



Fall 2020 Curriculum

2008 Boys

Youth Development Phase

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Introduction of Context

Context is important in curriculum writing because it dictates how you write your curriculum. In sports, contextual factors include the age of players, their ability, the frequency of training sessions, the provided space and available resources, and more.

In this case, we had to prepare a 10-week educational plan for a group of 13-year-old boys who would practice twice a week outdoors during the months of August, September, and October in Pittsburgh, PA. Most of the players had been playing in our club and had been introduced to the club's curriculum, but obviously due to their young age had only a very basic understanding of our six curriculum pillars:

1. Team defending
2. Playing out from the back
3. Ball circulation
4. Pressing
5. Chance creation
6. Transition

Our objective was to create an educational plan based on these pillars that would help our players grow and improve their abilities to succeed independently in the game.

Season Overview

This section shows an overview of the season plan. First, below are some of the important factors to consider when conceptualizing the big picture of your plan.

Blocked vs. interleaved learning: Research shows that neither block nor interleaved learning are exclusively effective, and that each can be utilized strategically to yield the best learning results. Block learning involves practicing one, isolated skill repetitively—for example, practicing a C scale on the piano over and over until it is perfect, or practicing team defending only for a 4-week period. Interleaved learning is randomized learning. In this method, you change the skill or topic every session.

Block learning can be helpful when learning a new topic. New concepts or skills can be difficult to grasp, so the repetitive component of block learning “slows the introduction” and provides the teacher and student both extended time and multiple opportunities to present and conceive the topic. But, block learning is limiting. When overused, it can prevent a student from developing a variety of skills within holistic, contextualized settings.

Interleaved learning covers more material, but can be chaotic. When overused, it can prevent a student from experiencing the repetition that any human needs in order to develop a skill.

The solution is to combine block and interleaved learning and use them each effectively. Our first decision was to pick (3) curriculum pillars. Covering only one would be too limiting. Covering all six would be chaotic and overwhelming. We selected A) Playing out from the back, B) Pressing, and C) Chance creation.

Next, we created an order of lessons that utilized **block learning at the beginning of a pillar** in order to increase the likelihood that our players would grasp new concepts **before transitioning to a pattern of interleaved learning** that rotated through educational pillars in order to give our players the chance to continue reviewing and strengthening their abilities within each topic. You can see that we ordered the coverage of curriculum pillars from start to finish like this: **A A B B A A B B A B A B C A B C**.

General → Specific: In the beginning of an instructional module, we want to introduce our players to a variety of concepts and skills. It is difficult for the average person to develop proficiency in something instantly. Instead, the forgetting hypothesis suggests that the more we learn, forget, and relearn, the better we remember something. So, by incorporating a variety of concepts and skills at the beginning of a module we are setting up our players with more opportunities to review and relearn them. It is okay if early sessions do not yield widespread, deep understanding or proficiency by players in your team because the primary objective at this point is simply introduction. Later sessions will aim to help players develop these specific, individual pieces of skill and understanding.

Tactical before technical: Historically in sports education, technical development is seen as a precursor to tactical development. This could be true on an individual level, but in a team setting, it is important to prioritize tactical education, which involves things like team shape and decision making,

in order to create situations in training sessions that are realistic and gamelike before teaching players how to execute their decisions technically in these situations. Otherwise, players may be learning technical skills in ways that aren't applicable to the game.


Low to high intensity macrocycles: Another common malpractice is “Hell Week.” Overloading the beginning of instructional modules with intensity and workloads due to the idea that “baptism by fire” will “snap players into shape.” In fact, however, the shock and overuse of this method increases the likelihood of injuries and decreased levels of player performance. We can still have high standards, but instead, it is better if we work towards them gradually. This will also ensure that our teams peak at the end of a season and end on a high.








Therefore, you can see in the season overview below how session plans call for larger groups of players and playing areas in the beginning before shifting to smaller groups and playing areas. More players in larger playing areas can mean less individual actions and more time to make decisions, which is low intensity, whereas smaller groups and smaller areas can result in more individual actions and less time to make decisions, which is high intensity. Session formats can be a tool that you use to manage the intensity of your sessions. Whole-part-whole will generally mean more time spent playing bigger games with more space, whereas small-sided games in smaller spaces can be used to increase intensity and provide more repetitions of a desired skill or concept.

(Note: There are other recommended approaches for periodizing a training plan that involve planning mesocycles and microcycles within your macrocycle that make plans to cycle more frequently through low, medium, and high intensities in order to account for other things, such as recovery times after games or intense sessions, but these considerations are more for a team that is active 6-7 days each week. The amount of periodization detail here is appropriate for our youth team.)

