

U12 Skills

Passing- [Video for inside foot passing](#)

- Plant your standing foot next to the ball, strike the center of the ball using the inside of your foot, and follow through toward your target.
- Make contact using the flat instep area (from the base of your big toe to the middle of your heel). Never kick the ball with your toes!
- Strike the exact center (the heart) of the ball. Hitting too high causes the ball to bounce, while hitting too low makes it fly into the air.
- Keep your upper body slightly leaning forward over the ball rather than leaning back.

Controlling/Trapping- [Video for controlling and trapping](#)

- Use the inside, sole, or outside of your foot to absorb the ball's momentum with a relaxed posture.
- **Inside of the Foot:** Turn your toe slightly outward and lock your ankle. Use the arch to cushion ground passes so the ball stops cleanly near you.
- **Sole of the Foot:** Raise your toes slightly and place the bottom of your foot on top of the ball to halt its movement instantly.
- **Outside of the Foot:** Point your toe slightly inward and use your pinky-toe area to guide or redirect a rolling ball across your body.
- **Cushioning the Ball:** Relax your receiving leg and pull it back slightly upon impact to absorb the ball's speed, preventing it from bouncing away
- **Head Up:** Keep your eyes on the ball until contact, then glance up to see your surroundings.
- **Body Posture:** Keep your knees slightly bent, stay low on your toes for balance, and position your body directly in the path of the incoming ball.

Shooting & Striking- [Video for striking](#) [Video for shooting](#)

- **Take a touch:** Push the ball a small step or two ahead of you so your leg has room to swing.
- **Plant your foot:** Place your non-kicking (supporting) foot roughly 2 to 6 inches to the side of the ball.
- **Aim your toe:** Point the toes of your plant foot directly at your target (the goal).
- **Bend your knee:** Keep a slight bend in your planting knee for stability and balance.
- **Use your laces:** Strike the center of the ball using the top of your foot (where your shoelaces are), rather than your toe.
- **Lock your ankle:** Keep your ankle stiff and point your toe down toward the ground so your foot doesn't wobble on impact.

- **Lean forward:** Position your chest and upper body slightly over the ball to keep your shot low and under control.
- **Follow through:** Swing your kicking leg straight through the ball toward your target and let your momentum carry you forward onto your striking foot.

Dribbling- 1. [Video for dribbling](#) 2. [Video for dribbling](#) 3. [5 soccer dribbling drills for beginners](#)

- **Stay on your toes:** Avoid running with your heels flat on the ground so you can react and change direction quickly.
- **Lean forward:** Keep your chest slightly over the ball to stay ready to sprint or shift angles.
- **Use both parts of the foot:** Alternate lightly between the inside and the outside of your feet for agile control.
- **Keep it close:** Do not kick the ball far ahead or keep it trapped directly under your feet; push it just far enough so your next step meets the ball naturally.
- **Take small touches:** Use frequent, soft taps rather than big strides to stay in control.

[Video on close ball control](#)

Throw-In- [Throw-in Video](#)

Players at this level should be learning throw-in strategy.

- **On or behind the line:** Your feet must touch the touchline (sideline) or the ground outside of it. You cannot step fully onto the field of play before releasing the ball.
- **Keep feet grounded:** Both feet must maintain contact with the ground when you release the ball. Dragging a toe or heel is allowed as long as no part of the foot completely lifts into the air.
- **Face the pitch:** Your body must be directed toward the field when you execute the throw.
- **Use both hands:** Grip the sides of the ball securely with both hands.
- **Over the head:** Bring the ball completely behind and over your head with bent elbows.
- **Continuous forward arc:** Deliver the ball in one fluid motion from back to front. Throwing it downward or starting the release in front of your head is a foul throw.

Positions-

Research 7v7 for U10 and 9v9 for U12 team formations. Players should begin learning and understanding team formations and how to properly shift on the field.

- Players should be taught basic positions on the field where they should stand and some of the key elements of their position. (Forward, Midfielder and Defender)
 - **Goalkeeper**
 - Main job: Stop the other team from scoring goals.
 - Special rule: The only player on the team who can use their hands and arms, but only inside their own penalty box.
 - Starter of Plays: Shouts commands to organize the backline and passes the ball out to begin an attack.
 - **Defenders**
 - Goal Protectors: Positioned in front of the goalie to block shots, tackle opponents, and win headers.
 - Center-Backs: Stay in the middle to stop direct central attacks.
 - Full-Backs / Wing-Backs: Guard the left and right outer sides of the field to stop enemy wingers and run up the sidelines to help the offense.
 - **Midfielders**
 - The Connectors: Sit between the defenders and the forwards to link the team together.
 - Two-Way Play: Help defend by winning the ball back and help attack by passing the ball forward.
 - Pace Makers: Control the speed of the game, with central and attacking midfielders creating goal chances.
 - **Forwards**
 - The Attackers: Positioned closest to the opponent's goal.
 - Main Scorers: Strikers and center-forwards take shots to score goals.
 - Space Makers: Wingers run down the sides to cross the ball into the center, while all forwards pressure enemy defenders.

What to do when...

- **A goal is scored:** 1st look to the referee for confirmation the goal was scored. Then return the ball to the center mark for a kick off. Team kicking off needs to remain on their half of the field until the ball is in play. The opposing team needs to remain on their half of the circle (12 ft.) from the kick off point until the ball is in play.
- **An injury occurs:** players shouldn't crowd the injured player. Once the referee has paused the game they should remain in place(they can take a knee). Coaches wait to be called onto the field by the referee.