



# NSC BALL MASTERY MATRIX



Needham Soccer Club believes that the most important thing a child can learn, in terms of soccer development, is to be comfortable with the ball at their feet. Ultimately the best way to do this is to give them as many touches on the ball as possible, I.E increasing their foot skills.

Only when a player becomes totally confident with the ball at their feet, can they begin to think about the rest of the game. This Matrix is intended to help coaches set goals for specific ball mastery skills they should look to develop (master) with each of their players over the course of the season.

The beauty in focusing our sessions around ball mastery is two fold. One, it creates the player-centric environment that is vital to the development of our players within the sport itself. But also, and more importantly, it becomes an opportunity to teach our children the importance of goal setting and the process of learning and developing at your own rate, giving you the chance to teach our children to embrace a challenge.



# NSC BALL MASTERY MATRIX

Foot skills should be the foundation of every practice session no matter how young or how old the child is. Why? Because..

- Working on foot skills at the beginning of a practice session is a good way to warm up.
- You can easily adjust the complexity of the skill depending upon the age and skill level you are coaching.
- There is always a way to progress to harder and harder skills.
- You get multiple touches on the ball right away.
- Done at speed will make it challenging and can be a good aerobic training tool that is much more effective, overall, than running laps.
- As time passes, and mastery is achieved, the skill becomes instinctive and you'll see it be used in a game unconsciously... To Name A Few!

Below we have listed several ideas for multiple touches on the ball that can be not only part of your daily warm-up but should be a primary focus for the entire season. Remember any skill can be broken down to an age appropriate level. However this list attempts to go from basic foot skills to more advanced as players move from NSCJA to BAYS U14.



# NSC Junior Academy

## Ball Mastery Goals – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade!



**Controlled Dribbling** – Slowly move ball between both feet using inside, outside & sole of foot to manipulate the ball in different directions.

**Speed Dribbling** – Running w/ the ball using the laces of the foot to guide the ball along with you. NO TOE BALLS! Emphasize keeping the toe pointing down while running.

**Foundation Touches** - Aka “*Side Sprints*”. Ball in between feet moving ball from side to side in a pendulum fashion.

**Sole Taps** - Little touches on ball using the toe’s, sole (*bottom*) of the foot in a repetitive fashion of left, right, left, right and so on.

**Inside Foot Passing** – Plant foot facing your target, strike through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot. \*best technique for accuracy and control\*

**Inside Foot Trap** – Used to receive a pass. Opening hips and foot to catch/cradle the ball and bring it to control at ones foot.



# NSC Junior Academy

## Ball Mastery Goals – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade



**Big Toe / Little Toe** - Move ball with inside of big toe, followed by outside of little toe in a zig zag fashion. Left foot only, followed by right foot only. *\*players begin to know what foot is their dominant, spend more time on their “weak” foot at this age as muscle memory is much easier to learn while players are young\*\**

**Heel / Toe Roll** - Roll ball up and down sole of foot from heel to toe keeping contact with the ball at all times.

**1 Touch Juggle** – Starting with the ball in hand, drop the ball and using your laces take 1 touch to pop the ball back up and catch it again in your hands.

**Pull Touch**– Using the sole of your toes, directed the ball back into your plant foot.

### Introduction to Specific Change of Direction moves. “COD’s”

**Inside Chop** – Running forward, use the inside of the foot to turn the ball straight back in the opposite direction.

**Outside Chop** – Running forward, use the outside of the foot to turn the ball straight back in the opposite direction.



# NSSCL & BAYS U10

## Ball Mastery Goals - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade



**Pull Push** - Pull ball back from heel to toe and push forward with the laces.

**Sole Roll** - Body square to (*facing*) the ball, roll entire foot over the ball (*inside of foot making contact with ball first*) and quickly repeat.

**Big Toe, Big Toe / Little Toe Little Toe** - Now 2 touches with big toe followed by 2 touches of little toe.

**2 Foot Juggle** – Starting with the ball in hand, drop the ball and using your laces take 1 touch with right foot before it hits the ground to pop the ball back up and take 1 touch with your left foot to pop the ball back up and catch again with your hands.

### COD Move

**Pull Back** – Running forward, use the sole of your toe to pull the ball straight back in the opposite direction, facing the ball the entire way through the turn.

### Introduction To 1v1 Moves

**Fake & Take** – Dribbling at a defender, player dips shoulders & bends knees to “sell” the fake (*or to make the defender believe the attacker is going in a specific direction*) in one direction and takes the ball with the outside (*little toe*) of the opposite foot in the other direction around defender.



# NSSCL & BAYS U10

## Ball Mastery Goals – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Foundation Touches forwards/backwards** - Now moving with the ball forwards and backwards.

