

# 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade Practice Ideas Alexander Soccer Club

## General

1. All preschool and kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> can be used at 2<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade age groups. Tweak to fit your team.
2. Practices should generally last an hour for 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> grade an hour and 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade last an hour and 15 minutes, 1 hour and 30 minutes max
3. Take water breaks as needed. Best break times are transitions between activities.
4. Every player has a ball that they are responsible for throughout practice.
5. Try to minimize standing in lines and having kids waiting to do things.
6. It works well to have the coach(es) and/or players demonstrate and participate in activities.
7. Try to build practice around a general focus – dribbling, passing, shooting, etc. Tell players what the focus is for the day and the things they need to focus on.
8. Build practice off of A,B,C,D method – note lots of B and C activities apply to both
  - a. Warm-up and some skills building
  - b. Skill building (ex: trapping, dribbling to goals, cones, hit the coach with the ball, etc)
  - c. Game-like scenarios (ex: 1v1, scrimmage, gate dribbling as a competition)
  - d. Scrimmage or small sided games
  - e. When appropriate and time allows, finish practice with a game.

## Dribbling in confined space (A, B)

1. Setup a box with a boundary (20ft x 20ft). Place many gates (two cones a few feet apart) inside the box.
2. Each player dribbles inside the box in all directions. Direct players to use both feet, right only, left only, pull back and turn on command, switch often. Call for the players to stop the ball with a specific body part and continue on.
3. Go for 1-2 minutes, give 30 second rest. Repeat no more than 5 times.
4. Players learn to keep tight control, change direction, and be aware of surroundings.

## Gate dribbling (A, B)

1. Setup a box with a boundary (20ft x 20ft). Place many gates (two cones a few feet apart) inside the box.
2. Each player dribbles through the gates in all directions. Players try to dribble through as many gates as possible. Use the same types of dribbling as mentioned above.
3. Go for 1-2 minutes, give 30 second rest while giving tips/suggestions/focus points. Repeat no more than 5 times.
4. To finish, have players count how many they go through in 30-60 seconds. Repeat, have them try to get more.

## Trapping (B)

1. Divide team into half. Groups go ~20 yards from coaches and face them. Separate groups by ~15yds.
2. Coaches have all the balls. Coaches serve balls by kicking or throwing. Mix up the distribution low and high.
3. Players trap the ball and dribble it back near the coach and pass it into a Pugg goal, then return to the line.
4. Focus points – Get body behind the ball. Move to ball, do not wait for it. Players cushion the ball with foot, chest, thigh, etc to get control and keep it close. Quickly get under control and dribble.

## Sharks and Minnows (B, C)

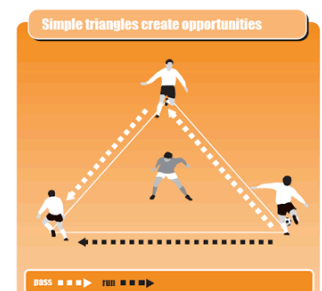
1. Setup a box with cones every several feet (20ft x 20ft or 25ft x 25ft).
2. One or two players, "sharks", try to take the ball away from the others "minnows" as they dribble around the box.
3. The minnows are "out" when they dribble out of the box or a shark kicks the ball out of the box.
4. You can also have the minnows "swim" from one side of the box to the other while the sharks try take the ball.
5. When a player loses the ball he/she becomes a shark.
6. Minnows learn to protect the ball with their body position, how to change direction to avoid sharks, how to change speeds to avoid sharks. Sharks learn to take the ball away from the minnows, how to use the box to their advantage and how to defend as a team.

## Monkey in the middle (B, C)

1. Put the players in a circle (use center circle or set up ~30 feet in diameter)
2. Have one player be the monkey and try to steal the ball. Players on outside pass the ball to maintain possession.
3. You can add more monkeys as needed, no more than 3.
4. Monkeys can be in the middle for so many minutes or until he/she steals the ball.

