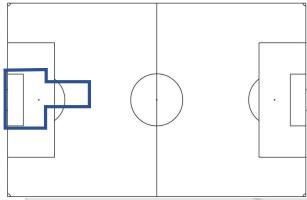


# Instepper Challenge



## Field/Course Set-up



- A** Goal Targets \* (refer to key)
- Use soccer balls so it is easy to determine if the target was hit.
  - The distance between targets are based on size age-appropriate goals (6/7/8 yards) with the targets placed 1 yard inside each post.
  - An actual goal is a nice-to-have but not required.

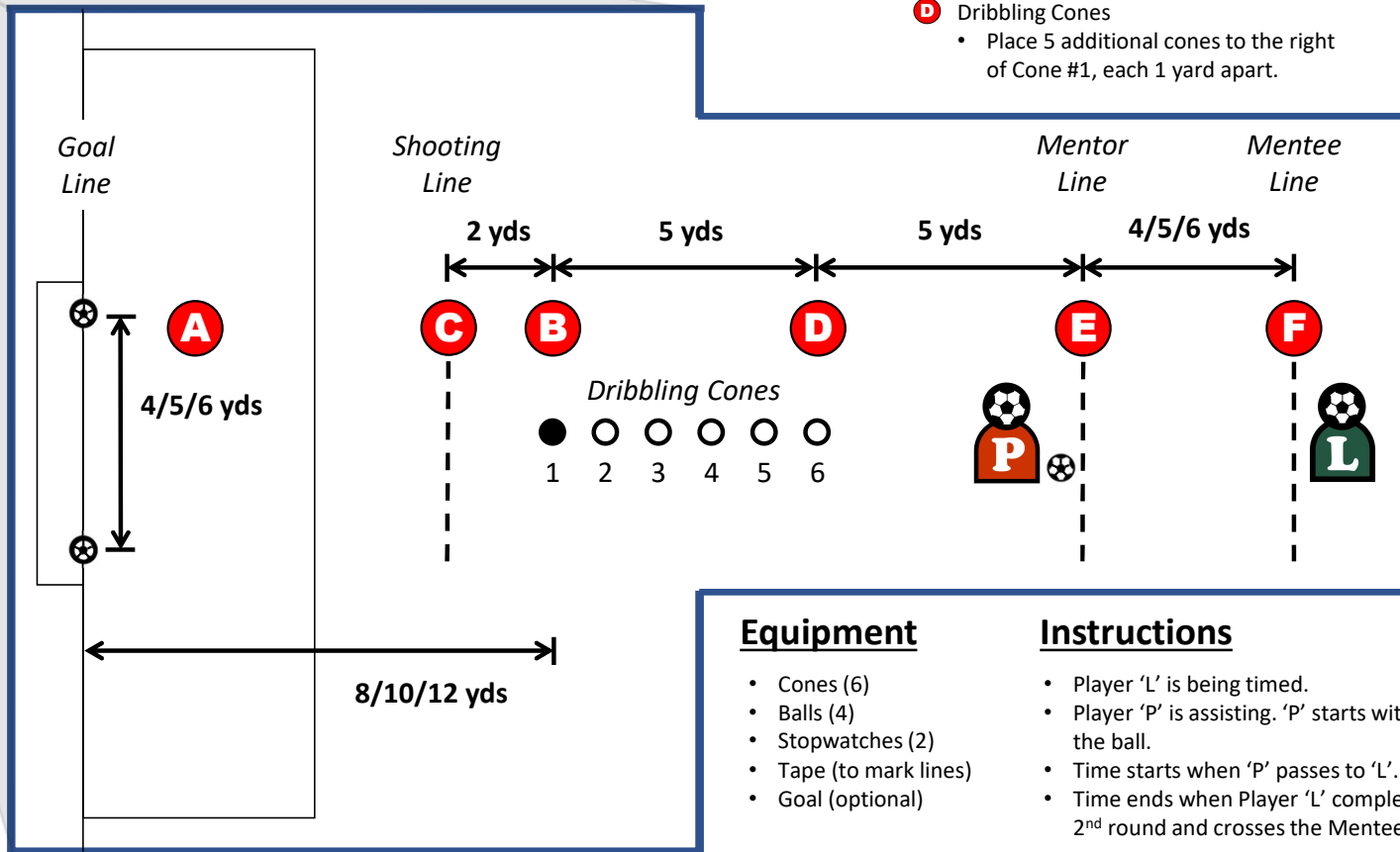
- B** Penalty Spot \*
- Place Cone #1 on the penalty spot (8, 10 or 12 yards from the Goal Line).
- C** Shooting Line
- Mark the Shooting Line 2 yards in front of the penalty spot (Cone #1).
- D** Dribbling Cones
- Place 5 additional cones to the right of Cone #1, each 1 yard apart.

