

# Wellsboro Area Youth Soccer

## U12 Curriculum

At this stage, the structure (but not the content) of the training sessions will be similar to that of older players. At this stage, players are pre-pubescent and have important physical limitations in terms of strength and endurance. With that said, children's capacity to solve problems increases significantly at this stage. Therefore, although the main component of the training session will be to continue to develop technique, an increased tactical understanding will be part of the emphasis in training. - US Soccer Curriculum

### **Psychological:**

*Objectives: The player will...*

- show increased motivation and competition.
- demonstrate increased self-confidence paired with respect and self-discipline.
- show increased cooperation and teamwork.
- demonstrate increased commitment.
- increase communication (productive) on the field.

### **Physical:**

*Objective: The player will...*

- show increased speed, agility, coordination and balance in competitive games with and without the ball.

## **Technique (Field players):**

*Objectives: The player will...*

- perform technique with increasing quality at increased tempo.
- demonstrate advancing moves, cuts, and turns with the ball (in combination) - [Single and double cut](#) , [3 basic turns](#)
- increase efficiency in receiving and turning with the ball on the first touch.
- pass with the inside, outside, instep, over distance (20+ yards).
- cross a ball from the flank (wide position) - [Crossing](#)
- strike to pass or shoot a ball with appropriate technique- [Soccer hop](#)
- perform chipping and volley shots - [Volley kicks](#)

## **Technique (Goalkeepers):**

*Objectives: The player will demonstrate...*

- advancing footwork (side shuffle, crossover) in combination.
- increased field awareness and communication with field players.
- appropriate "angle play" based on the location of the ball.
- how to appropriately deal with crossed balls.
- how to execute a breakaway save.
- how to use deflections (punching, boxing, tipping, parrying) when making saves.

## Tactics:

*Objectives: The player will demonstrate...*

- the use of game related communication on the field.
  - A. "man on" - person with (or receiving) the ball has immediate pressure from the opponent.
  - B. "turn" - person with (or receiving) the ball has time to turn with the ball.
  - C. "switch" - change the point of attack across the field.
  - D. "I'm in" - first person applying immediate pressure on the ball.
  - E. "shift" - defensively slide right of left.
  - F. "step" - defensively move toward the ball.
  - G. "drop" - defensively retreat.
- Use of appropriate communication (Goalkeepers).
  - A. "Keeper" - The goalkeeper will handle the ball.
  - B. "Away" - The goalkeeper needs the field players to clear the ball "away".
  - C. "Out" - The keeper has the ball and wants field players to push "out" of the box and up the field.
- 3v3 attacking principles of "triangle", "width", "length" and the defending principles of pressure, cover, and balance.
- starting the attack from the keeper ("Playing out of the back").
- attacking and defending set pieces (throw-ins, free kicks, corner kicks, goal kicks).

## Training

### Objective:

- 2 practices/week (90 minutes) plus a game
- Multiple, efficient touches on the ball for each player at each practice

### Principles:

- Be sure the training area is appropriate and safe.
- Activities should be developmentally appropriate and relevant to the game of soccer. (See EPYSA U12 season practice plan below)
- Be clear, concise, with accurate information.
- Practice session activities should build from simple to complex.
- Encourage player decision making on the field.

### Structure:

- [Setting up the practice area](#)
- Each practice session has four main ingredients:
  1. Warm-up - Elevating body temperature (use the ball)
  2. Individual Activity - technique improvement (each with a ball)
  3. Small Group Activity - improve technique and understanding with small numbers
  4. Large Group Activity - application of technique and decision making in the game.
- Preparation: All coaches should have a plan coming into the practice session.  
[EPYSA U12 Season Practice Plan](#)
  - 20% of time spent on the physical component
  - 30% of time spent on technique
  - 20% of time spent on tactics
  - 30% of time spent playing the game - (small-sided)
- During the Session: Do not stop the session too often. Players must learn to find solutions without constant coaching. Give clear and accurate coaching points and quickly restart the practice.
- Evaluation: Take a few minutes after the session to review and note what worked well and what needs improvement.

## **The Game:**

Objective: By the end of the season the player should be capable of:

- applying technique at increasing speed in game situations.
- applying attacking and defending principles in games.

Key: \*New terminology for the age group

## Terminology

Dribbling - Controlling and moving the ball with the feet.

Goal line - The shorter boundary lines marking the end of the field. The full goal line is in the field of play.

