



# Kickin' it with the Cougs Soccer Skills Program

## U8 Skills Sessions





## Kickin' it with the Cougs Soccer Skills- Practice Sessions

### Age Group: 7 & 8 yrs, prepared by Bob Maltman, U of R Cougar Women's Soccer

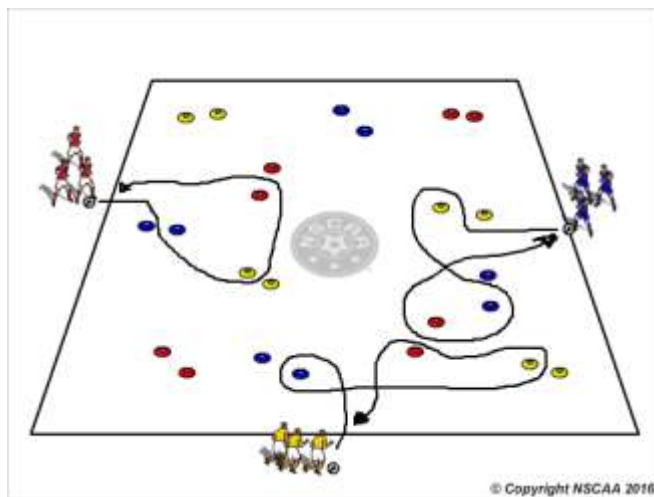
#### Key points for coaches:

- More coordinated in their actions and will be able to perform a wider range of agility and footwork/movement exercises. .
- Will work hard to try to impress the coach with their abilities, especially under positive reinforcement.
- Still focus upon many technical elements involving footwork, dribbling, feints, receiving and passing. The players are able to gain an appreciation of the use of space in terms of special awareness.
- In 1 v 1 exercises, can introduce individual attacking (close control, change of direction, change of pace, drive at the defender, attack space and calm finishing) and defending (angle of approach, balanced body position, close the distance on the attacker, move him where you want to go, when and how to tackle).
- In 2 v 1 situations, can work on concepts of combination play and moves to create space (attacking) and the angle and distance from the 1<sup>st</sup> defender to provide cover and close down on the attacker.
- Can incorporate in small sided situations varying from 1 v 1 to 4 v 4 that give players many touches on the ball. The smaller team size reduces the complexity of decisions that need to be made.

#### Agility warm-up with ball 10 minutes

Multiple touches on the ball-emphasis on using inside/outside/bottom of foot to maneuver the ball.  
Toe taps, rolling ball sideways.  
Combinations of touches – e.g. inside/inside/outside; Inside/outside/roll across body with sole of foot, etc.

#### Gate dribble 10-12 minutes



Place your players into groups of 2 or 3. Have groups spread around the perimeter of a 15 by 20 yd grid.

Inside the grid, use cones to create mini gates 1-2 yds wide (vary width of gates to challenges the players). If you have coloured cones, create different coloured gates. Have each player dribble through a set number of gates (and specific colours if multi coloured gates available) before returning back to their team mate.

Can specify the total number of gates that each team needs to go through.  
Can specify different ways of going through the gate/across the face of the gate/around the a gate post etc.

#### Emphasis:

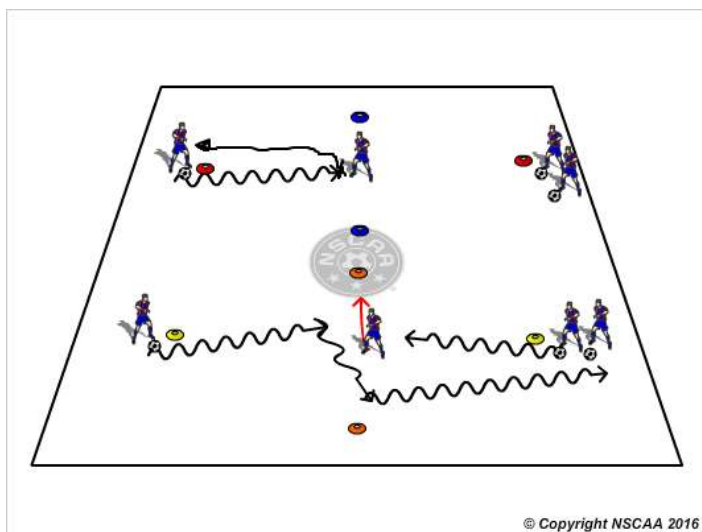
Close control of the ball-many light touches vs kick and chase. Use different parts of both feet – especially, inside, outside, top and sole. Keep head up and “scan the area” by looking left and right while running with the ball.

1 v 1 Line dribble  
10 minutes

Players in groups  
of 3 or 4.

Every 2-3 minutes,  
can have a break  
and discuss how  
they are doing.

Can recreate  
groups on  
occasion so  
players face a  
different  
opponent.



Place two outer cones 20 to 25 yds apart (yellow cones in diagram). At the midway point, place a central defending line/gate (width gate based upon dribbling skills of attackers – wider for less skilled, narrower for more skilled).

