# **Rotating U5 Soccer Practice Plans**

Cold Lake Minor Soccer schedules one practice and one game/funday per week for U5 teams. To keep practices fresh, coaches can rotate through the following three unique 45‑minute sessions. Each plan focuses on fun and fundamental skills for four‑ and five‑year‑olds while building listening skills, dribbling control, passing, and teamwork. All activities can be adapted to indoor gyms or outdoor fields.

## General dribbling and safety reminders

* **Dribbling technique** – remind players to use the inside and outside of both feet, take short touches to keep the ball under control, and look up while dribbling. Encourage them to practice with both feet and celebrate effort.
* **Hydration and weather** – schedule a break every 10 minutes and provide shade. In hot weather, follow AYSO’s recommendation to schedule practices outside the hottest part of the day and use sunscreen; in cold weather, let players wear hats, gloves, and layers.
* **Lightning and storms** – stop play and seek shelter if thunder is heard; wait 30 minutes after the last thunder before resuming.

## **Plan A – Dribbling & Adventure Theme**

This plan was described in detail previously. It mixes imaginative games with fundamental dribbling. Use it whenever players need to review ball control.

### Time schedule

| Approx. time | Activity | Objective |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **5 min** | Warm‑up **Red Light / Green Light** | Listening & reaction time |
| **10 min** | **Gatekeepers** dribbling game | Close control & decision making |
| **10 min** | **Pirate Treasure Hunt** | Inside/outside cuts & acceleration |
| **10 min** | **Sharks & Minnows** | Dribbling under pressure & shielding |
| **10 min** | **Mini‑scrimmage** (4v4) | Apply skills in free play |

### Key instructions (summary)

* **Red Light, Green Light** – players line up on one end of a grid. The coach calls out “green light” to make them dribble and “red light” to stop. Any player still moving returns to the start. Vary commands (left foot, right foot) to challenge them.
* **Gatekeepers** – set up pairs of cones as gates in a grid. Players score points by dribbling through open gates while two gatekeepers block different gates every few seconds. Remind dribblers to keep their eyes up and change direction.
* **Pirate Treasure Hunt** – divide players into teams. Each player dribbles through a cone slalom to collect a “treasure” (pinnie or flag) and returns to tag the next teammate. Encourage inside/outside cuts and fast dribbling after the turn.
* **Sharks & Minnows** – create a rectangular grid. Two players are sharks without balls; the rest are minnows who must dribble from one end to the other while sharks try to knock their balls away. Players whose ball is stolen become sharks. Remind minnows to shield the ball with their body.

### Indoor vs. outdoor adaptations

* Indoors, reduce the grid sizes and use a futsal ball. Walls can act as boundaries, but players should not use them to push off. Outdoors, enlarge the grids and spread cones further apart. Check the field for holes and adjust for wind and weather.

## **Plan B – Driving School & Animal Games**

This session introduces imaginative variations of the traffic‑light game and emphasises dribbling accuracy. It includes an energetic tag game and a coach‑targeting passing game.

### Time schedule

| Approx. time | Activity | Objective |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **5 min** | **Driving School** warm‑up | Practice changing speed & direction |
| **10 min** | **Walk the Puppy** dribbling game | Keep the ball close & use the inside of the foot |
| **10 min** | **Snake in the Grass** tag game | Coordination & quick cuts while dribbling |
| **10 min** | **Hit the Coach** passing game | Accuracy & fun targeting |
| **10 min** | **Mini‑scrimmage** (4v4) | Apply skills in small‑sided play |

### Activity descriptions

**Driving School (warm‑up)** – this variation of Red/Green Light adds more colours for variety. After starting with “green” to go and “red” to stop, introduce yellow to slow down and purple to change direction; a disco light means stop and dance. Use a small grid (20 × 20 yards) and encourage players to listen and react quickly. Indoors, shorten the distance and mark boundaries with tape.

**Walk the Puppy** – give each child an imaginary leash. Tell them their ball is a puppy, and they must not let it stray too far. Players dribble across the field, keeping the “puppy” close with small touches of the inside of their feet. Emphasise keeping the head up and staying in control. Indoors, use flat markers and adjust the distance.

**Snake in the Grass** – set up a 10 × 10-yard square. Two players start as snakes lying on their stomachs. On the coach’s shout, all players dribble inside the square while snakes slither around trying to touch them. When a player is touched, they become a snake. Continue until only one dribbler remains. Encourage quick cuts, pivots, and jumping to avoid the snakes.

