

YMCA Soccer Warm-Up Activities for 8-9-Year-Olds

Warm Up Description	Page¹
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Players dribble in space—that is, run with the ball, keeping it within playing distance (one ball per player). 2. Players dribble and turn on signal. 	80
Players in pairs pass and move.	84
Players in pairs pass the ball hand to hand, throwing so that the hands must move to catch the ball.	86
Players play a 1 v 1 game, using a full goal; the goalkeeper dives to save the shot. Players trade off being GK. Attacking player can try to score by throwing or shooting.	90
Players play a 4 v 2 game in which their goal is to make six passes. Instruct players to move to support positions so that the passer can split (i.e., pass between) two defenders. Any pass that splits the defenders counts double.	96
Players pass and move in pairs. Increase distances and encourage players to get the ball off the ground.	100
Play a “tag” game, to encourage chasing opponents.	104
Play 1 v 1 games (in areas about 20 yards long, maximum) in which the defender pressures the opponent, trying to channel him or her toward the weak foot.	107
Players in pairs, 5 to 10 yards apart, practice quick passing, alternating passes with two touches and one touch.	110

¹ This page number refers to pages in the “Plans for 8- to 9-Year-Olds” document found on the “Season and Practice Plans” page in the YMCA’s **Coaching Soccer** online course.

Warm Up Description	Page¹
Players free dribble, changing pace and direction. They try to beat the coach when he or she gets in the way.	113
GK1 distributes the ball to A1, who dribbles down field and crosses to A2. A2 dribbles and shoots toward cones guarded by GK2. GK2 then distributes to A2, who dribbles and crosses to A1, who shoots on GK1. Then A3 and A4 take A1's and A2's places.	116
1 v 1—Players dribble and shoot into goal under pressure. Place a defender behind the attacker; the defender cannot move until the attacker begins the run to goal. The defender, slightly behind the attacker, chases the attacker to the goal as the attacker dribbles and shoots.	120
Play 1 v 1 in a 20- x 10-yard area. Review individual marking skills.	124

YMCA Soccer Fitness Activities for 8-9-Year-Olds

Key Idea	Description	Page ¹
General Fitness	<p>The team is still gathered in a group after stretching. “Now that we’re all loosened up, I want everybody to run in place at a slow pace. Now a bit faster. Good. Now everyone stop.” Choose a child to demonstrate a long, strong kick. “That was a great kick. Now I need all of you to dribble the ball to each other and practice passing.” Have children pass two times each. Next, have them perform a leg stretch. “Those four activities we did are a part of soccer, but they also are ways to improve your fitness. Each activity helps to improve a different area of fitness. Running improves your cardiorespiratory fitness, kicking helps your muscular strength, dribbling helps your muscular fitness, and stretching helps your flexibility. Throughout the season we’ll be learning more about fitness in our Fitness Circles.”</p>	80
Safety	<p>Gather children into a group. Choose one player to act out being injured (limping) and have a second player get a coach to report the injury. “What did you see happening?” Listen to their responses. “When you get injured, it will probably look like what was acted out. If it hurts, you should stop and let me know right away. Don’t pretend it doesn’t hurt. Usually, injuries are not bad, but sometimes they can be serious. If you get hurt even a little, I need to check your injury. If you see a player who looks hurt or in pain, or if you saw her get injured, let me know. Telling me if you’re hurt helps me keep you safe during games and practices.”</p>	84

