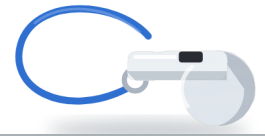


Start Here: For Parents

A free starter from the Soccer Skills & Game Intelligence Workbook • ages 7–12



This free starter has four complete exercises from the Soccer Skills & Game Intelligence Workbook, a yard practice, a 4-week tracker and the answer key. It works on its own: print it, sit down together for 10–15 minutes, then go outside.

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Our team is blue and always attacks up the page. Opponents are orange.
- 2 Each exercise has a “How to check” line. A ruler or a piece of string helps.
- 3 Let your child try first. The answers are on page 8, never on the question page.
- 4 Then do the yard practice on page 6 two or three times a week and color the tracker on page 7.

HELPING WITHOUT TAKING OVER

- Ask before you tell: “What did you see? Why that teammate?”
- Praise the choice and the effort, not only the result.
- One tip at a time, then let them play.
- Mistakes are how players learn. Keep it short and fun, and stop while they still want more.

REAL PRACTICE COMES FIRST

This workbook supports, and never replaces, real practice, team play and coaching. If your coach teaches something differently, follow your coach.

TEAM SIZES IN YOUTH SOCCER IN THE US

AGE GROUP	MOST PLAYERS PER SIDE
U7–U8	4v4, no goalkeepers
U9–U10	7v7: 6 field players and a goalkeeper
U11–U12	9v9: 8 field players and a goalkeeper
U13 and up	11v11: 10 field players and a goalkeeper

These are the most players per side in common US youth play. Smaller games are fine at any age. Age groups go by birth year, and your league may use different numbers: check with your coach.

The full workbook has 7 units (dribbling, passing, space, attacking and defending, positions in 4v4, 7v7 and 9v9, scanning and game situations), 34 decision exercises, 7 home practices, a badge tracker and parent notes. Answers: page 8.

PLAY SAFE

- Warm up first. Stop if anything hurts.
- Water before, during and after practice.
- Play on flat, safe ground, away from roads, cars and windows, with a grown-up nearby.
- Shoes that grip. Shin guards for games with other children.

NO HEADING DRILLS

No heading: youth soccer guidance in the US says no heading for players aged 10 and under, and only limited heading practice for ages 11–13. This workbook has no heading drills.

THE PICTURE KEY

- Our team (blue, letters)
- Opponents (orange, numbers)
- You
- ⦿ The ball

Arrows: solid = pass, dashed = run, wavy = dribble. Our team always attacks up the page.



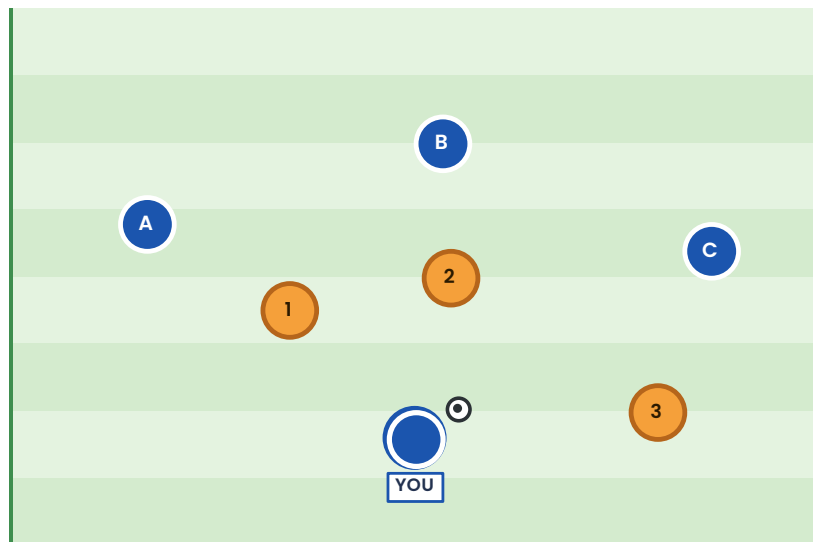
Exercise 1: Who Is Open?

