

Soccer for Success Social Emotional Learning Curriculum

Week 1: Preparation Sheet

SEL Domains:

- Relationship Skills (Promote Peer Bonds, Engage Authentically, Build Team)
- Responsible Decision-Making

Soccer Objectives: Dribbling

By the end of the week, players will be able to:

- Understand the technical concepts of running with the ball
- Understand the different parts of the foot used to dribble and control the ball

Soccer Teaching Points

Day 1: Dribbling - Running with the Ball

- Take quick little steps when dribbling, using the laces to dribble (“pinky toe”)
- Demonstrate change of speed, acceleration, and deceleration, while controlling the ball
- Knees are bent, body is leaning forward over the ball, and players are on the balls of their feet

Day 2: Dribbling - Ball Control

- Demonstrate different ways to manipulate the ball to get around an opponent
- Explain that the laces, inside, outside, and sole of the foot can all be used to control the ball
- Explain how to keep ball close to body when in traffic, relax body, stay balanced, soft touches

SEL Objectives: Respect

By the end of the week, players will be able to:

- Feel excited to be part of a team experience and bought in to the team culture
- Understand ways to show up as a good teammate
- Collaborate with the team to create a Team Code

SEL Teaching Points

Day 1: Respect

- Ask players examples of teams they know (ex. soccer teams, reading teams, basketball teams) and share new teams that they might not know, emphasizing professional women’s teams to introduce them to new experiences!
- Discuss how all teams have a Team Code, or a set of rules, to keep everyone safe and excited to come to practice
- Define a Team Code as a group to ensure everyone feels safe as a member of the team

Day 2: Respect

- Ask players what being a good teammate looks like (ex. cheering on your teammates, passing the ball to teammates, helping players up if they fall down, taking care of the equipment, helping the coach-mentor pick up at the end of practice, listening during the opening and closing circles, following the rules of the game to ensure your safety and the safety of your teammates, not intentionally touching other players because you care if they get hurt)
- Challenge players to do one thing that shows they are a good teammate during practice

Week 1, Day 1

Teaching Points

Introduce the Soccer Teaching Points: Dribbling – Running with the Ball

- Explain that the laces, inside, outside, and sole of the foot can all be used to control the ball
- Show how to keep the foot pointed down, knees bent, and arms out for balance
- Ask for 1 or 2 volunteers to demonstrate running with the ball

Introduce the SEL Teaching Points: Respect

- Ask players examples of teams they know (ex. soccer teams, reading teams, basketball teams) and share new teams that they might not know, emphasizing professional women's teams to introduce them to new experiences!
- Discuss how all teams have a Team Code, or a set of rules, to keep everyone safe and excited to come to practice
- Define a Team Code as a group to ensure everyone feels safe as a member of the team

STEP 1: Staff Set-Up (10-15 Minutes)

Coach-mentors should arrive at least 10-15 minutes in advance to prepare for a productive practice session.

Preparation includes:

- Using Practice Planning Sheets to organize your practice day
- Identifying Soccer and SEL Teaching Points
- Reviewing [See It, Say It resource](#) and [Positive Behavior Management Tools](#), as needed
- Choosing [Check-In](#) style and selecting a [Cool Down Conversation Starter](#)
- Laying out equipment on practice field to allow for smooth transitions
- Meeting with co-coaches and liaising with additional site contacts

STEP 2: Warm-Up & Opening Circle (15 Minutes)

Welcome the Team

- Create a safe space
 - Address each player by name as they arrive, and encourage them to say hi to their teammates as they arrive
 - Show players what equipment they have available to them during the session
 - Have players engage in static stretching or high fives until all players arrive

SEL Warm-Up: All My Friends

Set-Up: multiple disc cones (one per player) - 30 yd. diameter circle

- Each player finds a disc cone, and the coach-mentor stands in the middle of the circle
- The coach-mentor says loudly, "All my friends who..." and then finishes the sentence with something that is true about themselves (ex. has a sibling, like apples, like singing, etc.)
- As soon as the coach-mentor is finished with the statement, everyone who this applies to moves from their cone to an empty cone that is not right next to them

Progression Suggestions:

- When players move from cone to cone, they can incorporate other activities (ex. lunges, skipping, hopping, shuffling, etc.)
- Add a ball and have players hold the ball above their head when they move from cone to cone
- Add a ball and have players dribble from cone to cone

