



New York State West Youth Soccer
Association

No goalie at practice?

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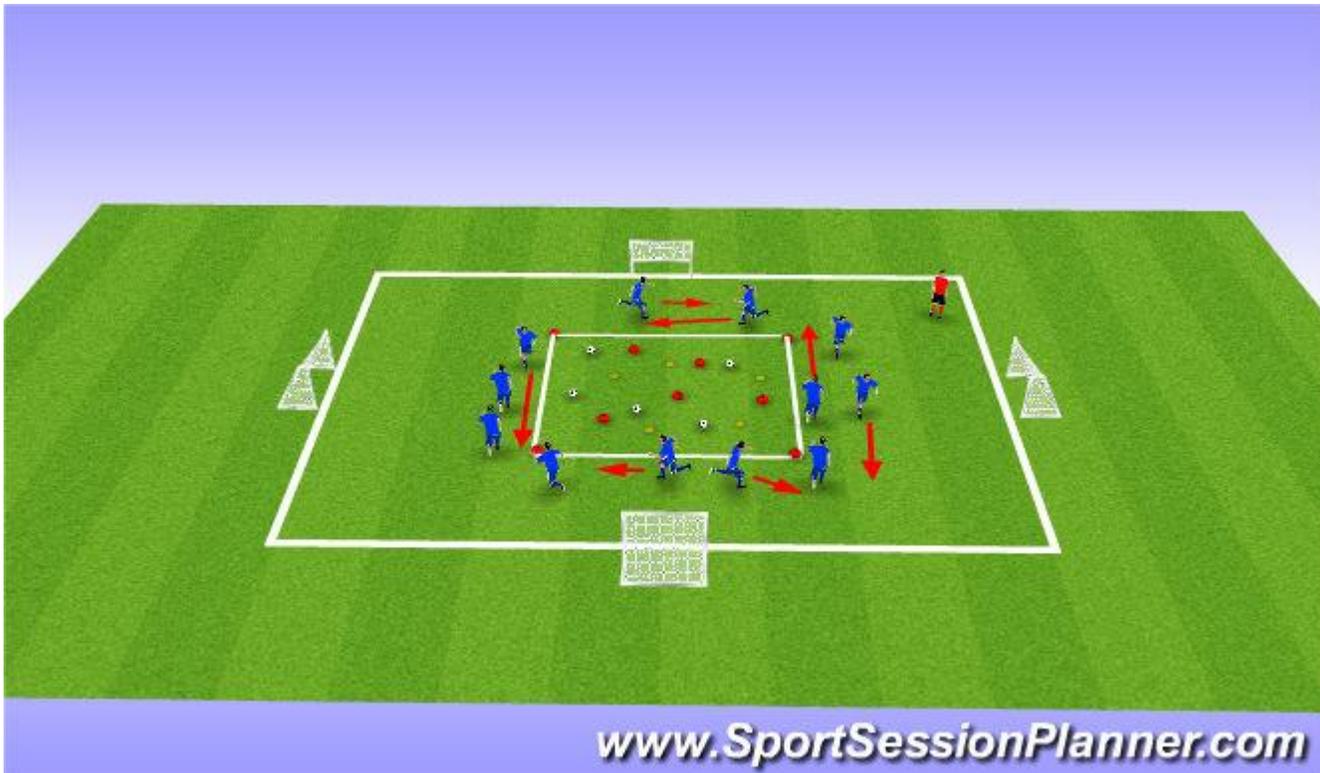
Age group: 5-12

Shooting and scoring is a crucial component of the game, and as such, is an important player development topic. As such, shooting on goal, with its many variations, should always be part of every practice session. What if you don't have a goalie available at your practice session? This newsletter will offer 4 practice session options that do not require a goalie and will help promote the basic techniques for shooting on goal. Guidelines for the following shooting exercises are:

- *Small groups*
- *Practice both feet*
- *Age appropriate distance to the goal*
- *Lots of shooting*
- *Fun and exciting competitions*
- *Provide plenty positive reinforcements*

The goal of every game is to score goals. As we all know, the team that scores the most goals, wins. It has been noted that there is still a gap between the importance of scoring within a game versus the amount of practice time allocated to shooting on goal in youth soccer. Shooting practice is attractive to the players, because they naturally want to score, and the activity requires no extra motivation. It is a crucial practice need, because the amount of goals ultimately determines victory or defeat. Therefore, shooting should always be part of the practice session in youth soccer. Even if a goalie is not available for a practice session, we can teach an age appropriate session that develops the basic skills and techniques that are needed for scoring goals within a game.

