



Lesson Plan



Activity Name	Description	Diagram	Purpose/Coaching Points
<p>1. WARM-UP</p> <p>Players organize themselves into groups of three. Set up two cones 40 yards apart.</p>	<p>One player goes in between the two cones to be the server (1). One of the two outside players (2) runs around the nearest cone and as soon as player (2) turns around the cone the server throws the ball in the air to the runner. Player (2) heads the ball to the far outside player (3). Player (3) heads the ball back to the server (1) runs around the nearest cone and the procedure is repeated in the opposite direction.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes on the ball. • Neck stiff. • Attack the ball and run through it. • Head the lower half of the ball for height and distance.

2. CROSSES TO FINISH

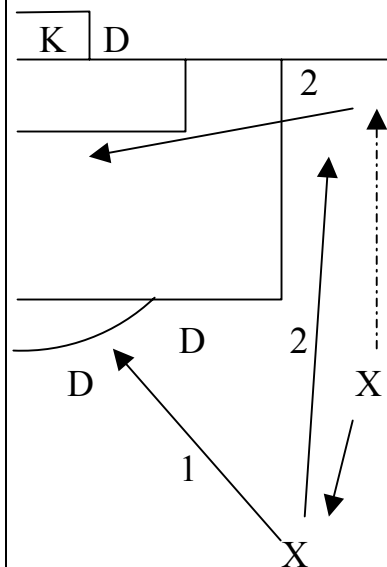
Use the final third of the age appropriate field. Four defenders and a goalkeeper. Defenders take turns in pairs.

A winger and a midfielder at each flank and the balls are with the wingers. Each defensive pair starts on the edge of the penalty area and clears four crosses in each turn.

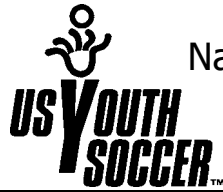
Sequence of crosses:

1. Right-winger passes back to the midfielder who crosses towards the penalty arc (#1).
2. Right-winger passes back to the midfielder who sends a through ball. The winger chases the ball and crosses toward the penalty spot (#2). Defenders turn and run into the penalty area to defend the cross. Process repeats from the left side and then the two defenders switch.

Progress by adding a forward (2v1) and then add a second forward (2v2).



- Attack the ball.
- Head early; don't allow the ball to bounce.
- Head high and wide in the direction you are facing.
- Do not flick the ball into dangerous areas. Concede a corner if you must.
- If the keeper calls for the ball and comes out, cover for the keeper by running to the goal line.
- After the ball is cleared, sprint out.



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3. NEUTRAL ZONE			
<p>Two neutral players in zones (5 yards in from the touchline) on the flank. Only neutral players are allowed in the flank zones. 4v4 to 6v6 in the center area. A goal may be scored only after a neutral player has crossed the ball.</p>	<p>Play a match with neutral zones on the flanks in order to get in good crosses. Defensive headers should try to clear the ball into one of the neutral zones. To maintain realism ask the neutral players to combine and execute a typical flank sequence (overlap, wall pass, etc.) before crossing the ball. Players in the center area play a normal soccer game except they are not allowed into the neutral zones. Progress by lifting the restriction.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate marking assignment early and clearly. • Send one defender to the near post to block the cross from entering the goal area. • Mark the other forwards by keeping goal-side of them.
4. 6 VS. 6 MATCH			
<p>Play a match according to the US Youth Soccer rules for U12.</p>	<p>A normal match except any defensive header earns a point.</p>	<p>US Youth Soccer regulation U12 field and goal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide the players on recognizing when to head the ball for a defensive clearance.
5. COOL-DOWN TEAM KNOTS			
<p>The players organize themselves into groups of six. Each group stands in a circle facing one another.</p>	<p>On the coach's signal the players close their eyes and reach into the center of the circle to hold other players' hands. When they open their eyes they should be in a big human knot. Only hand-to-hand positions are allowed. Players attempt to unravel themselves without letting go.</p>	<p>The task is to make a circle with everyone still holding hands. Someone will take charge and become the leader giving instructions. After a session on heading for U12 players this will be a good change of pace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility and balance. • Group cooperation. • Problem solving skills. • Leadership development.