



REC SOCCER PRACTICE FIELD SET-UP RECOMMENDATIONS

The basic object is to always have your players as **spread out as possible**, and to have them **either** in one set location **OR** moving parallel to/away from others.

Set-up on a game field

If on a game field, set up with the coaches in the middle of the field and the players toward where the goals would normally be. The coaches are at opposite ends of the starting circle, at least 10+ feet apart, facing and talking in the opposite direction. Players are in the last 1/3 of the field on each side, so the middle 1/3 is empty except for the coaches, providing a big buffer between the teams' practice spaces.

In this illustration, the players are all in boxes (more on this below):



In the next picture, the coach is in the center, but the player is in a lane (more on this below); the player moves away from the coach (and the other team's practice area), toward the empty end line.

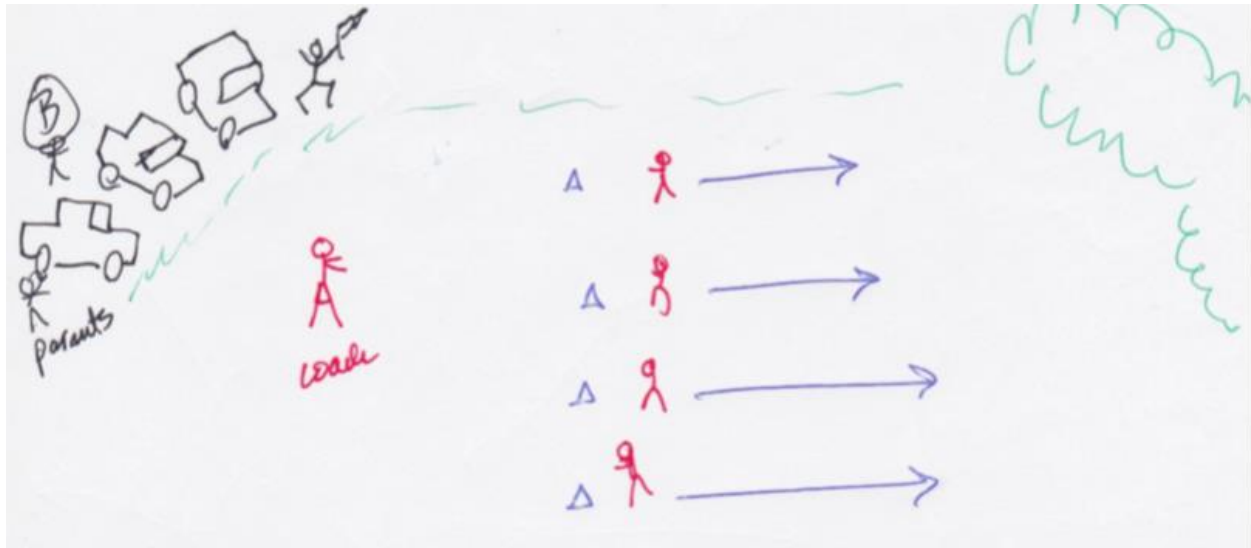


Again: spread out and either in one set location **OR** moving parallel to/away from others.

Set-up near cars or a busy areas

If there are cars or people or a busy area, set up so you have the players move away from that occupied area into empty space. Except with K-2 teams, parents would stay in this area of the

car-park or away from the field, while the kids play or practice. But the idea is always that the players move toward empty space, just like in a game!



As you can see, the parents are by the cars and off the field (EXCEPTION: with the coach's permission parents for players in K-2 can be on the field with their child but physically distant from other players. The same exception can be granted by you for any other players with special needs; just make sure the parent is apart from everyone else and only near their child.)

Set-up, two teams on a green area

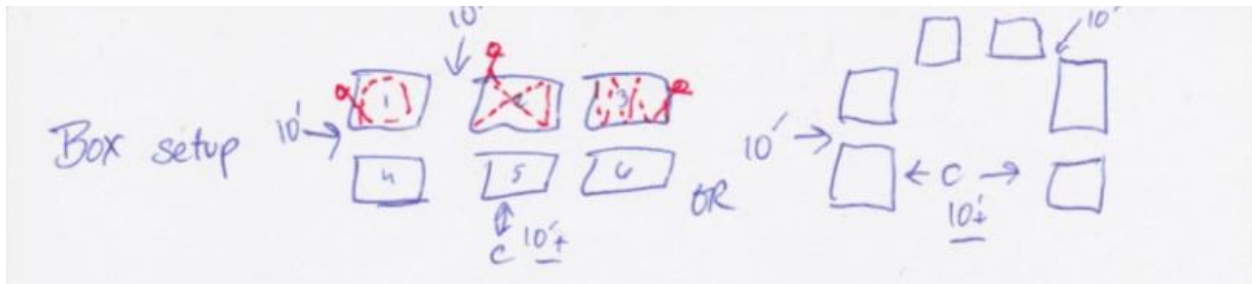
Same idea but on an empty grass field: the two teams are on opposite sides of an open grassy area, working away from each other.



