



# Smithfield Youth Soccer

Grades 3-4

Development Focus & Practice Activities/Drills

# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

7v7

Grades 3 & 4



## FOUNDATION PHASE II

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT COMBINATION PLAY AND FINISHING

### Soccer Development

#### GOALS

- Players develop scanning skills (ME AND MY SCANNING SKILLS)
- Players develop fundamental movement skills (ME AND MY MOVEMENT SKILLS)
- Players continue to develop fundamental soccer skills with and without the ball with pressure (ME AND THE BALL)
- Players develop cooperative play, low structured team play based on a style of play (ME AND MY TEAMMATES)

### Learning objectives

- To develop individual coordinated movements (efficiency, quality, quickness)
- To continue develop reaction speed and acceleration speed, agility
- To develop fundamental player actions with a high focus on both attacking and defending actions
- To develop skill acquisition (application of technique): mid-range passing and shooting (20 yards)
- To develop spatial awareness (SCANNING) and coordinated movements with teammates
- To cooperate with others as a team to solve problems within the game
- Developing formations with specific roles and responsibilities including the goalkeeper
- To introduce age-appropriate individual & collective team tactical principles / player actions in attacking and defending and both transition moments
- To experience playing in multiple positions
- To introduce of the concept of a warming-up routine
- To develop reflection skills: about the game
- To develop reflection skills: build self-esteem and self- confidence

# Passing warm-up, bounce pass, first touch, movement, technical drill

A technical soccer warm-up drill that develops passing accuracy, first-touch control, and continuous movement through a sequence of bounce passes and quick rotations.

## Drill setup

- 1. **Field Size:** Two 5-yard gates set in a line, spaced 3 yards apart using cones or training sticks.
- 2. **Players:** 3 per station

2 players on one end of the cones (one with the ball)

1 player on the opposite side

## Drill Instructions

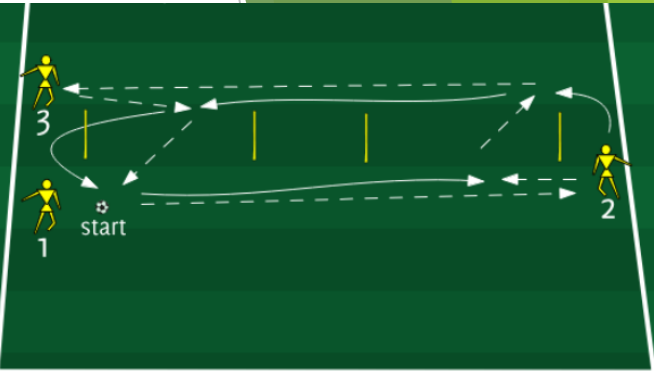
- 1. Player 1 passes the ball to Player 2 on the opposite side and immediately follows the pass.
- 2. Player 2 returns a bounce pass and then moves around the cone to receive a return pass between the closer gate from Player 2.
- 3. Player 2 then passes a ball to Player 3 on the opposite side of the area, and Player 2 immediately follows the pass.
- 4. Player 3 returns a bounce pass and moves around the cone to receive a return pass between the gate from Player 3.
- 5. Continue for 60- 90 seconds before switching directions or rotating players through different groups.

## Drill Variations

- Weaker Foot Only: All passes and touches must use the weaker foot.
- One-Touch Bounce Pass: Receiving player must return the ball with one touch.

## Drill Coaching Points

- Sharp, Accurate Passes: Focus on hitting the target with proper weight.
- Quick Movement After Passing: Players should sprint or shuffle around the cone with purpose.
- Body Positioning: Position the body for a quick return pass and stay light on feet.
- Communication: Verbal and visual cues help maintain rhythm and spacing.



3-Man Passing and Moving Warmup

# 1v1 escape, tight space dribbling, pressure, decision-making, first touch

A tight-space 1v1 soccer drill that improves first touch, awareness, and decision-making under pressure as players attempt to escape the grid through one of three gates.