Passing lanes: is the line from the ball to a teammate clear?



● OUR TEAM ● OPPONENTS ● BALL → PASS → RUN → DRIBBLE

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY



1a You have the ball. Which teammate can you pass to safely?

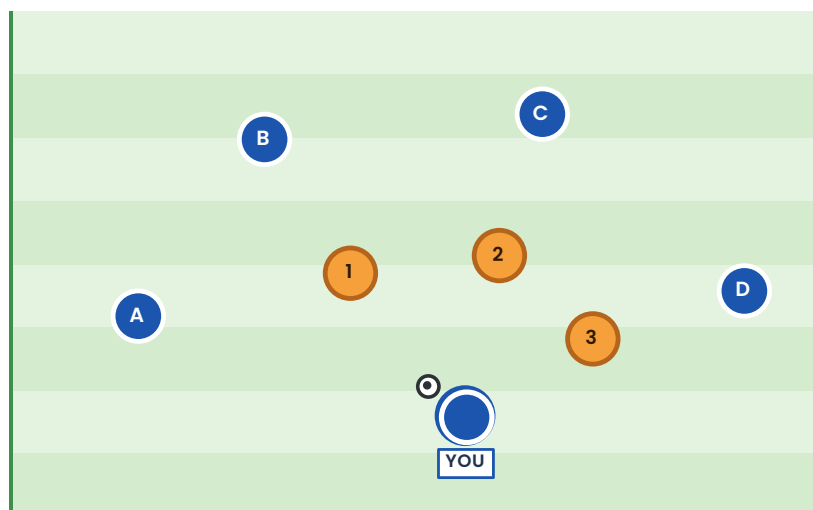
HOW TO CHECK

Lay a ruler from the ball to a teammate. If its edge runs through an opponent, that lane is blocked. If the ruler has room on both sides, the teammate is open.

TICK ONE

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ C

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY



1b Four teammates this time. Which one is open?

HOW TO CHECK

Lay a ruler from the ball to a teammate. If its edge runs through an opponent, that lane is blocked. If the ruler has room on both sides, the teammate is open.

TICK ONE

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ C
☐ D

TALK ABOUT IT (NO RIGHT ANSWER, NO KEY)

When you play, how do you know a teammate is open? What do you look at first?

Exercise 2: Which Way?

Our team attacks up the page: forward, back or sideways?



OUR TEAM OPPONENTS BALL PASS RUN DRIBBLE

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY

2a The ball goes from A to B to C to D to E. Is each pass forward, back or sideways?

HOW TO CHECK
Our team attacks up the page. Forward = up toward the goal you attack. Back = down toward your own goal. Sideways = across, staying on the same stripe.

TICK	PASS 1	PASS 2	PASS 3	PASS 4
Forward	☐	☐	☐	☐
Back	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sideways	☐	☐	☐	☐

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY

2b Now the ball goes from A to B to C to D. Forward, back or sideways?

HOW TO CHECK
Our team attacks up the page. Forward = up toward the goal you attack. Back = down toward your own goal. Sideways = across, staying on the same stripe.

TICK	PASS 1	PASS 2	PASS 3
Forward	☐	☐	☐
Back	☐	☐	☐
Sideways	☐	☐	☐

TALK ABOUT IT (NO RIGHT ANSWER, NO KEY)
Which pass do you think is the hardest to make: forward, back or sideways? Why?