**Hit the Coach** – create a small square. Players dribble around and try to shoot their ball at the coach’s legs. Whoever succeeds chooses an animal sound for the coach to imitate. SoccerHelp’s version suggests lining up players facing the coach; on “Go,” they chase the coach while dribbling and try to hit them. This game teaches kicking while running, looking up, and ball control in a crowd. To adapt for indoors, reduce the square and encourage softer passes to avoid bouncing off hard walls.

**Mini‑scrimmage** – end practice with a 10‑minute 3v3 game. Rotating players often keeps everyone involved. Indoors, use futsal goals or cone gates and non‑marking shoes; outdoors, use small pop‑up goals.

## **Plan C – Striking & Passing Day**

This plan highlights striking and passing skills while still incorporating dribbling and tag games. Shorter activities keep players engaged and leave time for free play.

### Time schedule

| Approx. time | Activity | Objective |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **5 min** | **Little, Little, Big** warm‑up | Learn to vary dribble touches |
| **10 min** | **Soccer Bowling** | Shooting accuracy & laces technique |
| **10 min** | **Partner Passing** | Passing & receiving with the inside of the foot |
| **5 min** | **Plant a Tree** dribbling game | Change direction & explore space |
| **5 min** | **Hospital Tag** | Tag game with fitness tasks |
| **10 min** | **Mini‑scrimmage** (4v4) | Apply skills & celebrate |

### Activity descriptions

**Little, Little, Big (warm‑up)** – line players up at one end of the field. They dribble forward using two small touches (“little, little”) and then a big touch to push the ball further. Have them race to a line and back. This teaches young children to control the ball before accelerating.

**Soccer Bowling** – set up 5–6 cones as bowling pins across a small goal line. Players take turns shooting their ball to knock over the cones. Mike’s Window notes that this drill encourages children to kick with their laces instead of their toes. Create two lanes for more participation. Indoors, use lightweight cones and roll the ball instead of kicking hard.

**Partner Passing** – pair players about five feet apart. They pass the ball back and forth using the inside of their feet. After 10 passes, each pair takes a step back and continues passing. Emphasise receiving the ball with a soft touch and accuracy over power. Indoors, mark pairs with cones to avoid collisions.

**Plant a Tree** – give each child a cone (their “tree”). Have them run to plant their tree somewhere on the field, then dribble their ball to that tree. After a few rounds, ask them to dribble to a neighbour’s tree or pretend to be monsters who knock over trees before collecting the cones. This activity teaches spatial awareness and changing direction.

**Hospital Tag** – play inside a square. One coach is the “germ” with a ball. The germ dribbles around and tags players by kicking their ball. When tagged, a child must go to the “hospital” (a small area) and complete a quick fitness task (e.g., jumping jacks or toe taps) before re‑entering the game. Rotate the germ role to give everyone a chance to chase.

**Mini‑scrimmage** – finish with a 4v4 game. Encourage players to use their passing and shooting skills from earlier activities.

## Indoor vs. outdoor adaptations for Plans B & C

* **Indoor** – shrink playing areas, use futsal or low‑bounce balls, and ensure players wear non‑marking shoes. Avoid sliding tackles and use flat markers instead of tall cones. You can use gym walls as boundaries for Snake in the Grass and Hit the Coach, but caution players against collisions.
* **Outdoor** – expand grids to allow more running. On grass or turf, you can place cones farther apart for Walk the Puppy and Plant a Tree. Check for holes and remove debris. In cold weather, ensure players wear layers and headgear, in hot weather, schedule extra water breaks.

## Video search links

Below are recommended keyword searches to find visual demonstrations for each drill. These search links take you to external video platforms. Cold Lake Minor Soccer does not control the content.

| Drill or concept | Example search link |
| --- | --- |
| Driving School (red/yellow/purple light) | [Search “driving school soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=driving+school+soccer+drill) |
| Walk the Puppy | [Search “walk the puppy soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=walk+the+puppy+soccer+drill) |
| Snake in the Grass | [Search “snake in the grass soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=snake+in+the+grass+soccer+drill) |
| Hit the Coach | [Search “hit the coach soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=hit+the+coach+soccer+drill) |
| Little, Little, Big | [Search “little little big soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=little+little+big+soccer+drill) |
| Soccer Bowling | [Search “soccer bowling drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=soccer+bowling+drill) |
| Partner Passing | [Search “partner passing soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=partner+passing+soccer+drill) |
| Plant a Tree | [Search “plant a tree soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=plant+a+tree+soccer+drill) |
| Hospital Tag | [Search “hospital soccer drill”](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=hospital+soccer+drill) |

These rotating practice plans should help coaches keep sessions fresh and engaging. Adapt the activities to the needs of your team, swap games between plans, and **most importantly, have FUN.**