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment refers to a series of ongoing checks by the teacher to see how his/her students are doing. Through formative assessment, the teacher identifies misconceptions, struggles, and learning gaps, as well as ideas of how to address these issues. Of course, the coach formatively assesses the players every training session and every game, but we thought that it also made sense to incorporate practice matches at the midway point of the season in order to evaluate how we did during the first half of it, as well as inform our plans going forward.

Summative Assessment: A summative assessment is an evaluation that is administered at the end of an instructional unit. We finished the season with another week of practice matches for our summative assessment.

<u>Week . Session</u>	<u>Curriculum Pillar</u>		<u>Session Topic</u>	<u>Tactical vs. Technical</u>	<u>Unit Focus (# of players)</u>	<u>Intensity</u>	<u>Format</u>
1.1	A	Build-up	Intro to the playing out from the back	90% tac 10% tech	Entire team (11)	 Low	-Whole -Part -Whole
1.2	A	Build-up	Intro to the playing out from the back		Entire team (11)		
2.1	B	Pressing	Intro to team defending and pressing		Entire team (11)		

2.2	B	Pressing	Intro to team defending and pressing		Entire team (11)		
3.1	A	Build-up	Building through the zone of creation	75% tac 25% tech	GK, Def, Mid (6-7)	 Medium	Progressive: Warm-up → SSG's → Big Game
3.2	A	Build-up	Building through the zone of creation		GK, Def, Mid (6-7)		
4.1	B	Pressing	Pressing from the front		F, Mid (6-7)		
4.2	B	Pressing	Pressing from the front		F, Mid (6-7)		
5.1	Practice matches		Summative assessment		Entire Team (11)	Low	
5.2	Practice matches				Entire Team (11)		
6.1	A	Build-up	Accelerating the play	50% tac 50% tech	Def, Mid (6-7)	 Medium	Progressive: Warm-up → SSG's → Big Game
6.2	B	Pressing	Creating and executng pressure pockets		F, Mid (5-6)		
7.1	A	Build-up	Playing into the forward line		Central players of Def, Mid, F (5-6)		
7.2	B	Pressing	Recovering and reorganizing if the press is broken		Def, Mid (2-6)		
8.1	C	Chance creation	Penetrating & finishing	25% tac 75% tech	F, Mid (2-6)	 High	All SSG (small-sided games)
8.2	A	Build-up	Dribbling-to-pass		Def, Mid (2-6)		
9.1	B	Pressing	Defending 1v1, 2v1, and 1v2		F, Mid (1-6)		
9.2	C	Chance creation	Penetrating & finishing		F, Mid (1-6)		
10.1	Practice matches		Summative assessment		Entire Team (11)	Low	
10.2	Practice matches				Entire Team (11)		

Layering of Topics

This section shows how to strategically layer topics into your instruction. First, below are the important terms to consider.

Topic Groups: There are dozens, maybe hundreds of things that you could teach for each of our six curriculum pillars. Teaching them all at once is overwhelming and impossible. It is important to think about how you could frame, or arrange, these topics into smaller “packages” in order to present them to your players bit-by-bit in a way that will be manageable for you and comprehensible for them. Therefore, I came up with topic groups. Within each group are more specific skills and concepts. (We will get to those later.)

For playing out of the back, they are:

1. Principles of attack
2. Priorities of attack
3. Team formation and system
4. Game intelligence
5. Positioning and movement off-the-ball
6. Passing concepts
7. Receiving details
8. Passing details
9. Dribbling details

For team pressing, they are:

1. Principles of defense
2. Priorities of defense
3. Team formation and system
4. Pressing concepts
5. Psychosocial excellence
6. Pressing details
7. Defending details

Wholistic Environments: You want to make sure that you provide your players with wholistic training environments—in other words, activities and games that are gamelike and provide players with opportunities for tactical, technical, physical, and psychosocial development—NOT activities and games that address isolated topics in unrealistic environments. So, for playing out of the back, it is important that each of the (8) topic groups that I identified above are present in each session. For each of the sessions (columns) in the chart below, if the row of a topic group has color in the session’s column, it means that the topic group is “present” in the session. As you can see, all topic groups are always present.

Affective Filter: The “affective filter” is a metaphor associated with linguist Stephen Krashen’s Monitor Model of second language learning that describes how attitudes of a learner impact his/her ability to succeed. The affective filter has commonly been described as an imaginary wall that rises in the mind and prevents input, thus blocking cognition. On the other hand, when the affective filter is lowered, the feeling of safety is high and development occurs. Current neuroscience research supports the theory that stress affects thinking and learning.

In sports education, too, it is extremely important that we do not overwhelm our players. A wholistic environment is good, but directly addressing all eight topic groups and providing players with too much, disjointed information will negatively impact their confidence levels and desire to learn.