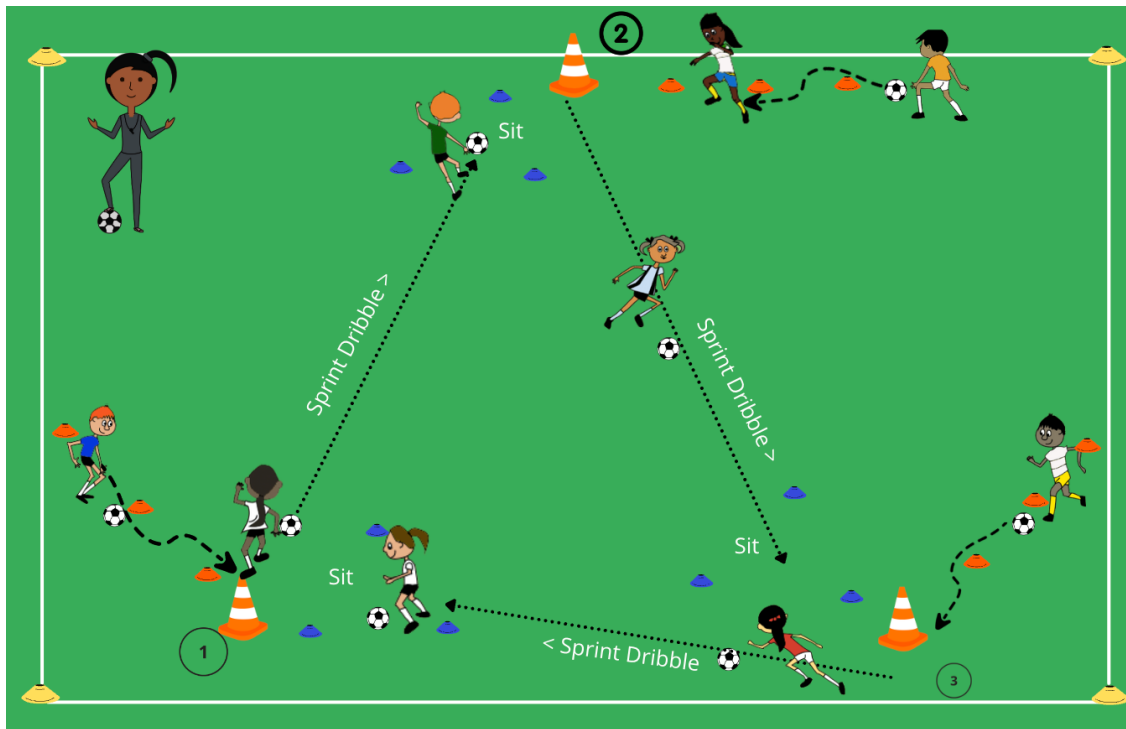
Discussion Point: Asking thoughtful questions helps us get to know our teammates, and it shows that you are interested in getting to know someone. This helps us build a fun team, where we know things about each other and can find new friends.

- What surprised you about your teammates? What did you learn?
- Why is it important to ask questions and learn more about the people we meet in lives?

Opening Circle

During the Opening Circle, [check-in](#) with players and introduce the Soccer and SEL Teaching Points of the day, listed above, through Guided Discovery.

STEP 3: Activity 1: Radiant Relay (10-15 Minutes)



Set-Up: 3 tall cones - 25 x 25 x 25 yd. triangle, 9 disc cones - create 5 x 5 x 5 yd. triangles in each corner, 12 disc cones, create straight line of 4 cones going away from each corner, 1 soccer ball per player

- Divide players into 3 teams, each team starts in a corner at the end of the line of cones
- First player in each group dribbles the ball, weaving in and out of the cones
- At the end of cones, the dribbler should accelerate towards another corner (designate a destination corner for each team)
- Dribbler should stop the ball in the smaller corner triangle, then sit down and cheer on other teammates
- Team with all players seated first wins
- Switch up teams and play multiple rounds