The goal of the practice is becoming familiar with shooting, mastering shooting, and improving the techniques. Shooting on goal is a complex matter. A successful shot on goal depends on several factors such as distance to the goal, position angle to the goal, position and distance of the defenders, the quality of the build-up (assisting, pass, reception), and of course the techniques of the shooter. What is necessary for a practical and effective goal shooting practice? It should be age appropriate regarding complexity, distance, and coaching. Thus, the key for 6-10-year-old is to learn the basics in a playful way, whereas the key for 10-12 years old, is coaching the detailed techniques. In the following, we demonstrate one age appropriate practice sample for each age group.



In the Zoo

Age group: 5-6

Set up:

- 20x20yd field, 6x6yd field.
- Put different balls in the little square (tennis balls, soccer balls, footballs, foam balls...).
- 12 kids > 24 balls.
- Set up 4 mini goals on each side of the big square.

Execution:

- All kids are running around the small square and are not allowed to enter the little square.
- The coach gives different commands, e.g.: "the kangaroos are on the lose!" > the kids start to jump around the square for a short time.
- More commands:
 - o Hawks > the kids run and flutter with their arms
 - o Snakes > the kids crawl
 - o Racehorses > the kids run fast
 - o Monkey > roll forward
 - o Polar bears > the kids move/crawl on all fours
- With the command: "all animals are hungry!" > the kids enter the little square, take a ball and score on any goal, then they grab another ball and score on a different goal until no ball is left.
- Set it up again and start over.

The focus of this exercise and age group is on developing and broadening the movement skills. Shooting on the goals will give many chances to succeed. It will help them get familiar with the ball and the ball handling/ kicking movement. Praise them a lot without any corrections.



The moving goals

Age group: 6-8

Set up:

- 20x20yd square.
- 3 teams of 4.
- 4 adults (coaches, parents, older siblings...) who are holding a stick together, gym ball, hoops...and moving in the field > as moving goals.

Execution:

- Every player has a ball dribbles in the field and try to hit a moving a goal.
 - o Kicking through stick-goal = 1 point.
 - o Hitting the gym ball = 2 points.
 - o Kicking through hoop = 3 points.
- The player cannot hit or score the same goal twice consecutively.
- At the end the points will be totaled up > which team has the most points?

Variation:

- The players use different balls (tennis ball, foam ball, size 1 ball, size 5 ball...)
- No teams, single competition.

The key of this exercise is for the kids to become familiar with the shooting techniques. Also, it gives the kids many options to succeed. The positive experience of scoring makes them learn the techniques quickly. The adults can adjust their speed for kids that need some support. Limit the correction to simple tips.



Shooting + coordination

Age group: 8-10

Set up:

- One youth goal.
- 2 traffic cones in each corner of the goal.
- 3 stations 20yd away from goal (as shown in the picture).
 - o Station 1: agility ladder.
 - o Station 2: 3 hurdles.
 - o Station 3: 2 cones (4yd apart).
- The kids line up at each station (not more than 3 kids in line).
- The coach is standing about 12yd away from the goal (as shown in the picture).

Execution:

- The first player (station 1) is running through the ladder without touching the rungs > then the coach feeds the player with a ball > the player has two touches, with the second touch he shoots on the goal and tries to knock over the cones.
- Once the first player gets a ball > the first player of station 2 runs over the hurdles and gets a ball from coach and tries to score by knocking over the cones.
- At station 3 the player will execute different movements between the cones, e.g. jumping with one leg, high knees, running backwards, arm circling...)
- After shooting the players rotate.

Variation:

- The players have only one touch.
- The coach varies the kind of feeding of the ball (ground and high balls, rolling slow/fast, bouncing balls).
- Use both feet.
- Preset left or right corner.

This exercise is a combination of coordination and shooting. It has several different coordinative exercises that develops the orientation ability, the ability to react, and the ability to balance. These abilities are essential for a successful shot on goal with perfect timing. The different exercises simulate different situations that helps the player develop technical and coordinative capabilities for indefinite game situations. For example: the player gets body-checked by the defender (balance), the player gets tackled (reaction, balance), the player gets a high pass, etc.... Also, this exercise helps develop the shooting and aiming techniques as the players need to aim for the corner of the goal.

This exercise offers many possibilities for the coach to have the kids improve on. For instance, the coach can adjust the distance to the goal, the size of the goal, and on how the ball is passed/ feed to the player trying to score. The competition is intense, but the kids get a lot of shooting in, which they enjoy.

To sum up, these exercises are short and can be part of any warmup or as the final part at the end of the practice session. As always please let me know if you have any questions, if you need more information or if you have any feedback. Please feel free to contact me: **dgroth@nyswysa.org**.