

Reflections on practice plans submitted

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In Indiana, soccer has long been a popular youth sport and an afterthought at the same time. I am part of a movement that is trying to transition Recreational Soccer leagues from an ultra-non-competitive “ everybody wins but very few learn” program. We, as soccer board members, are trying to move the soccer program to a more educational/instructional platform with a competitive travel option added. Part of this transition is identifying what our own players at the III/III level were lacking in so hat we can change the way the kids were coached at our youth level.

We found that many of the children on our team were lacking at the basic fundamental skill level compared to many of the race programs In our area. These reflections very much reveal the shortcomings of our players and the soccer program as a whole, which offer us great Insight on what we can do to change how we develop younger children In our community. PRACTICE 1: As can be expected with children in this age group (III/II 1), image becomes important to some of them. With that in mind, getting the kids started for warm up by ribbing in a square was met with a little hindrance and bewilderment.

For many of the kids, warm up was a term given to a bunch of kids unleashing target practice on whichever unfortunate soul found themselves in front of the net. However, in an attempt to get the pace up, I introduced myself as a “ shark” a couple of minutes in to force more focus on the moves and that proved effective.

The warm up hit a good pace about five minutes In when I allowed the players themselves to take the shark role, which brought more off

competitive spirit out in the boys. The “Sector Game” (aka Jewel thief) has become a favorite of both the coaches and the kids.

As a coach, the game is effective because in Dalton to teaching IV dribbling it also helps teach proper defending to those in the sector areas. In this particular instance, the obstacles of note were that the kids would slow the ball down or stop it before entering, which plays in the hands of the defender. In addition, I found that a major obstacle was keeping the kids morale up as they tried to dribble past the defenders.

Many of the kids were afraid to lose possession to the point that they were scared to be creative.

I countered that by reminding them that the best players in the world still lose the ball a decent amount, which seemed to register. Towards the activity end, the kids began to get much better at becoming less fearful when approaching the defenders and the success rate went up. The expanded small-sided activity proved rough at the start. Many of the kids' bad habits came out at the start as there was little movement and the kids had difficulty with the rules of the game. Many of the kids had their heads down and became unaware of their surroundings, and kicking without purpose took the place of passing.

I tried to combat this at first by I had to do a stop all and give everyone some direction. I took a ten second break to give some advice and add the 5 consecutive pass point rule, then let them get back to it. The flow got a little better as time went on, and the pass rule helped a little as well. The match at the end started off much the way the expanded activity did, rough.

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Passing again gave way to kicking without purpose and many kids would try to go 1 v 5 without any passing at all. We continued to let them play, however, hoping that it would improve.

About 10 minutes in, we added coach keepers in place of the child pepper to add one more field player and make scoring more difficult. This proved effective, and by making things more difficult to score the players began to look for open players. Much like the expanded game, the play improved towards the end of the match. PRACTICE 2: By keeping the focus on dribbling for another practice, I was hoping to build momentum off of the last practice and increase the kids' dribbling skill. For the warm up, I chose to do something similar to last practice but deviate just slightly.

My hope was that putting faster paced music into the warm up would increase would help pep the tempo up from the start. The warm up still started slow, but I feel the music did help get their heart rate going by adding the toe touches at the chorus. The kids did get into the flow of the music and I feel that my desired income was achieved. My small-sided activity, Yankee swap, worked out well. Much like the small-sided activity from practice 1, the kids did well with the heightened success rate and enjoyed the competition involved with the game whether it was done in the musical chairs format or in the 2 minute point counting format.

The kids did a good job of shielding the ball and many of them did well getting their head up and trying to find the open cones to dribble to. Although it may seem a bit elementary for Lull kids, this is the type of activity needed to get them more comfortable on the ball. With that in mind,

I feel that this was a successful game. Again, like in practice 1, the expanded small-sided started out rough. The kids still felt the onus to do it on their own, or maybe the lack of trust to bring other players into the game.

Because we have 12 kids, I chose 3 v 3 so that we could have 2 games going at the same time.