**Sole Taps forwards/backwards** – Now moving with the ball backwards and forwards.

**Inside/Outside Roll** – Rolling your foot, using inside or outside of your foot, up the ball to put the sole of the foot on the top of the ball and repeat.

**Little Toe, Big Toe W/ Both Feet** – First touch with little toe right foot (*outside of foot*), second touch with big toe right foot (*inside of foot*), Third touch with little toe of left, Fourth touch with big toe of left. Repeat.

### COD MOVE

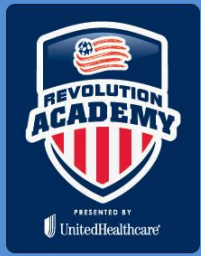
**Cryuff Turn** – Dribbling straight. Put your plant foot beside the ball and using the inside, big toe, of your control foot, chop the ball behind your standing leg & begin dribbling the ball away in the opposite direction.

### 1v1 Move

**Scissors** – Same idea as above. Difference here is the “fake” step now happens by moving your foot in front of the ball.. Faking left and taking the ball away to the right for example, the left foot is your “fake” step foot, when you take that fake step you must swing your foot around the front of the ball while bending your knees and dipping shoulders to fake left.

### Introduction of an Escape Move

**Pull & Pop Touch** – Using the sole of your foot perform a heel to toe roll and using your toes/laces of your foot flick the ball straight up and catch the ball in your hands.



# NSCCL & BAYS U12

## Ball Mastery Goals – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Foundation Touches Side to Side** - Now move body to left whilst performing 3-4 “side sprints” and then back to the right in a zig zag fashion.

**Sole Taps Side to Side** – Moving the ball from side to side, left foot to right foot in a zig zag fashion.

**Foundations W/ Combo** – Starting with foundation touches, on command coach call out a particular skill move to perform then players get back into foundation touches.

**Sole Taps W/ Combo** – Start with sole touches and on command coach calls out another skill move to perform and then players get back into sole taps.

### 1v1 Move

**Step Over** – Require a similar fake to the scissor but now you step over the front of the ball.

### COD Move

**Pull Push Behind** - Pull ball to side & behind standing foot and using inside of big toe push across to control with other foot

### Escape Turn

**Circle Roll/Turn** - Moving ball with either the inside or sole of the same foot in a circular motion.



# NSCCL & BAYS U12

## Ball Mastery Goals – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Foundations W/ Roll Over.** 2 Foundations touches followed by a roll over and repeat. 1<sup>st</sup> touch inside right foot, 2nd touch w/ inside left foot then use right sole to roll the ball over and repeat starting with first touch left foot.

**Pull Push Side to Side – “V Touches”** – Set ball in front of and to the side of you. Reaching across your body, with the sole of your foot, pull the ball back in and take second touch out in front and to the opposite side. Then repeat with opposite foot.

### 1v1 Moves

**Double Scissors** – Same idea as a single scissor. Now just do 2 scissor steps with both feet. Scissor step with left, scissor step with right then take ball away to left for example.

**Roll Step Over** – Combining the roll over and step over. Roll the ball across your body with your right foot going from right to left and your next step with your left foot steps over the ball.

### COD Moves

**Roll Over/Outside Chop** – Running straight. Rolling your sole over the top of the ball while coming to a stop and use the outside of the same foot to take the ball back in the opposite direction.

**Roll Over/Inside Cut** – Same as above; however this time letting the ball roll across your body to the opposite foot to use the inside of that foot to take the ball back in the opposite direction.

### Escape Move

**Lift Touch** – Using your toe to dig in under the ball to lift it up and over a defenders leg. Often used in 50/50 situations where you beat a defender to the ball and know they are coming in hard for a tackle.





# BAYS U14 & Up

## Ball Mastery Goals



### 1v1 Moves

**Maradona** – Legendry escape turn coined by Diego Maradona of Argentina. Using the sole of both feet perform a slight pull back with your dominant foot while simultaneously spinning in a 360degree motion and catching the ball with the sole of your opposite foot to pull the ball back in front of you.

**Cristiano Chop**- Often used on the outside of the field as a way to cut into goal. Speed Dribbling with the outside foot (foot closest to the sideline) breaking stride to quickly chop the ball using the big toe of the outside foot behind your plant foot to cut the ball in towards goal.

### Escape Move

**Foot Flap** – The Legendary Ronaldinho of Brazil was famous for this escape move. In one step, using the outside of your foot, you start by taking the ball with the little toe to the outside, but before your foot hits the ground, at the flap of your ankle, use the inside of your foot to take the ball inside back inside.

**Inside/Out Hesitation** – Catching the ball with the inside of your foot appearing to take it in one direction, plant foot is used as a juke step before taking second touch with outside of the same foot to go in the other direction.

**Inside/Out Scissor** – Same as above but adding a scissor with either foot to help fake defender and take the ball away into space.