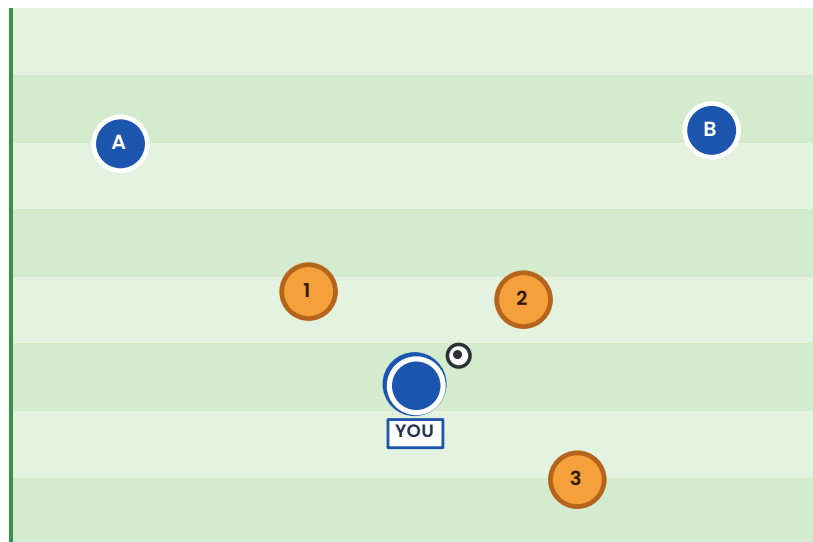
Exercise 3: Who Is Closest?

Who will press you first? Measure from the ball



● OUR TEAM ● OPPONENTS ○ BALL → PASS → RUN → DRIBBLE

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY



3a You have the ball. Which defender is closest to the ball and will press you first?

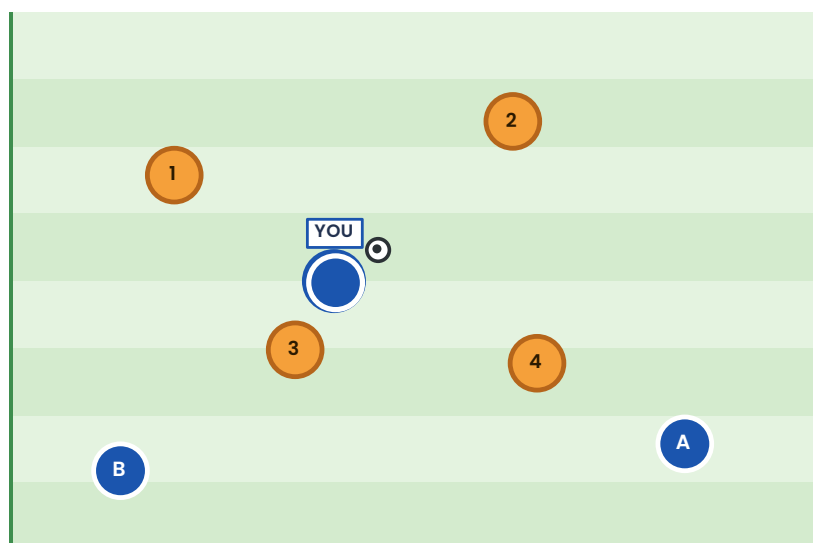
HOW TO CHECK

Measure from the ball to each opponent with a ruler or a piece of string. The shortest one is closest.

TICK ONE

- ☐ Opponent 1
☐ Opponent 2
☐ Opponent 3

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY



3b Look all around you, behind too. Which defender is closest to the ball?

HOW TO CHECK

Measure from the ball to each opponent with a ruler or a piece of string. The shortest one is closest.

TICK ONE

- ☐ Opponent 1
☐ Opponent 2
☐ Opponent 3
☐ Opponent 4

TALK ABOUT IT (NO RIGHT ANSWER, NO KEY)

Why does it help to know where the closest defender is before the ball comes to you?