Therefore, the color strips below show how to incorporate all eight topic groups in each session effectively. The reality is that a variety of concepts and skills will be present in every session, but the coach will have to choose which topics to directly, explicitly address with his/her players.

In the chart below, when a topic group is written, it is meant to be the main focal point of the session. In other words, the learning objectives within this group are those that the coach will directly, verbally teach and preach throughout the session.

Next, the shade of each topic group’s color indicates the level of emphasis that it receives in each session. The darker the shade is, the more directly and explicitly the coach addresses the topic. The lighter shades mean that the topic will be “present” in the session from a design perspective, but that the coach may only make mention of something related to the topic once or twice, or maybe not at all.

For example, with passing details (red), passing will be part of sessions A1 and A2, but the coach might not mention passing technique more than once because the main objectives of these sessions involve learning about and making decisions based on the principles and priorities of attack. But, later in the season, during sessions A5 and A6, coaching the specific details of passing is the main focus, and hopefully, by this point, although the principles and priorities of the game will be present in the session, they don’t need to be mentioned specifically more than once or twice.

Blocked vs. Interleaved Learning: You can see how this topic is again present in this part of the planning. Every time that a topic group becomes the main focus of a session, it happens twice, back-to-back. This design feature aligns with the idea that block learning enhances student understanding at the beginning of a new topic. But, by making every topic group a part of every session, we provide students with opportunities to learn, forget, review, and relearn better.

A: Playing out of the Back

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
	Intro to playing out from the back	Intro to playing out from the back	Building through zone of creation	Building through zone of creation	Accelerating the play	Playing into the forward line	Dribble - to - pass
	Worldwide principles of attack	Worldwide principles of attack					
	Priorities of the game	Priorities of the game					
	Formation	Formation and system	System				
			Game intelligence	Game intelligence			
			Positioning and movement off-the-ball	Positioning and movement off-the-ball			
			Passing concepts	Passing concepts			
					Receiving details	Receiving details	
					Passing details	Passing details	
					Dribbling details		Dribbling details

B: Team Pressing

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7
	Intro to team defending & pressing	Intro to team defending & pressing	Team pressing from the front	Team pressing from the front	Creating and executing pressure pockets	Recovering and reorganizing	Defending 1v1, 2v1, and 1v2
	Principles of defense	Principles of defense					
	Priorities of the defense	Priorities of the defense					
	Formation	Formation	System	System			
			Pressing concepts	Pressing concepts			
				Psychosocial excellence	Psychosocial excellence		
					Pressing details	Pressing details	
						Defending details	Defending details

Educational Plan, Pillar A (Playing out from the back)

Formative assessment: You can see how the first objective of each session often involves reinforcing, reteaching, or checking for retention of prior knowledge. These moments help strengthen your players' learning and make sure that you all can "count from 1-10 before learning 11-20."

Teaching Points: These are the concepts that you must know well in order to teach them well. Teachers must be experts in their content areas. Also, it's important to note that this list is not exhaustive. You could probably add more specific skills and concepts. My list is a basic outline of the things that I felt were relevant to my team. As you go through the season, you might realize what to add or subtract based on your specific scenario.

<u>Session #</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Learning Objectives</u>	<u>Teaching Points</u>
1	Intro to playing out of the back	Explain and show players... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principles of play in attack • The objectives/priorities of the game • Our team formation ...so that they can create realistic, gamelike scenarios in training sessions throughout the season.	–Principles of play in attack: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penetration • Dispersal (width, depth, height) • Movement • Support • Improvisation –Priorities of the game: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score a goal • Assist a goal • Assist an assist • Advance the ball / break opposition lines • Keep the ball –Team formation and system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positional relationships • Individual responsibilities
2	Intro to playing out of the back	–Reinforce / reteach the principles, priorities, and positions within our team formation. –Introduce our system of play	
3	Building through the zone of creation	–Check for retention of principles and priorities. –Continue emphasizing our system of play –Introduce... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and concepts that will enhance game intelligence. • Details related to positioning and movement • Basic passing concepts 	–Game Intelligence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scanning • The "superiorities" • The "free man" –Positioning and Movement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blindside positioning • Sliding

