

YMCA Soccer Games and Skill Drills for 6-7-Year-Olds

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Attacking the Goal	Game	10	Players will learn that they have to attack a goal (cone) to score in soccer. Each team attacks a different goal.	<p>1 v 1—Each player tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not hands. (No need for any other rules right now!)</p> <p>When the question-and-answer section precedes the coach’s cues, ask the questions before the players begin the game. Use the cues during the game.</p>	<p>Coach: Which way do you go when you get the ball? Players: Toward the cone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Go toward the cone.” 	Have enough balls and cones so all players get plenty of touches and chances to score. If the number of balls and cones available is limited, have players pair off and pass the ball to each other before hitting a cone.	78
Attacking the Goal Team Play	Game	10	Players will learn that they can play with other players on the same team and try to score between the posts (cones or goal).	2 v 2—Each pair tries to score by hitting a cone or by kicking into a small goal.	<p>Coach: Who is on your team? Players: (Name of teammate)</p> <p>Coach: Which goal are you trying to score in? Players: That one. (Have them point.)</p> <p>Coach: Where do you kick the ball to score? Players: In the goal. (If they say “in there,” have them show you.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Score in the goal.” 		80

¹ This document offers activities, telling you what to teach. For guidance on how to teach fundamentals, see the Teaching Skills and Tactics Topics in the in the YMCA’s **Coaching Soccer** online course.

² This page number refers to pages in the “Plans for 6- to 7-Year-Olds” document found on the “Season and Practice Plans” page in the YMCA’s **Coaching Soccer** online course.

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Field Boundaries Start/ Restart Attacking the Goal	Game	20	Players play a 4 v 4 game of soccer in a predetermined area while adhering to simple start and restart rules.	4 v 4—Each team of four tries to score into a small goal. For each pair of teams, mark a playing area no larger than 50 by 30 feet.	<p>Coach: How do we start the game? Players: With a kickoff at the center. The other team must go back into its own half.</p> <p>Coach: What happens when the ball goes out-of-bounds at the side? Players: It is a throw-in.*</p> <p>Coach: What happens when the ball goes out-of-bounds at the end? Players: It is a goal kick or a corner kick.**</p> <p>Coach: What happens after a goal is scored? Players: A kickoff at the center. The team that scored must go back into its own half.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Have both feet behind the line.” • “Hold the ball back overhead with two hands.” • “Throw to your teammate, keeping both feet on the ground.” 	<p>It might be worth stopping the game for five minutes so all players can practice taking throw-ins (see page 136). You can do this quickly by having pairs of players do throw-ins to each other (one ball per pair).</p> <p>You can set up and practice goal kicks and corner kicks during the game.</p>	81

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Passing Moving to Support Spacing	Game	10	To play the 4 v 4 game as a team, focusing on positional and support play.	4 v 4— Players learn to spread out down the field so they can receive a pass. Review the rules, including starts and restarts, fouls, no use of hands, throw-ins, corner kicks (direct only), and goal kicks.	Coach: What is the fastest way to get the ball down the field (pass or dribble)? Players: Pass. Coach: For Katie to pass down the field, where does Matthew need to go so she can pass to him? Players: Down the field. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Be in a space where someone can pass to you.” 		83
Passing Moving to Support	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move forward to support teammates. 2. Practice moving forward to support teammates.	Pairs—Each pair passes the ball and moves up and down the field. Remember that when you ask young children questions you may not get the answers you are hoping for. Young children are unpredictable. You may need to probe by asking “What else?” or to get to an answer by offering them a forced choice (“Do you think it is this or that?”).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Move downfield (toward the goal) to support your teammate.” 		84
Passing Spacing	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to spread out as a team to move the ball downfield. 2. Practice spreading out as a team to move the ball downfield.	Groups of four—Each group passes the ball and moves up and down the field. The object is to get the ball down the field as quickly as possible. Each player must receive at least one pass.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Spread out forward and sideways.” 	Provide some light opposition for the better teams, so they must get the ball past you before getting to the other end of the field.	85
Passing Spacing	Game	10	Players will learn to spread out the length and width of the field.	4 v 4—Each team leaves one player forward. This will ensure some depth to the attack. Freeze the game occasionally to show them where to move to be in the best position to receive a pass.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Leave one player forward.” • “Spread out over the field.” • “Look for teammates to pass to.” 		86

