**Rotating U7 Soccer Practice Plans**

Cold Lake Minor Soccer schedules one practice and one game/funday per week for U7 teams, as recommended by Canada Soccer for grassroots programs. To keep practice fresh, coaches can rotate through the following three 45-minute sessions. Each plan focuses on fun, ball mastery, passing, shooting, and teamwork for six-year-olds while building listening skills and spatial awareness. Activities may be adapted for indoor gyms or outdoor fields. Practices should remain centred on enjoyment rather than results, and every player should get plenty of touches on the ball.

# General playing and safety reminders

* **Technique & ball mastery** – encourage players to use both feet (inside and outside) for dribbling, passing, and shooting. Keep touches short and remind them to look up to avoid collisions.
* **Hydration and breaks** – schedule a water break every 10 minutes, provide shade on hot days, and let children wear hats and gloves in cold weather. Avoid practicing in extreme heat or lightning storms; if thunder is heard, stop playing and wait 30 minutes before resuming.
* **Equipment** – shin guards are required, soccer cleats are recommended outdoors and flat-soled shoes indoors. Size-3 balls suit U7 players.

# Plan A – Dribbling & Movement

This session emphasises close ball control and changing direction. Use it when players need to sharpen their dribbling and reaction skills.

## Time schedule

 Approx. timeActivity Objective

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **5 min** | **Red Light / Green Light** warm-up | Listening & reaction time |
| **10 min** | **Toe Taps & Foundations** | Quick touches with both feet |
| **10 min** | **Sharks & Minnows** | Dribbling under pressure & shielding |
| **10 min** | **Gatekeepers Passing Game** | Passing through gates & decision-making |
| **10 min** | **Mini scrimmage (4v4)** | Apply skills in free play |

## Activity descriptions

**Red Light, Green Light (warm-up)** – players start at one end of a grid. On “green” they dribble quickly; on “red” they stop the ball with the sole. Add variations such as “yellow” to dribble slowly and “purple” to change direction. Emphasise listening and keeping the ball close.

**Toe Taps & Foundations** – each player stands over their ball and alternates touching the top with the soles (toe taps). Then practice “foundations”: knocking the ball gently between the insides of the feet while moving forward. Encourage quick feet and light touches.

**Sharks & Minnows** – in a rectangular grid two players start as sharks without balls. The minnows dribble from one end to the other while sharks try to knock their balls away; when a minnow’s ball is stolen, they become a shark. Remind minnows to shield the ball using their body.

**Gatekeepers Passing Game** – set up pairs of cones (gates) around the grid. Two players act as gatekeepers moving to block gates. The rest of the players dribble and pass through as many open gates as possible. This encourages players to lift their heads, change direction, and choose open gates.

**Mini-scrimmage** – end the session with a 4v4 scrimmage. Rotate players often to ensure equal playing time and encourage passing, dribbling, and shooting.

## Indoor vs. outdoor adaptations

* Indoors, reduce the grid size and use a futsal ball. Walls can act as boundaries for Sharks & Minnows but remind players not to push off. Keep gates small for Gatekeepers and use flat markers.
* Outdoors, enlarge the grids and spread gates further apart. Check the field for holes and adjust for wind. In cold weather allow hats and gloves, in hot weather schedule extra water breaks.

# Plan B – Passing & Teamwork

This session introduces imaginative games to build passing accuracy and teamwork. Use it when the team needs to share the ball and work together.

## Time schedule

 Approx. timeActivity Objective

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **5 min** | **Follow the Leader** warm-up | Mirror dribbling & change of pace |
| **10 min** | **Inside/Outside Cuts** dribbling | Turning & changing direction |
| **10 min** | **Traffic Jam** game | Ball control in congested areas |
| **10 min** | **Numbers Passing** (2v1) | Pass & move, supporting play |
| **10 min** | **Mini scrimmage (4v4)** | Apply skills in small-sided play |

## Activity descriptions

**Follow the Leader (warm-up)** – the coach or a chosen player dribbles around the grid using various speeds and moves. All players follow and copy the leader’s turns, stops, and accelerations. Rotate leaders to involve everyone.

**Inside/Outside Cuts** – set up a line of cones. Players dribble to each cone, using the inside of the foot to cut one way and the outside to cut back. Encourage them to accelerate after each cut and use both feet.

**Traffic Jam** – scatter cones randomly in a grid to represent traffic. Players dribble through the “traffic” without hitting cones or other players. Add commands such as “horn” (stop and turn) or “speed bump” (slow down) to improve control.

**Numbers Passing** – organise players in groups of three with one defender in the middle. The two attackers try to complete passes around the defender. Rotate defenders frequently. Emphasise passing accuracy, moving after passing, and supporting your teammate.

**Mini-scrimmage** – finish with a 4v4 game. Focus on teamwork, communicating “pass” or “mine,” and creating space.

## Indoor vs. outdoor adaptations

* Indoors, shorten distances and mark boundaries with tape. For Traffic Jam use flat markers and avoid hard contact. For Numbers Passing use a futsal ball and adjust the defender’s space.
* Outdoors, enlarge the grid; use grass or turf to encourage longer passes. Ensure cones are visible and players wear cleats for traction.

# Plan C – Shooting & Striking Day

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

## Time schedule

 Approx. timeActivity Objective

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **5 min** | **Tag with a Ball** warm-up | Coordination & dribbling awareness |
| **10 min** | **Pull Back Turns** | Turning quickly & shielding |
| **10 min** | **Pirate Treasure Hunt** | Inside/outside cuts & acceleration |
| **5 min** | **Gates Dribbling** | Agility & ball control |
| **10 min** | **Mini scrimmage (4v4)** | Apply skills & celebrate |

## Activity descriptions

**Tag with a Ball (warm-up)** – each player dribbles inside a square while one or two players attempt to tag others by touching them or their ball. Once tagged, players perform a quick skill (e.g., three toe taps) before rejoining the game. This promotes awareness and encourages players to protect the ball.

**Pull Back Turns** – players dribble forward then stop the ball with the sole and pull it back, pivoting to change direction. Repeat using both feet. Emphasise using the body to shield the ball and accelerating after the turn.

**Pirate Treasure Hunt** – divide players into teams. Each dribbles through a cone slalom to collect a “treasure” (pinnie or cone) and returns to tag the next teammate. Encourage quick cuts and racing back to the start.

**Gates Dribbling** – set up several small gates with cones around a grid. Players score points by dribbling through as many gates as possible in one minute. Encourage players to keep their heads up and change direction quickly.

**Mini-scrimmage** – conclude with a 4v4 scrimmage. Emphasise using turns, dribbling moves, and shooting when near goal.

## Indoor vs. outdoor adaptations

* Indoors, reduce the play area and use a futsal ball. For Pirate Treasure Hunt shorten the slalom and use soft markers. Gates Dribbling can be done with fewer gates to avoid congestion.
* Outdoors, enlarge the grid and spread the gates wider apart. On grass or turf you may add more “treasure” stations to encourage longer runs.

# Citations

These practice plans are based on age-appropriate guidelines for Under-7 soccer in Alberta. Sessions focus on enjoyment, movement, and basic skills. Each practice lasts about 45 minutes with small-sided games (4v4) and rosters of eight players. Recommended field dimensions (33–44 yards long and 25– 33 yards wide) and game durations (four 10-minute quarters or two 20-minute halves) guided the scrimmage design. Indoor adaptations reflect futsal-style play on 70′×35′ courts. Safety notes on equipment, no offside rules, and practice format come from Canada Soccer grassroots resources.

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