



*Grassroots soccer is not about the amount of trophies you win. It's about the difference you make to a young person's life.*

# THE ONTARIO SOCCER ASSOCIATION GRASSROOTS WORKBOOK & PRACTICE PLANS

April 2015





## Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of the Grassroots Soccer Provincial curriculum. This resource should be used in conjunction with the first edition of the curriculum. The Ontario Soccer Association has created this resource for Districts, Clubs, Academies, and youth coaches to follow a coaching curriculum that is designed to meet physical literacy needs for players from age 4-12

The information within this document will allow Technical Directors as well as youth coaches to create programs and coaching sessions that are appropriate for the development stage of each player. By implementing the curriculum, along with good coaching methodology, players will benefit from and enjoy practice sessions more. All sessions will focus on player development in a low stress, supportive, positive, fun-filled and safe environment. By coaches creating this environment the players will be excited to learn and be anxious to return.

In general terms a curriculum consists of information that promotes technical, social, physical and psychological development of the players. In addition to the activity examples and sample session plans it includes approaches to teaching and learning. The curriculum helps to remove the 'guess work' in choosing developmentally appropriate content and enables coaches to work on their methodology and coaching style.

## What is Grassroots Soccer?

**FIFA**  
For the Game. For the World.

FIFA's main objective for its Grassroots programme is to bring football to as many people as possible, thus addressing FIFA's mission to "develop the game".

Interacting, sharing, playing, and meeting others – these are all benefits that we promote in grassroots football, while, of course, encouraging enjoyment on the pitch. For some, grassroots football is a recreational activity. For others, it is the practice of football in a club or school environment, with regular training and matches, that is important.

Football for everyone, For the game, for the world. FIFA's grassroots football programme targets boys and girls aged 4-12 years through school, community, and club initiatives. The key concept of the programme is to bring together as many people as possible through football. The grassroots programme advocates exchanges and sharing human values and, of course, promotes the pleasure of practising our marvellous sport.

Of course not all young players will become the stars of the future and they do not all have the skills required to become professional players. So intensive training sessions and complicated tactics are not appropriate.

Sepp Blatter,  
President of FIFA

Reprinted with permission from FIFA



## Contents

Introduction .....	2
What is Grassroots Soccer?.....	2
The OSA Player Development Model .....	4
The Four corner development model .....	5
Active Start Week 1.....	6
Active Start Week 2 .....	8
Physical Literacy.....	10
Guidelines for Active Start Coaches.....	10
Grassroots Workshops.....	11
Active Start Week 3.....	12
Active Start Week 4.....	14
Active Start Week 5.....	16
Active Start session planning template.....	18
Acknowledgments .....	20



# Active Start practice plan

## OSA Player Development Model – The Station Concept

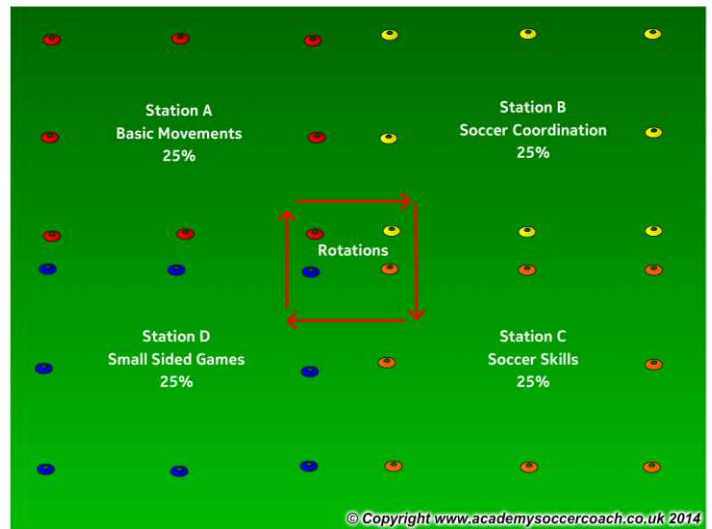
The activities provided illustrate how stations can be used during Grassroots practices.

During the practice players will spend an allotted time at each station having fun, developing specific skills and qualities before moving onto the next station. By using station work we create an environment where players are continually motivated and challenged.

The following gives coaches five weeks of session plans. After the five weeks are complete coaches can use the activities provided to create further session plans. In all sessions players will travel through four stations. In these examples one station focuses on Physical Literacy, two stations on movements with the ball and the fourth station is focused around the game with the children playing 1v1.

All sessions take a holistic approach to developing our children and youth. Each game and activity will focus on four main areas of the child's development; these include social/emotional, physical, psychological and also technical.

**Total Practice time:** 40 minutes as per the OSA Recreational and Development Matrix



If working with a larger group organize players into groups of six. Each station has a coach who will lead that specific station for the session. Players rotate every eight minutes with a two minute break in between each station to have a water break and move to the next station.

If working with a smaller group you can still have the four stations and players will move together through all four stations until all are complete.

## Different scenarios based on numbers in attendance

# Players	# Steps & Stations	Coach/Parent/volunteer	Setup 40 minutes typical session
24 - 40	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① General Movement</li> <li>② Soccer Coordination</li> <li>③ Soccer Technique</li> <li>④ Small-Sided Game</li> </ol>	4	<u>Ideal scenario</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 coaches 4 groups.</li> <li>• Players are spread across stations and rotate clockwise through the four station.</li> </ul>
18 - 30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① General Movement</li> <li>② Soccer Technique</li> <li>③ Soccer Coordination</li> <li>④ Small-Sided Game</li> <li>⑤ Small-Sided Game</li> <li>⑥ Small-Sided Game</li> </ol>	3	<u>Second scenario</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 coaches 3 groups.</li> <li>• Coaches required to change their stations over to SSG's on the final part of training.</li> <li>• 1.2.3 first 30 minutes</li> <li>• 4.5.6 final 10 minutes</li> </ul>
12 - 20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① General Movement</li> <li>② Small-Sided Game</li> <li>③ Soccer Coordination</li> <li>④ Soccer Technique</li> </ol>	2	<u>Third scenario</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 coaches 2 groups.</li> <li>• 2 groups of players across 2 stations focus on 2 key components.</li> <li>• Coaches required to replace their stations with a different component on the second phase of training. (SC &amp; ST)</li> </ul>

**“The benefit to running a group program is that a larger number of players fosters further participation. Children occasionally absent are not then responsible for practice cancellations, because there are always sufficient players to participate in the activities. And the atmosphere created by a large number of players guarantees lots of fun in every session”**

- Sylvie Béliveau CSA Long Term Player Development Manager  
(Resource: Active For Life website)



# FOUR CORNER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The Four Corner LTPD model consists of technical, psychological, physical and social/emotional components. Each corner of the model reflects a wide aspect of a player's development that has to be considered. The gradual progressive development of players is fundamental to the enjoyment, technical competency and retention in the game. The Four Corner approach places the player at the center of the development process with soccer experiences that meet the four key needs of the player.