## Triangle Passing (B, C)

1. Set the sets of three kids up in triangles. The kids pass to each other.
2. Triangles are the simplest form players can take in the game to maintain possession. In games, players should look to move to support each other and form triangles.
3. You can add a 4th player as a defender. Rotate the defender every few minutes, or if



the defender steals the ball he/she switches with the last person to pass the ball.

### Square Passing (B, C)

1. Set the sets of three kids up in squares (10 feet per side). One corner is left open. The players form a triangle.
2. The ball should be at the corner of the square OPPOSITE the open corner.
3. Player passes to one of the other two. The player that did not receive the pass moves to the open corner to make a new triangle and be ready for a pass.
4. Players focus on moving to form triangles.

### Dribbling/shooting small goals (C)

1. To set-up place two sets of cones to define a ~15ft by ~30ft space. Set up two of these spaces and coach from space in between them.
2. Break team into 4 groups, one group at end of each rectangle. Designate one group in each space as offense, one as defense. To start, defense or coach serves the ball (kick, throw, etc) to the offense.
3. You can have multiple players on the field playing at the same time.
4. Begin with 1 offense v 1 defense, variations include 2v1, and 2v2 (2v2 needs slightly large box), add Pugg goals at rectangle ends to introduce shooting
5. Scoring – Without goals, dribbling across the end line. With goals, goals scored.
6. Activity is complete when ball goes out of bounds or goal is scored.
7. Offense focus points
  - a. 1v1 - make quick decisions, put defense on heels, shoot when clear
  - b. 2v1 – keep spaced, make quick decision to pass or dribble (or shoot)
8. Defense focus points –
  - a. 1v1 or 2v1 - Get to offense quick, don't let them get comfortable. Use the box sidelines as an extra defender. Position body to force the offense the way you want them to go. JOCKEY POSITION. When you win the ball, transition to offense quickly.
  - b. 2v2 – Defend as a team. One addresses ball, the other covers the passing lane. Be prepared to switch.

### Shooting (shoot and save) (C or game)

1. Place the balls on one side of the goal. One coach will serve ball towards the penalty spot.
2. Players are lined up in middle of field approximately 20 yards from goal.
3. One player starts in goal.
4. Serve a ball to first player in line and that player shoots the ball first time (no trapping).
  - a. If the shot goes in, the player automatically stays in the game.
  - b. If the shot misses and the shooter saves the next shot, the player remains in the game.
  - c. If the shot misses and the next person scores, the first player is out.
5. After shot, the player becomes goalie. After playing goalie, the player is either out or goes to back of the line.

### Scrimmage/Small sided games – 3v3, 4v4, 5v5 (C or D)

1. Set up small goals or use Pugg Goals.
2. Set up a small field (~15yd x ~25yd).
3. Play to a set number of goals or time period.
4. Variation – play a full field scrimmage with another team practicing at same time.

### World Cup (game)

1. Divide team evenly into groups (minimum of 2 or 3). Coach is goalie. Field of play is the penalty box.
2. Every team is out for themselves. First team to score a goal advances to next round and sits out until 2<sup>nd</sup> team scores. Final round is top two teams, first to score wins World Cup.
3. Game play
  - a. Coach starts ball randomly (kick, throw, etc) in the box
  - b. Teams try to score a goal.
  - c. When ball goes out of bounds, coach restarts ball from goal.
  - d. Add second ball if goals are not getting scored.

- Some books to consider. These were Kindle books, but may be available in paperback.
  - “20 Youth Soccer Practices” by Scott Carlson
  - “The Soccer Academy: 140 Overload Games and Finishing Practices” by Michael Beale
  - “Youth Soccer Drills & Practices: 20 pre-planned training sessions plus drill bible”
- US Youth Soccer website also has a free online resource called the US Soccer Player Development Guidelines. You can find countless ideas through Google and Youtube. You can also contact the soccer club for additional ideas.