

General Practice Info Alexander Soccer Club

A, B, C, D labels on suggested practice activities

The ABCD method is taught by US Youth Soccer. It is not meant to be a formula; it is a guideline to help with building your practice to progress from warm-ups through game scenarios. It can be helpful in developing a theme for a practice session. You can adjust times and activities based on how well or poorly they work with your team. Many activities can be tweaked to fit multiple categories.

A activities – A activities are warm-ups and basic skill building. The key here is to focus on the fundamentals and movement. Most youth don't need specific stretching and warm-up activities. Keeping them moving constantly will get the warm-up function and skill building and make the most use of your limited time.

B activities – B activities are more advanced skill building, goal driven. These activities apply the fundamental skills in A activities and advances them as well as puts them into more of a goal-oriented setting.

C activities – C activities are game-like scenarios ranging from 1v1 through full-sided scrimmages. It is best to choose activities that more closely follow the theme of the A and B activities, but it is by no means required. C activities are also where general team shape, positional roles, and situational play are discussed.

D activities – Generally, these are cool down games to end practice on a loose and fun note. Many kids see the ending of practice on a game as a reward for their work and it makes them look forward to coming back next time.

A couple sample practices are included below for reference. The times in those practices are for reference, be flexible to let the times float longer or shorter based on the effectiveness of the activity and mood of the team.

Sample practice (60 minutes) – Dribbling, assume 9 kids

A – Ball skills and Bulldog (total of 15 minutes including water break at end)

Ball skills - Dribbling in a confined space (15 x 15 yards usually is a good starting point). Emphasize close dribbling, players should be up on their toes, changing direction, changing pace, head up and avoiding each other. Force variations like dribbling with one foot only, insides of feet only, outsides of feet only. Call out changes like right turn, left turn, trade balls, pull back and turn, tap-taps, stopping the ball with a specific body part, etc.

Bulldog - every player has a ball within the space. The goal is to protect your ball while trying to knock other player's balls out of the space. Last player with their ball wins.

B – 1v1 (10 minutes) and 2v1 (10 minutes)

1v1 - Set up a space roughly 10 x 20. Divide team in half and put one half at each short end of the rectangle. Designate one side offense and the other as defense. Defense passes ball to offensive end. Offense tries to dribble past the defender to the other end of the rectangle. After each pair goes, they change lines so everyone is offense and defense.

2 v 1 – Use same space but add a second offense line. Same scenario, try to dribble across the other end line, but now introduce spacing and passing to the offense.

C – small-sided scrimmage (15-20 minutes)

Set up a space 20 x 30. Divide the team evenly and set up two small goals. Do not use goalkeepers. Emphasize game scenarios, especially quickly attacking with the dribble since ball skills are the emphasis of this specific practice.

D – Sharks and minnows (5-10 minutes)

Use the 20 x 30 space. Select one shark and station them at one end of the box. Everyone else has a ball and starts at the other end. When the coach yells "swim" minnows try to swim (dribble) from one end of the reef to the other while avoiding the shark. If a shark knocks a minnow's ball out of the box, then that minnow becomes a shark for the next round. Reset and repeat until all minnows are captured by the sharks. Last person with a ball is the winner and gets to be first shark in the next round.

Sample practice (60- minutes) – Passing, assume 9 kids

A – Basic passing (total of 20 minutes including water break at end)

Set up a 7 x 7yd square. 3 players in each square with one ball. Start the players at 3 of the four corner and point out the basic triangle shape they make (the most important shape in the game for passing is a triangle since it gives 2 options to complete a pass). Start off standing and passing clockwise or counter-clockwise. Emphasize passing to the receiver's feet, and using the inside of the feet to pass and receive the ball.

Put the triangle into motion for passing. Now the two players off the ball need to form the triangle to give the person with the ball 2 options. Until they get the idea of passing and moving to form the triangle, start off with just clockwise motion. Switch to counter-clockwise. Then let them go free.

B – 2v1 and 3v2 (25 minutes including water break at end)

Set up a space roughly 10 x 20. Divide the team into 3 groups. Designate one group as defense and put them behind one goal. Designate two groups as offense and put them behind the other goal. Defense passes the ball to the offense. Emphasize quick decision making – do I dribble?, do I pass?, do I shoot?

For 3 v 2, you will need to expand the space to roughly 15 x 30 to give space to work. Triangles come into play. Players off the ball need to quickly set up triangles to give options for the pass. Emphasize that not everything has to be forward, side to side and even back passes can get a defense out of shape quickly.

C – Keep away (20 minutes including water break at end)

Set up a space roughly 30 x 30. Divide team into 3 groups (you will need pinnies, assume red, blue, and T-shirts). Designate 1 team as defense (red). Blue and T-shirts are on offense. Set a 3-5 minute timer. Object is to complete as many passes as possible before the defense steals it. Emphasize passing away from pressure, moving off the ball to set up triangles, quick play will tire out the defense. Award a point to offensive teams for completing 5 passes in a row. When timer runs out, blue becomes defense and T-shirt and red are on offense. Restart timer. For third timer, T-shirt is on defense and Red and blue on offense. Winning group has the most total points.

D – Kids' choice – Sharks and Minnows, Shoot-Save, World Cup, etc. (15 minutes)