Although priorities will vary during the player's different ages and phases of maturity, the model provides a basic framework for coaches to work within. In addition to the four main components, there are a number of additional 'contributions' from a wide number of people, such as parents, teachers, schools and local clubs.

The model is deliberately interlinked, which means that activity in any one corner will produce a reaction throughout all aspects of the model. For example, a practice on technique may impact physical balance and co-ordination while producing increased confidence and enhanced social standing within the group. The key message to coaches is not to consider any of the programme's aspects in isolation.

As the development pathway for each individual player is unique and diverse, the needs of each player will ebb and flow in all of the four corners. And, while the need for added support for some players will be minimal, others will require much more applied and specific support.

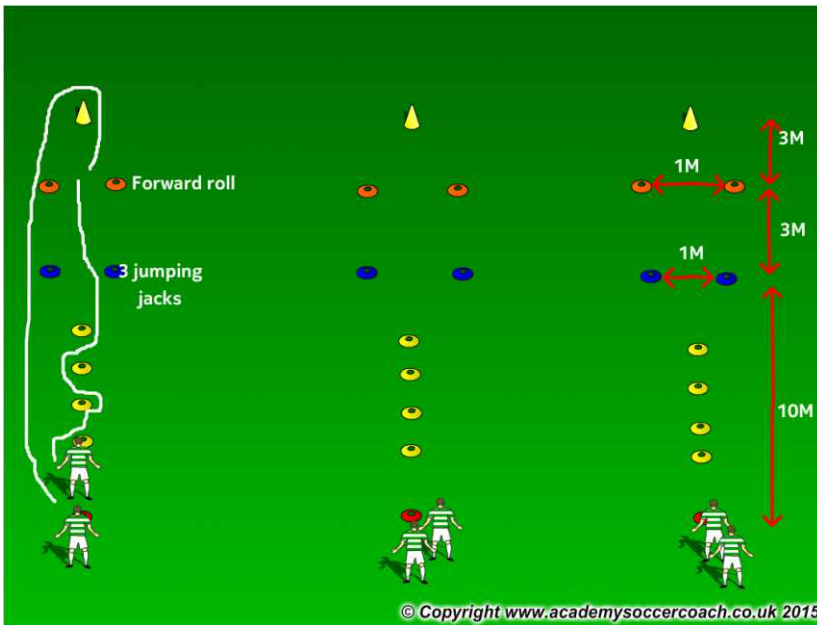
The Four Corner development model is referenced through out this resource using the colour codes found in the diagram to the left.





# Active Start practice plan – Week 1

## STATION A - GENERAL MOVEMENT



**Organization:** Players are placed into 2 or 3s.

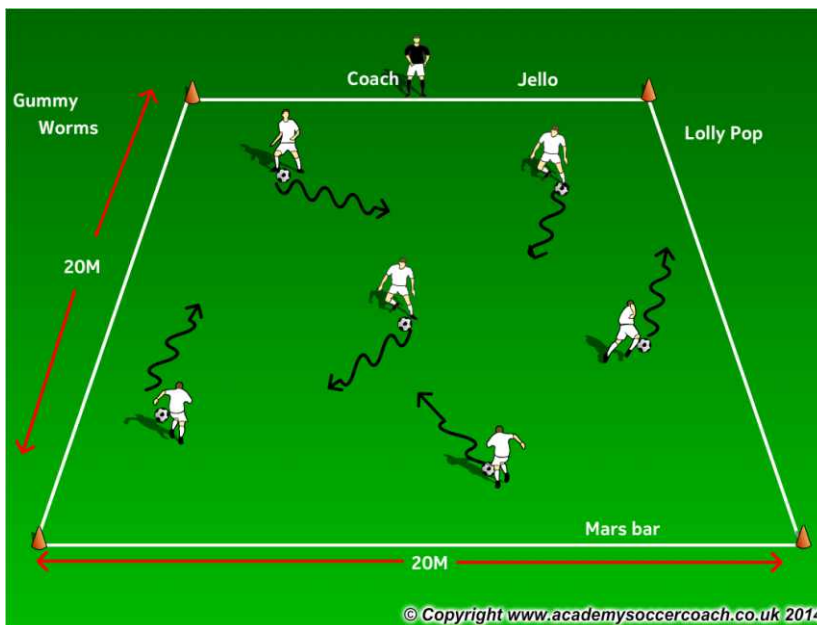
**Procedure:** The 1st player runs in and out of the yellow cones and then sprints to the blue gate. The player performs 3 jumping jacks and then runs backwards to the orange cones where they perform a forward roll. They then run around the end yellow cone and sprint straight back to the start, give their partner a high 5 and then the next player goes. Players waiting perform jumping jacks.

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Listening  
Different types of running  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
FUN!



## STATION B - SOCCER TECHNIQUE - CANDY STORE



**Organization:** 20m x 20m area. Each player has a soccer ball.

**Procedure:** All players dribble inside the area. The area now becomes a candy store and the players explore by shouting out their favourite candies. The coach names each side of the area after a different candy and when the coach calls out that specific candy the players dribble to the correct side and perform a specific challenge. I.e. toe taps, (players touch ball 1 foot at the time using their sole) inside inside etc. (Players use the inside of their feet to knock the ball back and forth between each foot).

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

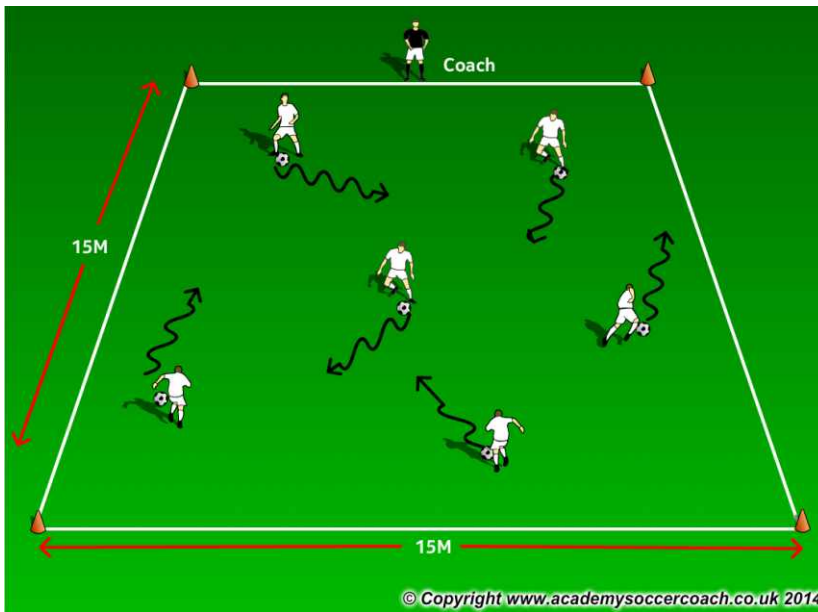
**Emphasis:** Listening  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
FUN!