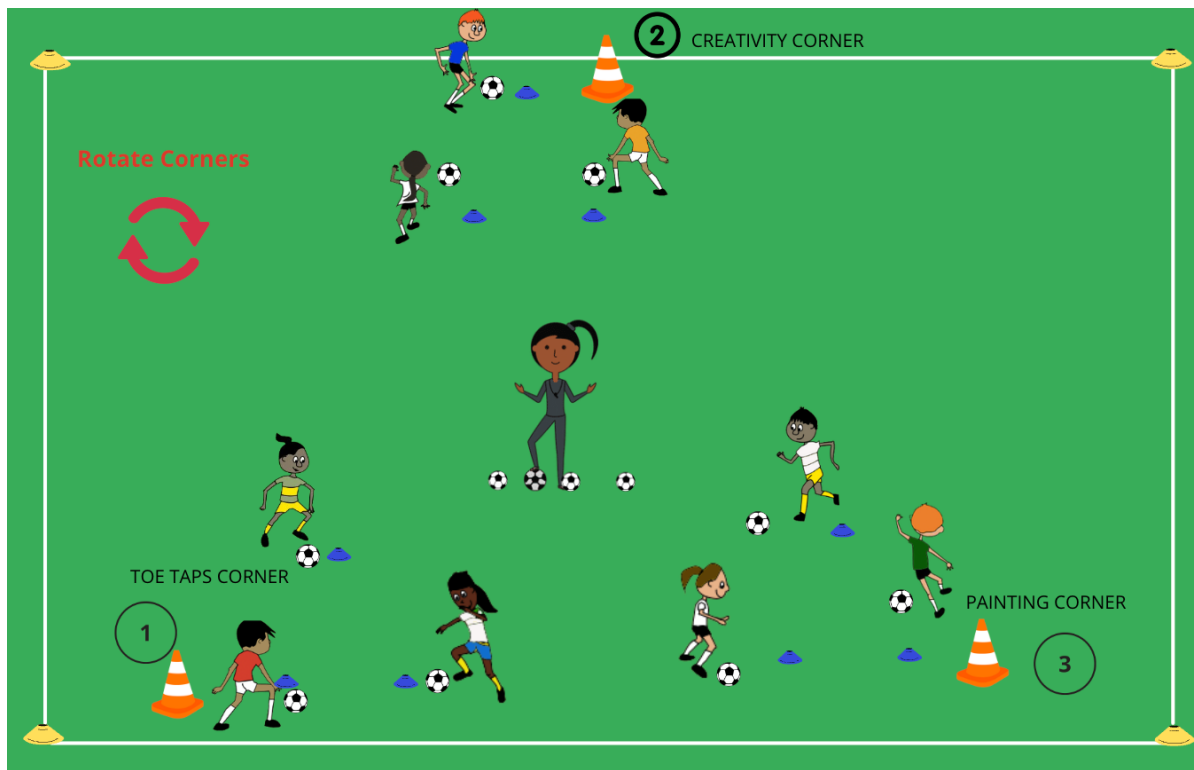
Progression Suggestions

- Players start without balls and coach-mentor assigns dynamic movements to each corner (ex. lunges, high knees, hops, Frankenstein, etc.)
- Limit dribblers to left/right foot only
- Switch up cone placement
- *Player Led Progression:* Challenge players to discover and suggest the next progression for the activity based on skills that have already been practiced
- Switch up tasks during relay (ex. step-over at end of cones, toss ball ahead and hop over cones, etc.)

Coaching Points

- Soccer: Change of speed - slower and smaller touches when weaving, explode and larger touches when going to another corner
- **Modeling Moment:** take moments to cheer on players as they relay, thank teams who listen and have all players sitting down as they finish

STEP 4: Activity 2: Crowded Corners (10-15 Minutes)



Set-Up: 3 tall cones – 25 x 25 x 25 yd. triangle, 9 disc cones – create 5 x 5 x 5 yd. triangles in each corner, 1 soccer ball per player

- Divide players into 3 teams
- *Phase 1:* Assign a specific task to each smaller triangle, 1) creativity corner (create your own move), 2) painting corner (pretending ball is paintbrush, paint entire floor of triangle), 3) taps corner (do three toe taps on each soccer ball)
- Teams rotate corners – have players suggest different ways to get to each corner (ex. slow dribble, one foot only, fast dribble)

Halftime Conversation Starter during Water Break

- Ask players why it is important to listen to the proper ways to get to each corner
- Have players think about what would happen if everyone made up their own rules to the game

- *Phase 2:* Players dribble inside the large triangle
- On the coach's signal, players sprint dribble to the corner on their right
- First player to each corner becomes the corner defender, and tries to make sure no other players dribble into the corner
- If the defender tackles the soccer ball, dribbler retrieves the ball, does five toe taps, and tries again to enter any corner
- If the dribbler gets into the corner successfully, they take their ball to the coach-mentor and cheer on teammates

Progression Suggestions

- *Phase 1:* Change tasks in each corner for different rounds
- *Player Led Progression:* Challenge players to discover and suggest the next progression for the activity based on skills that have already been practiced

Coaching Points

- Soccer: Emphasize accelerating while also maintaining control of the soccer ball to a new corner

STEP 5: Scrimmages (10-15 Minutes)

Option 1: Games

To keep players moving and engaged, and to reduce stoppage time, games should be small-sided, and the Continuous Play Model should be used. Full 11v11 games are not recommended.