4	Building through the zone of creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Check for retention of principles and priorities. –Reinforce / reteach... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game intelligence. • Positioning and movement • Passing concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismarking • Opposite movements • Rotations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Passing concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, second, third line passes • Combinations / patterns of play
5	Accelerating the play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Check for retention of... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and priorities • Game intelligence • Positioning and movement • Passing concepts –Introduce some... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing details • Receiving details • Dribbling details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Passing details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different ways to pass • Communicating through a pass • Pass quality • Passing range –Receiving details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Orientado” • On the ground, in the air • Under pressure from various angles • The qualities of a first touch –Dribbling details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different ways to manipulate and move with the ball • Changes of speed and direction • Body feints
6	Playing into the forward line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Check for retention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and priorities • Game intelligence • Positioning and movement • Passing concepts –Emphasize passing and receiving details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Passing details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different ways to pass • Communicating through a pass • Pass quality • Passing range –Receiving details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Orientado” • On the ground, in the air • Under pressure from various angles • The qualities of a first touch
7	Dribble-to-pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Check for retention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Dribbling details:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game intelligence • Positioning and movement • Passing concepts <p>–Emphasize passing and receiving details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different ways to manipulate and move with the ball • Changes of speed and direction • Body feints
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Educational Plan, Pillar B (Team Pressing)

<u>Session #</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Learning Objectives</u>	<u>Teaching Points</u>
1	Intro to team defending & pressing	<p>Explain and show players...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principles of play in defense • The objectives/priorities of defense • Our team formation <p>...so that they can begin to create realistic, gamelike scenarios in training sessions throughout the season.</p>	<p>–Principles of play in defense:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure • Compactness • Delay & recover • Cover & balance • Control & restraint <p>–Priorities of the game:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent a goal • Prevent the assist of a goal • Prevent the assist of an assist • Prevent the opposition from achieving their objectives and/or advancing the ball • Recover the ball <p>–Team formation (positions only)</p>
2	Intro to team defending & pressing	<p>Reinforce / reteach the principles, priorities, and positions within our team formation.</p>	
3	Pressing from the front	<p>–Check for retention of principles and priorities.</p> <p>–Introduce...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our system of play • Pressing concepts 	<p>–Team formation and system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positional relationships • Individual responsibilities <p>–Pressing concepts</p>
4	Pressing from the front	<p>–Check for retention of principles, priorities, and understanding of positions within formation.</p> <p>–Reinforce / reteach...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positional relationships within our team system (what “brings the formation to life”) • Pressing concepts <p>–Begin introducing some qualities of psychosocial excellence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, second, and third defenders • Defending in between lines • Tracking / shadowing • Fronting / screening • Setting traps • Pressing cues • Access <p>–Psychosocial excellence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scanning to collect information and increase awareness • Discipline

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipation • Communication & teamwork • Decision making • Tenacity • Determination & perseverance
5	Creating and executing pressure pockets	<p>–Check for retention of...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and priorities • Formation and system • Pressing concepts <p>–Introduce and emphasize more qualities of psychosocial excellence.</p> <p>–Introduce pressing details</p>	<p>–Pressing details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footwork & body movement • Timing • Acceleration • Angle of approach • Body positioning • Intercepting
6	Recovering and reorganizing	<p>–Check for retention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and priorities • Formation and system • Pressing concepts • Psychosocial excellence <p>–Introduce defending details</p>	<p>–Defending details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delaying • Jockeying • Retreating • Blocking • Tackling
7	Defending 1v1, 2v1 and 1v2	<p>–Check for retention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and priorities • Game intelligence • Positioning and movement • Passing concepts <p>–Emphasize pressing and defending details</p>	

Sample Sessions

- Building through the zone of creation: Two-player rotations & Communication
- Pressing from the front
- Recovering & reorganizing
- Defending 1v1, 2v1, and 1v2

Building through the zone of creation: Two-player rotations & communication

Page 1:

Topic: Two-Player Rotations & Communication

Group: 08 boys

Date: 23 Jan 2021

Number of Players

- Blue = 8-10
- White = 7-11
- Total = 15-21

Warm-up: Group communication & problem solving w/ individual dribbling & mastery skills

- **Set-up** (based on 16 total players)
 - Area = 25x15
 - (5) cones of each color: White, blue, yellow, orange
 - Note for group size variations: There should always be one more cone than the number of players per group/team within this game
 - Also, make sure the colors are dispersed evenly amongst each other--No two cones of one color too close together



The Players

- Divide players into (4) groups of (4) w/ pinnies. [Keep teams even (blue vs. white)]
 - (4) red (2 blue + 2 white)
 - (4) blue (2 blue + 2 white)
 - (4) yellow (2 blue + 2 white)
 - (4) orange (2 blue + white)
- (1) ball per player

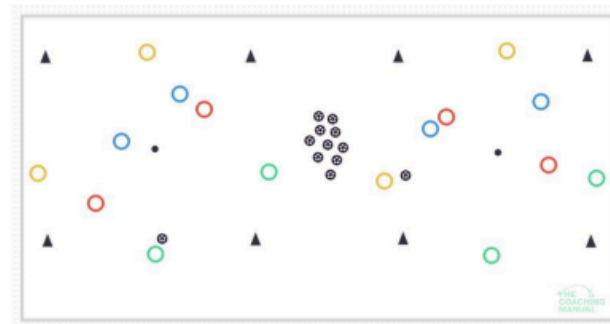
The Activity:

Page 2:

- **Part A:** Lead the players in a warm-up that involves different dynamic movements/stretches + dribbling and skill moves (sole rolls, inside-outside w/ weak foot, scissors, body feints, etc.)
- **Part B:** Incorporate intermittent team games/competitions
 - **Progression #1:** At the sound of whistle, the first team (by color) to get together and take a knee wins.
 - **Progression #2:** The first group with all players to find the same color cone and take a knee wins.
 - Players can find different cones as long as the color of the cone of each player within a team is the same.
 - More than one player (regardless of team) can be at one cone.
 - **Progression #3:** No more than one player per cone.
- **Coaching Points**
 - **Scanning & awareness:** As you dribble the ball, keep your head up and scan your surroundings so that you can avoid obstacles, accelerate into space, and know where your teammates are at all times.
 - **Teamwork & communication**
 - Progression #1: Call your teammates by first name
 - Progression #2: Figure out as a group what color cone you are targeting
 - **Problem Solving:** What if it is not possible for your third or fourth teammate to find a cone of the same color? What if you cannot find a cone of the right color? How do you all communicate, regroup, and find a new set of cones?

Small-Sided Game: 2v2 + 4 Targets

- **Focus:** Working together in pairs to create space for each other in which you can receive the ball and play forward.
- **Set-up:**
 - Two groups (blue and white)
 - (8) players per group = 2v2 + 4 targets
 - (9) players per group = Add ball collector
 - (10) players per group = One player serves
 - Area = 15x15
 - Lots of balls in the middle for servers (coaches)



- **The Game:**
 - **Objective:** Earn (1) point every time your team can progress the ball from target to opposite target (N-S / E-W)
 - **Restriction:** No more than (1) pass from target-to-target before connecting with a CM
 - **Periodization:**
 - 60-sec: Play
 - 30-sec: Rest + coaching points
 - 60-sec: Play (same set-up)
 - Rotate CM's + T's
- **Coaching Points:**
 - Cultivate the environment with movement:
 - CM's--Scan & communicate to maintain balanced shape (opposites)
 - Targets--Slide to stay connected with the ball
 - Priorities:
 - #1 = Play forward
 - #2 = Rotate, circulate, and keep the ball to find a new path forward
 - Assess the player with the ball:
 - Good position = Facing forward with space in front
 - Bad position = Facing backwards and/or under pressure
 - Decision making:
 - Teammate in bad position = Go to the ball to support him
 - Teammate in good position = Move away from him to give him space
 - CM's
 - Trigger = the first movement
 - Sharp movements to lose defender
 - Timing--Move as the ball rolls so that when the target receives, the picture is already developing
 - Pass from T → T = rotation trigger
 - Technique
 - Secure the ball
 - Drive your pass to the target

Big Game

- Bring blue and white teams back together (Red + orange vs. Blue vs. yellow)
- Scenario variations:
 - 7v7 = 45x65
 - 8v8 = 51x74
 - 9v9 = 57x83
 - 10v10 = 64x93
- Formations--Make sure there are always (3) CM's
 - 7v7 = 1-2-3-1
 - 8v8 = 1-2-4-1
 - 9v9 = 1-2-5-1
 - 10v10 = 1-4-3-2

Pressing From the Front

Page 1:

Intro to "Team Pressing" (Front 6) Field Set-Up

Written by Will Dodds

Set-up Explanation:

--Rough dimensions: 38 wide x 56 long

--Yellow cones show (3) zones for "Over the River" game (38 wide x (20+16+20) long)

--Green cones divide the entire area into two halves for "POFTB vs. Pressing"

--(2) big goals will be used for both games (OTR + POFTB vs. P)

--(4) small goals will only be used for P vs. P



Page 2:

"Over the River" to practice "team pressing"

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

🕒 25 mins 👤 12 players 🏀 8 balls 🏠 8 bibs 🚩 8 cones 🏟️ 38x56 area

Set-up Explanation:

--Rough dimensions: 38 wide x 56 long

--Yellow cones show (3) zones for "Over the River" game (38 wide x (20+16+20) long)

--Green cones divide the entire area into two halves for "POFTB vs. Pressing"

--(2) big goals will be used for both games (OTR + POFTB vs. P)

--(4) small goals will only be used for P vs. P



This arrow shows a movement that pertains to the progression of this game.