# Active Start practice plan – Week 1

## STATION C - SOCCER TECHNIQUE - BODY BREAKS



**Organization:** 15m x 15m area. Each player has a soccer ball.

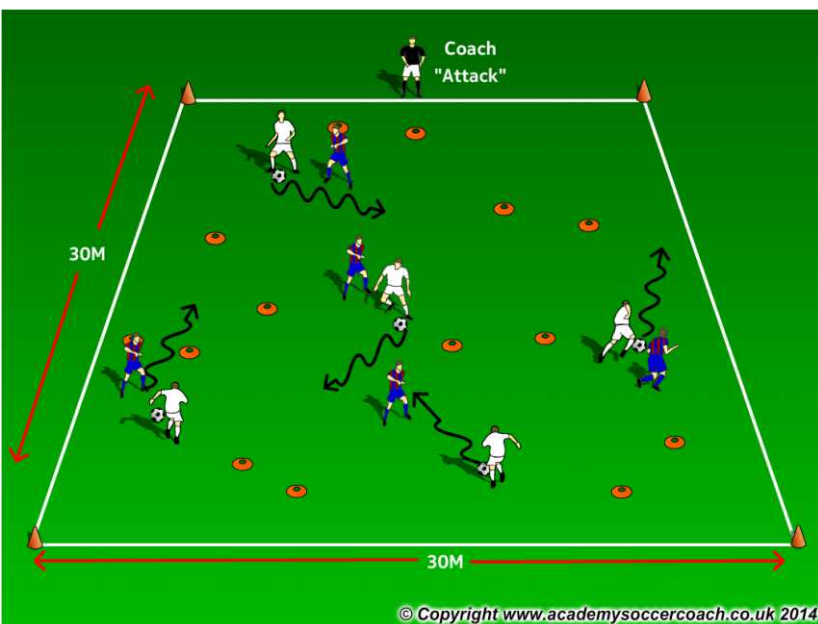
**Procedure:** Players dribble inside the area. The coach calls out a body part and the player must stop the ball and place the correct body part on the ball. The coach calls go for the players to dribble again.

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Listening  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
FUN!



## STATION D - SMALL SIDED GAME - 1V1



**Organization:** Players are paired inside a 30m x 30m area.

**Procedure:** When the coach calls "Attack" the player with ball attempts to dribble through the gates. The player without the ball becomes the defender. If the defender wins the ball he/she then becomes the attacker and vice versa. Players play for 1 minute and score a point every time they go through a gate. Player's cannot go straight back through the same gate. After 1 minute players change partners.

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Listening  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
FUN!





# Active Start practice plan – Week 2

## STATION A - GENERAL MOVEMENT - ELVES AND WIZARD



**Organization:** Mark out a "cone forest" inside a 15m x 15m field. 8-10 players.

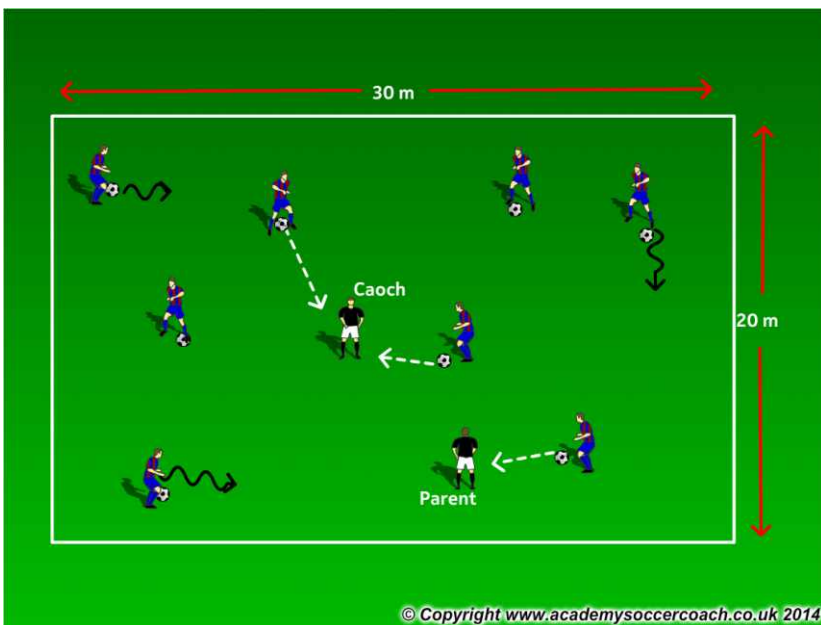
**Procedure:** Elves (players) move around the forest. Whenever two elves meet in the forest, they jump over the cone (one at a time). Can elves jump over the cones before the wizard (parent or coach) catch them!

**Time Frame:** 6 - 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Running with/without the ball  
Changing direction  
Jumping  
Awareness  
Slowing down, speeding up  
FUN!



## STATION B - COORDINATION - CATCH THE ROBBER!



**Organization:** Area is 30m x 20m. 8-10 players, each with a ball

**Procedure:** Each player (officer) dribbles around the area trying to arrest the robber (parent or coach) by passing the ball at their legs. Once all robbers have been caught the players (officer) win the game. Game can be repeated.

**Time Frame:** 6 - 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Eye – foot coordination  
Lots of touches on the ball  
Different parts of the foot  
FUN!

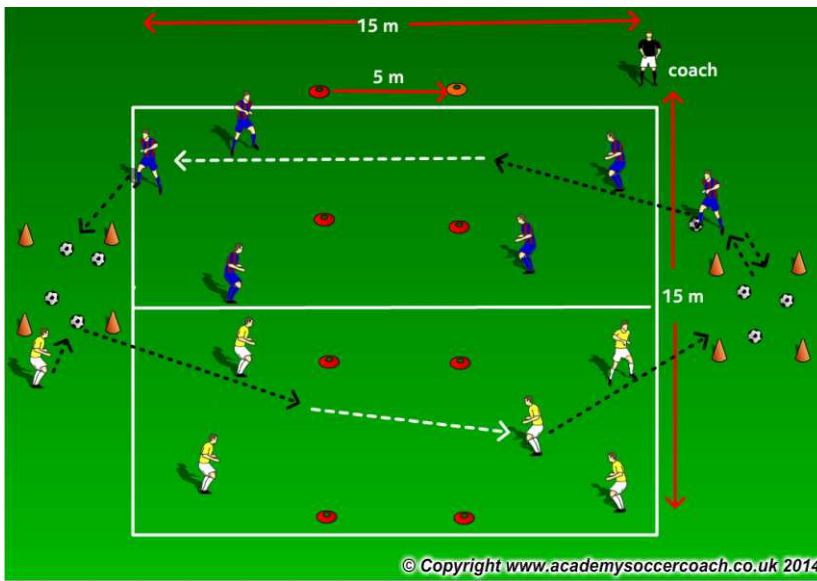






# Active Start practice plan – Week 2

## STATION C - SOCCER TECHNIQUE - PASSING



**Organization:** Using cones mark out a 15m x 15m field with a 5m wide "river" down the middle. Mark out a 2m x 2m "ball castle" on each side of the field. Have equal balls on each castle.