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Key Idea	Description	Page¹
General Fitness	<p>Gather children into a group. “Everyone think of a hill. Get a picture of a hill in your mind. Close your eyes and see it in your mind. You see it? Now pretend we’re all bicycling up that hill. We start at the bottom and slowly climb. We have to work harder and harder as we make it to the top. Then we gradually start pedaling back down the hill, which is not as hard as going up . . . That hill is the way your body will move every practice. We start slow with a warm-up. As you ride up the hill, this is how we move in the middle of practice. Toward the end of our practice, we gradually start to come back down the hill, slowing our bodies down. This is called the cool-down. A warm-up and cool-down are important parts of healthy fitness.”</p>	86
Flexibility	<p>Gather children into a circle sitting down with their legs stretched in front of them. “Think of stretching a rubber band as far as you can. What happens if you stretch the band too far?” Listen to their responses. “That’s right. It breaks. Muscles work in sort of the same way. Stretching your muscles too far can tear and injure them. But it’s important to stretch your muscles for them to be flexible. Everyone reach forward and try to touch your toes, but stretch only until you feel a slight pulling in your leg muscle—make sure it doesn’t hurt.” Tell them to hold the stretch for 10 counts without bouncing. “Stretching your muscles is important to keep them flexible, but you shouldn’t feel pain. The main soccer muscles to stretch are the front of your thighs (quadriceps), the back of your thighs (hamstrings), and the back of your lower legs (calves).” Demonstrate stretching each muscle group.</p>	90

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Healthy Habits	Gather children into a group. "Everyone run in place for 15 seconds. Ready? Go! . . . Now stop! Whenever we run and kick during our practice, our body starts to get warm. When our bodies get really warm, what do you think happens to cool them off?" Wait for their responses. "Our bodies start to sweat. Sweat is the water that comes out of all the pores in your skin. Then the sweat evaporates into the air. Since your body sweats to cool off, what do you think we need to put back into our bodies?" Wait for someone to say, "water." "That's right. Drinking enough water every day is an important healthy habit. You'll need to drink more water if you're running and playing a lot. I want to challenge all of you to drink one glass of water a day for every year of your age. How many is that? . . . Eight? Nine? I know you can drink that many glasses a day!"	93
Safety	Gather children into a group. "Pretend you're a 'player in a bubble.' Walk around and work at not bumping into your teammates to make sure their bubbles don't break." Keep children in a confined area. Time them for one minute. "Now we'll do the same thing while jogging." Time for 30 seconds. "It's important not to bump into other players—that is a foul, even if it's an accident. It's important to play as safely as you can. Thinking about the other players' bubbles will help you stay in your own space when you play soccer."	97
Cardio-Respiratory Fitness	Gather children into a circle. "Remember the hill we imagine we bicycled up a few practices ago? We start slow going up, then go faster toward the top and come slowly back down. Let's start up that hill by running in place slowly, getting a little faster, faster, and now really fast . . . Now start to slow down. A little slower. Slower. And stop." Run with children to model. "That was a short version of moving during our practice. We run faster to make our heart and lungs stronger; this is called cardiorespiratory fitness. We start slowly and then gradually slow down at the end of the practice to help our hearts pump blood and carry oxygen from our lungs to our muscles."	100

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Cardio-Respiratory Fitness	<p>Gather children into a circle and give one child a ball to hold. "What does the heart pump to the whole body?" Listen to responses until someone says "blood." "What does the blood carry to the muscles?" Listen until someone says "oxygen." "We're going to pretend that the ball is oxygen and that you're big blood vessels or tubes that carry the blood. Dribble the ball to the person next to you." Each child should touch the ball, only with his or her feet, until the ball completes the circle. "The oxygen in your blood starts at your heart and travels to your lungs, legs, arms, and brain." Try assigning a part of the body to each player. "Playing soccer helps your heart and lungs get better at getting oxygen to your muscles—this is called cardiorespiratory fitness."</p>	104
Muscular Strength and Endurance	<p>Gather children into a group in their own space. "We're going to move different directions in our own space. I will point to a direction and the whole group should jog slowly in that direction. When I put my hand up, everyone stop." Point to directions of: forward, one side, the other side, and backward. "When you jog in different directions, you use different muscles. It's important to improve your muscular strength and endurance in all your muscles in your body. We can do that by practicing jogging different directions, passing and kicking the ball, and spreading out on the field."</p>	107
Training and Conditioning	<p>Gather children into a circle. "Everyone run in place for 10 seconds . . . Now stop. Now run in place for 20 seconds . . . Stop. Next we'll run for 30 seconds . . . Stop. When you run, you're improving your body's physical conditioning in your heart, lungs, and muscles. Every time you play soccer a little bit longer and let your body get a little more tired, your body improves its physical conditioning. When your body has better conditioning you can make longer passes, keep up with opponents, and play longer without getting too tired."</p>	110