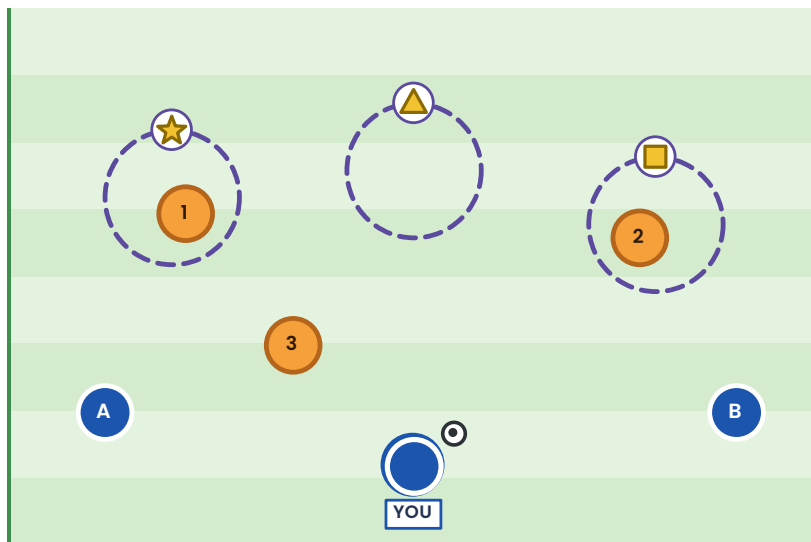
Exercise 4: Find the Free Space

Find the space with no opponent in it



● OUR TEAM ● OPPONENTS ● BALL → PASS → RUN → DRIBBLE

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY



4a Which space is free for you to dribble or pass into?

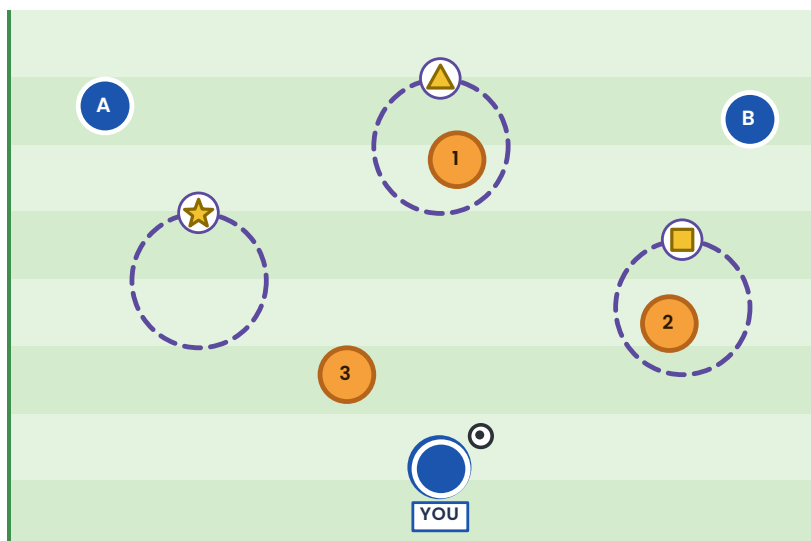
HOW TO CHECK

A space is free when no opponent is inside the dashed ring.

TICK ONE

- ☐ Star
- ☐ Triangle
- ☐ Square

↑ WE ATTACK THIS WAY



4b The defenders have moved. Which space is free now?

HOW TO CHECK

A space is free when no opponent is inside the dashed ring.

TICK ONE

- ☐ Star
- ☐ Triangle
- ☐ Square

TALK ABOUT IT (NO RIGHT ANSWER, NO KEY)

Where on a field do you find the most space? Talk about it with someone at home.

Try It in the Yard

Practice card: Traffic Light Dribble (cut it out and keep it with your ball)



Traffic Light Dribble

SPACE A yard or park, about 10 big steps square
TIME 10–15 minutes
YOU NEED 1 ball, 4 cones (shoes or water bottles work), a grown-up to call out

HOW TO PLAY

- 1 Warm up: jog, skip and side-step for 2 minutes.
- 2 Dribble inside the square with small touches. Keep the ball within one step.
- 3 “Green!” dribble faster. “Yellow!” slow down with tiny touches. “Red!” stop the ball with your sole.
- 4 “Turn!” pull the ball back with your sole, or cut it with the inside of your foot, and go the other way.
- 5 The grown-up holds up some fingers now and then. Look up and shout how many, without losing the ball.