**Procedure:** Each team stands in their own half, with children evenly divided on both sides of the river. Players on the same side as their ball castle get the balls from their castle and dribble the ball towards the river. They then pass the ball across the river to their teammates, who quickly run with the ball and place it in the opposite castle.

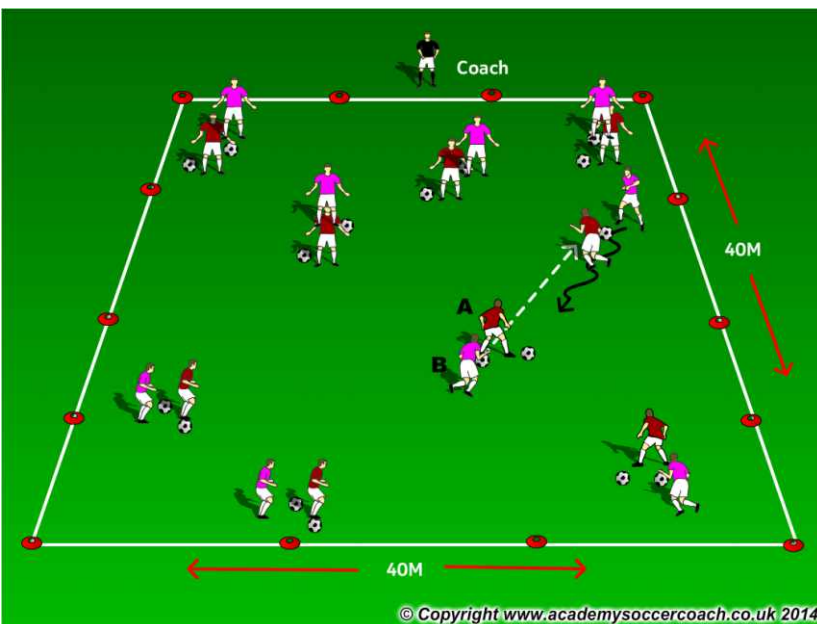
The team with fewer balls in their castle wins. (Duration 1 minute)

**Time Frame:** 6 - 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Lots of touches on the ball  
Using different technique  
Positive feedback  
FUN!



## STATION D - SMALL SIDED GAME - 1 v 1 TO A BALL



**Organization:** Players placed with a partner. Each player has a ball. One ball is the game ball and one ball is the target ball.

**Procedure:** Players play 1v1 to a ball. Player B players a pass through player A's legs. Once the ball is played the game is live and players compete to hit the target ball with the game ball. Players compete for 2 minutes. Once a goal is scored players switch and restart the game.

**Time Frame:** 6 - 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
1v1  
Changing direction  
Change of speed  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
Passing  
FUN!



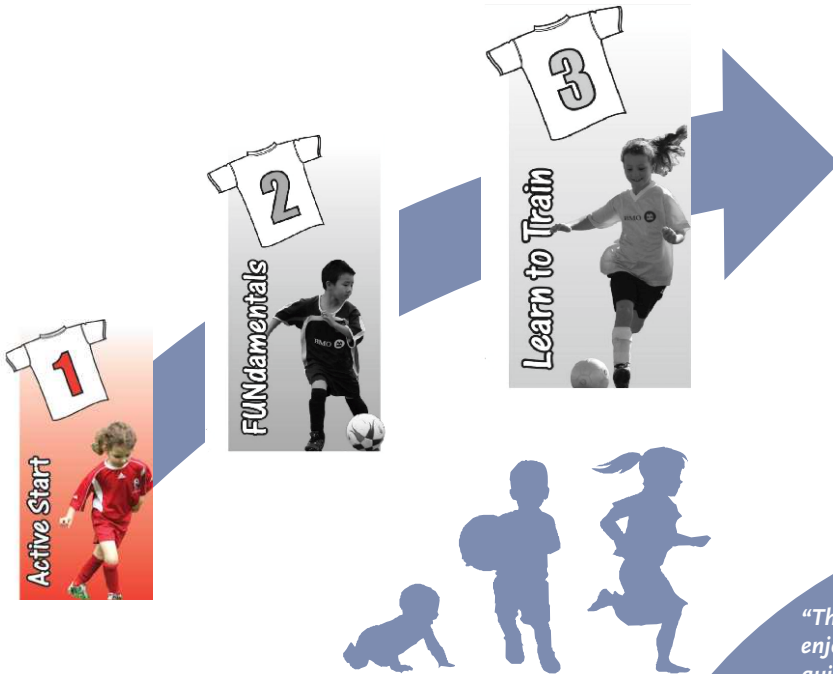


# Physical Literacy

PHE Canada's definition:

Physical Literacy is moving with **competence** and **confidence** in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the **healthy development** of the **whole person**.

Physical literacy impacts many areas of our lives. For example, competent movers tend to be more successful academically and socially. They understand how to be active for life and are able to transfer competence from one area to another. Physically literate individuals have the skills and confidence to move any way they want; can show their skills and confidence in lots of different physical activities and environments; and use their skills and confidence to be active and healthy.



- Crawling**
- Throwing**
- Running**
- and much More...**

*"The more physically literate your child is the more likely they are to enjoy and succeed in sports. Being able to run, change direction quickly, stop quickly, have good balance, being agile and flexible will help your child enjoy soccer skills like dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving the ball. Physical literacy is fundamental in a child's enjoyment of soccer."*

*Bobby Lennox,  
The Ontario Soccer Association  
Manager, Player Development*

## GUIDELINES FOR COACHES, EDUCATORS AND FACILITATORS WORKING WITH ACTIVE START PLAYERS:

There's a lot more to coaching the very young than just organizing games and practices. During play sessions, coaches have to "do it all": Console kids when things go wrong, praise their successes, mediate conflicts, hear stories, and much more. By actively participating, you can facilitate play and share your enthusiasm. Then there are the little duties like helping players put on uniforms or tie their shoes. Training methods have to be age-appropriate. Physical activities and unstructured games packaged in motivational stories-these are the tools of the trade of this level.

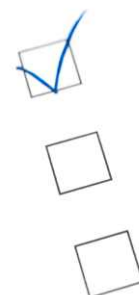
When putting an activity together for these age, make it very **SIMPLE**

- S**imple activities are best.
- I**dle time should be minimal.
- M**ake a game out of a practice.
- P**rovide a range of activities.
- L**et kids have positive experiences.
- E**xtend beyond soccer- specific objectives.

