



## U14-U15 SEASON PLAN

### Practice Format

Practices should follow the **PLAY-PRACTICE-PLAY** format. Play-Practice-Play is the optimal manner to structure a practice session for youth players, as it utilizes best practices for the learning and application of game-like scenarios.

#### **STAGE 1: PLAY (15 Min)**

As children arrive at practice, they immediately start playing small games. In the first Play phase, players engage in small-sided games with the primary focus on having fun. It is important that these pickup-style games are led by the players and facilitated by the coaches. Players can experience the game while the coach observes and guides them towards developing their own solutions rather than being directed what to do.

#### **STAGE 2: PRACTICE (30 Min)**

In the second phase of Play-Practice-Play, children are engaged in different forms of targeted learning activities to further guide their opportunities to develop. Practice activities should be of appropriate challenge (striking a balance between success and failure), resemble the game, involve the players making decisions and allow for creative problem solving. The role of the coach during this phase is to guide players while using teaching actions. While it is during this phase that targeted learning takes place, there should always be an emphasis on keeping the atmosphere fun and enjoyable for the players.

#### **STAGE 3: PLAY AGAIN! (15 Min)**

The final stage of Play-Practice-Play is the game. This phase offers players the opportunity and freedom to play, without interruption, in an environment that mirrors the actual game. The focus here is to encourage players to express themselves and demonstrate what they learned during the Practice phase. A coach should observe and guide using minimal dialogue if possible. By silently observing the application of the Practice phase in the final Play phase, the coach can check each player's understanding and ability to execute the goal of the training session.

For more information, view/download the following document published by U.S. Soccer:  
[U.S. SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION PLAY-PRACTICE-PLAY OVERVIEW](#)



## NORTH VERMILION YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

### Player Development Skills

In an effort to help coaches focus on player development, we have developed a plan for coaches based on the National Grassroots Curriculum provided by US Youth Soccer. The following chart shows the skills coaches will focus on each week.

<b>U14-U15 DIVISION</b>	
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>SKILLS</b>
<b>1</b>	Dribbling (ball control) & Possession
<b>2</b>	Supporting Teammates in the Attack & Improving Possession
<b>3</b>	Individual & Small Group Defending
<b>4</b>	Improving Combination Play in the Attack
<b>5</b>	Improving Finishing & Service into the Box
<b>6</b>	Creating Chances in the Attack
<b>7</b>	Improve Team Defending by Addressing Pressure, Cover & Balance
<b>8</b>	Improve Ability to Score Under Pressure
<b>Other</b>	Goalkeeping
<b>Other</b>	Heading



# NORTH VERMILION YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

## Weekly Plans

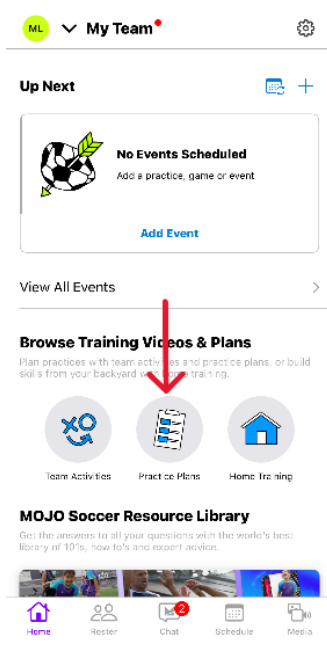
The following weekly plans provide things to look for, questions (and answers) to ask players to ensure understanding, and activities that can be used each week for coaches to introduce/teach the focus skill. Coaches are welcome to use other activities as long as they are aligned with the weekly focus skill.

The entire USYS National Grassroots Curriculum can be accessed for free via an app called “MOJO Sports.” Coaches are encouraged to download this app and access the detailed practice plans provided. Weekly practice plans provide detailed activities, short videos, and graphics for each of the focus skills.