## Drill setup

1. Field Size: 6x6 yard grid
2. Gates: Three 1-yard gates on three sides of the corner grid  
The middle gate is placed diagonally, facing the opposite cone
3. Players: 4 players per grid
4. 3 players with balls at the diagonal gate
5. 1 player without a ball at the opposite cone

## Drill Instructions

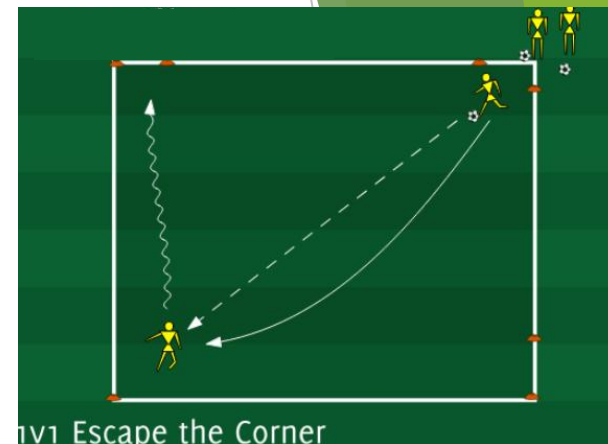
1. One of the players with a ball passes to the player on the opposite cone, who must receive the ball in the corner of the grid.
2. Immediately after the pass, the passer becomes the defender and applies pressure.
3. The receiving player must attempt to dribble through one of the three gates to escape the corner.
4. A point is scored only if the ball is dribbled through a gate (no points for passing through).
5. The receiver must read the pressure and decide whether to take a close control touch or a larger touch to escape around the defender.

## Drill Variations

- Touch Limit: Allow only two touches to escape for added challenge.
- Smaller Gates: Narrow the gates to demand more precise control and execution.

## Drill Coaching Points

- First Touch Awareness: Encourage players to take touches based on the pressure — small if unpressured, big if defender is tight.
- Read the Defender: Attackers must scan quickly and choose the right gate to escape through.
- Body Positioning: Receive the ball on the half-turn to see both the field and the defender.
- Defensive Pressure: Defenders should close down quickly and angle their approach to limit escape options.
- Acceleration: Once an escape route is chosen, explode into space with speed.



# Y passing drill, movement off the ball, receiving, body positioning, first touch

A passing and movement drill using a Y-shaped cone setup to improve receiving, passing, and dribbling with speed. Players rotate through roles. Players rotate through roles.

## Drill setup

1. Use four cones to form a "Y" shape.
2. The base cone (#1) is 15 yards from the center cone (#2).
3. The top cones (#3 and #4) are 10 yards from the center cone.
4. Assign 5-6 players per setup, with one player at each cone and extra players lined up at cone #1.

## Drill Instructions

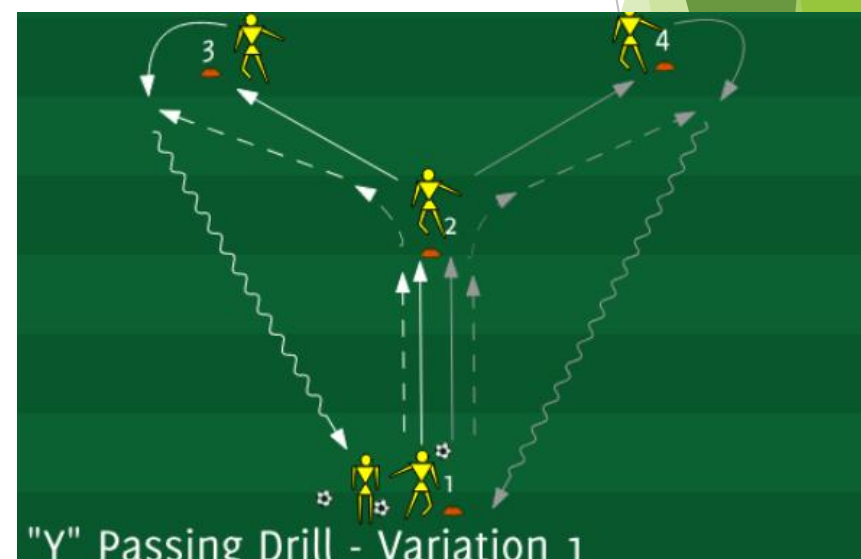
1. Player 1 (at base) passes to Player 2 (center).
2. Player 2 receives with an open body and plays to Player 3 (top left).
3. Player 3 dribbles quickly back to cone #1 and passes to the next player in line.
4. Players rotate positions by following their pass.
5. The sequence repeats with Player 1 passing to Player 2, but this time Player 2 plays to Player 4 (top right).
6. Player 4 dribbles back to cone #1 and plays the ball to the next player in line.
7. The drill continues with players moving through each position.

## Drill Variations

- Require one-touch passing for advanced players.
- Increase the passing distance to challenge long-range accuracy.
- Reverse the passing pattern to develop both feet.

## Drill Coaching Points

- Emphasize receiving with an open body to play forward quickly.
- Encourage firm, accurate passes to keep the drill flowing.
- Focus on quick decision-making and scanning before receiving.
- Ensure players dribble at speed when returning to the start.
- Reinforce communication and awareness to execute clean rotations.



