to the attacker. The attacker tries to get free from the defender. Play stops when the attacker or the defender has the ball in the space; they then do it again.
Games Approach #2 (10 minutes)
Goal: Players learn to mark effectively when on defense in a game.
Description: 3v3.

Coach’s Point
Freeze the game occasionally to show players where good supporting positions are. Watch that players don’t try to support by getting too close to teammates who have the ball. This only makes the game more crowded, so encourage them to stay in a space to receive passes.

Character Huddle (5 minutes)
Key Idea: Respect
Gather the children into a single-file line near 2 cones about 10ft apart. “I am going to walk down the line 2 times. Remember how it feels each time I pass you.” Walk down the line and nod to each player. Repeat, but this time tell each player “great game” or “nice play today” and shake his or her hand. “Which time that I passed you made you feel better?” Ask the children to stand next to a cone that represents their choice. “Shaking hands and saying ‘good game’ are important traditions that show we appreciate our opponents.” Divide the team in half and have them practice the end-of-game “respect ritual.”

Wrap-Up: Make positive comments about today’s practice. Remind them of next practice day and time. Give a sneak preview of next week’s practice – Challenging your opponent for the ball.
**Purpose:** To defend your own space in a game, focusing on pressuring the ball. The objective is for players to be able to pressure opponents who have the ball during game play.

**Warm-Up:** (10 minutes) 1v1. Each player tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not their hands.

**Well-Being Circle**

**Discussion**

Healthy Habits (5 minutes)

Explain to the players that taking care of your body gives you energy. “What are some healthy ways we can take care of our bodies?”

**Activity**

Gather in a group. Mark boundary areas. Have the players run as fast as they can when you say “go!” Make sure they stay within the boundary areas. They can run for about a minute or until they get tired. “You had enough energy to run but when you don’t take care of your body, you can get tired much faster.

**Equipment:**

- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 2 portable goals or cones per team of 3
- Different colored shirts or vests to differentiate teams
**Practice 10**

**Games Approach #1 (10 minutes)**

**Goal:** Players learn to watch an opponent and stay close.

**Description:** 3v3. Each team tries to stop the other team from scoring.

**Skill Practice 1:** (5 minutes) Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to pressure an opponent in possession of the ball. Practice pressuring an opponent who is in possession of the ball. Gather players in groups of 3. Set cones about 10 yards apart. Players 1 and 2 each have a cone and each stands by the cone to start. A feeder feeds the ball to player 1. Player 2 closes the gap as quickly as possible, trying to prevent player 1 from dribbling to player 2’s cone. Rotate the feeder into the practice every 2 trials.

**Games Approach #2 (15 minutes)**

**Goal:** Players learn to mark tightly and pressure the ball carrier during game play.

**Description:** 3v3.

**Coach’s Point**

Freeze the game occasionally to show good marking and to check that players are marking appropriately.
Character Huddle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Keeping the YMCA Character Values in perspective.

Gather the children in a group near 2 cones about 10ft apart. “What did you most enjoy learning about in soccer this season?” Listen to their responses. “Players who thought they tried their best to learn, stand by this cone. Players who think they had fun this season, stand by this cone. Both of these are important. You should try your best and have fun no matter what happens during the season. The most important thing in soccer is to have fun playing with friends and to learn new skills. I feel you all did that!”

Recall a time you used one of the character values; caring, honest, respect, or responsibility on the field and how it made you feel?

Wrap-Up: Make summary comments about what everyone learned over the season. Point out something positive about every player. Encourage players to remember the character values they have learned and to come back next season.