Pre-Brief:

- Session Topic: Team pressing with emphasis on front 6. (Remember to ask them if they know who these players are, and if not, clarify them using the numbering system.)
- Key Themes: Unity, teamwork, and patience. (Ask: How would you define these words? What do they mean to you?)

The Rules of the Game:

- How to Play the Game: The game always restarts with a server passing the ball into the "resting/waiting" team. In the diagram above, the reds have the ball. The red team plays 4v1 and looks to switch the ball to the gray team, but this pass must be below waist level. If red succeeds, team blue continue defending against team gray, who now have the same objective as the red team previously did. If team blue recover the ball, they attack the goal they are facing, playing 4v4 vs. red. Once the ball goes out, or team red recover the ball from team blue after losing it, the round is over, and the next round starts with a new ball from the server into the gray team.
- Optional Rule: Give the team playing out a minimum number of passes to complete before "switching the field."
- Progression #1: A defending winger can enter the "zone of possession" to press a CB. The defending team can now play 4v2. The second defender does NOT have to be the same player throughout the round.
- Progression #2: One gray player can enter the middle zone as a target to help the red team build out.
- Progression #3: Remove the height restriction on the pass from red to gray to switch the zone.

Key Coaching Points:

- Attacking team pre-requisites: Diamond shape, good passing & receiving
- Horizontal shifting/sliding as a unit to achieve compactness.

- Mandatory individual habits: 1) Ready positioning (pulsing), 2) communication with teammates (verbal and non-verbal, i.e. pointing), and 3) scanning in order to know what is both behind and in front of you.
- Position-based responsibilities: The #9 screens the #6, wingers press CB's while screening fullbacks, CM's slide ball side while monitoring and/or screening opposing CM's.
- Progression #1: Coach the winger's press: Fast+slow+skateboard-low, force the ball backwards, and recover.
- Progression #2: Coach the midfielder: Defend in-between-the-lines (screen the #9 behind while monitoring an opposing CM in front), and press the CM as a receives a pass to recover or force backwards the ball.
- Progression #3: Analyze body shape and movement of attacker in order to anticipate that he is about to play over-the-top, and drop (backpedal / side-shuffle) in order to win or challenge for aerial ball.
- Delay & Retreat: Any time our first press fails, we all must recover immediately to get behind the ball. Then, we work to reorganize and set a new trap.
- Reminder/Clarification: Patience is a focal point of the session, but of course if there is an obvious error or pressing cue, you can go.

Pressing vs. POFTB

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

⌚ 25 mins 🧑 11 players ⚽ 8 balls 🧢 5 bibs 🚩 6 cones 🏟️ 38x56 area

Set-up Explanations:

--Rough dimensions: 38 wide x 56 long

--Yellow cones show (3) zones for "Over the River" game (38 wide x (80+16+80) long)

--Green cones divide the entire area into two halves for "POFTB vs. Pressing"

--(2) big goals will be used for both games (OTR + POFTB vs. P)

--(4) small goals will only be used for P vs. P



The Rules of the Game:

- Pressing team objective: Recover the ball and score on the first big goal.
- POFTB team objective: Score on any of the other (5) goals.
- All restarts begin with the GK.
- Optional rule: The team POFTB must switch the ball from CB to CB (3) times before play is "live" (so that the coach can monitor/help the pressing team slide horizontally).
- POFTB restriction: The #8 and #10 cannot cross the halfway line (marked by green cones) into their team's defensive half.

Coaching Points & Reminders:

- First, mold the POFTB team: CB's split, #6 moving opposite to connect with GK and/or CB's, #8 and #10 on "opposites" seeking passing lanes.
- Diagnose issues and repeat coaching points listed with "Over the River."
- Reminder: Gradually change players between POFTB and Pressing teams rather than switching the roles of each team all at once. This way, existing players can take leadership roles by helping new players. Also, there will be less setback and learning curve when players assume new roles.

Recovering and reorganizing (when the press fails)

Page 1:

1v0 + Recover

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

🕒 25 mins 🧑 8 players 🐾 4 bibs 📌 10 cones 🏟️ Long & Narrow area

How to Play the Game:

- Note: Ideally, every player will have his own ball. At the very least, there needs to be a 2:1 player:ball ratio.
- The first player: The first player in line for the blue team will leave his line and run with the ball towards the opposite goal. He cannot shoot on goal until he enters the "end zone" through the near-sided gate.
- The second player: As soon as this blue player enters the end zone, the first red player enters the game and carries his ball towards the opposite goal, abiding by the same "entering and shooting" rules.
- The recovery run: As soon as the initial blue player has shot on goal, he should chase the advancing red player and attempt to prevent this player from scoring.
- Players always return to the same line.
- Rotate the side of the goal from which players enter. That way, they get to attack and recover from different sides of the field.
- The game should be continuous. Stop every few minutes to make coaching points.

