McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Simon Says* In a rectangular area play Simon Says with the team. If a player does something they are not supposed to issue them a "Gotcha!" Play to see who can get the least "Gotcha's". Examples of activities include dribbling in the area, change direction, stop the ball with your …. Even throw in some trick one's like kick the ball as far away as you can. Progressions: 1 min. w/o ball, 1 min. w/ball at hands, 4 w/ball at feet	▪ Have the players do several actions like clapping in between your legs and skipping to increase body awareness
2nd Activity *Monster Turnaround* In the same area have everyone dribbling around with a ball. Two monsters (coaches) should be moving around in the area as well. Players get a point for tagging a monster and executing a turn without the monster getting their ball. Play for 30 seconds. Progressions: Play to try to beat your own score. Turn using the sole of foot. Turn using outside of foot.	▪ The players should be able to turn with the: o Sole of the foot o Inside of the foot o Outside of the foot ▪ After players turn they should accelerate to get away from the monster
3rd Activity *Tigerball* Each player has a ball except for the "Tigers." At the coach's signal, the tigers (2) try to steal a ball from one of the other players. To win it, he must steal the ball with his feet and then hold it above his head in his hands. The tiger should then take the ball to the coach. Now, both players are tigers. Play until only two people are left and then those players are the next tigers. Progressions: Use only left foot, outsides of feet, soles of feet.	▪ When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender?
4th Activity *Soccer Golf* Set up a golf course in the area and have the players "golf" in pairs. In order to complete a hole the players could be asked to pass their ball into a corner flag or to make the ball stop in a small grid.	▪ Requiring the players to hit a corner flag to finish out a hole demands accuracy ▪ Requiring players to play the ball so that it stops in a small square demands that they play the ball with the proper amount of pace (weight)
5th Activity (the game) *Numbers Game* Split the players into two teams and have them stand on opposite endlines. The game is played on a small soccer field. Assign each player a number on each end (1-5 on one side and 1-5 on the other side). Play a ball into the area and call out a number; those players must then sprint onto the field and play 1v1. Play until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. Progressions: Have more than one 1v1 game going on at the same time. Call out two numbers. Mix up the numbers.	▪ Don't be afraid to have more than one 1v1 going on at the same time ▪ Encourage players to shoot whenever they have a clear line of sight to the goal

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4

McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Monkey's in the Jungle* Use disc cones to set up small trees (small triangles) in a large playing area. 2 players are lions, the rest are monkey's. Have two less trees than the number of monkey's. Monkey's are safe from lions if they are in a tree, only one monkey in a tree at any one time. Monkey's can only stay in trees until another monkey comes along and makes a monkey noise. Monkeys that get tagged switch jobs with the lion. Progressions: 1. Players dribble a ball (once lion steals a ball they become the monkey) 2. Monkeys must perform a move in the tree	▪ Players need to be able to stop the ball quickly once in a tree. ▪ Players need to protect the ball from the lions.
2nd Activity *Wacky Weather Game* In a large playing area every player has a ball and must follow weather commands from Coach. Windy = dribble; No wind = move slowly taking lots of touches; Hurricane = race around perimeter of grid and back into coach; Raining = 10 toe taps; Sunny = lay down & use ball as pillow (no hands); Thunder = turn (e.g. dragback); Lightning = move (e.g. scissors); Snowstorm = kids try to hit coach with balls; Tornado = coaches are tornadoes & try to steal balls from players. Last player left with a ball is the winner.	▪ Players should learn basic turns on the thunder part e.g. inside cut; outside cut; dragback. ▪ Players should learn moves on lightning part e.g. step fake; scissors move; stepover move ▪ Players should try to use moves and turns to escape tornadoes.
3rd Activity *Soccer Olympics* Using a large square playing area have half the players be servers who spread out around outside of the square holding a ball in hand. Remaining players stand in a small 5 yard square in middle of big square. Inside player's race around calling for ball from open servers. Players must play a controlled volley (kick) back to server who must catch it. Each time server makes catch middle player scores a point. Once you reach 5 pts you race back to middle. First three back get gold, silver, bronze. Progressions: 1. Head ball back 2. thigh/volley	▪ Players must call for the ball before it can be served into them. ▪ Players should get approx 5 yards away from server when calling for ball. ▪ Players must be on toes ready to get to the ball when it is served ▪ Players must try to keep balance when they kick/head the ball back
4th Activity *Edge of the World* Each player gets a ball and stands on one sideline of an area. The objective is for everyone to pass their ball so that is stops as close to the other sideline as possible. If the ball goes past the sideline it falls off the edge of the world. Players gets points for getting their ball within one yard (distance depends upon ability) of the line without going over. Progressions: Players play ball with laces; inside of foot	▪ Instead of having a line you could also have an end zone that the players try to get their ball to stop in ▪ Players should be encouraged to step in to their passes and follow through when making contact. ▪ Players must look down at ball as they are striking it.
5th Activity (the game) *Outta There* In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a **small** line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are "outta there." This should be a very fast paced game. Progession: Move from 1 vs 1 to 2 vs 2	▪ This game should be **very** fast paced ▪ As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately ▪ The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren't having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them ▪ Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4

McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Champions League* In a large square playing area players choose 4 champions league teams which represent each side of the square (e.g. Arsenal; Barcelona; Real Madrid; Chelsea) Coach calls out team names in any order and players must run towards that side. Progressions: 1. Players dribble ball 2. Coach shouts 'Gooooal Chelsea!" and players must race to Chelsea and then perform celebration dance e.g. 10 toe taps.	▪ Players should use dragback and inside cut turns when changing direction. ▪ Have a skills move for every goal celebration e.g. scissors move; stepover move; inside/outside rolls ▪ Add your own fun commands e.g. 'offsides' – everyone stops with foot on ball and raises their hand. ▪ Players must be able to slow down quickly to stop at each side.
2nd Activity *Wacky Races* In a large square playing area players dribble a ball each imagining they are driving in their favorite car. Coach has red, yellow, green cones and holds them up in random order. Red = stop, Yellow = slow, Green = Go. Progressions: 1. 'Nascar' – players race around outside of square 2. 'Donuts' – dribble in a circle 3. 'Reverse' – dragback move.	▪ Last player to stop on red light must go to re-take test (separate small square where they perform skills moves) Players must also re-take test if they crash into someone else. ▪ Players must look up often to see lights changing color. ▪ Add fun commands like: 'let me hear your engines!' 'let me hear your horns!' ' Let me hear your radios!'
3rd Activity *Pirates of the Caribbean* In a 15x25 yard area split players into 2 teams (Black Pearl & Flying Dutchman). Each long side of area represents ship where teams line up with a ball each. Place 7 sharks (cones) in middle of area in a line. Teams must battle to knock the cones over by kicking balls at them, and then retrieve them. Balls can only be kicked from side of area. Game ends once all sharks are captured. Progressions: 1. Passing with weak foot 2. striking with laces	▪ Ensure players are striking ball with correct foot surface (inside/laces) ▪ Players should step into their passes and follow through the ball. ▪ Player's must keep their eye on ball when striking it. ▪ Player's standing foot must be beside ball and facing target.
4th Activity *Shark Attack* In a large playing area players each have a ball and are surfers. 2 or 3 players are sharks and must try to kick all balls out of grid in short a time as possible. Once player loses their ball they combine with other surfers by trying to pass balls around sharks. At end of game only one ball will remain and it becomes a keepaway game. Change sharks after each round. Sharks with lowest time are the winners.	▪ Sharks should work together to pressure players off ball. ▪ Emphasis starts on dribbling and shielding and moves on to passing and spacing out as number of balls reduces.
5th Activity (the game) *GK Game* Set up several small 10 x 20 yard fields and have the team play 2v2 in them. When a team is on defense they have to have one person drop back and be a goalie. When the defender steals the ball he passes the ball back to the goalie and they then start to attack. While this is happening the other team is having someone drop back into their goal. Comments: Have several games going at once and rotate the teams so everyone two person teams gets to play all the other teams.	▪ Physically demanding game ▪ The nature of the game demands instant transition from attack to defense