BOX SET-UP

The Box is your best option. Each box is marked on the field. Players move freely within their limited/defined space. There is a ten-foot "moat" or "alley" between each box so even if

players are at the closest ends of their boxes, they will always be at least ten feet apart from each other.



You can set up with the coach in front (example a) or with the boxes in a square around the coach, and the coach is in the middle. Both are good.

There are no measurements on the boxes – basically the idea will be to make them as **big** as possible, leaving always a ten-foot alley-moat between them. You can use ANYTHING to mark the boxes: cones, pinnies, empty water bottles if you clear them away after. You can also do multiple lines of boxes, as in the first illustration, above on the left.

Players can move freely within the box, dribbling from corner to corner. You can tell the players that one corner is A, the next B, etc. and have them (for example) dribble from A to D then to B then to C. They leave their water bottle on one corner, then warm-up and exercise entirely within the box.

PROS:

- Areas are defined, players have a lot of freedom within their box/area and can do what they want within that space (if a parent is helping, the parent would also need to be within that same space).
- Very secure since each area is 10' apart from every other area – extremely safe, easy to manage.

CONS:

- If fields are marked then it is great; if not, requires a lot of cones, which you may not have.
- Bring a tape measure the first time to make sure you allow enough space!

LANE SET-UP

Lanes are also good. The coach stands at one end. The beginning of each lane is marked by a cone. You want lanes to be like 25 feet apart or so, because players will need a margin of error. Players move from the cone into empty space, away from the coach (OR they can run toward another cone at the end). This works best if there is an end line – you tell them to run to the end line, turn around and come back. It is also good if each cone is somehow unique so they know which cone to run toward.



When you are doing static or in-place exercises (like in the picture to the right), you will want to have half your players up front by the cones, and the other half deeper in the field. This will ensure that there is additional distance between the players as they work.

PROS:

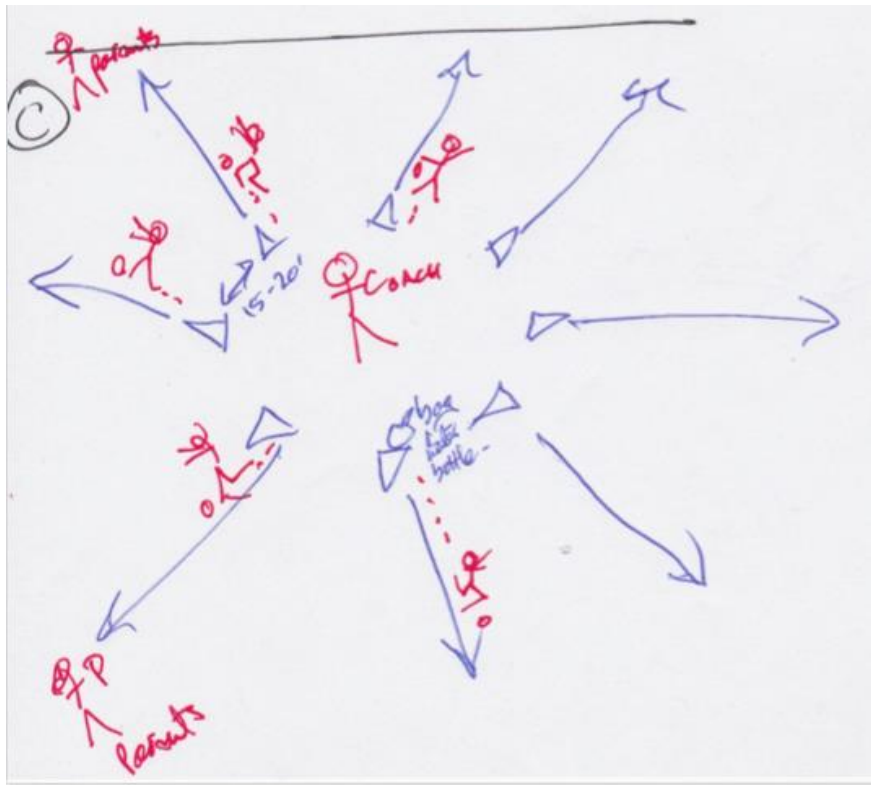
- Easy to set up – just drop a line of cones at least 20-25’ apart and the kids run toward the other end of the field.
- With a helper at the far end to turn them back (and their bag and water bottle to remind them of where they are going), they get a little more “free range” while staying apart.