(Resource: Success in Soccer)

## ACTIVE START – CHECKLIST TO SUCCESS

- Ensure you have enough soccer balls for every child
- Use 1 soccer ball per child (they don't like to share their toy)
- Check playing area to ensure its safe – No rocks and No holes
- Remove/reduce distractions. E.g. Swings, pool, dogs, etc.
- Have the practice organized so that all the children are active, all the time
- Have a parent or guardian join in to help supervise and play with their child
- Keep activities short, a active start child's attention span is short
- Be **ENTHUSIASTIC**
- The more **NOISE** from the children the **BETTER**
- Don't keep scores
- "HIGH FIVES" for everyone
- Create the backyard environment
- Have players play 1v1 against their parent
- HAVE FUN!!!**
- Ensure the children leave wanting to come back next week













## GRASSROOTS WORKSHOPS

The Player Development Department has been created at the OSA to assist the membership, districts and clubs with their understanding of the Long Term Player Development (LTPD) philosophy and how it is being applied at the Grassroots level of our game in Ontario.

Grassroots Workshops are available for District Associations and Clubs to host. The content of a Grassroots Workshop is found below:

-  2 day course – (14 hours)
-  Course background and objectives, FIFA, CSA, OSA
-  Philosophy of Grassroots Soccer
-  Importance of small sided games
-  How to plan a practical session
-  The characteristics of children and the educational approach
-  Field preparation for a festival
-  Running a festival



## GRASSROOTS WORKSHOPS

The course content of the Grassroots Workshop is designed to provide theoretical and practical knowledge to coaches to work with larger groups of grassroots players. The emphasis in each of the games and sessions will be fun, creativity and self-expression. A player-centred, holistic approach is used to create well rounded, positive young people who love the game of soccer. Understanding why children play soccer is important in the adult management of the game, children play soccer for a variety of different reasons, some are quite different than why adults play soccer.

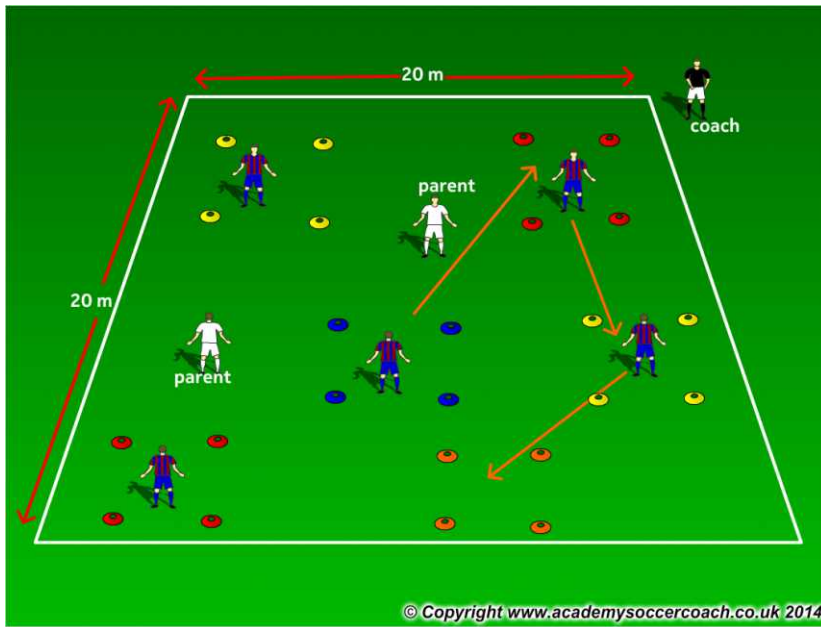
For more information on Grassroots Workshops please email: [grassrootssoccer@soccer.on.ca](mailto:grassrootssoccer@soccer.on.ca)





# Active Start practice plan – Week 3

## STATION A - GENERAL MOVEMENT - FIND AN EMPTY CAGE



**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Changing direction  
Running  
FUN!

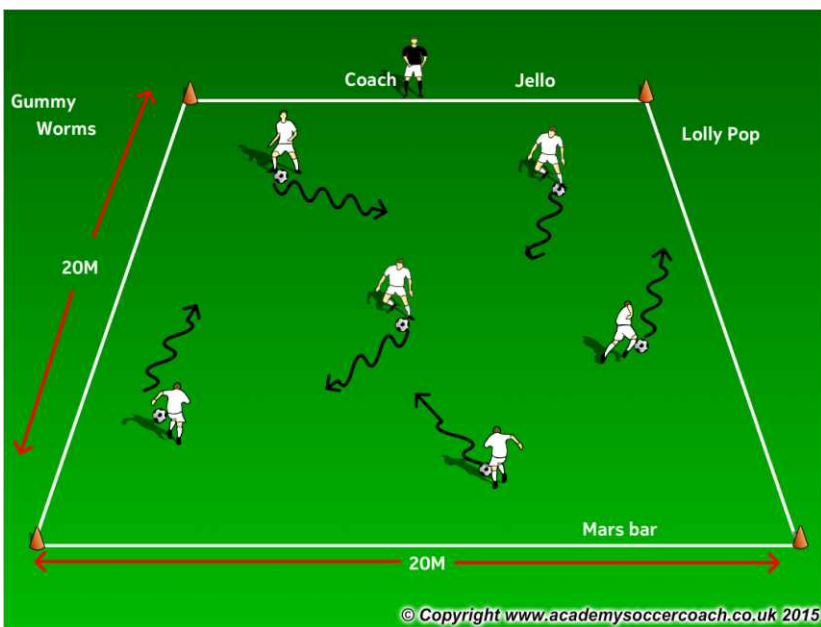
**Organization:** 20m x 20m area. Boxes of 1m x 1m are marked out within the area. 2 or 3 hunters (Parents).

**Procedure:** Players pretend to be different animas in the cage and move in different ways I.e. Skipping, hopping, running backwards. On coach's call, players must find an empty cage to move into. Only one animal per cage.

If a hunter tags a player, he/she becomes a hunter.



## STATION B - GENERAL MOVEMENT - CANDY STORE



**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Listening  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
FUN!

**Organization:** 20m x 20m area. Each player has a soccer ball.

**Procedure:** All players dribble inside the area. The area now becomes a candy store and the players explore by shouting out their favourite candies. The coach names each side of the area after a different candy and when the coach calls out that specific candy the players dribble to the correct side and perform a specific challenge. I.e. toe taps, (players touch ball 1 foot at the time using their sole) inside inside etc. (Players use the inside of their feet to knock the ball back and forth between each foot).





# Active Start practice plan – Week 3

## STATION C - SOCCER TECHNIQUE



**Organization:** Set up a jungle of cones inside of a 15m x 15m field. Mark out a 5m x 2m about 2m away from the field.

**Procedure:** The birds move through the trees. The hunter (parent) is in his/her tent (rectangle box) moving around getting ready for the hunt.

As soon as hunter runs into the jungle to hunt, the birds can save themselves by flying on to the trees (touching the cones), however, each tree can only hold 2 birds at a time.

The hunter can tag any bird who can't find a tree. If any player is tagged, he/she becomes a hunter too.

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Ball familiarity  
Basic movements  
FUN!