Coaching Points:

- Sprint
- First, cut off the goal, aka recover to get "goal side," etc.
- Then, deal with the attacker: Contain, show him wide, press tight upon cues, etc.

Page 2:

Delay + Recover (1v2 --> 2v2)

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

🕒 25 mins 🧑 8 players 🏀 8 balls 🐾 4 bibs 📌 9 cones 🏟️ Long & Narrow area

How to Play the Game:

- Restarts: Each wave always starts with one defender passing to either one of the attackers and entering the field to touch the middle cone.
- The second defender: As soon as the first defender passes the ball into an attacker, this guy must run around the nearest corner cone before entering the game. (This means that he will probably be chasing the play from behind.)
- The 1v2: As soon as one attacker receives the inbound pass, the attackers should advance toward the opposite goal vs. the first defender.
- The 2v2: Once the second defender recovers and joins the game, play 2v2 with each team defending and attacking their respective goals.
- Note: NO OFFSIDE
- Ball out = Game over
- To EXTEND the "delay time" of the first defender, require the second defender to run around the corner AND GOAL.
- To REDUCE the "delay time" of the first defender, require the second defender to simply touch the corner cone.

Coaching Points:

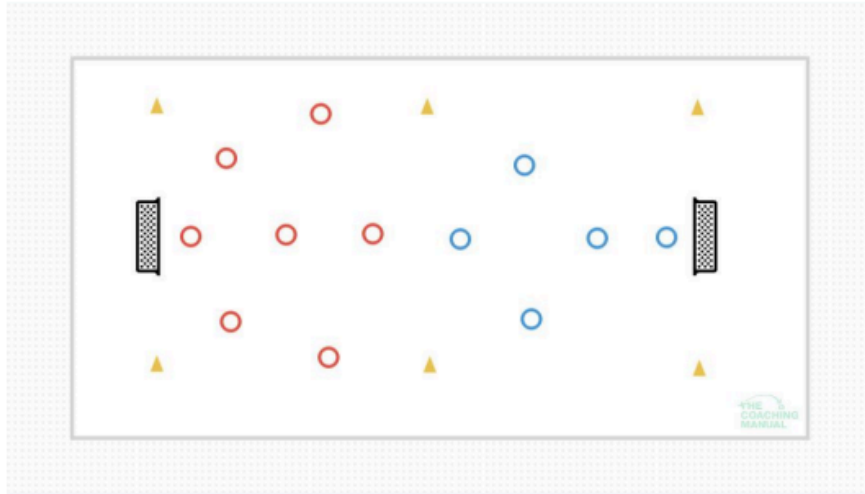
- First defender = Delay
- Delay = Backpedaling or shuffling, screening the goal, preventing the attackers from getting behind you, with eyes on both players, maybe cutting off the pass and forcing the ball carrier wide (if you are lucky), and buying your teammate time to recover behind the ball to help you defend.
- Second defender = Recover
- Encourage the attackers to challenge the defenders by creating realistic, threatening, game-like scenarios: Run with the ball at the first defender, pass to space behind him, etc.

Delay + Recover End Game

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

🕒 25 mins 🚧 6 cones 🏟️ Long & Narrow area



How to Play the Game:

- Condition #1: A goal scored only counts for a point if your entire team (minus the GK) is in the other team's half.
- Condition #2: If you lose or turn over the ball in the other team's half, whether it is in the field of play, for a throw-in, or for a goal kick, everyone except the center back(s) and GK must do two push-ups before resuming play while the attacking team can transition as quickly as they would like.
- Reminder: Possession must be clearly lost. You can still fight for a 50-50 ball.
- Variations: Increase or decrease number of push-ups based on whether you want more or less "delay time" for the defenders.

Set-Up Variations:

- 5v5 = 1-1-2-1
- 6v6 = 1-2-3
- 7v7 = 1-2-3-1

Defending 1v1, 2v1, and 1v2

Page 1:

1v1 First Press

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

⌚ 20 mins 🧑 12 players ⚽ 12 balls 🦋 6 bibs 🚧 4 cones 🏟️ 15x15 area

Objective: All players will show that they can arc their run to eliminate a target when pressing as the first defender.