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Muscular Strength and Endurance	Gather children into a group. "Stand with your arms straight out from your sides. Give enough space so you don't bump your neighbor. Circle your arms like this." Demonstrate. "Keep going until you get very tired, then stop." Wait until the last child stops. "Do your arms feel tired? That is called muscle fatigue. Muscles can keep moving and tightening only for so long before tiring out. The longer you can play before your muscles tire out, the more muscular endurance you have. You can improve your muscular endurance by playing soccer."	113
Healthy Habits	Gather children into a group. "What are healthy habits?" Listen to their responses. "Why do you need to practice healthy habits?" Listen to their responses and encourage discussion of how healthy bodies and minds are important to sports. "Practice healthy habits every day to take care of your bodies—the same way we practice soccer to improve our skills and get to be better players. Keep the list of healthy habits in your mind." Have a list of examples written on a piece of paper clipped to a clipboard, including brushing your teeth; no smoking, alcohol, or drugs; eating healthy foods; and getting plenty of sleep. "Check each item off when you have done that habit during the day." Have a pen to actually check an item off the list. "Every day start your list over again. Doing all the habits daily keeps you healthy."	117
Training and Conditioning	Split children into two or three groups. Give each group a ball. Instruct them to make a circle, then dribble and pass to others in their group. Continue for one minute, then bring everyone together. "Let's say that activity finished our practice. Now you're finished with practice for the week. What could you do tomorrow to stay active and practice skills that are similar to or the same type of thing we do in practice?" Listen to their responses. Discuss running, dribbling, kicking, and other ball-handling skills. "Your body loses its conditioning when you stop using it! It's important to stay active outside of soccer practices. This helps keep you fit for soccer."	120

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Healthy Habits	<p>Gather children into a group. "What kinds of food do you think are the best to eat when you play soccer?" Listen to their responses. Encourage discussion to talk about the difference between healthy foods and unhealthy foods. Healthy food choices include fruits, vegetables, grains or cereals, lean meats, plant proteins, and nut butters. Discourage soda, high-sugar foods, fatty meats, chips, and fried foods. "Your body needs all types of food to be healthy. Let's think of three healthy snacks you could eat that would give you energy to practice." Listen to responses and encourage everyone to contribute. Vote on whether the foods they name are the best choice or not. "Eating healthy snacks that give you extra energy to play soccer is a healthy habit you should be practicing every day."</p>	124

YMCA Soccer Games and Skill Drills for 8-9-Year-Olds

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Shooting	Game	5	Players will practice individual attack and defense skills (i.e., dribbling, shooting, marking, tackling, goalkeeping).	1 v 1—Each player tries to score on an opposing player by hitting the opponent’s cone. Cones are about 20 yards apart (i.e., the length of the playing area is 20 yards).			81
Start/ Restart Throw-In Corner Kick	Game	20	Through playing a game, players will review (or learn) game rules, including start and restart rules, throw-ins, and corner kicks.	3 v 3 (no GKs)—Each team of three tries to score into a goal; introduce rules one at a time during game play.	<p>Coach: What happens at the start of a game? Players: Kick off.</p> <p>Coach: What happens after a goal? Players: Kick off.</p> <p>Coach: What’s the call when you kick the ball out of bounds beyond your own goal line? Players: A corner kick for the opposing team.</p> <p>Coach: What’s the call when you kick the ball out of bounds along the touchline? Players: A throw-in.</p> <p>Coach: What happens when you kick the ball out of bounds beyond the opponents’ goal line? Players: A goal kick is given to the other team.</p>		81

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.