## 4-goal soccer game

The 4-Goal Game provides a dynamic and engaging way to teach players key concepts like spatial awareness, teamwork, and quick transitions.

### Drill setup

1. Create a rectangular field with dimensions around 25x35 yards (adjust based on the number of players and their skill level).
2. Place two goals near the corners of the long side of the field (totaling four goals, two for each team to defend and attack).
3. Divide players into two teams. A 3v3, 4v4, or 5v5 setup works well for this drill.
4. Each team defends two goals and attacks the two goals on the opposite side.

### Drill Instructions

1. The teams start in the middle of the field, and the coach plays a ball to begin the game.
2. Players can score in either of the two goals they are attacking, which forces the defending team to be aware of multiple threats and cover both goals.
3. The game focuses on quick transitions between defending and attacking, as the ball can switch directions rapidly.

### Drill Variations

- Limit touches for attacking players (e.g., two-touch maximum) to force quicker decision-making and movement.
- Increase the number of players (e.g., 6v6 or 7v7) to work on positioning in larger spaces.

### Drill Coaching Points

- Attacking players must decide quickly which goal to target based on the defensive setup.
- Defending players must communicate and position themselves effectively to cover both goals and block passing lanes.
- Encourage quick decision-making when attacking; players should assess which goal is more open and position themselves accordingly.
- Focus on defensive positioning and communication. Players should work together to cover both goals and prevent the attackers from having easy options.





## Six cone soccer passing drill

This is a soccer passing drill that focuses on passing, movement, and awareness after the pass.

### Drill setup

1. Create a 15 X 25-yard rectangle using six cones.
2. Have five players start on one of the six cones, leaving one empty.
3. One player starts with the ball.

### Drill Instructions

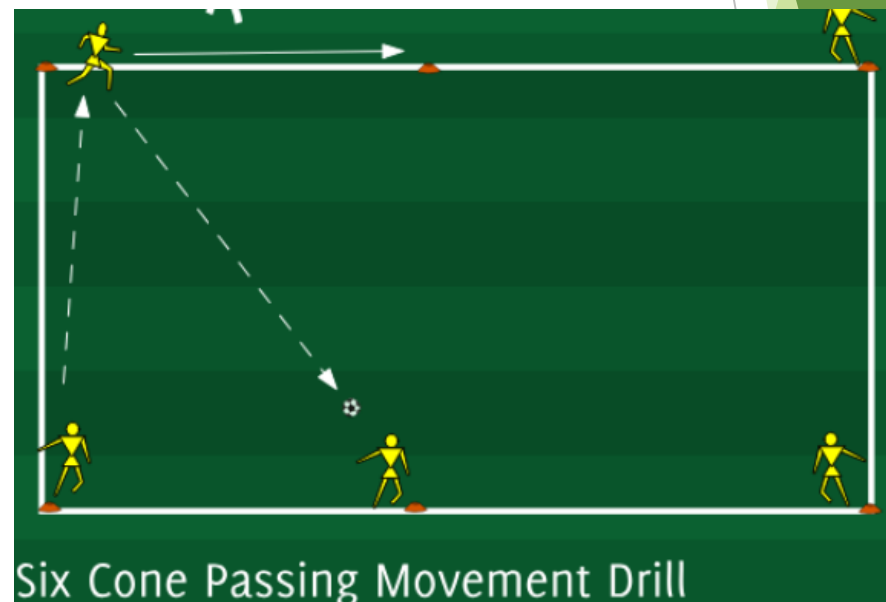
1. As players pass the ball, they must move to the open cone.
2. As the passing player moves to the open cone, his cone becomes open and available for the next passer.
3. Play continues for 2 minutes.

### Drill Variations

- Increase or decrease the size of the field
- Limit the touches to 1-touch passing
- Add a combination or 1-2 pass

### Drill Coaching Points

- Good passing technique
- Crisp passes
- Good weight of passes
- Movement immediately after the pass
- Play in 2 touch



## 4v2 soccer, 4 vs 2 soccer game

This 4v2 game will focus on building an attack near the penalty area and getting shots on goal.