## STATION D - SMALL SIDED GAME – 1 v 1 TO A LINE



**Organization:** 15m x 15m field. 8 players (4 children, 4 parents), soccer balls

**Procedure:** 2 teams, player's vs parents (dolphins and penguins). They all move freely in the ocean. The four shores (side of the area, have numbers, name of city etc.)

When the coach calls the number or name of the shore, kids (penguins) run with the ball as fast as they can to that shore before parents (dolphins) touch them.

The player (penguin) who runs out of the ocean first wins.

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
FUN!





# Active Start practice plan – Week 4

## STATION A - GENERAL MOVEMENT - RACE TRACK

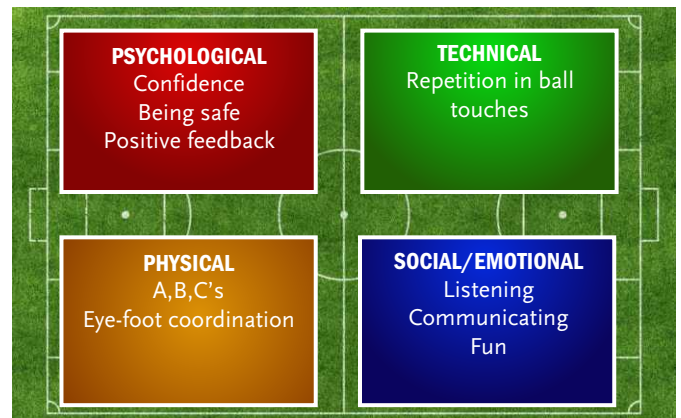


**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

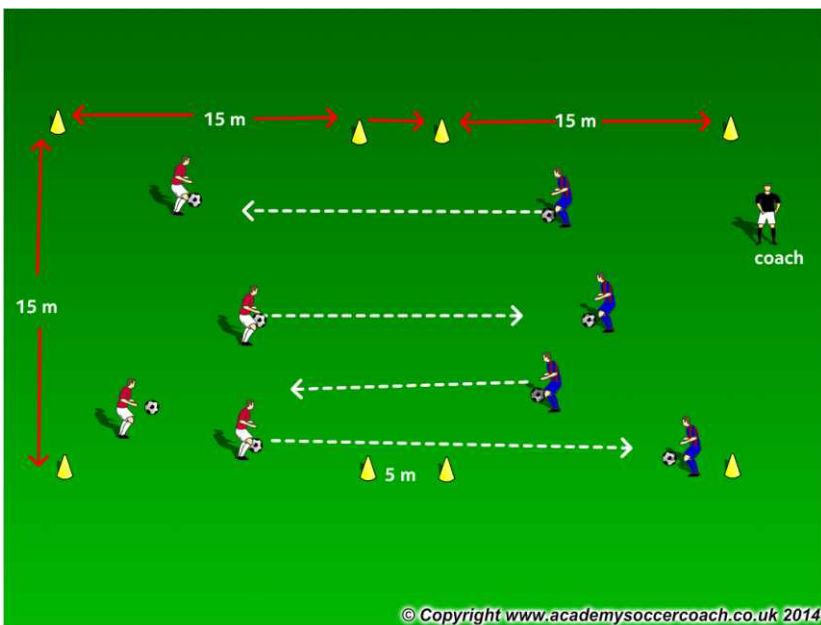
**Emphasis:** Awareness  
Basic movements  
Dribbling/races  
FUN!

**Organization:** 25m x 30m area. Every player has a ball.

**Procedure:** Players dribble around the "race track", and imitate a car on the track: 1st gear = slow, 4th gear = fast, breaks = stop, encourage players to be as animated as they can be, and make car noises.



## STATION B - SOCCER TECHNIQUE -TIDY UP YOUR ROOM



**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Coordination  
Spatial awareness  
FUN!

**Organization:** Create two boxes of 15m x 15m with a 5m neutral zone in between. Every player has a ball.

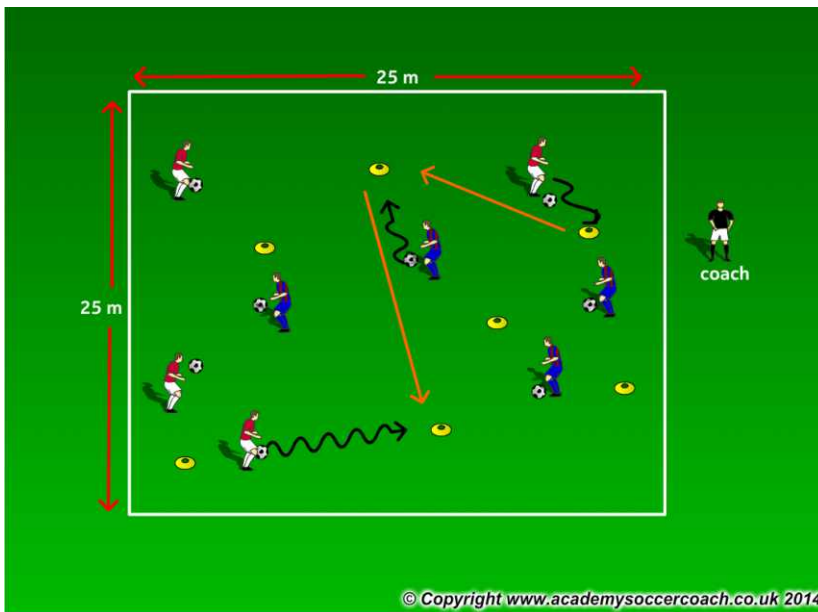
**Procedure:** Player's shoot the ball out of their room into a friend's room. When the coach stops the game (1 minute), the team with the most balls in their room, has to make funny faces. Game can be repeated.





# Active Start practice plan – Week 4

## STATION C - SOCCER TECHNIQUE – BALL SWAP



**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Ball familiarity  
Basic movements  
FUN!

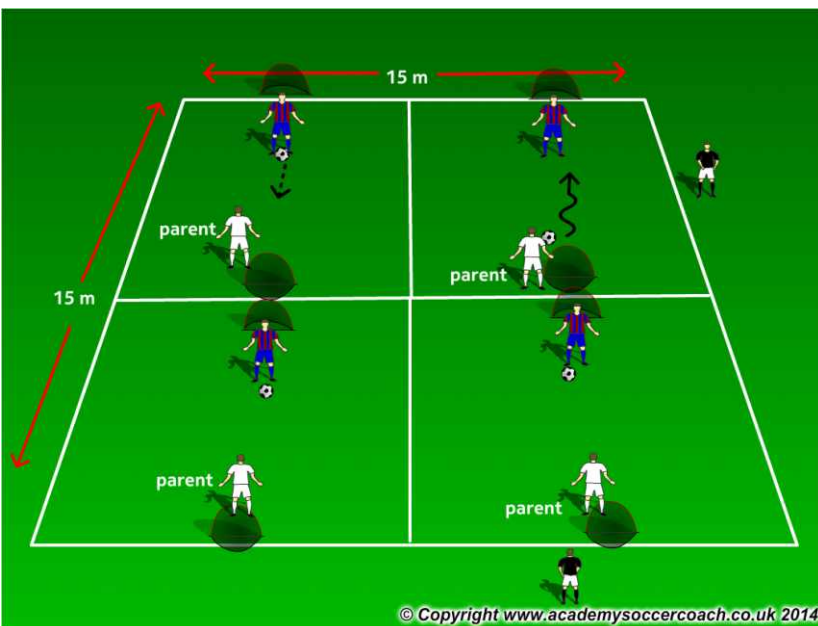
**Organization:** 25m x 25m area, every player has a ball.