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4

McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Soccer Ball Tag* In a 20x 20 yard square have 2 – 3 taggers, and of the remaining players give half of them a ball to hold. You can only tag a player who does not have a ball in their hand. The idea is for players to throw balls to players who are being chased. If a ball is dropped the player can still be safe if they dive on it before being tagged. Progression: Player's pass and dribble the balls (make square 30x30 yds)	▪ Player's must learn to communicate and play with their heads up to succeed in this game. ▪ Player's should try to pass into the path of an oncoming runner so they don't have to slow down.
2nd Activity *World Cup Superstars* In a 25x25 yd square have a small 5x5 yd square in each corner. Divide the players up equally into each small square and give them a team name (world cup countries). Each player has a ball. Player's then race clockwise to each stadium (square) and perform skill in each one before returning to their own square. 1st team to get all players back wins. Skills: - toe taps; dragbacks; inside/outside cuts; scissors; stopovers. Progressions: 1. counterclockwise direction 2. two groups go one direction, two the other.	▪ Players should learn to slow down going into square and accelerate away. ▪ Players should dribble with head up so they can avoid traffic. ▪ Keep an eye on quality of skills because players will tend to try and rush the skills to win the race.
3rd Activity *Coconut Shy Game* Everyone pairs up and stands 10 yards apart; one of the players needs a ball. In between the players is a ball on top of a disc cone. The players pass the ball back and forth trying to knock the ball (coconut) off of the cone. The person who knocks the ball off the cone puts in back on while the other person retrieves the game ball. Which pair can score the most points in a minute? Progression: Specify what surface they must use to strike the ball.	▪ Players should step into their pass and follow through as they strike ball. ▪ Players must keep eye on the ball as they strike it. ▪ Standing foot should be beside ball and facing towards target
4th Activity *Pairs Game* Set up several small gates inside an area (one more gate than the number of pairs). The players are divided into pairs who play 1v1 to the small gates. Each pair has a ball; whoever has the ball tries to dribble through as many gates as they can. When they lose the ball the other person tries to score as many points as they can as well. Progressions: Score by dribbling through a goal. Score by dribbling through the goal and stopping the ball within two yards for your opponent to take.	▪ Try to make sure everyone is with a partner of relatively the same ability ▪ Players in possession should look up often to see where open gates are. ▪ Players should use turns and shielding moves to keep the ball ▪ Make it a competition where winners match up against winners and have a final where the top two players go head to head.
5th Activity (the game) *2v2 to multiple goals* Use the same set-up as in activity four but now each pair becomes a team. Play 2v2 into the multiple goals. Progressions: A team can score by dribbling through a goal. A team can score by passing through a goal. A team can score by passing the ball through a gate to their teammate on the other side.	▪ Have three or four small goals so their isn't a lot of congestion ▪ Can we try to score on a goal where there is not a defender (very simple language for advanced tactical concept of playing the ball away from pressure)