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Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page²
Game Play	Game	20	Players will adhere to rules during game play.	Players play 5 v 5. Be sure to rotate the goalkeeper, as this is a new position for them.			82
Game Play Positions	Game	20	Players will learn positional roles and responsibilities.	<p>Play 3 v 3 games. Players learn the following positional duties:</p> <p>Goalkeeper (GK)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle the ball • Save shots • Distribute the ball to teammates <p>Defender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend space in own half • Mark players • Support the attack <p>Midfielder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive the ball from defense • Distribute the ball to forwards • Contribute to attack <p>Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attack goal • Apply pressure to defense when you lose the ball 	<p>Coach: How far forward can players go in a game if the defenders come up the field?</p> <p>Players: To the last defender—otherwise you're offside.</p>		84
Game Play Offside	Game	25	Players will gain an initial understanding of the offside rule.	Players play 5 v 5. Take the opportunity to explain the offside rule to them as they play.			85

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Goal-keeping Narrowing the angle Gathering the Ball	Game	10	Players will learn to come off the line toward the ball to narrow an opponent's shooting angle and then gather the ball effectively.	1 v 1 using a full goal. Defenders earn a point every time the offensive player doesn't score.	Coach: Where does the GK move to make it harder for the shooter? Players: Toward the ball. Coach: Then what? Players: Stop the ball. Coach: How? Players: By gathering it. • "Move toward the ball!"	Play 3 v 3 games; rotate GKs so every player has a turn. Add time	86
Goal-keeping Narrowing the angle Gathering the Ball	Skill Drill	10	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to gather the ball. 2.Practice gathering the ball.	Players in pairs practice appropriate gathering techniques, feeding each other at low, medium, and high levels, and at different speeds.	• "Get in line with ball." • "Take the ball into chest." • "Hug it!"		87
Goal-keeping Distributing the ball	Game	10	For goalkeepers to defend the goal by stopping shots and distribute the ball using appropriate techniques.	Players play 4 v 4. Goalkeepers distribute the ball to teammates by one of three methods: rolling it, over-arm throwing it, or punting it. The defense earns a point every time the goalkeeper successfully distributes the ball.	Coach: What should the GK do when he or she gets the ball? Players: Pass it to a teammate. Coach: How? Players: Depends on where the open teammate is.		91

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Goal-keeping Distributing the ball	Skill Drill	15	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to roll the ball. 2.Practice rolling the ball. 3.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to over-arm throw the ball. 4.Practice throwing the ball. 5.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to punt the ball. 6.Practice punting the ball.	Players pair up and practice the three skills.	Roll <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Step with the opposite foot and roll.” Over-arm Throw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Step with the opposite foot.” • “Use a straight arm over-arm throw.” Punt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Take a long step.” • “Drop and kick the ball.” • “Use the laces.” (as the contact surface) • “Follow through to the target.” 		91
Passing Passing Lanes Moving to Support	Game	15	To keep possession of the ball by effective passing, ball control, and support play. Players will learn to provide support to their teammates with the ball during full game play.	Play 3 v 3 games without GKs. Give teams an extra point for four consecutive passes.	Coach: Other than good passing and receiving skills, what else does the passer of the ball need? Players: Someone to pass to—supporting teammates. Coach: Where should supporting teammates be? Players: In open space. Coach: Any open space? Players: A space in which the passer can get the ball to him or her.	Players play 3 v 1, 4 v 2, or 6 v 3 games, depending on their skill proficiency.	93

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Passing Passing Lanes Moving to Support	Skill Drill	15	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to provide support for teammates with the ball 2.Practice providing support for teammates with the ball.	Play 2 v 1 games in 10- x 10-yard areas marked by cones. Players focus on providing good angles of support against cold, warm, and hot defenses as necessary. The goal is to get six passes. Players should learn that the supporting player should move "off the ball" so the passer always has a teammate to pass to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Support the player with the ball." • "Move to open a passing lane!" 		94
Penetrating the defense Passing Target Player	Game	15	Players will learn to pass the ball forward through a defense. Players use a target player to create shooting opportunities during game play.	Play 3 v 3 games. Play with the target player in the attacking half. The offense scores a point when they successfully get the ball to the target player.	<p>Coach: When the target player has the ball, what should teammates do to continue an attack?</p> <p>Players: Provide support and prepare for a return pass.</p>	<p>To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2 depending on their skill proficiency.</p> <p>Goals from the target player feed count double.</p>	97
Penetrating the defense Passing Target Player	Skill Drill	15	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to shoot from a target player feed. 2.Practice shooting from a target player feed.	Players shoot from the target player feed. They pass to the target player, provide support for the return pass, and receive and shoot the return pass.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pass to the target player!" • "Provide support for the return pass!" 		98

YMCA Soccer Games and Skill Drills for 8-9-Year-Olds

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Penetrating the defense Passing Target Player	Game	10	Players will successfully make long passes to a target player and create scoring opportunities.	Players play 3 v 3 games without GKs. The target player is in the attacking half. Get the ball forward as quickly as possible and support the target. The offense earns a point for successful passes of 10 yards or longer to the target player.	Coach: What is the quickest way to get the ball forward from defense to your target player? Players: Long pass.	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2 depending on their skill proficiency.	100
Penetrating the defense Passing Target Player	Skill Drill	10	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to make long passes. 2.Practice long passes.	Players practice long passing in pairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Long step to the ball!" • "Strike your foot under the ball." • "Use the laces." (as the contact surface) • "Follow through to the target." 		101
Receiving	Skill Drill	20	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive the ball with the thigh and the chest. 2.Practice receiving the ball with the thigh and chest.	Partners feed each other long balls, varying the distance and pace of the feeds to simplify or challenge as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Get in line with the ball!" • "Bring your thigh [or chest] to the ball." • "Withdraw your thigh [or chest] on contact." • "Kill the bounce." 		102
Marking	Game	10	Players learn to mark opponents during game play.	Play 3 v 3 games. The focus is on marking. The defense earns a point when a defender stays between the ball handler and the goal. The offense earns a point when the ball handler slips past the defender.	Coach: Where is the best place for the defender to be to mark an opponent? Players: Between the opponent and the goal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mark your opponent!" 		104

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Marking	Skill Drill	15	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to mark an opponent. 2.Practice marking an opponent.	Players learn the correct goal-side marking position. Play 1 v 1 games with two feeders in a 20- x 10-yard area. A feeder feeds player A, who is marked by player D. Player A has to get the ball to the other feeder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Stay goal-side— between your opponent and the goal!” 		105
Marking Tackling	Game	10	Players will mark tightly and win the ball in the tackle.	Play 3 v 3 games without GKs. The defense earns a point if it wins the ball.	Coach: What do defenders need to do when their opponent gets the ball? Players: Tackle the opponent.	Make the focus close marking by midfielders and defenders.	108
Marking Tackling	Skill Drill	15	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to tackle. 2.Practice block tackling.	Players practice block tackling in 1 v 1 games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Get close to the ball.” • “Use the inside of the foot.” • “Keep your knee bent and leg firm.” 		108
First-Touch Pass	Game	10	Players will use the first-touch pass during game play.	Play 3 v 3 games without GKs. Most players must make three touches—two to control and one to shoot or pass. Designate one player per team to make only one touch. Alternate this player who gets only one touch.	Coach: When you are under pressure do you have time to control the ball? Players: No. Coach: What should you do when the ball comes and you have no time? Players: Pass it immediately. (That is, on one touch.)	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2 depending on their skill proficiency. Give a point for successful first-touch passes when they’re executed when they should be.	110
First-Touch Pass Give and Go	Skill Drill	15	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use a first-touch pass (give and go) to beat a defender. 2.Practice first-touch passing.	Players in 2 v 1 games pass to a target player. Conditions of this game are the defender must go to the player with the ball, and two attackers must get the ball to the target player.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Give the pass.” • “Go for the return.” • “Return pass behind the defender.” • “Pass to the target player.” 		111