**Procedure:** Players dribble around the area, on coach's call, player's pick up their balls, and run to the cone, leave their ball, and go to take another ball and continue to dribble.

**Progression:** Player's are asked to touch the cone or jump on the spot, before running to get their next ball.



## STATION D - SMALL SIDED GAME – 1 v 1 (PLAYER VS PARENT)



**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
FUN!

**Organization:** 15m x 15m area is divided to 4 equal fields.

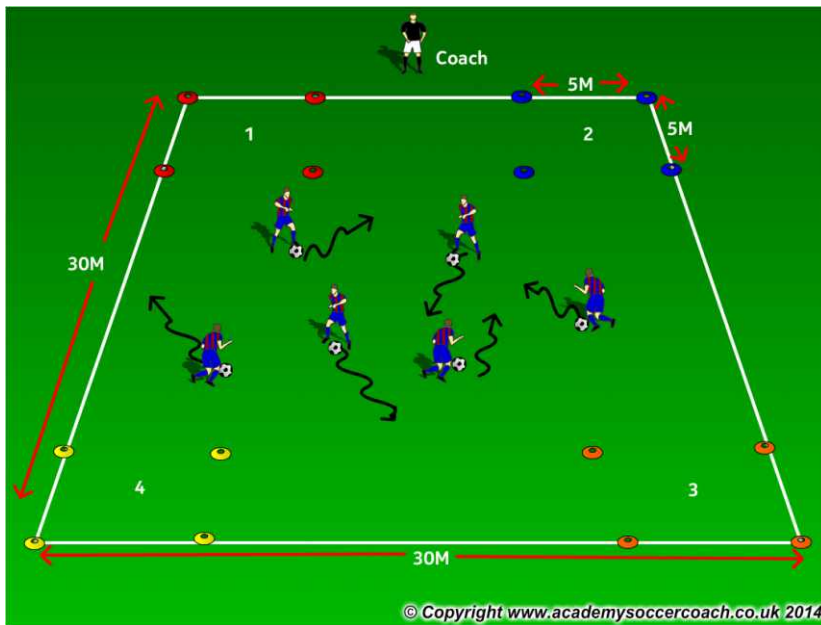
**Procedure:** 1v1 game. Player's vs parents.





# Active Start practice plan – Week 5

## STATION A - GENERAL MOVEMENT



**Organization:** Each player has a ball in a 30m x 30m area. In each corner there is a 5m x 5m area which is numbered as above.

**Procedure:** Players dribble around inside the middle of the area. When the coach calls out a number the players dribble to that specific corner. The 1st player to stop their ball in the correct corner scores 1 point.

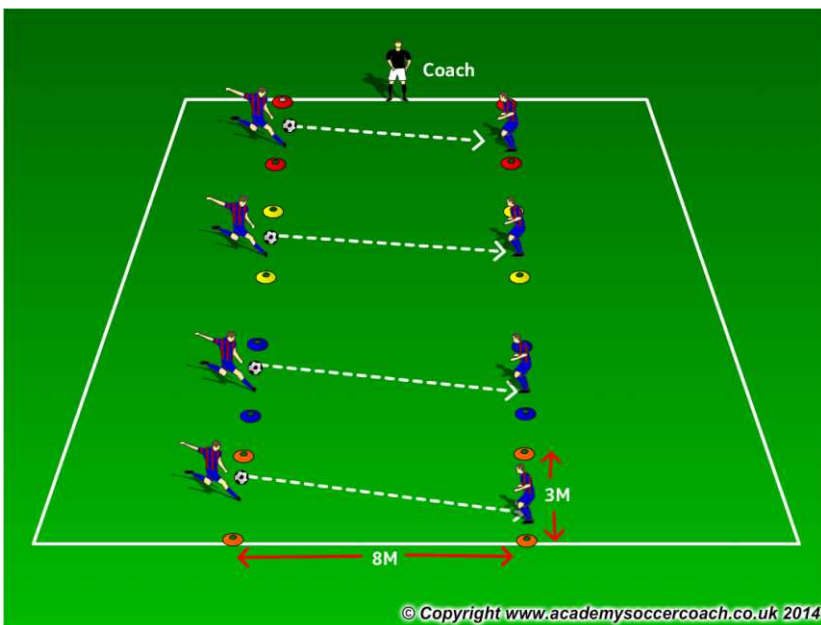
**Progression:** When the players arrive in the corner instead of stopping they perform 5 toe taps and continue to dribble.

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Listening  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
FUN!



## STATION B - SOCCER TECHNIQUE - SHOOTING



**Organization:** Players are in pairs and stand opposite each other in the goals, they are 8m away from each other in a 3m goal

**Procedure:** Players look to strike the ball past their partner. Each time a player scores they score 1 point. After 5 shots the players rotate positions.

**Progression:** Have players practice shooting with both feet.

**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Shooting  
Goalkeeping  
Coordination  
Team work  
FUN!







# Active Start practice plan – Week 5

## STATION C - SOCCER TECHNIQUE - SHOOTING



**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Shooting  
Goalkeeping  
Coordination  
Team work  
FUN!

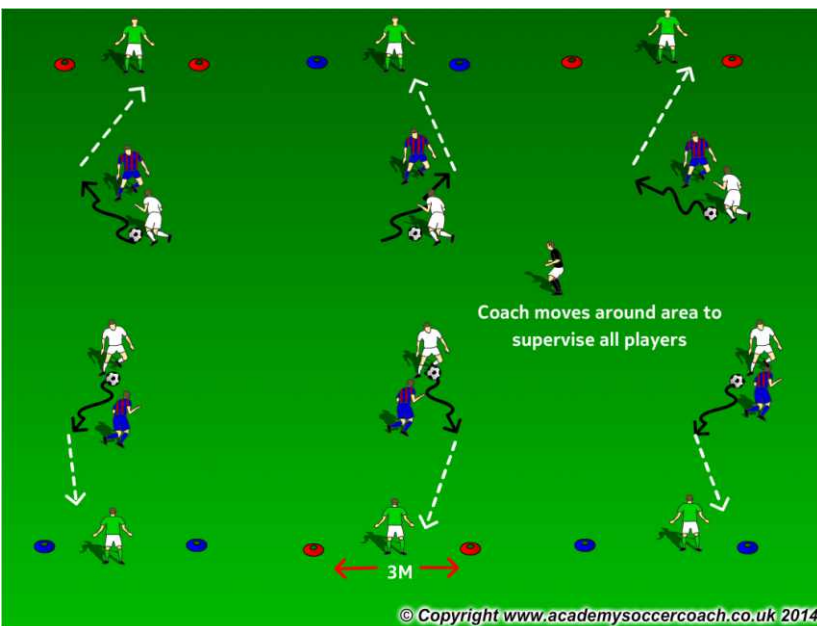
**Organization:** Players are in pairs and stand opposite each other in the goals, they are 8m away from each other in a 3m goal

**Procedure:** Players look to strike the ball past their partner. Each time a player scores they score 2 points. If the players can strike the ball sitting on the cone and score a goal they score 3 points. After 5 shots the players rotate positions.