Examples of scrimmage variations include:

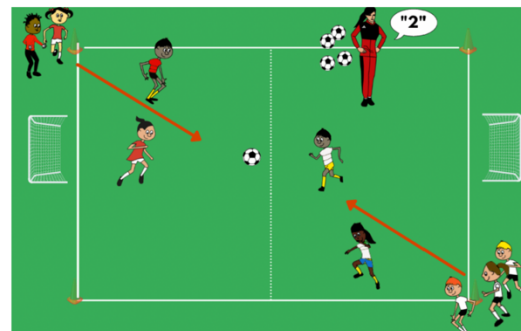
Small-Sided

- Create teams of 3-7 players each
- Set up as many fields/courts as needed to get all players playing
- Each team is assigned a goal to attack and a goal to defend
- Rotate teams after a few minutes (Round Robin format)



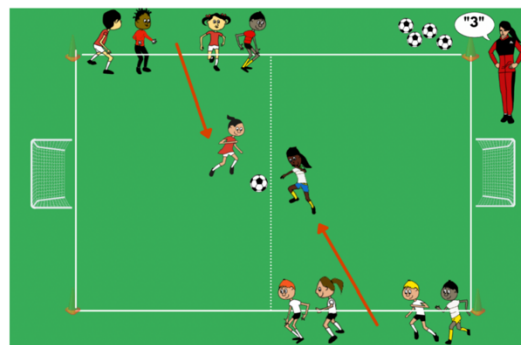
Corner Soccer

- Two teams are created
- Each team is assigned a goal to attack and a goal to defend
- Start teams from corners of opposite end lines
- When the coach-mentor calls out a number, that number of players run onto the field to play 2v2, 3v3, 4v4, etc.
- Variations can include adding more than one soccer ball and/or additional goals



Line Soccer

- Two teams are created and the teams stand on the opposite sidelines of the field/court. Each team is assigned a goal to attack and a goal to defend
- Each player is assigned a number (Team A - 1, 2, 3 etc., and Team B - 1, 2, 3, etc.)
- When the coach-mentor calls a number, the players assigned to that number run onto the field to play 1v1
- Gradually increase the number of players being called ("3 and 4!", "1, 2, 3, and 4!") and make sure each player is getting rotations in the game
- Variations can include adding more than one soccer ball and/or additional goals



Option 2: Self-Challenge/Challenge of the Week/Goal Tracking

- Allow players the time to individually challenge themselves by working on the [Challenge of the Week](#), [SAQ \(speed, agility, quickness\) exercises](#), self-assigned goals set on their [player challenge tracker](#), etc.

STEP 6: Cool Down (5-7 Minutes)

- The Cool Down allows the children to take an emotional break from the competition of the Scrimmages, while lowering their heart rate through static stretching
- The Cool Down provides an opportunity for players to center themselves, as well as connect with teammates
 - Have players partner up, or form small groups
 - Share pre-selected **Conversation Starter** to the group
 - While performing [\(mostly\) static stretching or low energy exercises](#), players can discuss the conversation starter assigned by coach, making sure each player gets the opportunity to share their answer/opinion

STEP 7: Closing Circle & Cheer (5 Minutes)

- Have the players form a circle for the Closing Circle.
- During the Closing Circle, review the Soccer and SEL Teaching Points of the day.
- The Closing Circle offers a second opportunity to [check-in](#) with the players to see how they are doing emotionally.
- A Closing Cheer allows the children to leave on a positive note in a team environment and solidifies your team culture.

STEP 8: Staff Debrief (10 Minutes)

- As a staff, it is important to take time at the end of the day to reflect on the successes and challenges of the day's practice session.
- Be sure to take time to reflect on any behaviors or patterns you notice from different players, which will help you connect individually with them throughout the season.
- This will serve to address any issues that arose during the session, provide constructive feedback to other coach-mentors, and help you prepare for the next practice session.
- The Staff Debrief is done after organizing players for departure, connecting with family members, and cleaning up the field and supplies.