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Dribbling	Game	10	Players learn to run at opponents with the ball and beat those opponents while dribbling the ball under control	Play 3 v 3 games. Players attempt to beat their opponents with the dribble. The offense earns a point when a dribbler beats an opponent. Instruct the players not to bunch up; there should be space behind the defenders. Rotate GKs every few minutes.	<p>Coach: When should you try to beat a defender with the ball? (You might need to set this up: "Should you try it in this situation or that situation?") Players: When there is space behind the defender.</p> <p>Coach: In what part of the field are you likely to find the most space? Players: Wide. (Along the sides of the field.)</p> <p>Coach: How can you beat the defender most easily? Players: Push the ball past the defender and run.</p>		113
Dribbling	Skill Drill	15	<p>1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to dribble by a defender under control.</p> <p>2.Practice dribbling.</p>	<p>Play 1 v 2 games in 10 x 30 areas. Player A must beat two defenders in succession and get to the 30-yard line with the ball.</p> <p>Defenders may only move sideways. If a defender wins the ball from player A, he or she gives it back and player A continues, finishing by passing to the target player (T).</p> <p>Player T then becomes the attacker and player A becomes one of the defenders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Push and run!" 		114

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity ¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page ²
Scoring from a Cross	Game	10	Players use the width of the field to cross the ball and score.	Play 3 v 3 games without GKs. Use a short and wide field. Play begins with the offense attempting to score from a cross. They earn a point only if they score from a cross.	<p>Coach: When players have the ball out wide, how can they create a scoring chance? Players: Cross the ball.</p> <p>Coach: Then where do other players need to be to score? Players: In the center.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pass the ball wide!" • "Cross the ball." • "Score from the cross!" 	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2 depending on their skill proficiency.	117
Scoring from a Cross	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to score from a cross. 2. Practice scoring from a cross. 	Pair up players. The striker passes to the winger, the winger crosses, and the striker meets the cross to score.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pass to the winger!" • "Move forward and meet the ball on the run!" • "Score!" 		118
Scoring off a Corner Kick	Game	10	To work as a team to turn corner kicks into goal-scoring chances.	<p>Play 5 v 5 games. Begin each play with a corner kick. The offense earns two points for goals scored off a corner kick.</p> <p>Review corner kick rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Score from the corner kicks!" 	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1, 4 v 2, or 6 v 3, depending on their skill proficiency.	121
Scoring off a Corner Kick	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to set up corner kicks to create the best scoring chance. 2. Practice corner kicks. 	Players practice corner kicks near the post corner, unopposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "One player [A2] on the near-post." • "Others [A3, A4, A5, A6] ready to run in." • "Aim for [A2], who flicks the ball back for other players moving in." 	<p>To simplify, cross the ball on the ground.</p> <p>To challenge, cross the ball in the air and add two defenders.</p>	121

Topic(s)	Type	Min.	Activity¹	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page²
Marking during Corner Kicks	Game	10	Players learn to mark opponents to prevent scoring chances from corner kicks.	Play 5 v 5. Use half the field, and begin each play with a corner kick. The defense scores a point each time the offense fails to score on the play.	Coach: How can you prevent opposition from scoring at corner kicks? Players: Mark them tightly.	To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1, 4 v 2, or 6 v 3, depending on their skill proficiency.	125
Marking during Corner Kicks	Skill Drill	10	1.Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to mark during corner kicks. 2.Practice marking during corner kicks.	Players practice marking during corner kicks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mark tightly 1-on-1.” • “Move with your opponent!” • “Win the ball if possible.” 		125

YMCA Soccer Team Circle Activities for 8-9-Year-Olds

Key Idea	Description	Page ¹
Four Core Values	Gather players into a circle. "Everyone hold hands. We're going to keep holding hands as a group, trying to keep the ball in our circle. We'll pass slowly and remember to hold hands at all times." Repeat for 10 passes. "Drop hands. If you were just passing, it would have been much easier. But when we think of working together as a team, it takes more effort. We need to put just as much effort into being good teammates, with everyone doing their part. We'll talk about four qualities or values that help us be better players—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. These qualities are just as important as kicking and passing. Give me an example of each of the four values." Listen to their responses and discuss.	83
Honesty	Gather children into a group. "Think about the rules in soccer. I am going to tell you a rule. Raise your hand if you think it's something you should let the official know happened." (Examples: hand ball, tripping, kicking the ball out of bounds, running into the goalie.) "You should let the official know about all of those rules being broken, even if the official does not see it. Raising a hand or telling officials is an honest thing to do when you break a rule, even if it's an accident. It's important to be honest when you break a rule in practice and in games. This will make you a better player and a better person."	85

¹ This page number refers to pages in the "Plans for 8- to 9-Year-Olds" document found on the "Season and Practice Plans" page in the YMCA's **Coaching Soccer** online course.