I let the kids try and work it UT on their own, and coached on the fly from the side as they played the game. This time it was not needed to stop the game and do a catch-all redirect. I was impressed by that and hoped that maybe it would bode well for their advancement. We still have several kids kicking without purpose, which is an issue that will have to be addressed in another practice.

The match at the end went similar to practice 1, but I chose not to use coach keepers this time. We moved to a smaller field to accommodate 6-a-side, but kept the Lull rule of offside to make them focus on the importance of knowing the rule.

We as a team still have a lot of levy play and need to work on our trust. The kids are coming from a race program where they have been encouraged to dribble through everyone and not get others involved. So, my feeling is that this will take time.

The kids did look to pass more as they became tired, so there was a light at the end of the tunnel hopefully. PRACTICE 3: passing. From the very start, things were a struggle as we tried to get the kids to focus on making good

passes, with the correct part of the foot, that are played to the feet of the receiving player.

This was in stark contrast to what many of them were accustomed to. Most kids were coming from a background where they would kick it to an area and hope someone was there.

Warm up went a little longer than 10 minutes, 13 to be exact. The kids also needed some work on receiving the pass and taking the touch away from the oncoming player. I felt this was an effective activity, so we will try this in hopes they continue to improve. The small-sided activity was a mixed bag. We had some that did very well passing, and a few did well moving to open areas.

We also had some that were good at weighting the passes correctly.

Others struggled with those aspects, and the ball would often leave the square. Much like the warm up, I felt that this was a game that we should not provide variation from on the rules. I feel this way because again this is paramount in learning effective soccer and I had broken the game down to one of its simplest forms in the iv . I let them go for the 20 minutes and switched up opponents and teams from time to time to find who needed instruction and did so on-the-fly accordingly.

Overall I was pleased with how the game went for the majority. The iv-iv keep away was a mixed bag also.

I tried very hard to let this go as long as possible without stopping the play, and chose to tit for went the ball left the square and was on the way back in <https://assignbuster.com/reflections-on-practice-plans-submitted/>

to give instruction. We had a lot of kids playing a spectators role during this game, meaning they were not prepared when the ball was coming to them. The movement also seemed to suffer. However, 10 minutes in several kids started to get the hang of it.

I felt good overall about the game and think that it was something I would like to use more frequently because it forces the kids to get better passing in tighter spaces.

Plus, with this being the first practice really focused on passing, a lot of these growing pains were to be expected. The match was rough, plain and simple. One thing that seems to happen the minute the goals are brought into play is an overall selfishness in the team. Passes go by the wayside again and kicks become the style of play and more of the levy play.

Although we try not to stop play during the scrimmage, I did stop play on this occasion to refocus them on what he had learned today for the hour. It is very apparent that we will need more practice time on passing in the near and distant future.

My future practice plans reflected that very much so. As for the plan itself, I was happy with it. It pointed out a skill we really needed to work on, which we continued to do throughout the campaign. PRACTICE 4: With the warm-up for practice 4, I wanted to do something that pushed the kids a little harder while at the same time break down the basics of passing down to the simplest of forms.

That simplest form is passing between two players. For the players that showed up early I asked them to pair up and get in the squares, that were already set out, and begin passing back and forth to get used to the space.

Once the designated start time arrived, I gave them direction and got them started. The first 90 second run went alright, but the intensity that I had hoped for in the warm-up picked up upon the challenge of beating their amount last reached by 2 passes. Allowed to start over and get a new baseline.

All things considered, I was pleased with the way they warmed up for the full 10 minutes. The small-sided activity went k. The kids competed hard during the activity, but the movement lacked at the start.

When I switched a player out or the ball went far out of the square, I took the opportunity to encourage better movement to get open and remind them that five passes earns a point. The movement came and went at times, but either way I feel that the activity accomplished my goal of helping the kids understand the need to move and show for passes, take a good touch away from the defender if needed, and then connect to the next neutral player outside of the square.

The expanded small- sided game if a transitioning iv is a very telling activity for us.

