

# GROW THE GAME OF SOCCER CLINIC SERIES

Thank you for attending the *Grow the Game of Soccer* Coaching Clinic, a community legacy program of the Los Angeles World Cup 2026 Host Committee, in collaboration with the Play Equity Fund. We are so happy you joined us. To help you remember what we learned today, we have put this quick reference guide together for you. Please don't forget to check out the additional resources available on the [CalSouth.com](https://CalSouth.com) and [CHJS.org](https://CHJS.org) websites.



## PATTERN PASSING

Begin with the simplest pattern passing. Give your players enough time so they start to feel the rhythm. Once they get the pattern, invite them to speed up or choose a more complicated pattern. This is a nice activity to do early in a practice. It's versatile- you can focus your coaching on passing, or you can focus on receiving and first touch. You can ask to increase the pace, and you can ask players where they might see a combination like this happening on the field.

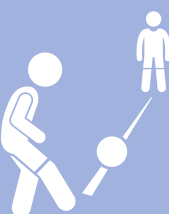


Patterned, Repetitive, Rhythmic activity is powerful for our athletes and ourselves. Not only does it help players (and coaches) who are dysregulated become regulated, but it is also great for warmups and cool downs. A warmup with rhythm can help us find our groove after a stressful day, and a patterned cool down supports us in resetting and recovering from the effort we've just put in.



## POSSESSION PROGRESSION

Begin by emphasizing first touch, technique, and shape without any pressure. You can build a competitive element by seeing which group can string together the most passes in 30 seconds, first with two-touch and then with one-touch play. In stage two we added pressure from a single defender. Groups can again compete for the most passes, rotating so everyone gets a turn defending. Stage three highlights shape, speed of play, and moving away from pressure. From here, you can expand into a larger grid or full possession activity. Each stage adds a bit more stress as the practice progresses.



Drills that gradually increase in difficulty are powerful tools for practicing stress management. When a drill begins at a level that feels accessible and achievable, athletes are more willing to engage fully. As the challenge builds, players are encouraged to stretch both their technical skills and their capacity to tolerate stress. Getting a pulse on what stressors our athletes can handle and normalizing resets will help them build towards a more resilient stress response over time.

## ATTACKING TO GOAL

You can model different ways to break lines and create scoring chances, taking moments to pause for correction or to highlight success and reinforce positive actions. The focus stays on the connections and relationships between teammates, working together to generate opportunities with a higher likelihood of finishing.



Effective team offenses and defenses rely on trust. Investing time in learning names and creating opportunities for athletes to build meaningful connections strengthens not only team cohesion but also individual well-being. Strong relationships help young people heal from overwhelming stress and trauma, and they translate directly into better performance on the field. Because relationships buffer stress, teams with solid connections, both among players and between players and coaches, are better equipped to navigate the high-pressure moments of the game.

# HEALING-CENTERED COACHING TIPS

## INCORPORATE PATTERNED REPETITIVE RHYTHMIC ACTIVITY

### TRY “VITAMINS”

The Tufts University Women’s Soccer team starts practice the same way every day by engaging in an activity called “vitamins.” Vitamins is an activity that builds core skills that you do every day, just like you take your vitamins every day. The Jumbos’ **vitamins work on core footwork or “touch”** - the ability to control the ball when it comes to you in the air.

**It looks like:** With a partner (the same partner all season), stand a few yards apart, facing one another. One partner tosses the ball to the other partner to control and pass back, then the partners switch. It follows this pattern: **5 -10** reps on each foot, *volley back*, **5-10** reps on each thigh, *volley back*, **5-10** reps on chest, *volley back*, **5-10** reps on head, *volley back*.

## CREATE MANAGEABLE PATTERNS OF STRESS

- **Follow the athlete's lead-** Always give athletes the chance to “opt in or out,” take a break, or reset themselves if they start to get dysregulated. Let them say when they are ready for a challenge.
- **Be as present in failure as you are in success-** Give your athletes tools for how to handle failure and give them as much time, attention and positive reinforcement as you would if they just hit the winning shot in the championship.
- **Give instruction when they can hear it-** Giving instruction in the heat of a game or match or when an athlete is dysregulated is not the optimal time for them to learn. Choose moments when they are more regulated to add challenge.

## BUFFER STRESS WITH RELATIONSHIPS

- Welcome young people onto the team as their whole selves- not regardless of who they are but *BECAUSE* of who they are by **asking questions-** Young people spend a lot of time being told what to do. Engage players in their learning and make them feel valued by asking more questions and giving fewer orders or instructions.
- Help young people connect with their peers by **considering groupings-** Be intentional about how you mix up teams and activity groups so that players have a chance to connect with different teammates. Divide players of similar skill levels for some activities, similar interests for others. Be sure to think about who doesn’t have a chance to work together often and pair them up for a new challenge.
- Be predictable. Make sure young people know what to expect from you by **following the plan.** Follow a practice and game plan- keep spaces, times and schedules as consistent as possible (and let players know when something will change). Incorporate rituals and traditions, warm-ups and cool downs, team cheers and celebrations, and consistent ways to settle conflict. Removing uncertainty makes spaces safer.