



U6 SEASON PLAN

Practice Format

Practices should follow the **PLAY-PRACTICE-PLAY** format. Play-Practice-Play is the optimal manner to structure a practice session for youth players, as it utilizes best practices for the learning and application of game-like scenarios.

STAGE 1: PLAY (15 Min)

As children arrive at practice, they immediately start playing small games. In the first Play phase, players engage in small-sided games with the primary focus on having fun. It is important that these pickup-style games are led by the players and facilitated by the coaches. Players can experience the game while the coach observes and guides them towards developing their own solutions rather than being directed what to do.

STAGE 2: PRACTICE (30 Min)

In the second phase of Play-Practice-Play, children are engaged in different forms of targeted learning activities to further guide their opportunities to develop. Practice activities should be of appropriate challenge (striking a balance between success and failure), resemble the game, involve the players making decisions and allow for creative problem solving. The role of the coach during this phase is to guide players while using teaching actions. While it is during this phase that targeted learning takes place, there should always be an emphasis on keeping the atmosphere fun and enjoyable for the players.

STAGE 3: PLAY AGAIN! (15 Min)

The final stage of Play-Practice-Play is the game. This phase offers players the opportunity and freedom to play, without interruption, in an environment that mirrors the actual game. The focus here is to encourage players to express themselves and demonstrate what they learned during the Practice phase. A coach should observe and guide using minimal dialogue if possible. By silently observing the application of the Practice phase in the final Play phase, the coach can check each player's understanding and ability to execute the goal of the training session.

For more information, view/download the following document published by U.S. Soccer:
[U.S. SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION PLAY-PRACTICE-PLAY OVERVIEW](#)



NORTH VERMILION YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Player Development Skills

In an effort to help coaches focus on player development, we have developed a plan for coaches based on the National Grassroots Curriculum provided by US Youth Soccer. The following chart shows the skills coaches will focus on each week.

U6 DIVISION	
WEEK	SKILLS
1	Dribbling (ball control)
2	Dribbling & Running with Ball
3	Dribbling To Control the Ball & Change Direction
4	Striking Ball Toward a Target
5	Dribbling with Specific Moves
6	Continued Striking Ball Toward a Target
7	Dribbling Under Pressure
8	1v1 Attacking



NORTH VERMILION YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Weekly Plans

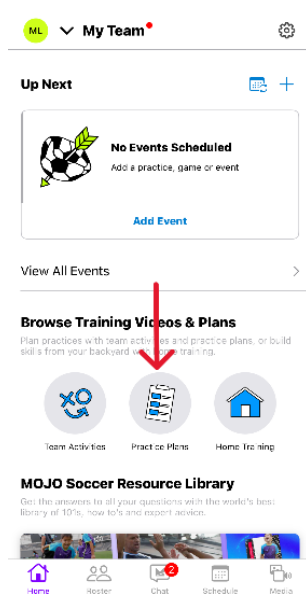
The following weekly plans provide things to look for, questions (and answers) to ask players to ensure understanding, and activities that can be used each week for coaches to introduce/teach the focus skill. Coaches are welcome to use other activities as long as they are aligned with the weekly focus skill.

The entire USYS National Grassroots Curriculum can be accessed for free via an app called “MOJO Sports.” Coaches are encouraged to download this app and access the detailed practice plans provided. Weekly practice plans provide detailed activities, short videos, and graphics for each of the focus skills.

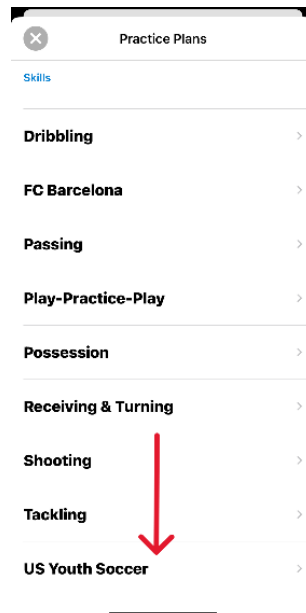
Scan this QR Code to download the app:



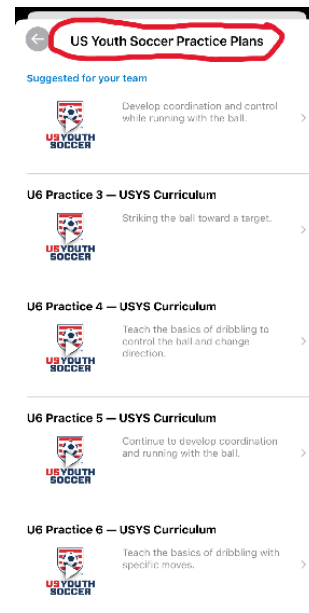
Once you download the app, the free curriculum can be found using the following steps:



From home screen click “Practice Plans”



Scroll to bottom and click “US Youth Soccer”



Scroll through to find your division/skill. Order of skills may vary slightly.



U6 Week One – Dribbling (ball control)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are learning to stop and start the ball using the bottom of the foot • Players able to balance and perform various movements (hopping, skipping, jumping) • Players are embracing their creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parts of the foot can you dribble with? Inside, outside, bottom, and laces • What is a good balanced stance? Knees bent and head over the ball • Why is it important to look up when we dribble? So we can see where we are going and where there is space

ACTIVITIES

	
<p>Bunny Trail</p>	<p>Body Part Dribbling</p>
	
<p>Sharks & Minnows</p>	<p>Tag</p>



U6 Week Two – Dribbling & Running with Ball

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are able to pick up their head and see where to dribble • Players are able to stop the ball before they get too close to another player or boundary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parts of the foot can you use to stop the ball? Inside, outside, and bottom • When do you use a small touch? In crowded spaces • When do you use a big touch? In open spaces