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Responsibility	<p>Gather children into groups of two partners. "Everyone stand and balance on one foot." Wait while everyone gets his or her balance. "Now one of you offer your shoulder for your teammate to lean on. If you're leaning on your partner's shoulder, try to balance on one foot again . . . Change places. If you were leaning before, let your partner lean on your shoulder and stand on one foot." Wait until everyone has balanced with the help of a partner. "Now come back here. Wasn't it easier to balance when you were leaning on your partner? It works that way in soccer, too. When you help each other during practices and games, we work better as a team; each of you can contribute. Your teammates count on you to contribute to the team. That is being responsible to your team."</p>	89
Respect	<p>Gather children into two lines standing opposite each other about five feet apart. "I want each line to walk toward each other and give each person in the other line a high-five. Imagine that the other line is your opponent for a game. Show me how you would act toward an opponent and what you would say if it was the end of the game and we lost the game. Start." Assist children if necessary. Listen to responses some children provide to each other. "At the end of each game it is important to show respect for your opponent. We do this by slapping hands and saying something like 'good game,' even if we lose the game."</p>	92

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Responsibility	<p>Gather children into two groups; one group will spread out and dribble and pass to each other. The other group will be to one side, as if on the sidelines during a game; they should be silent for the first 30 seconds of the activity. After 30 seconds, have them cheer and encourage on-field players; continue this activity for 30 more seconds. "When players are on the sidelines during a game, they should be encouraging their teammates, no matter what's happening in the game. This is being responsible to your team. It helps players keep trying hard even if they are losing or have made some mistakes. How did it feel when you were playing and the sideline players didn't encourage you? How about when they did encourage you?" Listen to both responses and have players compare feelings.</p>	95
Caring	<p>Gather children into groups of two and give each group one ball. Players should dribble and pass the ball to each other, making sure to distribute the ball to their partners. "Each of you should say two good things about your partner's skills. Then come back to me in a group. Begin." Wait for them to regroup. "What were some of the comments your teammates told you?" Listen to their responses. "What kind of value or quality is it when you go out of your way to say something good about a teammate's playing?" Listen to responses and encourage discussion as needed. "Caring is one of our core values. You show you care about your teammates when you encourage them."</p>	99

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Caring	Gather children into a group and choose two to demonstrate with you. You will dribble the ball and have the two children work to get in position to receive a pass. Keep dribbling, and do not pass to them. "Were the other players in good position to get a pass? . . . Why didn't they get the ball? . . . I didn't pass the ball, did I? Why didn't I? That's right—because I'm a ball hog! You can see how it makes you feel when one person keeps the ball too long. Sharing the ball so everyone gets a chance shows that you care about your teammates." Have players get into groups of three and dribble and pass the caring way. Bring players back together. "Raise your hand if you think that caring is an important quality or value on this team? It is important!"	103
Respect	Gather children into a group near two cones 10 feet apart. Act out two examples of celebrating for good play or a win. One should be exaggerated and obviously inappropriate, the other modeling the kind of celebrating you'd like to see from your team. "If you think the first example I showed you is the way to celebrate a good play, stand by this cone. If you think the second is the best way to celebrate, stand by this one." All children should vote. After all players have voted, ask them why they voted the way they did. "The second example is the kind of celebrating that shows respect for your opponents."	106
Respect	Gather children into a group and choose one child to help demonstrate. He or she will pretend to be an official; you'll be a player. Dribble the ball and pass it out of bounds. Direct the child to blow a whistle or make a sound to stop play. Bring the ball back to the child. "What did I do when the whistle sounded?" Listen to their responses. Discuss stopping when they hear the whistle, bringing the ball to the official, and not arguing about the call. "You need to respect the officials and their decisions at all times. It also shows respect to the official when you thank them at the end of the game."	109