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Passing	Game	10	To keep possession of the ball, focusing on passing in the game.	<p>2 v 2 to cones or small goals—Place the cones or goals about 20 yards apart. “Play as a team.”</p> <p>The first touch, when the player first receives the ball, is extremely important when passing and receiving a ball under pressure. Encourage players to use the inside or the outside of the foot with their first touch to set the ball rolling in the direction they want to pass next.</p>	<p>Coach: How can you best play as a team? Players: Pass the ball to each other.</p>	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 4 v 1, 4 v 2, or 4 v 3. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.	88
Passing	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pass a moving ball under pressure. 2. Practice passing a moving ball under pressure. 	<p>Groups of four—Form groups of four by telling the pairs of players from game 1 to join to make groups of four.</p> <p>Practice team passing using one or more of these three variations, depending on the abilities of your players:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pass the ball in a square, stopping the ball before passing. 2. Keep passing the moving ball in a continuous relay (pass and follow the ball). 3. Mark square areas with cones. Have three players in each square try to keep the ball away from one defender. Switch who plays the defender every six passes or three minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Receive the pass and push it toward your target.” • “Get close to the ball.” • “Face the receiver.” • “Point the toe outward.” (Use the inside of the foot to pass.) • “Defender, try to get the ball.” (Use in the third variation of skill practice 1 only.) 	This drill has three levels of difficulty. You may choose to do all three in sequence, begin with level 2, go straight to level 3, or skip level 2. This will, of course, depend on the abilities of your players.	89
Passing	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use passing and support to move the ball forward. 2. Practice combining passing and support to move the ball forward. 	3 v 1—Each team of three gets the ball from one end of the field to the other without running with the ball (by passing). One player is a defender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Move to a good place to support.” • “Pass and move.” • “Defender, try to get the ball.” 		90

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Passing	Game	10	To keep possession of the ball in the game, focusing on receiving in the game. The objective is to be able to receive the ball under pressure during the game.	4 v 4—Each team tries to pass frequently. “Pass and move.”	<p>Coach: When the ball comes to you, what should you do? Players: Stop it.</p> <p>Coach: Then what? Players: Dribble or get ready to pass or shoot.</p> <p>Coach: If you want to pass to the right, where should your first touch move the ball? Players: To the right.</p> <p>Coach: What about if you want to pass or dribble to the left? Players: The first touch should go left.</p>	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 4 v 1, 4 v 2, or 4 v 3. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.	92
Receiving	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive the ball quickly and efficiently. 2. Practice receiving the ball quickly and efficiently. 	Pairs—Partners stay 5 to 10 yards apart and pass the ball back and forth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Get behind the ball.” • “Use the inside (or outside) of the foot.” • “Push the ball in the direction you want it to go.” 		93
Receiving	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a moving ball and direct it toward the goal. 2. Practice receiving a moving ball and directing it toward the goal. 	Pairs—One partner (or you) feeds the ball to the other player, who controls the moving ball, dribbles, and shoots into the goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Use the inside (or outside) of the foot.” • “Push the ball toward the goal.” • “Dribble and shoot.” 	You can this skill practice more difficult for better players by providing some mild pressure as players receive the ball. Then the player must beat you before shooting at the goal.	93