ACTIVITIES

	
<p>Dancing Ball</p>	<p>Kangaroo Jack</p>
	
<p>Red Light, Green Light</p>	<p>Island Hopping</p>



U6 Week Three – Dribbling to Control the Ball & Changing Direction

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players are bending their knees and getting low to change direction• Players are taking small touches to control the ball and larger touches when there is space• Players try to use the inside, outside, and bottom of their foot to change direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What parts of the foot can you dribble with? Inside, outside, bottom, and laces• What is a good body position or stance if you are looking to change direction? Knees bent• What can you do if there is open space in front of you? Take a larger touch

ACTIVITIES




	
Dinosaur Tag	The Octopus
	
101 Dalmatians	Pattern Dribbling



U6 Week Four – Striking the Ball Toward a Target

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are dribbling close to a target before striking the ball • Players keep the ball on the ground • Players are not hitting the ball too hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What part of the foot can you use to strike the ball with accuracy? Inside of foot (you will probably need to explain accuracy) • What can you do to give yourself a better chance of hitting the target? Dribble closer • Where do we strike the ball to keep it on the ground? Middle of ball

ACTIVITIES

	
<p>Minions</p>	<p>Mosquitos</p>
	
<p>1v1 to Small Goals</p>	



U6 Week Five – Dribbling with Specific Moves

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players do a move to avoid a player and not just kick and run• Praise players for trying the moves even if they make a mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can you do to avoid a player? Do a pullback, cut with the inside or outside of the foot• What can you do to make it easier to cut the ball with the inside or outside of the foot? Bend your knees• What should you do after you do a move? Accelerate or take a couple quick touches to get away from a player

ACTIVITIES

	
Free Dribbling	Gates Dribbling
	
Knockout	Dribbling Moves Explained



U6 Week Six – Striking Ball Toward a Target

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players “face up” and turn their body toward their target • Players aim with the non-striking foot • Players strike through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot to pass the ball • Player have their toe down and hit under the ball when they are using their laces • <i>SAY NO TO THE TOE!</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens when you kick the bottom of the ball? It makes the ball go in the air • Where on the ball should we kick to keep the ball on the ground? The middle: think of the ball as an Oreo cookie – the sweet spot is the creme in the middle • How can we make it easier to hit our target? Dribble so that we can face the target before we strike the ball

ACTIVITIES


	
Moving Goal	Minions
	
2v2 to Small Goals	



U6 Week Seven – Dribbling Under Pressure

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players take small touches to control the ball and change direction • Players use different surfaces to change direction • Players pick their heads up to see other wizards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can you do to make it hard for someone to take/hit your ball? Keep the ball moving • What can you do to avoid the wizard hitting your ball? A pullback or cut to turn away from them • Wizards! Where should our plant foot/non-passing foot point when we are casting a spell? It should point toward our target

ACTIVITIES

	
<p>Dinosaur Tag</p>	<p>Wizard Duel</p>
	
<p>1v1 to Small Goals</p>	



U6 Week Eight – 1v1 Attacking

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players recognize when to use big touches versus small touches • Players are trying to use moves to avoid taggers • Make sure to praise players for trying moves even if they are unsuccessful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can you do to keep your balance if both your arms are tagged in Hospital Tag? Bend your knees and try to stay lower • What can you do after you take a small touch away from a tagger? Use a burst of speed and a bigger touch to get away • What can we do to change direction with our body? Move our hips to shift to a side

ACTIVITIES

<p>Hospital Tag</p>	<p>Shadow Dribbling</p>
<p>Sharks & Minnows</p>	<p>1v1 to Endline</p>



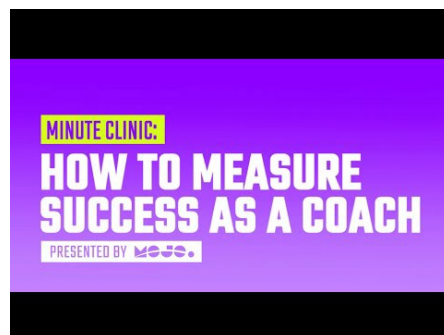
FAQs

- **When do players learn the rules (throw-ins, corner kicks, etc)?**
 - Within the Play-Practice-Play approach, players learn the rules of the game through playing and experiencing the moments when/where the rule occurs. The 2nd play phase of practice provides many moments within a context that most closely resembles the game.
- **When do players warm up and stretch?**
 - For players in U6-U12, there is no need to do any static stretching. *Playing soccer* is a great warm-up for playing soccer, therefore the first “play” phase of practice is the perfect time for players to warm up muscles while playing. For players in the U14/U15 division, static stretching can be incorporated into practice and should be done after the first “play” phase once muscles are warmed up.
- **How do I “coach” during the game?**
 - Effective coaches ***DON'T*** actually do a lot of coaching from the sideline during games. Instead of giving constant direction from the sideline, coaches should be observing to figure out which lessons from practice stuck and what may need to be revisited. Players should be allowed to problem solve and make decisions during games. Noise from sidelines (both fans and coaches) can be overwhelming for players trying to manipulate the ball.

Watch this
2-minute video



- **How do I measure success as a coach?**
 - Success ***IS NOT*** measured by wins and losses, we ***MUST*** balance winning and developing players.





Other Helpful Videos

- *Soccer 101 Series by MOJO*
 - For coaches who are new to soccer (or even those considered veterans), this collection of 50+ one-minute videos is an amazing resource! It is filled with “How to” and “What is” videos that quickly explain and demonstrate various soccer skills.
 - Access the entire playlist [***HERE***](#)
- *Minute Clinic/How to Coach Kids by MOJO*
 - A collection of one to two-minute videos on various topics pertaining to coaching soccer at the youth level
 - Access the entire playlist [***HERE***](#)