CONS:

- Players have to remember to move in straight lines, not always easy.
- Requires a parent or two at the far end to turn them back OR a line they “tag” and then come back from. Some chance for error.
- Less-defined. The freedom may give them the idea that they are off the leash and they might go anywhere.
- 20’ is not a huge gap – kids may accidentally get too close. Farther is usually better.

RADIATING LANES SET-UP

Like lanes, above, but coach is in the middle and the cones are in a circle around you. Instead of running parallel, each player runs so they radiate out from the center, like the yellow rays in a child’s drawing of the sun.



PROS:

- Easy to set up – a simple ring of cones at least 20' apart and at least 10' from the coach in every direction.
- Players get farther apart as they go.

CONS:

- Requires multiple parents to turn them back and to ensure they don't just keep going.
- Some chance of error in returning to center – may go to wrong cone.
- The freedom may give them the idea that they are off the leash and they might go anywhere.
- Requires an open field with no other teams around.

POSSIBLE PROGRESSION

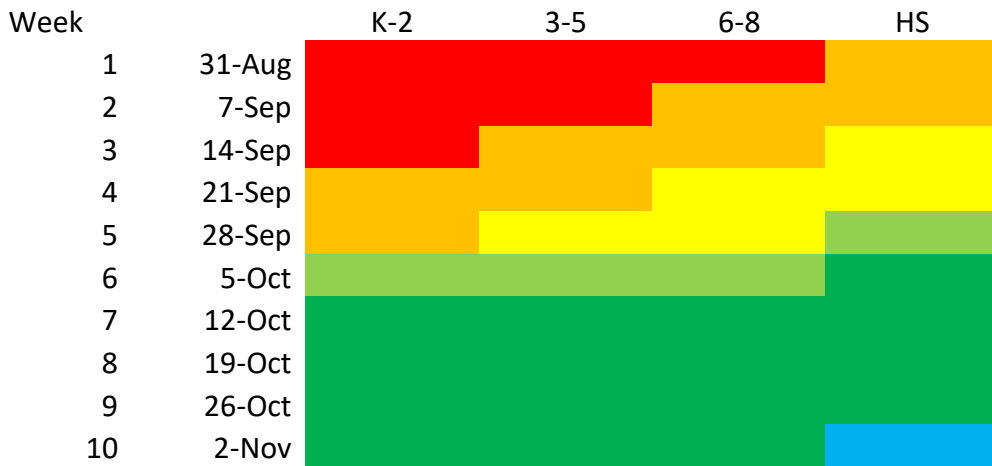
We view six steps, moving from lowest risk to higher risk.

1. Players are physically apart and do not share balls.
2. Players are physically apart but can share balls and move from box to box while remaining distanced.
3. Players are physically apart but can share balls and move from box to box while remaining distanced, but can also challenge each other for the ball from a distance, playing 2v1, 3v2, keep-away, rondo, etc.

4. Scrimmages become possible within the same team, but players remain physically distanced otherwise during practice.
5. Games are possible but players remain physically distanced otherwise during practice.
6. Tournaments and games are possible but players remain physically distanced otherwise during practice.

Each age group will move through the progression at different speeds.

For the first week of practice, all teams will be in step 1, except HS teams, which will start in step 2.



STEPS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Players physically isolated, no ball sharing |
| 2 | Players physically isolated, can share ball, can move from box to box |
| 3 | players physically isolated but can move freely, challenge 2v1, rondos, keep-away etc |
| 4 | Scrimmage within team possible but physically distanced otherwise in practice |
| 5 | Games possible but physically distanced otherwise in practice & games |
| 6 | Etc. including tournaments |

These are the currently-projected steps in the progression. Each week, we will update what step your age group is in and make clear what activities are permitted and what are not.