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4

McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Freeze Tag* In a 30x30 yd grid coach is Mr Freeze and chases players around the grid. Once a player is tagged they are frozen and can only get rescued if another player crawls beneath their legs. Players must call for help when frozen. Mr freeze tries to capture all players at once, after a while Mr Freeze gets tired and falls to the ground – kids win! Progression – players dribble ball away from Mr Freeze who tries to eat all the soccer balls by sticking them under shirt. Players get rescued by ball being kicked between legs.	▪ Player's must dribble with head up so they can see the where to go/not go. ▪ Player's should turn the ball away from Mr Freeze ▪ Soft passes through legs or they will lose their own ball.
2nd Activity *Finding Nemo* In a 30x20 yd grid players dribble their ball (Nemo) around making sure it doesn't get taken by divers (coaches). Diver's will steal balls & put them in tank (10x10 yd separate grid). To get back in game captured players must complete a task e.g. 10 scissors fakes. Last player remaining in grid wins. Task variations: toe taps; dragbacks; stopovers. Prog: juggling tasks instead of moves. E.g three foot juggles	▪ Can player's protect ball from divers by shielding and turning away. ▪ Can player's use moves such as dragback in the game to escape pressure. ▪ Player's must dribble with head up and with close touches.
3rd Activity *Austin Powers* In a 25x10 yd grid have all players line up at one end without a ball. Multiple soccer balls are lined up along side of grid. Players (Austin Powers) must run to other end without getting hit by lasers (balls) that Dr Evil (coach) kicks in. Ball must hit below the knee. Once hit, players join Dr Evil and help kick balls in. Last player left standing wins. Progression: kick with weak foot.	▪ Ensure player's are striking ball with inside of foot, no TOES. ▪ Look up at target, then keep eyes on the ball as you strike it. ▪ Step into the pass.
4th Activity *Krazy Keepaway* Use a 20x15 yd grid with 6 soccer balls placed randomly on perimeter cones. 3 vs 1 in the grid, team of 3 must make 3 passes then they try to knock over any perimeter ball to score by dribbling or passing the game ball. If the 1 defender wins ball they try to knock over a ball immediately. Team that gets scored on must do a crazy forfeit pre-determined by coach. E.g pink fluffy star dance. Progressions:1. Increase # of passes needed. 2. Make it 4 vs 2	▪ Pass with the inside of the foot. ▪ Receive gently with the inside of the foot. ▪ Encourage player's to spread out to make it harder for defender. ▪ Player's should always be moving to find better spacing.
5th Activity (the game) *Touchdown!* In a 30x20 yd grid with 3 yd endzones at each end, have 2v2 plus a receiver in each endzone. Team's score by passing ball into their endzone receiver. Receiver must trap ball in the endzone for goal to stand. After a goal the passer and receiver switch spots. Progressions: 3v3; 4v4.	▪ Look to pass into the receiver at every opportunity. ▪ Weight the pass so it reaches the receiver. ▪ Receiver should be alert and moving to get to the pass. ▪ Receive ball gently with inside of foot. ▪ Pass with inside of foot ▪ Step into passes to get power and accuracy.

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4

McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Anybody Who's…..* In a 30x20 yd grid have all player's line up at one end and coach as a catcher in the middle. Coach then says anyone who's ….. wearing shin guards! All those wearing shin guards run, those who aren't stay. Once you get tagged you join the coach in the middle and try and catch too. Progression: Player's dribble a ball each.	▪ Players will be running from both directions at once so make sure they look where they are going so they don't crash into each other. ▪ You can ask just about any question e.g. anyone who has a pet dog; anyone who has been to Florida etc. ▪ Players must reach the end line with ball under control, they can't just punt and chase.
2nd Activity *Sharks and Minnows* Mark off an area on the field as the pond. Choose a couple of players to be sharks – they won't have balls, but they are on the prowl for someone else's. All the other players are minnows dribbling around in the pond. The sharks must try to take someone else's ball away or kick the person's ball out of the pond. If they succeed, then they become a minnow, and the person whose ball was kicked becomes the shark.	▪ When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender? ▪ Can we spin away from pressure (a defender)?
3rd Activity *Formula 1* Divide the players into pairs. Set up a series of gates (checkpoints) using disc cones throughout a 30 x 30 yard area. Each pair has one ball. Each player 1 races by dribbling through each gate once. Then player 1 passes to player 2 on outside and they do the same. If two players crash into each other they must do 10 toe taps before continuing. Progression: Players must perform a skill through each gate.	▪ Players should look up between touches to see where the free gates are. ▪ Slow down to enter the gates and speed up out of the gates. ▪ Player's can't go through same gate twice in a row.
4th Activity *Gate Passing* Using the same set-up as above, pairs now work together in grid. Player 1 passes through gate to player 2 who then dribbles to next gate and passes through to player 1. 1st team to pass through 10 gates wins. Progressions: 1. Players must pass with weak foot 2. Players must complete 5 passes back and forth at each gate before moving on. 3. One touch passing.	▪ Players should work together as a team by communicating. ▪ Player's must pass ball with correct surface (inside/outside) ▪ Step into passes and ensure standing foot is beside ball and facing target. ▪ Encourage the players not to get too close to the gates when passing the ball through
5th Activity (the game) *Outta There* In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a **small** line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are "outta there." This should be a very fast paced game. Progressions: Start with 1v1 and progress to 2v2.	▪ This game should be **very** fast paced ▪ As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately ▪ The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren't having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them ▪ Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area