### Drill setup

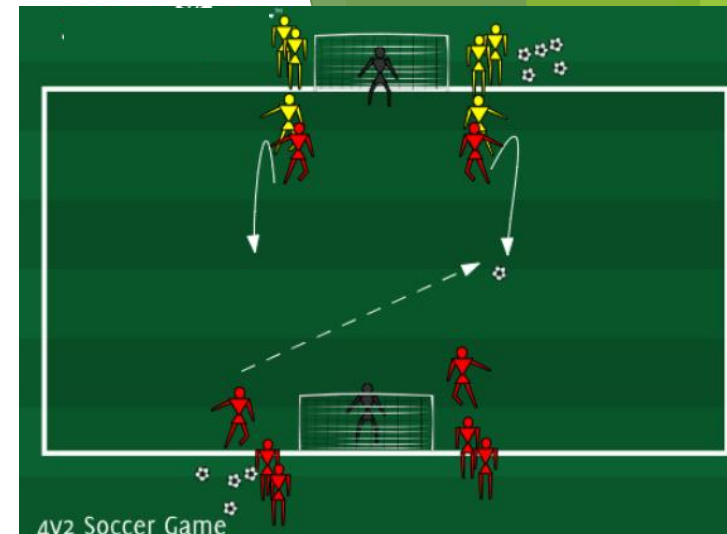
1. Create a grid the width of the playing field and about 25 yards from the primary goal on the pitch. The grid should be approximately 50x25 yards.
2. Place a portable goal 25 yards from the primary goal.
3. Split the team into two groups and place a goalkeeper in each goal.
4. Each team should position themselves on either side of the goalposts, one side with a supply of [soccer balls](#).

### Drill Instructions

1. Two target players from the attacking team will start the drill at the goal they are attacking, while the other players start at the goal they are defending.
2. The target players will check-in and ask for the ball from their teammates located near the defensive area.
3. The opposing team also sends 2 defenders to close down the target players checking in.
4. The starting attacker plays into the feet of the target play and plays 4v2 to the goal.
5. The target player decides whether or not to turn and shoot or lay a ball back to the midfielders.
6. If a defender wins the ball they attack 2vs4 on the other goal.
7. Alternate and let the other team play 4v2 going to their goal.
8. Have the forwards play as target players.

### Drill Coaching Points

- Attackers playing high checking in should read their pressure to decide whether or not to turn and go to goal, or lay the ball back to the midfield player and reset.
- Remind attackers that you miss 100% of all shots not taken.
- Focus on movement and positioning after laying the ball back to the midfielders.





# 1v1 Shooting Drill

Spice up your shooting combination drill by finishing with a 1v1 to goal. Add a fun little twist, and the kids love it.

## Drill setup

1. Set cones in the shape of a diamond about 20 yards from goal. Each cone about 12 yards apart. Adjust the size based on the age and skill level of your players.
2. Instruct one player to start at cone 2, 3, and 4. The remaining players form a line behind cone 1.
3. Instruct one player to start in the goal (not necessarily the goalkeeper as this will change).
4. A supply of balls should be placed near cone 1.

## Drill Instructions

1. Player 1 starts with the ball and passes to player 2. Player 1 follows the pass and moves to player 2's place.
2. Player 2 passes to player 3 and moves into quickly moves into defensive position.
3. Player 3 passes to player 4 and takes 4's place.
4. Player 4 receives the ball and immediately takes on player 2 in 1v1 battle to goal.
5. If player 4 doesn't score in the 1 vs 1, player 4 becomes the keeper. If player 4 scores, keeper remains.

## Drill Coaching Points

- Good passing combination
- Quick Movement off the ball
- Good defensive posture and positioning
- Shooter beats the defender with speed and gets a shot on target.



# Four Corners Soccer Passing Game

The Four Corners Soccer Passing Game is a great soccer passing drill to focus on changing the point of the attack, and timing of runs and passes.

## Drill setup

1. In a 40X40 yard area, create four grids that are about 5x5 yard in each corner of the larger grid.
2. Split the group into two teams and put one team in an alternate color.

## Drill Instructions

1. While each team is in possession of the ball, this team should pass among their teammates to keep possession.
2. A point is scored by passing the ball to a teammate that is inside one of the smaller corner grids.
3. The teams can score in any of the corners. However, they cannot score in the same area twice in a row.

## Drill Variations

- Do not allow players to stand inside the grids waiting for a pass. Instead, instruct the players to work on the timing of the runs and timing of the pass to connect inside the grid.
- Change the scoring rule and only award a point when a give-and-go is performed with the player that is in the grid.

## Drill Coaching Points

- Focus on the weight and accuracy of the passing
- Make sure players without the ball are supporting the player with the ball at all times
- Make sure the timing of the runs and timing of the pass are in sync.
- Make sure players change the point of attack and are not forcing passes into congested areas