Tactic: Individual or collective actions performed by a player or group of players to take advantage of an opponent, group of opponents or a team. The tactics are the tools to develop the strategy. Example: Quick transition of the ball from one side of the field to the other

Touchline - The longer boundary line marking the side of the field. The full touch line is in the field of play.

Block Tackle - *The most basic "tackle" in soccer. It is made head on, weight over the ball, using the inside of the foot. It is important to keep the tackling foot low, the ankle firm & the leg stiff.*

Goal Kick - A goal kick shall be awarded to the defending team when the entire ball crosses the goal line having last been touched or played by the attacking team. A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick.

Soccer Hop" - When the player hops on to their plant foot while at the same time loading their shooting leg - as opposed to just contacting the ball while in the running motion.

Throw-in - A throw-in shall be awarded to a team when the ball is last touched by a member of the opposing team before the entire ball passes over the touchline. A player throws the ball using both hands. The ball must be delivered from behind and over the head in one continuous movement, while both feet are on the ground on or behind the touchline and the player must be facing the field. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

Volley Kick - Kicking the ball straight out of the air (the ball does not bounce first.). A "half volley" is when the ball is kicked out of the air after bouncing first.

Shielding - putting the body between the ball and defender, Play ball with far foot, low center of gravity

Key: \*\*\* New game for the age group

## Dribbling Games

### 1. Red Light - Green Light

As in the game we played in our youth, one player is "IT". He stands at one end of the field with his/her back to the others and calls out red light, green light one, two, three and then turns around. The players meanwhile have been dribbling toward him/her and must stop, with their foot on top of the ball, when the player turns around. Anyone moving must go back to the beginning to try again.

**Coaching Points:** Keep the ball close and under control

### 2. North - South - East and West

Players dribble where the coach tells them to, i.e. a direction as suggested in the title.

**Coaching Points:** Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up.

### 3. Big Bad Bear

Each player with a ball in designated space. The coach is the "big bad bear" and moves about trying to get the ball from the players. If a ball is knocked away, the player quickly recovers the ball and rejoins the game.

**Coaching Points:** Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up, look for open space away from the coach who is trying to get the ball.



## 4. Draw

Partners face each other. Place one soccer ball between the two players. The objective of the game is to "draw" the ball back using the sole of the foot. The command to "Draw" is given by the coach. The fun part is that the coach tells a story in which he uses the word "draw" to signal the player movement.

For example: "Willy and his sister were working on cleaning their rooms. Willy said, 'Where should I put these socks?' And his sister replied, 'In your **Drawer**.'" Make up really silly stories.

You can add progression to this activity by having the players jog in place, have the players only use the non-dominant foot, have the players move up a ladder if they win and down if they lose the round and see who can get to the top first

**Coaching Points:** using the sole of the foot to pull the ball away from the opponent

## 5. Pac Man

In this game players are moving in any direction in a designated space. All players except one has a ball. The player without a ball is the "ghost" and tries to knock the other player's soccer ball out-of-bounds. Any player who loses his ball becomes the "ghost".

**Coaching Points:** Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up, look for open space away from the "ghost" who is trying to get the ball.

## 6. Sharks and Minnows

Set up a rectangular grid with cones. One player is in the center and is the "shark". Everyone else is along an end line with a ball. The objective is to get to the other end, in control of the ball. Don't let the players just kick it and run after it. The "shark" has to knock the ball out of bounds. Whoever's ball goes out becomes a "shark" and assists in getting the remainder of the players. The last player in becomes the next "shark".

**Coaching Points:** Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up, get past the opponent

## 7. Dribble Across The Square

Make a square about ten steps wide. Players are positioned so that all sides of the square are occupied by a player with the ball facing the center of the square.



The objective is to dribble across the square, turn at the opposite line and return to starting position. Continue for the designated number of "laps".

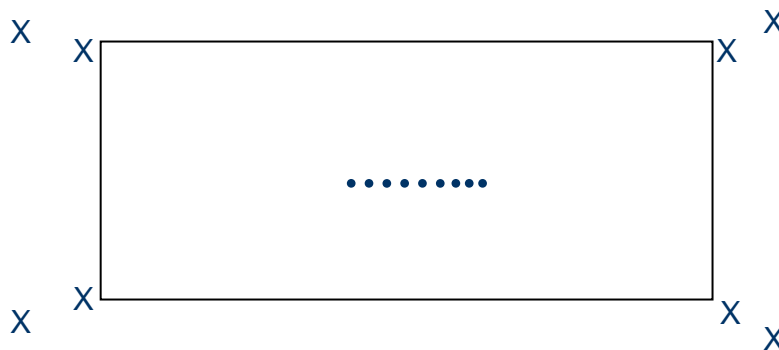
*Coaching Points:* head up, avoid oncoming player, turns