Scrimmage 3 vs 3 or 4 vs 4

McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Spiderman* In a 30x20 yd grid have all player's line up at one end and coach as Spiderman in middle. Player's must run to other end without getting tagged by Spiderman. Once tagged players must join Spiderman's web by holding hands. More people get captured the bigger the web becomes. Last player remaining is the winner. Progression: Player's dribble a ball and Spiderman must kick it out.	▪ Player' should use quick turns to escape the momentum of the web. ▪ Player's should dribble with head up and with ball close to them.
2nd Activity *Scooby Doo* In a 30 x 20 yd grid each player dribbles a ball around trying to chase the ghosts (coaches/parents) Once in range player's strike the ball at ghosts leg. Once a ghost is struck 5 times they are out of game. Progression 1: Make it a team game, team 1 must get two ghosts and team 2 a different two ghosts, becomes a race between teams. Progression 2: Player's must kick with only weak foot; laces; inside.	▪ Player's must be able to dribble with head up when chasing ghosts. ▪ Before striking ball player's should look at target then as they kick they must look down at ball. ▪ Challenge player's to kick whilst on the dribble. ▪ Ensure correct kicking surfaces are used (NO TOES)
3rd Activity *Doctor Doctor* In a 35x 25 yd grid have two equal teams of players lined up at each end of grid. Each player has a ball except team Dr. who stands in hospital (5x5 yd square at end of grid). Teams dribble around grid trying to strike opposition with ball below knee. Once hit a player must drop to one knee and call for team Dr to come and help them. Dr has 5 secs to come out of hospital and must try to tag the man down. Once tagged by Dr a player can resume playing. If Dr gets hit (whilst outside hospital) the game is over. Progression: Weak foot passing only	▪ Player's must be able to see the field whilst dribbling or they will get hit. ▪ Before striking ball player's should look at target then as they kick they must look down at ball. ▪ Challenge player's to kick whilst on the dribble. ▪ Ensure correct kicking surfaces are used (NO TOES)
4th Activity *Fox in the Box* Using two 15x20 yd boxes back to back have two teams of 4 (or 5) and # each player 1-4. Each team pass in # order in their box until coach calls # e.g. 1. # 1 from each team then runs into oppositions box and attempts to kick the ball away. It becomes a 3 vs 1 (or 4 vs 1) game of keepaway. Team to keep ball from fox longest wins the point. Repeat with other #. Progression: Increase the # of defenders from 1 to 2. Progression: Player's have two touch limit when passing.	▪ Look for correct passing technique with inside of foot. ▪ Encourage player's to spread out to make it harder for defender. ▪ Player's should receive ball gently with inside of foot. ▪ Player's should always be moving to find better spacing.
5th Activity (the game) *Minesweeper* In a 35x25 yd field have 5 mines (balls on cones) lined up along each end line. This is a 2 vs 2 game. Each team defends one end and attacks the other. Score by dribbling or kicking the game ball into one of the opposition's mines. (mine can only be knocked down by game ball, not feet) 1st team to knock down a mine wins game, next team comes on. Progression: 3 vs 3; 4 vs 4	▪ Game should resemble a real game of soccer but with targets instead of big goals. ▪ Player's should look to get close to target before taking shot. ▪ Accuracy over power. ▪ Player's should shoot with a passing technique (inside foot) for maximum accuracy.