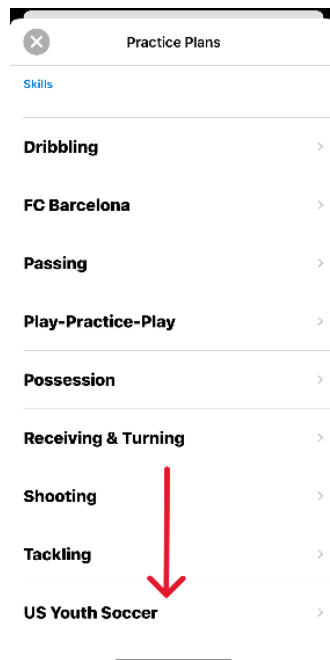
Scan this QR Code to download the app:



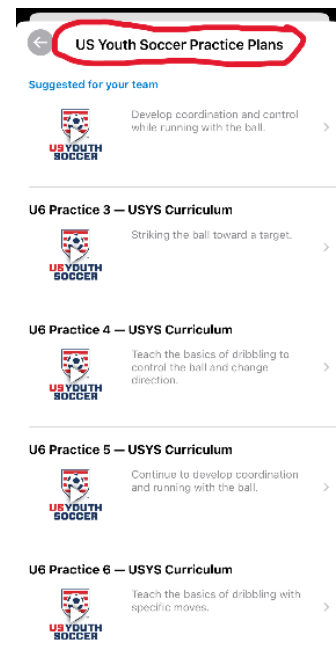
Once you download the app, the free curriculum can be found using the following steps:



From home screen click “Practice Plans”



Scroll to bottom and click “US Youth Soccer”



Scroll through to find your division/skill. Order of skills may vary slightly.



## U14 Week One – Dribbling (ball control) & Possession

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players embrace their creativity when dribbling, using different surfaces of the foot to manipulate the ball</li> <li>• Players look to attack space at speed</li> <li>• Players accelerate after doing a move to distance themselves from a defender</li> <li>• Players off the ball move to support and create openings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should you do once you beat a player on the dribble? Go around them and cut back behind them to seal them off. This means once the defender turns to recover, your body is now between them and the ball.</li> <li>• What happens to the defender when you dribble at them with speed? It makes it harder to defend you, also makes them have to decide — step to you and your teammate might now be open, continue to drop which gives you more space to attack</li> <li>• What are the cues to take a player on 1v1? There is space behind them if you beat them, they don't have support, you feel you can take them 1v1</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

<p><b>Horse</b></p>	<p><b>2v2 to Endlines</b></p>
<p><b>3v2 to Goal</b></p>	<p><b>More to Score</b></p>



**U14 Week Two – Supporting Teammates in the Attack & Improving Possession**

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players body shape is open and ready</li> <li>• Players look to play in as few touches as possible</li> <li>• Players scan the field or get a look in before they receive the ball</li> <li>• Players are able to move the ball to unbalance the defense and create openings</li> <li>• Players move off the ball to check into space to receive the ball</li> <li>• Players look to transition quickly to support the attack</li> <li>• Players scan the field or get a look in before they receive the ball</li> <li>• Players are able to stretch the field in the attack</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we do to keep the ball on the ground when passing? Receive it with our knee over the ball and strike through the middle of the ball. If we hit the bottom part of the ball it will pop up.</li> <li>• How can players off the ball create space? Move to stretch the field high, wide and give depth (behind the person with the ball)</li> <li>• How can we look to unbalance the defense? Keep the ball moving and switch the point of attack</li> <li>• Why is it important for us to transition as a team into the attack? We are more dangerous with more players forward, we won't leave gaps between our lines that the other team could exploit if they win the ball</li> <li>• How can we position ourselves to receive the ball so we can go forward? Open body position, receive with the front foot (closest to the goal you are attacking)</li> <li>• What foot should the passer aim for when their teammate has a defender near them? The foot farthest from the defender</li> </ul>

**ACTIVITIES**

<p><b>Rondo 5v2</b></p>	<p><b>Rival Rondo</b></p>
<p><b>The Upper Hand</b></p>	<p><b>Hot Box</b></p>



## U14 Week Three – Individual & Small Group Defending

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The player pressuring the ball takes an angled approach and has an athletic stance</li> <li>• The second closest players are at a good angle and distance of support</li> <li>• The team looks immediately pressure when they lose the ball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do we want to include immediate pressure when we lose the ball? It can force a turnover, or slow up their transition to attack</li> <li>• What is a safe distance of support for the covering defending? Goal side and 5 or so yards at angle to the pressuring defender (depending on the space). One attacker should not beat two defenders on the dribble.</li> <li>• What does it mean to have your head on a swivel as a defender? You are constantly checking to see where other players are on the field, this helps you to position yourself and communicate with others on your team</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