Week 1, Day 2

Teaching Points

Introduce the Soccer Teaching Points: Dribbling – Ball Control

- Demonstrate different ways to manipulate the ball to get around an opponent
- Explain that the laces, inside, outside, and sole of the foot can all be used to control the ball
- Explain how to keep ball close to body when in traffic, relax body, stay balanced, soft touches
- Ask for 1 or 2 volunteers to demonstrate different ways to manipulate the ball when dribbling

Introduce the SEL Teaching Points: Respect

- Ask players what being a good teammate looks like (ex. cheering on your teammates, passing the ball to teammates, helping players up if they fall down, taking care of the equipment, helping the coach-mentor pick up at the end of practice, listening during the opening and closing circles, following the rules of the game to ensure your safety and the safety of your teammates, not intentionally touching other players because you care if they get hurt)
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STEP 2: Warm-Up & Opening Circle (15 Minutes)

Welcome the Team

- Create a safe space
 - Address each player by name as they arrive, and encourage them to say hi to their teammates as they arrive
 - Show players what equipment they have available to them during the session
 - Have players engage in static stretching or high fives until all players arrive

SEL Warm-Up: All My Friends

Set-Up: multiple disc cones (one per player) arranged in a 30 yd. diameter circle minus 1 cone (ex. if you have 12 players, use 11 cones)

- Each player finds a disc cone, with one player left in the middle of the circle
- The player in the middle of the circle says loudly, “All my friends who...” and then finishes the sentence with something that is true about themselves (ex. has a sibling, like apples, like singing, etc.)
- As soon as the player is finished with the statement, everyone (including the person in the center) who this applies to moves from their cone to an empty cone that is not right next to them
- The player who remains in the middle begins the next round of the game
- You can add a ball or incorporate other activities (ex. lunges, skipping, hopping, shuffling, etc.)

Discussion Point: *Did you learn anything new about your teammates today?*

Opening Circle

During the Opening Circle, [check-in](#) with players and introduce the Soccer and SEL Teaching Points of the day, listed above, through Guided Discovery.

STEP 3: Activity 1: Greetings (10-15 Minutes)



Set-Up: multiple disc cones - 30 yd. diameter circle, 1 soccer ball per player

- Players dribble inside circle
- *Phase 1:* Coach-mentor calls out a ball mastery move, (ex. Toe Taps, Foundations, roll to side, pull, scissors, etc.) and players find space to do the ball mastery move
- *Phase 2:* Coach-mentor calls out types of greetings (ex. shake hands, high fives, high tens, fist bump, wave, etc.) and players find a partner to greet

Progression Suggestions

- Have players start without a ball
- Ask for players to demonstrate the ball mastery moves
- Players must dribble with right foot only, left foot only, inside of foot, outside of foot
- Assign players designated greetings partner and must find that partner when the coach-mentor calls out that greeting
- *Player Led Progression:* Challenge players to discover and suggest the next progression for the activity based on skills that have already been practiced

Coaching Points

- Soccer: Take quick, little steps and a lot of touches when controlling the soccer ball in a tight space, take longer strides and dribble with laces ("pinky toe") when running with the ball
- **Modeling Moment:** *If a player cannot find a partner to meet with a greeting, jump in to make sure all players can participate; meet players on their level for high fives instead of them reaching up to meet your level*

STEP 4: Activity 2: Keeping Tabs (10-15 Minutes)



Set-Up: multiple disc cones - 30 yd. diameter circle, 1 soccer ball per player

- On the coach-mentor's command, players should try to tag as many players as possible while maintaining possession of their ball
- Play 1-minute rounds and players should track the number of tags they get in that time
- Players should deduct 1 point for each time they go out of bounds
- Play multiple rounds - players should try to beat their previous score

Halftime Conversation Starters

- Discuss why it is important to be honest when tracking your score (ex. this can help us improve and know exactly what we are doing well, it is a way to show we respect the rules and allow our teammates to succeed, etc.)