Scrimmage 3 vs 3 or 4 vs 4

McHenry Area Soccer Federation

Practice Plan – U8/9

Activity	Coaching Points
1st Activity (warm-up) *Tom & Jerry* Players are paired up, one is Tom the other Jerry. Jerry must run around square trying to lose Tom who is chasing with a soccer ball. Tom must try to dribble and stay as close to Jerry as possible. When coach says "Freeze" Tom and Jerry must freeze, Jerry faces Tom with legs apart and Tom tries to pass ball through Jerry's legs. Hit leg = 1 point, hit leg and through = 2 pts; straight through = 3 pts. Progressions: 1. Tom must make the pass with weak foot. 2. Jerry also has a ball, Tom tries to hit ball instead of passing between legs.	▪ Dribble with ball close at all times to enable quick changes of direction. ▪ Dribble with head up scanning the field. ▪ Stop ball with sole of foot when coach shouts 'freeze'. ▪ Pass with inside of foot.
2nd Activity *Knock the Coconuts* Multiple groups of 2, Player 1 has ball at feet, player 2 is positioned 5 yds away with a ball on cone. Player 1 passes at target. If it misses target, player 2 receives ball at feet and switches spots with player 1 (must dribble ball, not carry it!) Repeat until target is hit, once hit the receiver picks up ball and takes it back to 10 yd line. Repeat as before, then 15 yd line, and repeat again 1st team to knock down ball at all 3 levels wins. Progression: pass with weak foot.	▪ Pass with inside of foot. ▪ Step into and follow through pass. ▪ Body should be facing ball and target when passing. ▪ Receive gently with inside of foot. ▪ Look up at target then down at ball as it is struck.
3rd Activity *Lightning* Using a big goal have all players except one GK line up 10 yards from goal. Coach passes ball from behind goal into 1st shooter who must strike it at goal 1 touch. Shooter must then follow shot and immediately become GK for next shot. Coach continuously passes balls in so it is played at 'lightning' pace. If player misses shot and then gets scored on they are out. If you score and/or make save you rejoin the line. Once out players can get back into game by catching a missed shot. Progressions: Weak foot shooting. Coach serves crosses from side.	▪ Shoot with correct technique – laces/inside of foot, no TOES. ▪ Follow through shots. ▪ Keep eye on ball when striking. ▪ Aim for corners of goal.
4th Activity *Paperboy* In a 30x15 yd grid have a goal (mail box) at one end, guarded by GK (guard dog). Have two more dogs guarding goal, one on 10 yd line, one on 20yd. Dogs can only move on hands and knees. Remaining players start at opposite end to goal and take turns to dribble ball (paper) past two dogs and shoot in goal past GK. Player to deliver most papers wins. Progression: All dogs can stand up to defend.	▪ Use close control cuts and moves to beat 1st two dogs. ▪ Use correct shooting technique (laces/inside) to strike ball past GK dog. ▪ Dribble with head up. ▪ Keep eye on ball when striking. ▪ Aim for corners of goal.
5th Activity (the game) *World Cup Doubles* Using one big goal divide team into pairs and give each pair a country name. Coach is GK and all teams go against each other trying to score in the one goal. It is a free for all at first as multiple teams are going for same goal. Once a team scores they qualify for round 2 and go and sit and wait for other teams. Last team to score is out, then round 2 starts with same elimination format. Last two teams play in world cup final. Team who is out wait behind goal & can replace a team still in if they head or volley one of their missed shots. Progression: teams of 3	▪ Be instinctive at shot at any given opportunity. ▪ Shoot with correct surfaces – laces/inside. ▪ Keep eye on the ball when striking. ▪ Follow in for rebounds. ▪ Be aggressive when it is crowded (want the ball!)

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4