EASIER Walk while you dribble, and use only “Green!” and “Red!”.

HARDER Use only your weaker foot, or dribble through a gate of two cones after every “Red!”.

PLAY SAFE

Warm up, drink water, play on safe ground with a grown-up nearby. Stop if anything hurts. No heading.

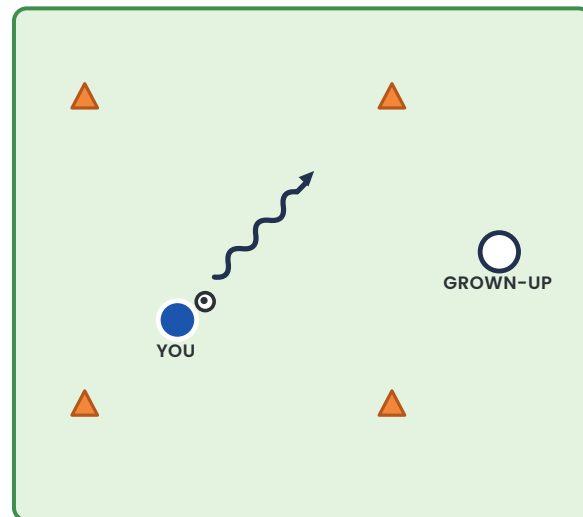
SELF-CHECK

I CAN...	NOT YET	GETTING THERE	YES!
I keep the ball close when I dribble.	☐	☐	☐
I can stop the ball with my sole.	☐	☐	☐
I look up while I dribble.	☐	☐	☐

Times I did this practice:



MY NOTES: WHAT I WILL TRY NEXT TIME



SET-UP FROM ABOVE



My 4-Week Practice Tracker

Practise 3 times a week; color a ball each time; a grown-up signs



Week 1

COLOR A BALL
EACH PRACTICE



PRACTICE 1



PRACTICE 2



PRACTICE 3

What I practised

Minutes _____

Grown-up _____

Week 2

COLOR A BALL
EACH PRACTICE



PRACTICE 1



PRACTICE 2



PRACTICE 3

What I practised

Minutes _____

Grown-up _____

Week 3

COLOR A BALL
EACH PRACTICE



PRACTICE 1



PRACTICE 2



PRACTICE 3

What I practised

Minutes _____

Grown-up _____

Week 4

COLOR A BALL
EACH PRACTICE



PRACTICE 1



PRACTICE 2



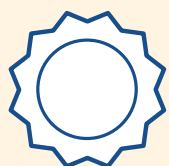
PRACTICE 3

What I practised

Minutes _____

Grown-up _____

MY SOCCER GOAL FOR THESE 4 WEEKS



All 12 balls colored? Color your Starter badge!

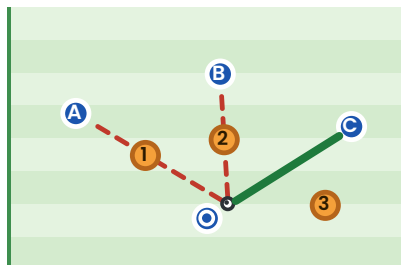
Then try the next unit in the full workbook, or play the practice again with a new twist.