Each coach cannot move faster than this progression. Each coach is NOT, however, required to move this quickly. Before moving on to Step 3, for instance, you may wish to confer with team parents to ensure they are comfortable with this. You may then choose to not progress to 2v1 challenges, etc. I will probably progress to Step 3 on time (if my team parents agree) BUT be really strict about not allowing the players to come more than six feet apart – meaning that the

challenge itself will trigger the pass, not a tackle. Other teams may choose not to scrimmage internally. That is also fine.

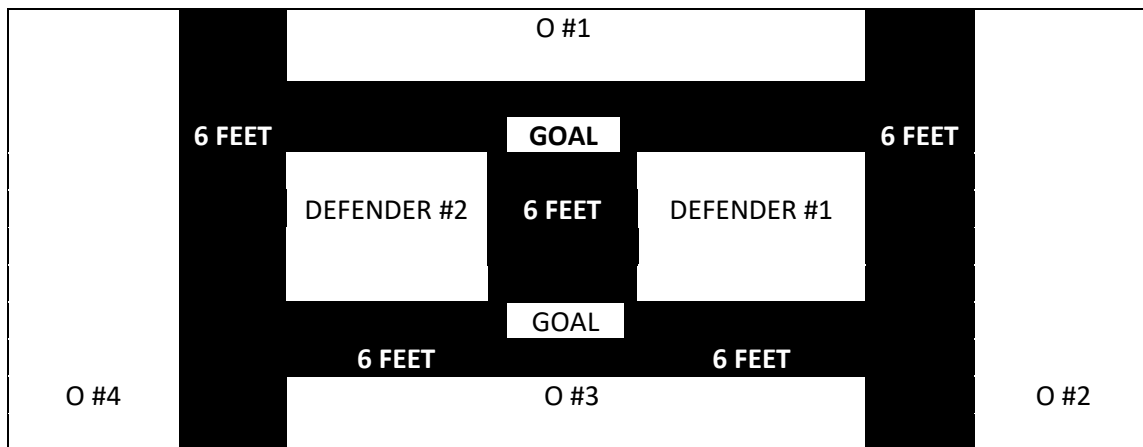
The illustration here is a best-case scenario that will depend on multiple factors. It is presented solely for illustrative purposes. Rec games will need to be approved by the Rec Committee (composed of your Rec Club Managers) and be allowed by the Commonwealth, the County, Virginia Youth Soccer and Arlington Soccer.

There are many games that you can play without any contact at all. Step 2 games suggested by Rec Coach Michael Harris include:

- **Target practice** — shooting on goals from various angles and distances. Like we do in hockey or baseball we put targets and you only get points if you hit the target.
- **Golf or horseshoes or shuffleboard** — distance and direction skill. Goal is to get the ball to stop closest to a cone, or to knock someone else’s ball away from the cone.
- **Croquet** – have to get your ball between two cones. Or you can bump someone else’s ball and get to kick it away.

Another Step 2 game is from former Rec Coach Unger: Corona Ball, presented here.

Equipment Required:



Standard 6’ Pug goals and a minimum of 12 cones to mark boundaries.

Field Setup:

Players are positioned into defined areas. Each white box is a player area. The black spaces are social distancing zones for safety.

Game Play & Scoring

- 4 Offensive Players X 2 Defenders
- Players rotate positions after every two possessions and keep their own individual score. The rotation is clockwise from the top as follows: O #1, D #1, O #2, O #3, O #4, D #2.
- The offense starts with the ball and has two possessions to try and score. A possession ends with either a Defender controlling the ball or the ball leaving the field of play. Note: field of play dimensions are elastic and the wider/longer the entire field the more room to run for offensive players (exercise) and the more fluid the game.

- Scoring:
 - Players keep an individual score.
 - Players on offense gets 3 points for scoring a goal, 1 point for an assist (the pass immediately before a goal), -1 point for a missed goal, and -1 if a turnover is created (the Defender controls the ball from a pass/shot). Offensive players can score in either goal.
 - Each Defensive player receives +2 points if no goals are allowed during a rotation.
 - In the case of an Own Goal, no points are awarded for the offense and the possession ends. An Own Goal is a goal resulting from a ball that comes in contact with a Defender prior to going into the goal, AND such contact is the cause of the goal. IF the ball would have been a goal had no contact with the Defender occurred, then the goal stands and points are awarded to the offense.

Variations

- Game play is more challenging if touches are restricted. For example, offensive players can play one touch or two touch, or the total number of touches for a possession can be restricted.

If you have other games, please write them up and let me know! We will be sharing all of these as widely as possible. We can use this period to build our players' skills and get them back in shape and have fun!