How to Play the Game:

- Note: The server/defender is defending the one goal to his right. (Place a cone or hang a bib on top of the goal as a reminder for players.)
- The Pattern: Blue server/defender passes across the box to the first red attacker. Both players enter the game and play 1v1. The red player attacks the blue goal. The blue player defends his goal and if he recovers the ball, can score in any of the (4) goals. The game ends when a goal is scored, the ball goes out, or the coach gets bored. Then, the next 1v1 should begin immediately with a red server/defender passing the ball across the box to a blue attacker and the two players proceeding to play 1v1 according to the same rules just explained.
- Rotation: Stay with your team, but alternate between the attacking and serving/defending lines.
- Point System: (1) point per goal. Keep track of your own team's score!
- Progression: All lines move from right to left side of each goal to change the direction of the pressing run.

Coaching Points:

- First pressing run: Fast-slow-skateboard-low and arched
- Force/show the attacker one way or the other. (For now, it depends on you--Force him outside where there is less space, or inside on his weak foot, for example.)
- Pressing cues: Opponent with lack of control, poor/heavy touch, turned backwards, etc.
- Aggressiveness (no foul, no turn)

Page 2:

2v1's w/ First & Second Defender

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

⌚ 20 mins 🧑 12 players ⚽ 12 balls 🦋 6 bibs 🚧 4 cones 🏟️ 15x15 area

Objective: All players will show that they can work together and communicate in pairs to set and execute a pressing trap vs. one attacker as first and second defenders

How to Play the Game:

- Note: The blue and red cones that signify each team's goal to defend have changed!
- The pattern: The first two blue defenders/servers communicate to decide who will pass the ball into player. Then, one blue player passes across to the opposite red attacker. All three players enter the game and play 2-blue vs. 1-red. The red player attacks the blue team's goal. If the blue team recovers the ball, they can score on any goal. As soon as a goal is scored, the ball goes out, or the coach gets bored, the game ends. Then, two red servers/defenders pass across to the opposite blue attacker and the next game starts.
- Rotation: Stay with your team, but alternate between attacking and defending lines.
- Point System: (1) point per goal.

Coaching Points:

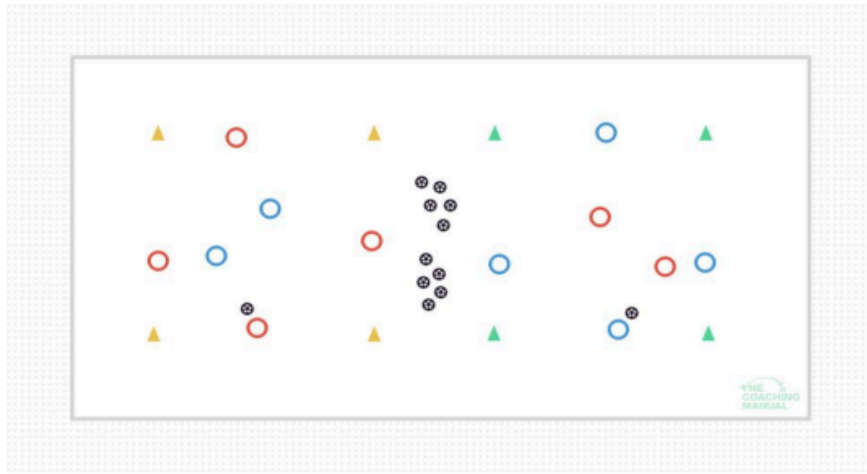
- Communication of first defender: Say and point to your teammate which way you are going to force the attacker.
- Responsibilities of second defender: Screen the goal and press/tackle the ball upon cue.
- Awareness, scanning, and unity: Is the other defender paying attention / with me?

4v2 Rondos

Written by Will Dodds

Set Up

⌚ 20 mins 🧑 12 players ⚽ 12 balls 👤 6 bibs 🚧 8 cones 🏟️ (12x12) x2 area



Objective: All players will show that they can recover, drop to cover, and reorganize after their press as first defender either fails or forces the ball elsewhere.

How to Play the Game:

- Objectives: Attackers aim to keep the ball and complete split passes as much as possible. Defenders aim to prevent the split pass first and when possible, recover the ball or knock it out of play. If/when defenders recover the ball, they should aim to dribble out of the area.
- Point System: Attackers earn (1) point per split pass. Defenders earn (1) point for dribbling out of the area. Take the aggregate score at the end of each round.
- Note: In the absence of servers, if/when a group loses a ball, they can get one from the ball pile in between the two games.

Coaching Points:

- First defender--Arch run and force play
- Second defender--Screen/front opposite target to prevent the split pass.
- Communication, teamwork, unity
- Recover / drop to cover / reorganize when the first press either fails or forces the play elsewhere and you now become the second defender.

Assessment Template for Practice Matches

Lastly, here is a template that I made to use to log individual and team evaluations during the formative and summative assessment weeks.

Team and Unit Evaluations

	Playing out from the back	Team Pressing
Strengths		
Areas for Improvement		

Individual Evaluations

[illegible]

[illegible]