This game really helps us tell who is ready and who is not when it comes to being ready to advance further in their soccer understanding. The kids connected well at times, but movement is still an issue and the players

would often get caught ball-watching. This usually ended up in that player's team losing possession. With 12 people, we would consistently rotate a team of 4 out so that we could let 4 kids at a time get a drink and receive some instruction on how to play the game more effectively.

The kids enjoyed the game, which is a plus, and several of our kids seemed to grasp the concept.

One point of note was that there seemed to be very little kicking without purpose in this activity. The kids did, however, struggle trapping the ball and keeping the touch close to their body. The match went the same way the match always goes at the end of reactive. Our kids still revert back to their old tendencies at the beginning and we continue to see the levy mentality.

I chose against coach keepers this particular time, because I feel at sometimes that offers a false sense of security to the kids knowing an adult is back there. Those kids need to also build confidence with a kid between the posts.

Unfortunately in our situation, after 2 offers were turned down we faced such an immense drop off in talent that I felt it would be more of an obstacle to have 2-4 more players than it would be to leave them off of the team. Having said all of that, I continue to let them play the 20 minutes and let them try to hopefully figure it out (with a little gentle nudges in the correct direction).

PRACTICE 5: Practice 5 was named the " Chamber of Horrors Trilogy" and when the kids arrived at practice, much like practice 4, the cones were already set up and ready to go.

Many of the kids have kicked their habit of wanting to shoot before practice starts, and I have noticed that they have started to form passing squares or playing monkey in the middle on their own.

This in itself is so refreshing I almost became overcome by my emotions. With them in check, though, we began the warm-up. Part one of the “Chamber of Horrors” went similar to the way the last warm-up went. We did a practice run, some kids fibbed about their scores, I wiped the slate clean once they realized they would have to beat that score by 2, and we began with a better sense of honesty.

The kids had a little trouble with the notion of receiving, turning, then passing through a different gate at first.

By the end of the ten minutes they had it better figured out. Part 2 of the “Chamber of Horrors” went over very well. The kids enjoyed the activity, and the addition of the defensive “ghosts” added a competitive spirit to the atmosphere of the game. The teams became frustrated by the defense, by using each other. I also had to remind them of the fact there were several “chambers” to go to.

That helped a little and things got more fluid as time went on.

By the end of the 20 minutes, I feel that the understanding was there, even if the execution was lacking. Part 3 of the “Chamber of Horrors” started rough much like every other expanded small-sided activity I have tried. A lot of dribbling into bad situations and a lot of kicking without purpose took place. I had to do a lot of coaching on the fly during this one.

I was constantly asking the boys to spread out when they possessed the ball. I would say we probably went 7 minutes without a point, but the teams started to figure it out and there were several close calls.

I really like this game as a way to use strategy advance the ball into advantageous situations. Some of the kids started to understand that you don't have to go forward all of the time. I was very optimistic that this would carry over into the match at the end of practice.

Each team had spells of over 2 minutes when they possessed the ball without losing it to the other team. I feel that this was a good practice plan that instituted several key factors of playing effective soccer. Before the match I reminded hem to use the things they learned today about passing and combining to transition and create good scoring chances.

Unfortunately, during the match, my optimism disappeared again. The team continues to struggle to carry the passing lessons learned over to the match play. The teamwork again subsided for selfish play.

We went back to coach keepers to allow all kids to play in the field in hopes that things they showed in the days activities. Instead of progression, I saw regression in the tactics and strategies. The goals appear to be a bit of a curse for us, and even the post practice pep talks concerning team scoring aren't yet registering. I let them play the full 20, but the passing failed to improve and actually got sloppier.

I plan to continue drilling the teamwork home, and hopefully eventually it will sink in.

SUMMARY: All things aside, I have noticed an overall improvement in the kids. Their attitudes have been mostly positive throughout the off-season and you can see the effort. In some ways, teaching these things to older kids proves more difficult than the younger ones because I find myself fighting several seasons of bad habits learned by the older kids. They do continue to improve, though, and I look forward to working with them for the rest of the season.