	
<p><b>Rondo 5v2</b></p>	<p><b>4v4 to 4 Goals (Defending)</b></p>
	
<p><b>Liverpool</b></p>	<p><b>Team Knockout</b></p>





**U14 Week Four – Improving Combination Play in the Attack**

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick movements by players to create space from the defender</li> <li>• Players recognize when to pass versus dribble</li> <li>• One- and two-touch passing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who determines when a combination should happen? The person receiving the ball communicates verbally or non-verbally to the person with the ball</li> <li>• What can we do to create space from the defender who is marking us? Move slowly to the direction away from the person with the ball and then change pace quickly to open up for the ball</li> <li>• What foot should you pass to for a Give and Go? The foot opposite the passer</li> </ul>

**ACTIVITIES**

<p><b>Team Ball Tag</b></p>	<p><b>Crossing Guard</b></p>
<p><b>One Touch Finish</b></p>	<p><b>Five Goal Game</b></p>



## U14 Week Five – Improving Finishing & Service into the Box

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement off the ball to create space</li> <li>• Body position from flank players is open and ready to receive the ball</li> <li>• When crossing the ball is prepared at a 45 degree angle and players get their hips towards the goal</li> <li>• Central players shape their body to frame the goal to make scoring with one touch easier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where should the wide player make their first touch? Down the line or on an angle to serve the ball early</li> <li>• Where should central players run to receive the cross? Try to frame the goal. Runners make runs at the near post, far post and center of the goal.</li> <li>• What can you do if you find you have made a run into the box too early? Recycle your run. Look to back out of the space.</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

<p><b>Shake It Off</b></p>	<p><b>The Final Boss</b></p>
<p><b>Catch Me If You Can</b> (at 1:18)</p>	<p><b>More to Score</b></p>





## U14 Week Six – Creating Chances in the Attack

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players first touch is in the direction they want to pass or dribble</li> <li>• Body shape is open to receive</li> <li>• Players recognize when to pass versus dribble and do not force a pass if it is not open</li> <li>• Wing players vary service into the box in the final activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our attacking options when we receive the ball? We should look to go forward first with either a shot, dribble or pass based on our distance from the goal</li> <li>• What is the first thing we should do as a team when we win the ball during? Spread out and make the space bigger</li> <li>• What should the keeper do after a save is made to help with a quick transition to attack? See if they can play under control to the farthest player up the field, if not can they build from the back</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

<p><b>Horse</b></p>	<p><b>Goals Out</b></p>
<p><b>Half Court Soccer</b></p>	<p><b>Barcelona</b></p>



## NORTH VERMILION YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

### U14 Week Seven– Improve Team Defending by Addressing Pressure, Cover & Balance

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Players are communicating when to step to pressure</li> <li>Players shift as a group and compact the field</li> <li>Players are not caught chasing the ball, but work as a team to switch defensive roles (pressure, cover, balance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where should we defend zonally and where should we man mark? We can keep our shape if we switch marks outside of the 18, but we can man mark inside the 18. (Some coaches may defend zonally on corner kicks.)</li> <li>Why is it important for defenders to “have their head on a swivel”? Players need to scan the field to see where the opponents are and adjust their space to support their team</li> <li>Is everyone on the team responsible for defending? Why? Yes, even the forwards can help to apply immediate pressure and slow down the attack</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

<b>Team Handball</b>	<b>Crossing Guards</b>
<b>Rondo 5v2</b>	<b>4v4 to 4 Goals (Defending)</b>



## U14 Week Eight – Improve Ability to Score Under Pressure

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players recognize when there is an opening and dribble at speed</li> <li>• Players take the shot as soon as they create space from the defender</li> <li>• When receiving the ball from the wide players, they look to shoot in 1 or 2 touches when possible</li> <li>• -Players frame the goal when receiving the ball from the flank</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should our movement be after we pass the ball to the wide player? Quick movement to adjust your angle either towards the goal if there is space or back to receive it if there is no opening forward</li> <li>• What do we look at when shooting? The space to either side of the goalkeeper</li> <li>• What can we do technically to increase our accuracy when shooting? Position our body to frame the goal, head over the ball, toe down and ankle locked, plant foot pointed towards the target</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