Answer Key

Check after you try. Every answer comes from the picture: prove it with a ruler

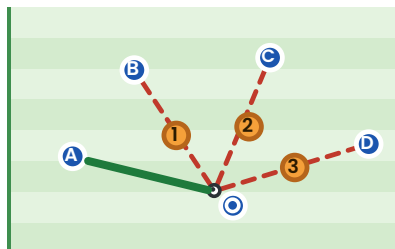


1a PAGE 2



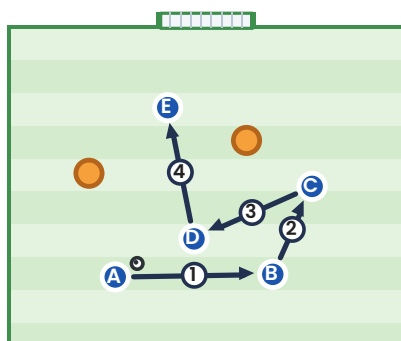
C.
The line to C is clear.
A: opponent 1 is in the way. B: opponent 2 is in the way.

1b PAGE 2



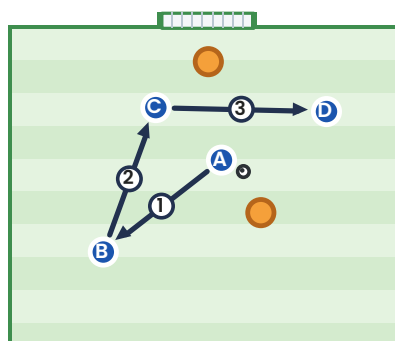
A.
The line to A is clear.
B: opponent 1 is in the way. C: opponent 2 is in the way. D: opponent 3 is in the way.

2a PAGE 3



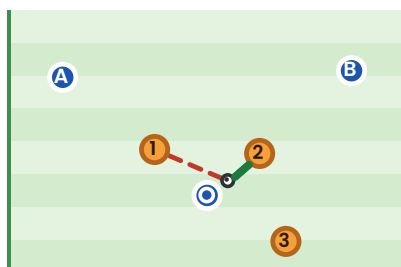
1 sideways, 2 forward, 3 back, 4 forward.
Pass 1 (A to B): sideways; Pass 2 (B to C): forward; Pass 3 (C to D): back; Pass 4 (D to E): forward.

2b PAGE 3



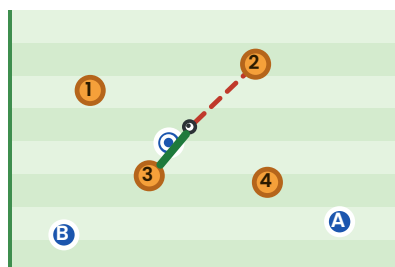
1 back, 2 forward, 3 sideways.
Pass 1 (A to B): back; Pass 2 (B to C): forward; Pass 3 (C to D): sideways.

3a PAGE 4



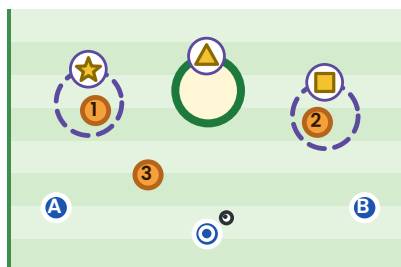
Opponent 2.
Opponent 2 is closest to the ball; opponent 1 is next. Check with a ruler or a piece of string.

3b PAGE 4



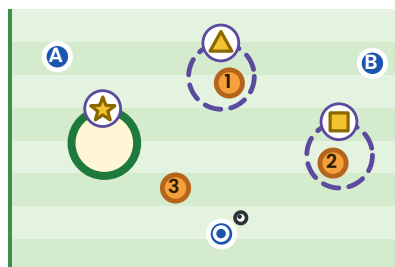
Opponent 3.
Opponent 3 is closest to the ball; opponent 2 is next. Check with a ruler or a piece of string.

4a PAGE 5



Triangle.
No opponent is inside the triangle. Opponent 1 is in the star. Opponent 2 is in the square.

4b PAGE 5



Star.
No opponent is inside the star. Opponent 1 is in the triangle. Opponent 2 is in the square.

"Talk about it" questions have no key: there is no single right answer. Want more? The full workbook has 34 decision exercises in 7 units, 7 home practices and a badge tracker.