## 8. Capture Three \*\*\*

Create a square space (25 x 25) with 9 balls and an equal number of players starting at each corner. The soccer balls are in the middle (see diagram below for the setup)

The way the game is played is that the first person in each line sprints to the middle, gets a ball and dribbles it back to the corner. Then the second person goes. From the second person on, players can take the ball either from the middle or from one of the other corners (players may not shield the ball at the corners). Only one person per line can be away from the corner at any one time. Also, a player away from the corner can only have one ball in their possession. The first team to get three balls in their corner wins.

*Progression:* Put restrictions in such as left foot only, outside of the foot only, having to touch the ball on every step etc.



## Passing Games

### 1. Quick Tag

One ball for the group. One player is the defender but does not try to win the ball. Rather, she tries to tag the player who has the ball at his feet. If successful, the tagged player becomes the new tagger. 5 successful passes equals one point ("goal")

### 2. Freeze Tag

Freeze tag is played in a rectangular grid. One person (or two if you like) is (are) IT. All players must dribble and stay in control of their ball. If the IT player tags them they are frozen. If they lose it out of bounds they must also freeze in place.

Teammates of the frozen players can unfreeze them by passing their ball between legs and then continuing to dribble the ball once it passes through their legs.

Change the IT often.

### 3. "GET EM"

Each player will need a ball set off to the outside of the playing space. Player 'A' is "It" and is the only player to start with a ball. **Player 'A' dribbles and tries to hit the other players below the waist with the ball.** Any player that is hit gets a ball and joins player 'A'. The game is over when all of the players have been "caught". The last player caught is "It" and starts with the ball for the next game. If you think the task will be too difficult for the one player to get another at the start of the game, start with 2 players being "It".

#### 4. Passing Square (1)

A square space with a minimum of five players is designated. Players in equal numbers start at each of the four corners of space. The extra player starts at the corner where ball starts. Play starts by passing to an adjacent corner and following immediately, joining the line of player who was passed to.

Coaching Points: Accurate, well-paced passes. Receiving passes with the inside of the foot and opening hips toward direction of next pass.

#### 5. Passing Square (2)

A square space with a minimum of five players is designated. Players in equal numbers to each of the four corners of space. Extra player is at corner where ball starts. Play starts by passing diagonally across grid and following immediately, taking the place of player who was passed to. If pass is received from a diagonal, the next pass should be square and vice versa.

Coaching Points: Accurate, well-paced passes. First touch away from pressure of oncoming player.

#### 6. Circle

Players split into two groups. Half the players are inside the designated CIRCLE space while the others are positioned around the outside of all four sides of the space. Each player on the outside has a ball. On "go", players on the inside of space move to receive a pass from a player on the outside.

After receiving a pass, the player returns the pass moves to receive a pass from a different person.

Variations: As above except inside players receive, turn and play to a different outside player who does not have a ball.

Progressions:

- a. May only receive with the inside or outside of the foot
- b. receive on the foot, thigh, chest, head from a toss
- c. add defenders to pressure inside players

## 7. 4v4 to cone goals

Play 4v4 with cones (4) on endline. The player that hits their opponent's cone can reset the cone on their team's goal line. The team that wins all the cones wins the game.

### Shooting Games

#### 1. World Cup \*\*\*

Players work in pairs as a team (country of their choice). They all must stand outside of a 12yd boundary (lined with low cones) parallel with goal line. Coaches standing behind the net or end line continuously throw balls out towards these pairs (teams) using about 6-8 balls to start.

The objective is for the teams to retrieve a ball and shoot quickly into the net from behind the boundary line. As soon a team scores (it can be done by either of the two teammates), they sprint off to the end line. The last team left without scoring a goal gets eliminated from the competition (like the World Cup!). The next round starts again with one less team, et. al., until there are only two teams left competing.

Teams are not only trying to score but are also allowed to defend their opposing teams trying to score. The pace is wild as "live" balls are continuously served to the teams (teams that are knocked out chase stray shots behind the nets and get them back to the coaches ASAP). Use a fewer number of balls as the number of teams dwindle.

The coaches are goal keepers or leave goal open.

## References:

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Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (EPYSA)

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