	
<p><b>Knockout</b></p>	<p><b>Goalie Moley Finishing</b></p>
	
<p><b>Liverpool</b></p>	<p><b>One Touch Finish</b></p>



## U14 Other – Goalkeeping

### OVERVIEW

At this age, you may have players who love playing in goal. Although a player may want to play in goal all the time it is important to let them play on the field to develop their comfort on the ball with their feet. This session is designed to work specifically with goalkeepers and can be done while the rest of the team is training or before training. Your goal is to build their confidence and technical ability. You want to make sure that the keepers are being challenged, but successful. If you are not an experienced goalkeeper coach make sure to review the sessions on technique. Remember, during your regular training sessions you need to incorporate the keeper as much as possible. You want to help them establish themselves as leaders in the back and also practice decision-making in the activities.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players are moving their feet to get their body behind the ball when catching; shuffle the feet with the knees bent and chest square to the ball</li> <li>• Players are getting their hands behind the ball when catching</li> <li>• Players use “soft hands” to catch the ball; make contact with their finger tips and wrists are not bent in a diamond</li> <li>• Players are landing safely when they dive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a good set position when catching the ball? Feet are shoulder width apart, knees are bent, hands are waist high in front of the body with palms facing each other</li> <li>• When do we distribute the ball with our hands versus punting the ball? If we can play to a teammate and possess the ball, we can use the roll or throw; when we want to play the ball long we punt</li> <li>• How do we land when diving? We have one hand on top of the ball and one hand behind the ball. We land on our side, not our elbow.</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

		
<p><b>Catch &amp; Release</b></p>	<p><b>Pairs Passing &amp; Catching</b></p>	<p><b>Knees Diving</b></p>
		
<p><b>Basket Catch</b></p>	<p><b>Diamond Catch</b></p>	<p><b>9 Essential GK Skills</b></p>





## U14 Other – Heading

### OVERVIEW

This session teaches players proper heading technique and how to cross the ball. That said, coaches should limit excessive heading in training. We suggest soft foam soccer balls for some of these activities. If you do not have foam balls, use slightly deflated or softer soccer balls and avoid any ball made of hard plastic. You may also want to spend a few minutes to talk with your players about the importance of the toss into the header. A good soft toss can make a header easier.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO SAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players are arching the back, but keeping the neck motionless</li> <li>• Eyes are open when striking the ball</li> <li>• Contact is made at the hairline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do we want to make contact with the ball? On the forehead just at the hairline</li> <li>• Can someone show me how to head the ball, just the motions without the ball? Back arched, arms out for balance and to help aim, neck motionless, eyes open and strike the hairline</li> <li>• What are the coaching points for a volley? Body behind the ball, lean over the ball, strike with the laces or inside of the foot</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

	
<p><b>Team Handball</b></p>	<p><b>Heading Progression</b></p>
	
<p><b>Heading to Goals</b></p>	<p><b>Soccer 101: How to Head the Ball</b></p>

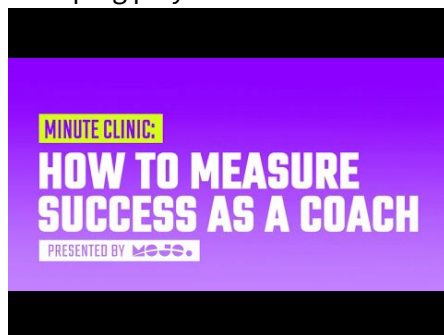


## FAQs

- **When do players learn the rules (throw-ins, corner kicks, etc)?**
  - Within the holistic “PPP” approach, players learn the rules of the game through playing and experiencing the moments when/where the rule occurs. The 2<sup>nd</sup> play phase of practice provides many moments within a context that most closely resembles the game.
- **When do players warm up and stretch?**
  - For players in U6-U12, there is no need to do any static stretching. *Playing soccer* is actually a great warm-up for playing soccer, therefore the first “play” phase of practice is the perfect time for players to warm up muscles. For players in the U14/U15 division, static stretching can be incorporated into practice and should be done after the first “play” phase once muscles are warmed up.
- **How do I “coach” during the game?**
  - Effective coaches don’t actually do a lot of coaching from the sideline during games. Instead of giving constant direction from the sideline, coaches should be observing to figure out which lessons stuck and what may need to be revisited. Players should be allowed to problem solve and make decisions during games. Noise from sidelines (both fans and coaches) can be overwhelming for players trying to manipulate the ball.



- **How do I measure success as a coach?**
  - Success ***IS NOT*** measured by wins and losses, we must balance winning and developing players.







## Other Helpful Videos

- *Soccer 101 Series by MOJO*
  - For coaches who are new to soccer (or even those considered veterans), this collection of 50+ one-minute videos is an amazing resource! It is filled with “How to” and “What is” videos that quickly explain and demonstrate various soccer skills.
  - Access the entire playlist [\*\*\*HERE\*\*\*](#)
- *Minute Clinic/How to Coach Kids by MOJO*
  - A collection of one to two-minute videos on various topics pertaining to coaching soccer at the youth level
  - Access the entire playlist [\*\*\*HERE\*\*\*](#)