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Supporting ahead of the ball Diamond Formation Moving the ball forward as a team	Game	10	Players learn to spread out ahead of the ball and to move the ball forward as a team.	As a team, players keep the ball and attack the goal by passing and receiving and by supporting ahead of the ball during the game.	Coach: If you don't have the ball, where can you go to help your team move toward the goal with the ball? Players: Move forward. Coach: Is it a good idea to leave a player forward? Players: Yes. "Have a forward."	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 4 v 1, 4 v 2, or 4 v 3. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.	97
Supporting ahead of the ball Diamond Formation	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to support ahead of the ball. 2. Practice supporting ahead of the ball.	Teams of four, unopposed—Each team passes and moves to the end of the field. The team must make four passes before shooting. You might see two players go to the same place to receive a pass. Emphasize forming a diamond shape as a way of best using the available space to bring the ball forward. Freeze the practices occasionally to demonstrate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pass and move ahead." 		97
Supporting ahead of the ball Diamond Formation Moving the ball under pressure	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move the ball forward under pressure. 2. Practice moving the ball forward under pressure.	Teams of four—Each team passes and moves to the end of the field as you oppose them. The team must make four passes before shooting. You might see two players go to the same place to receive a pass. Emphasize forming a diamond shape as a way of best using the available space to bring the ball forward. Freeze the practices occasionally to demonstrate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pass and move ahead." • "Move to where you can receive a pass" (away from the defender). 		98

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Passing Receiving Dribbling Push and Run	Game	10	Players will learn to attack the goal with the ball.	<p>4 v 4 – The objective is for players to be able to pass, receive, and use the “push and run” to move the ball forward under pressure during the game.</p> <p>To push and run, the player with the ball kicks it past the defender — pushes — and runs after it. The defender will have to turn around, which slows him or her down.</p> <p>Focus on getting players to make a good decision about whether to pass or dribble. Encourage them to pass if a teammate is open but to dribble if they get into a one-on-one situation.</p> <p>Novices have difficulty making these decisions, so be patient in your explanations and be prepared for poor decision making by some players.</p>	<p>Coach: What are some ways to get past a defender with the ball? Players: Dribble. Kick it past and run after it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Run past an opponent with the ball if you can.” • “Pass if you need to.” • “Look for space behind the defender.” • “Push and run.” 	Encourage better players to use alternative ways, other than push and run, to beat the defender. These could include faking a shot or passing the ball to one side of the defender and running around the other side.	100
Passing Receiving Dribbling Push and Run	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to attack a goal under pressure. 2. Practice working together as a team to attack a goal under pressure. 	<p>Players will learn to attack a goal under pressure.</p> <p>1 v 1—Place cones about 15 yards apart. Each player attacks the other player’s cone. Player 1 starts by passing the ball to player 2, who then becomes the attacker. Player 1 becomes the defender.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Receive and push the ball into space.” • “Stay spread out.” (This isolates the defender, leaving space behind him or her for the push and run.) • “Push and run past the defender.” 	2 v 2 in 30 yards by 20 yards— Have the 1 v 1 pairs from skill practice 1 combine with another pair to make 2 v 2 groups.	101

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Shooting	Game	10	To attack the goal in the game, focusing on shooting with good technique under pressure. Players learn the importance of having a shooting attitude.	4 v 4 – players shoot under pressure using appropriate technique.	Coach: What do you have to do if you want to score? Players: Shoot. Coach: Where should you shoot? Players: At the goal. The whole goal is the target. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you don't shoot, you won't score! 	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 4 v 1, 4 v 2, or 4 v 3. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.	104
Shooting	Skill Drill	5	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to shoot correctly. 2. Practice shooting with correct technique.	Groups of four — each player shoots in turn and retrieves his or her ball or you can designate someone to retrieve the balls from behind the goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Take a long step to the ball.” (The step looks like a jump. This helps get the shooting leg back.) • “Get close to the ball.” (Keep the non-striking foot alongside.) • “Use the laces of the shoe.” (This provides power.) • “Keep the toe down.” (This keeps the ball down.) 	A player (or you) rolls the ball forward before each player shoots.	105
Receiving Shooting	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a pass under control and shoot. 2. Practice the skill.	Players will learn to receive a pass under control and shoot. Groups of four—Same as skill practice 1, but a player (or you) passes the ball before each player shoots. Pass the ball so the receiver must change the ball's direction before shooting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Good first touch.”(You might have to explain again that they need to set up the shot with the first touch.) • “Control and shoot at the goal.” 	Higher-ability players can adapt this drill by doing their own passing and then, having passed, becoming the defender who chases after the shooter. The shooter must shoot before the defender gets to him or her.	107