**Progression:** Have players practice shooting with both feet.



## STATION D - SMALL SIDED GAME - 1 v 1 TO GOAL



**Time Frame:** 8 minutes

**Emphasis:** Shooting  
Dribbling  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
FUN!

**Organization:** Player placed into groups of 3. They play 1v1 to goal.

**Procedure:** Goalkeeper rolls the ball out and the 2 player's play 1v1. After a goal is scored they player who scored the goal goes in goal.





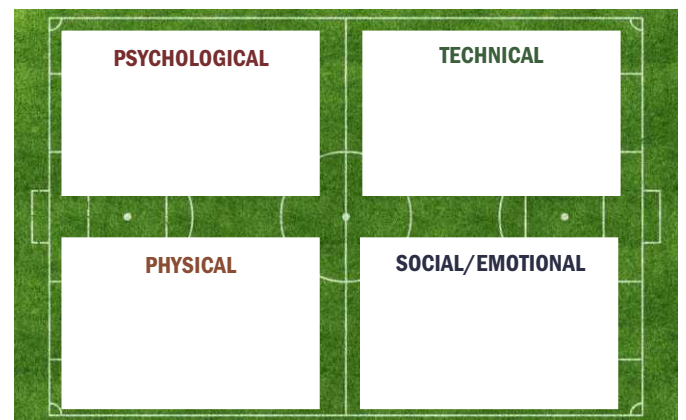
# Active Start practice plan

## STATION A - GENERAL MOVEMENT

For coaches to plan their own sessions

Time Frame: 8 minutes

Emphasis:

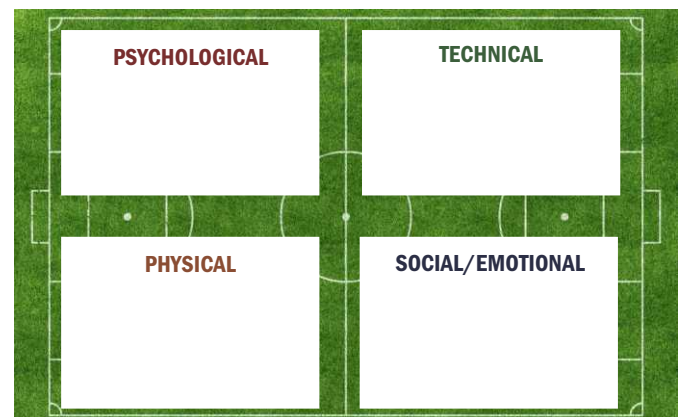


## STATION B - SOCCER TECHNIQUE

For coaches to plan their own sessions

Time Frame: 8 minutes

Emphasis:





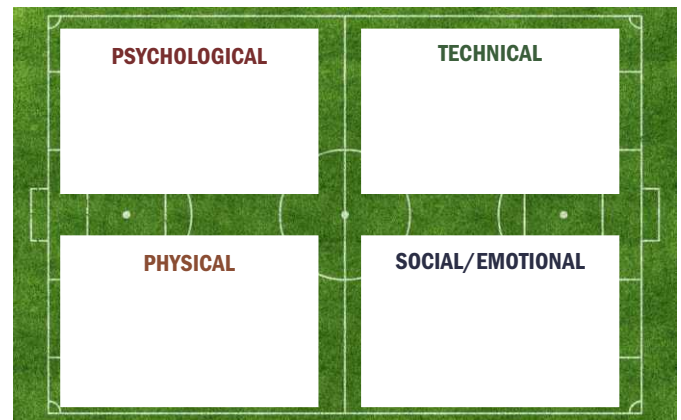
# Active Start practice plan

## STATION C - SOCCER TECHNIQUE

For coaches to plan their own sessions

Time Frame: 8 minutes

Emphasis:

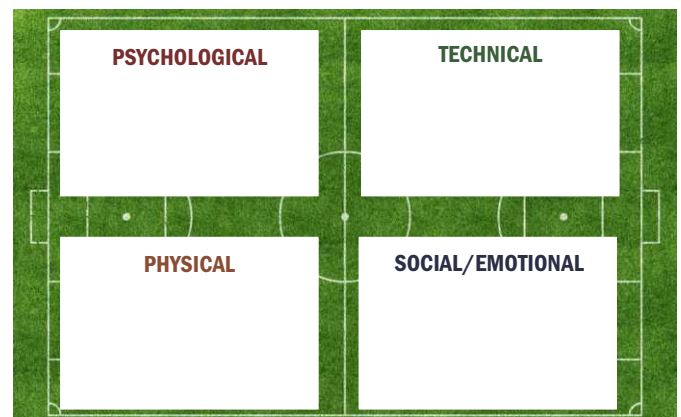


## STATION D - SMALL SIDED GAME

For coaches to plan their own sessions

Time Frame: 8 minutes

Emphasis:





For more information on grassroots soccer development please contact: [grassroots@soccer.on.ca](mailto:grassroots@soccer.on.ca) or visit [www.ontariosoccer.net/grassroots](http://www.ontariosoccer.net/grassroots)



## Ontario Soccer Association Resources

- The Ontario Soccer Association Recreation Matrix
- The Ontario Soccer Association Development Matrix
- "Wellness To World Cup" Brochure
- Player Evaluation Forms
- Game Organization Guide
- U8 Festival Guide
- Game Leader Information
- Retreat Line Information
- Active Start Brochure
- FUNdamentals Brochure
- Learn To Train Brochure
- Soccer For Life Brochure
- CS4L LTPD for parents
- OSA LTPD Video
- OSA Grassroots Video

Printed documents are uncontrolled. For the most recent version of this document please visit [www.ontariosoccer.net](http://www.ontariosoccer.net)

To contact The Ontario Soccer Association call 905-264-9390 or visit [www.ontariosoccer.net](http://www.ontariosoccer.net)

## Acknowledgments

The OSA would like to acknowledge time and support in developing this resource from technical leaders in the province.

The OSA would like to acknowledge the other readily available documents, resources and suppliers we reference in creating this curriculum:

