

# AYSO 8U Training Session Plan

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Topic: Welcome to Soccer! (Game Basics Refresher)

Duration: ~60 minutes

Objective:

- Introduce basic positions: goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, and strikers (Coach note: No goalkeepers at 8U, but we teach the terminology for future learning!)
- Understand field boundaries and direction of play
- Learn restarts: kick-offs, goal kicks, corner kicks, kick-ins/throw-ins
- Teach basic rules: no hands, listen to the whistle, play safely
- Build comfort with the ball and enjoy the game!

Setup: Arrive early and setup activities prior to start to maximize training time.

## Session Overview with Page References

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Activity Name</u>	<u>Manual Page Reference</u>	<u>Time</u>
Free Play	Free Play	Page 30	5 minutes
Warm-Up	Dynamic warm-up + Technical Ball Warm-Up	Pages 31	10 minutes
Activity 1	Gates Dribbling		10 minutes
Activity 2	Basic Passing & Receiving		10 minutes
Explanation & Demo: Activity 3	Walk the Field	Page 42	10 minutes
Small-Sided Match	Small-Sided Match	Page 32	10 minutes
Cool Down & Debrief	Static stretching + review	Pages 32	5 minutes

## Equipment Checklist

- Cones
- 6-8 Size 3 Soccer balls
- Pinnies

### 1. Free Play (5 minutes)

- Have balls on the field for them to just kick around while waiting for other teammates to show up for training.

### 2. Warm-Up (10 minutes)

- **Dynamic Warm-Up Exercises (Page 95) (3-5 minutes):**
  - Jogging: Easy pace around the field once ~30 seconds
  - Midfield to Goal and Back:
    - High Knees: Lift knees high, rhythm and posture ~20 seconds
    - Butt Kicks: Kick heels toward glutes ~20 seconds
    - Power or Regular Skips ~20 seconds
- **Technical Ball Warm-Up (5 minutes):**
  - Red Light, Green Light (Dribbling Focus)
  - Players dribble their ball inside a defined area trying to keep the ball within a few steps when dribbling.
  - Coach calls out "Green Light" = dribble, "Red Light" = stop and put foot on ball.
  - Optional: Add "Yellow Light" = slow dribble, "Lightning" = fast dribble!
  - Coaching points: head up while dribbling, small touches.

### 3. Activity 1 – Gates Dribbling (10 minutes)

- Set up pairs of cones ("gates") around the field.
- Players dribble through as many gates as they can in a set time.
- Progression: Can they use both feet? Outside of foot? Coaching points:
- Keep the ball close, look up for the next gate, encourage using both feet

### 4. Activity 2 – Basic Passing & Receiving (10 minutes)

- Pair players up. Each pair with 1 ball.
- Pass the ball to partner through a cone gate.
- Encourage stopping the ball before passing back.
- Coaching points:
  - Step next to the ball, use inside of the foot
  - Eye on the ball, follow through
- Control first, then pass

### • 5. Explanation & Demo (10 mins) Activity: Walk the Field

- Brief walking tour of the field with the team:
- Show: sidelines, goal lines, goals
- Explain "out of bounds" and how restarts work:
  - Sideline: kick-in or throw-in (confirm region rule!)
- Goal line off defense: corner kick
- Goal line off offense: goal kick
- Introduce positions:

- Goalkeeper (we don't use this position at 8U, but it's good to learn!)
- Defenders: help stop the ball from going toward our goal
- Midfielders: help both defense and attack
- Strikers (Forwards): try to score goals
- Use cones or players to show positions visually!
- Coach Note: Tell players: "Right now, we won't have a goalkeeper in our games, but when you move up to 10U, you'll get to play that position!"

## 6. Small-Sided Match (10 minutes)

- Half team vs half team game.
- No goalkeepers
- Use small goals or cones.
- Focus on letting kids play and explore. Minimal stoppages.
- Stop occasionally to point out:
  - Direction of play
  - Role of each position: defenders, midfielders, strikers
  - Ball out of play restart
- Coaching points:
  - Encourage spacing: "Find space!"
  - Cheer for effort, not just goals
  - Use teammates: "Can you pass to a friend?"

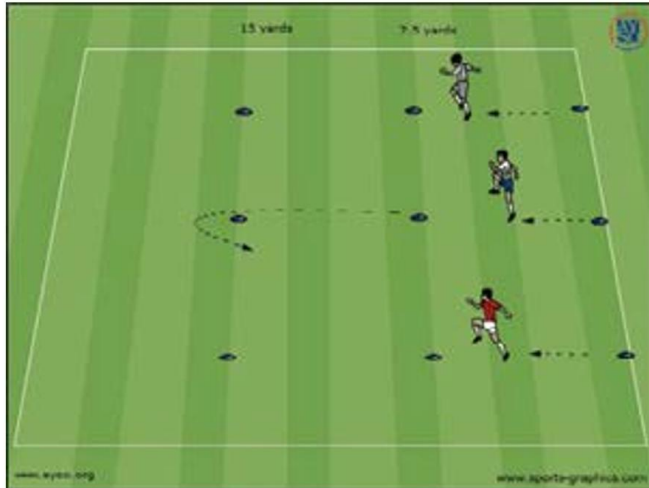
## 7. Cool Down & Debrief (5 minutes)

- **Circle Up, Light Static Stretching, Water Break:**
  - Hamstring Stretch: Reach for toes, hold.
  - Calf Stretch: Step back, press heel down.
  - Shoulder Stretch: Pull arm across chest.
- **Debrief:**
  - Reflective questions:
    - "What position did you like best today?"
    - "What was your favorite part of practice?"
    - "What did you enjoy most?"
  - Praise their energy and effort!
  - Remind: practice at home, bring water and ball next time.
- Finish positive!

# DYNAMIC STRETCHES

## GET READY TO PLAY

Dynamic stretching, in conjunction with static (pending the player's specific need) help prepare the muscles, increase the range of motion and warm up the body. Exercises can either be done freely within an open grid (more suitable for younger players) or organized similar to the option below.



Mark 10 x 15 yards area with a starting cone, a middle cone 7.5 yards from the starting one and an end cone 15 yards from starting one.

Create three sets of cones to have three groups of players working at the same time. Players perform dynamic stretches until the halfway point (cone) and then jog to the end cone, before returning to the starting cone (by jogging forwards or backwards). The process moves continuously until a dynamic stretch has been completed for each main body part.

**Suggested dynamic stretches (to see this in action visit: [aysou.video/stretches](https://www.aysou.co.uk/video/stretches))**

- Skipping
- Jogging forwards with arms rotating in forwards circles
- Jogging backwards with arms rotating in backwards circles
- Knees into the chest
- Heels to the backside
- Side shuffle
- Opening the leg (up and over motion)
- Closing the leg (up and over motion)
- Cariocca
- Swing leg across body
- Forward lunges

### Coaching Points

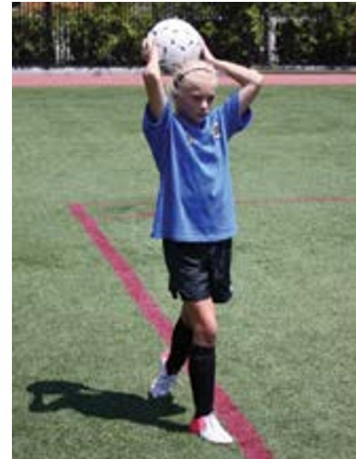
- TPF (Teach Proper Form).
- Select player to lead the stretches (leadership, responsibility, reward, esteem).

# THROW-IN

For 8U, each region shall have the discretion to use either throw-ins, dribble-ins or pass-ins to restart play.

Used to restart the game after the *entire* ball has crossed the touchline (whether on the ground or in the air).

To see this in action visit [aysou.video/tech5](https://www.aysou.video/tech5)



## General Coaching Points:

- Face the field of play.
- Have part of each foot on the ground, either on or behind the touchline when the ball is released.
- Use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion.
- Use the "W"/Butterfly method of holding the ball (touch thumbs together and grasp ball in hands).
- Feet must be kept on the ground until ball is released.

## Common Errors & Correction

Error	Correction
Foot/feet come off the ground during throw.	Have players keep their feet <i>together</i> with knees bent and hold their feet down until they develop feeling of throwing without lifting feet.
Ball slips out of grasp.	Reinforce use of "W"/Butterfly method of holding ball. If player's hands are small, instruct them to spread hand out until they have a solid grasp.