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Marking	Game	10	To defend the defender's space in the game, focusing on marking and pressure.	2 v 2 to small goal – players defend their space by marking an opponent. Players pressure the ball during game play.	Coach: How can you stop the other team from getting the ball? (You may need to set this up by saying "How can Katie make it harder for Matthew to get a pass from Michael?") Players: Stay close to them, mark them. Marking means guarding your opponent.	4 v 4	109
Marking	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to defend behind an opponent. 2. Practice defending behind an opponent.	1 v 1 with two feeders—One player is the attacker and one is the defender. The feeders are at two cones about 20 yards apart. Feeder 1 passes to the attacker, who must turn and pass to feeder 2. The defender has to stop this. You may need to help weaker players by either feeding the ball to them yourself or feeding the ball instead of them. Rotate players in practice 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Stay behind the attacker." • "Stay close." 	Make it harder for better players to mark by extending the size of the playing area. This might mean grouping players of similar ability together during practices.	110
Marking	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to mark an opponent during game play. 2. Practice marking an opponent during game play.	2 v 2 to small goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pick a player to mark." (This is one-on-one marking.) • "Stay with him or her." 	Make it harder for better players to mark by extending the size of the playing area. This might mean grouping players of similar ability together during practices.	110

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Marking Tackling	Game	10	The objective is for the players to be able to challenge the one with the ball and win the tackle.	2 v 2 – Players mark an opponent, apply pressure when that opponent gets the ball, and tackle when advantageous.	<p>Coach: When your opponent gets the ball, where should you move to? Players: Closer to the opponent.</p> <p>Coach: What should you then try to do? Players: Win the ball or tackle. Tackling is taking the ball away from the ball carrier with your feet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Use one-on-one marking.” • “Pressure.” • “Tackle.” 	4 v 4	112
Marking Tackling	Skill Drill	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to tackle correctly. 2. Practice tackling using correct technique. 	<p>Pairs—Place a ball between two players. On the count of three, the players trap the ball between them with the insides of their feet. This is a cooperative tackling practice; both players use the same side of the foot to trap the ball.</p> <p>This is a cooperative activity aimed at getting players used to timing a tackle. They work together to trap the ball between them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Get close to the ball.” • “Point the toe out” (to use the inside of the foot). • “Keep the knee bent and the leg firm.” 	Encourage stronger players to make a firm tackle. If both players time it well, they will hear and feel their feet on the ball. This gives them good feedback.	113
Marking Tackling	Skill Drill	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to tackle and to keep the ball. 2. Practice tackling and keeping the ball. 	<p>1 v 1—Set up two cones 10 yards apart. Place the ball between two players, each of whom is at a cone. On the whistle, the players attack the ball to see who can win the tackle and take the ball to the opponent’s cone.</p> <p>This is a competitive drill. You can control the whole practice for the group by using your whistle to start each repetition when the ball is placed in the middle of each pair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Attack the ball.” • “Get close to the ball.” • “Point the toe out” (to use the inside of the foot). • “Keep the knee bent and the leg firm.” • “Control the ball.” 		114

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Marking Tackling	Game	10	The objective is for players to be able to defend space by marking an opponent and winning the ball during the game.	2 v 2 to a small goal or cones – players execute good one-on-one defense close to their own goal by marking, pressuring, and tackling.	<p>Coach: What should you do when your opponent gets close to your goal? Players: Get close to the opponent so you can challenge for the ball.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mark.” • “Pressure.” • “Tackle.” 	4 v 4	116
Marking Tackling	Skill Drill	15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pressure the ball and tackle when defending. 2. Practice pressuring the ball and tackling when defending. 	<p>1 v 1 (plus feeder and collector)—Use one player per team to retrieve balls and one player to feed balls. The defender starts on the goal line with an attacker about 20 yards away. The feeder passes to the attacker, who must try to control the ball before dribbling to the goal. The defender comes quickly off the line to pressure and tackle.</p> <p>Have the feeding done from the side so the feeder is not in the way of the other players. Emphasize that players should stay on their feet while trying to tackle. Some players may lose their footing if they are moving too fast.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Go quickly to your opponent.” • “Pressure.” • “Tackle.” 	Advanced players defend against two opponents. The extra player can either be the ball collector or the passer, who then joins in the practice.	117