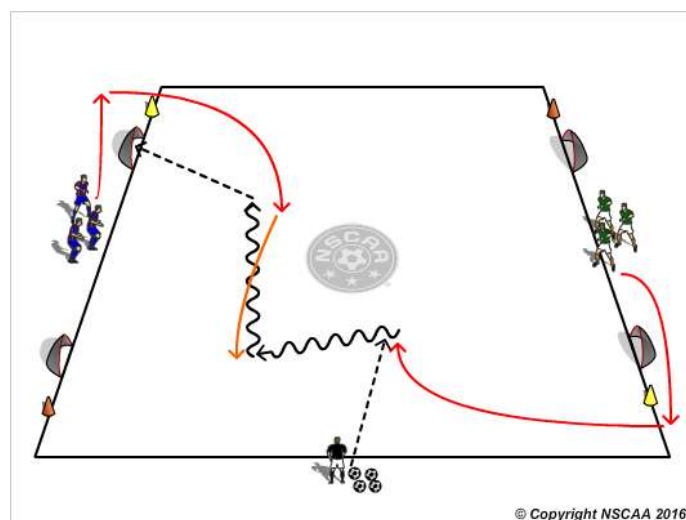
Defenders are permitted to move from side to side. At least one of the defender's feet **MUST** be on the defending line at all times (they cannot be off of the line).

**Objective:**

Attacker attempts to dribble past the defender across the line to reach the other side. Use changes of direction, change of pace, feints and close ball control. Each successful attempt = 1 point for the attacker. If the defender wins the ball (touches it or tackles successfully) s/he goes to the end where the attacker came from. The former attacking player now defends the line against an opponent coming from the opposite end. In attack, are players driving forward with confidence? Are they trying to attack open space? What do they think they need to do to beat the defender?

If focusing on the defender, what can he/she do to make play more predictable to be able to win the ball?

1 v 1 to two goals  
10 to 15 minutes.  
Play for 2 to 3  
minutes, have a  
quick rest, repeat.  
If you want, you  
can move some  
players from each  
group to another  
group so they face  
different  
opponents each  
time..



Create one or two grids of 15 by 20 yds. (no more than 3-4 players/team to keep things active and players engaged).

Using goals, or cones, create two goals on facing sides (you can use the longer or shorter sides to give more or less space for attacker to dribble).

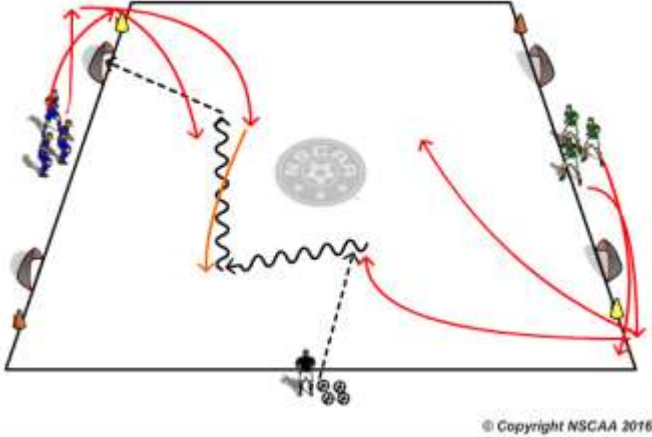

On the outside of the two goals place a cone (different colour if possible, if not same colour).

Coach calls out a colour (or direction if same coloured cones) that the player at the front of each line runs around. **The coach serves the ball to the player who comes into the grid first.** That player (attacker) then tries to get past the defender to score in either of the two goals. If the defender wins possession, s/he quickly attacks to score.

Attackers: How do you get past the defender? Where should you be looking? Do you go at the same speed or change speed to get past the defender? What part of the foot are you using to control the ball? When do you shoot? How do you shoot to keep the ball low?

Defenders:

How can you slow the attacker down? Stop him/her from getting past you? How do you steer the attacker away from goal? How do you make the attacker put their head down?

<p>2 v 2 to two goals 15 min</p>		<p>Building from the previous 1 v 1, the coach simply calls more than one player to enter the grid (specify a number). Can also have the players perform an agility exercise before they can run around a cone into the grid (e.g. jump in the air, roll on the ground, crawl through each players legs before they can run). Can emphasize role of 2<sup>nd</sup> attacker and defender.</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> attacker Movement to create and use space; how can you create 2 v 1 moments? (overlaps; wall pass are examples). How do you take the 2<sup>nd</sup> defender away from good cover positions? (angled runs, create width).</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> defender Angle and distance from 1<sup>st</sup> defender to provide cover. Communication with pressuring (1<sup>st</sup>) defender. Take away passing lanes and anticipate when it is possible to steal the ball.</p>
<p>Passing session Group players into 5 to 7 players. Each player chooses their number (e.g. 1 to 5 if 5 players).</p>		<p>Create a central area of 18 by 18 yds. Outside this area place one cone along each side (1-2 yds away as shown in diagram). Players pass by numbers and then move around an outside cone and come back in to receive the ball from the player above/below them (depending upon direction).</p> <p>Emphasis: How should players move to be able to “see the ball” AND “see their players – one with the ball and the player they have to pass to”? Where should the player pass the ball? To the back foot of team mate? How should the player receive the ball? What can player do with their head to “see the field”? Can vary passing sequence; add another ball.</p>
<p>End games 20-25 minutes 3 v 3 matches</p>	<p>Create three grids that are 15 to 18 wide and 20 to 24 long.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can have one game and end zone game (dribble into end zone to score) – can make the end zone along the long sides to give more space to attack.</li> <li>• Can have another game to two pop up goals each (placed along each end line).</li> <li>• One field with one goal on each end line</li> </ul>	