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Responsibility	Gather children between two cones about 10 feet apart. "What are some different ways you can move the ball down the field and score?" Listen to their responses. Provide the example of several players working together to move the ball and score as one choice. Give the example of one or two players working without many other teammates as the other choice. "Which of the two is the best example of teamwork? If you vote for the first group, stand at this cone; if you vote for the second group, stand at this one. If everyone makes good teamwork their responsibility, we can all work together to be successful. When you're responsible to your team, you become a better player."	112
Caring	Gather children into a group and choose three children to demonstrate. These three will dribble and pass down the field about 20 feet and then back to the group. Set up another group to do the same activity. Rotate players into the two groups until they all get a turn. Bring team back together to discuss. "What was happening every time a new person came into the passing group?" Listen to their responses. Discuss many players getting playing time. "When we share playing time, it shows that you care about your teammates. Players who care about each other want the whole team to get a chance to play. That way everyone can contribute to the team. It is more important that everyone get a chance to learn and play than it is to only play our best players so we have the best chance of winning."	115

Key Idea	Description	Page¹
Caring	Gather children into a group near two cones 10 feet apart. "Let's imagine we're playing in a game and one of your teammates passes to you. The pass is kicked too far away from you, and you can't get to the ball. Pretend you say, 'What a terrible pass! Get out of here until you learn how to play soccer!' How would you change your comment to sound more positive and make the person feel better?" Listen to their responses. "It is important to make positive comments and not get upset when your teammates make mistakes. This shows you care about your teammates."	119
Responsibility	Gather children into a group. Choose one child to demonstrate with you. Let the player know you'll be passing the ball and that he or she should pretend to be in position to score a goal. Make a bad pass to the player. Identify that the bad pass was your mistake. "Raise your hand if you think it's a part of learning when you make a bad pass." Give them time to raise their hands. "Now raise your hand if you think a bad pass means you are not a good player." Give them time to raise their hands. "Everyone makes mistakes, and when you make one it does not mean you're not a good player. It does mean you might want to practice more."	123
Respect	Gather children into groups of two. "Each of you tell your partner two or three ways you saw other players show respect this season. I'll give you two minutes." After two minutes, group all children together again. "Tell us what some of the examples were." Listen to examples and discuss. "It's important to notice respect being practiced and to talk about what we saw. AU season we have been working on both soccer skills and being good teammates. Improving both of those areas tells me you have respect for yourselves and your teammates."	126

Season Plan for 8- to 9-Year-Olds

At this age, kids will begin to explore tactics that help them keep possession of the ball, attack the goal, and defend space. Added focus will be given to playing under control as a team and on ways to stop shots and distribute the ball.

Overview of the Season Plan

The Season Plan on the next page provides a weekly guide and addresses tactical and skill components, and other activities that are fully detailed in the Practice Plans document. The Season Plan has five components:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the practice is your main focus.
- **Tactics and Skills:** Tactics are knowing what to do during the game (and when to do it), and they require an understanding of the problems faced by each team during the game and how those problems can be solved. Ways to maintain possession of the ball would be tactics. Skills are the physical skills traditionally taught, such as passing or shooting the ball or controlling the ball during play.
- **Rules and Traditions:** You will teach the rules of the sport to young children gradually, as part of playing games and learning skills. Traditions are those unwritten rules that players follow to be courteous and safe, such as raising your hand when you foul someone or playing cooperatively with the others on your team.
- **Fitness Concepts:** Even young children can understand some simple concepts about health and fitness, such as the idea that exercise strengthens your heart, so some of these are suggested as the focus for brief discussions during practice.
- **Character Development Concepts:** The four core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility—can all be related to many situations that arise while playing basketball. For example, playing cooperatively with teammates shows that you care about them. Again, we'll suggest some specific ideas for briefly discussing character development values.