Progression Suggestions

- Start with no soccer ball
- Perform different ball mastery moves (ex. turns, cuts, etc.) during the game
- Use only one surface of the foot
- *Player Led Progression:* Challenge players to discover and suggest the next progression for the activity based on skills that have already been practiced

Coaching Points

- Soccer: Keep your head up (eyes up) to know what's around you and laces, inside, outside, and sole of the foot can all be used to control the ball

STEP 5: Scrimmages (10-15 Minutes)

Option 1: Games

To keep players moving and engaged, and to reduce stoppage time, games should be small-sided, and the Continuous Play Model should be used. Full 11v11 games are not recommended.

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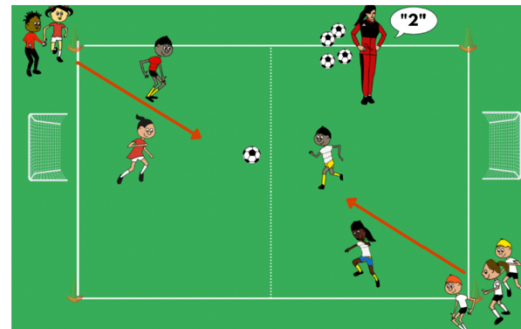
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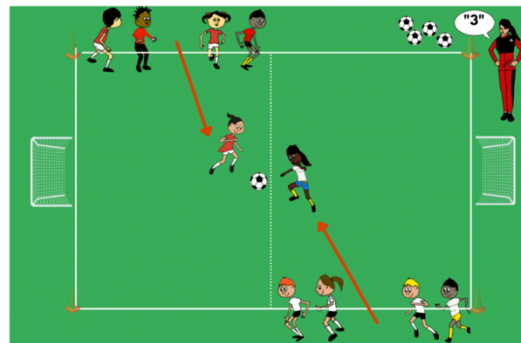
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STEP 6: Cool Down (5-7 Minutes)

- The Cool Down allows the children to take an emotional break from the competition of the Scrimmages, while lowering their heart rate through static stretching
- The Cool Down provides an opportunity for players to center themselves, as well as connect with teammates
 - Have players partner up, or form small groups
 - Share pre-selected **Conversation Starter** to the group
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STEP 7: Closing Circle & Cheer (5 Minutes)

- Have the players form a circle for the Closing Circle.
- During the Closing Circle, review the Soccer and SEL Teaching Points of the day.
- The Closing Circle offers a second opportunity to [check-in](#) with the players to see how they are doing emotionally.
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STEP 8: Staff Debrief (10 Minutes)

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- Be sure to take time to reflect on any behaviors or patterns you notice from different players, which will help you connect individually with them throughout the season.
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- The Staff Debrief is done after organizing players for departure, connecting with family members, and cleaning up the field and supplies.

Week 1, Day 3 – GAME DAY

STEP 1: Staff Set-Up (10-15 Minutes)

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STEP 2: Warm-Up & Opening Circle (15 Minutes)

Welcome the Team

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Warm-Up

- Choose an activity from the [Warm-Up Activities](#).
- Use this activity as an opportunity for your participants to get out some of the energy stored up from a long day in the classroom.
- Lead, or allow players to lead, a team stretch (mostly dynamic stretching).

Opening Circle

- During the Opening Circle, [check-in](#) with players and review the Soccer and SEL Points of the week.
- Review Soccer Teaching Points
- Review SEL Teaching Points

STEP 3: Scrimmages (40-50 Minutes)

CONTINUOUS PLAY

- Use the Continuous Play Model on Game Day.
- Using all available soccer balls, keep one to three coaches stationed around the field with extra balls in hand. When the ball goes out of bounds, announce "new ball!" and roll a new ball onto the field.
- Using the Continuous Play Model will keep players moving and engaged in the activity because it will minimize stoppages in the game, thus increasing the moderate-to-vigorous physical activity of all players.

PLAYER FORMATIONS

- Positions are not needed for grades K-2.
- Coach-mentors can sprinkle in instruction on player formations in grades 3-5.
- The formation for a 3-player team should be in the shape of a triangle. The formation for a 4-player team should be in the shape of a diamond (shown below).
- Two standard options for a 7-player team are also shown below, known as 3-3-1 and 3-2-2.



MULTIPLE FIELD SET UP

- Set up multiple fields if space allows. An example of a multiple field set-up is:



STEP 4: Cool Down (5-7 Minutes)

- The Cool Down allows the children to take an emotional break from the competition of the Scrimmages, while lowering their heart rate through static stretching
- The Cool Down provides an opportunity for players to center themselves, as well as connect with teammates
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STEP 5: Closing Circle & Cheer (5 Minutes)

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