- E** Mentor Line
- Mark the Mentor Line 5 yards from Cone #6.
- F** Mentee Line\*
- Mark the Mentee Line 4, 5, or 6 yards from the Mentor Line.

**Instepper Challenges** are designed to test players' complete set of soccer skills. These include: the first-touch (receiving), passing, 2-touch soccer dribbling, shooting (with accuracy), athleticism/conditioning, use of both feet, communication, and thinking ahead (tactical). Subsequent pages call out each skill.

**The first-touch is the most important fundamental skill in soccer.** An Instepper Mentoring Program is a unique and fun way to introduce and reinforce the first-touch with guaranteed results.

To learn more about the first-touch, the Instepper Mentoring Program and Instepper Challenges, visit [www.instepper.com](http://www.instepper.com).



* Age Distances
4/5/6 yds
12-55
10-11 & 56-75
2-9 & 76+

## Age Ranges

Anyone can take the Instepper Challenges, whether you are 2 to 102. Field/course dimensions are based on the following age ranges:

- 2-9
- 10-11
- 12-55
- 56-75 (same as 10-11)
- 76+ (same as 2-9)

## Equipment

- Cones (6)
- Balls (4)
- Stopwatches (2)
- Tape (to mark lines)
- Goal (optional)

## Instructions

- Player 'L' is being timed.
- Player 'P' is assisting. 'P' starts with the ball.
- Time starts when 'P' passes to 'L'.
- Time ends when Player 'L' completes the 2<sup>nd</sup> round and crosses the Mentee Line.

Players, coaches, teams, and clubs are free to use Instepper Challenges for non-monetary purposes/gains. Post Challenge results/videos to social media.

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**Station 1: First-Touch and Passing—Round 1**

- Players ‘P’ and ‘L’ must successfully complete 4 first-touch/pass (2-touch) sequences. A successful sequence is:
  - Player ‘L’ must receive the ball behind the Mentee Line with either foot and with any part of the foot, except the bottom part-of-the-foot.
  - Player ‘L’ must pass the ball back to the Player ‘P’ with the opposite foot. For example, if the first-touch was made with the right foot, the pass must be made with the left foot. Player ‘L’ can’t touch the ball more than 2 times per sequence.
  - Player ‘L’ must receive 2 sequences with the right foot and 2 sequences with the left foot.
  - It is OK if Player ‘L’ passes the ball from in front of the Mentee Line.
  - Player ‘P’ must receive the ball behind the Mentor Line. Player ‘P’ can use either foot to receive and pass the ball and is not limited to 2-touches. Player ‘P’ can also pass the ball to Player ‘L’ from in front of the Mentor Line (except for the very first pass in a Stations 1 and 5).
- When Player ‘L’ receives the 5th pass from Player ‘P’, they can receive the pass with either foot. Whichever foot receives the ball, the opposite foot must be used exclusively for Stations 2 and 3.

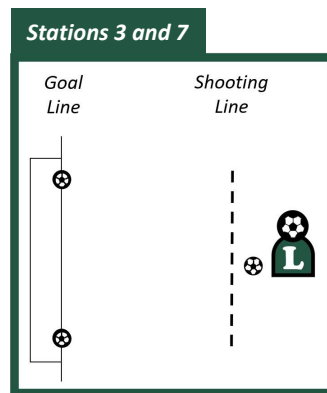
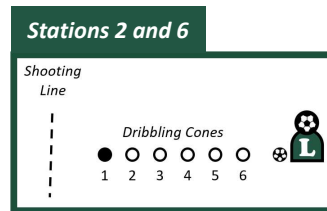
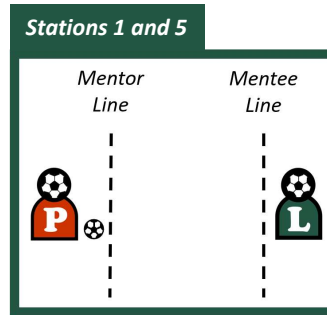
**Station 2: Dribbling—Round 1**

- Player ‘L’ can use any part of the foot can to dribble from the Mentee Line to Cone #6, except the bottom of the foot.
  - If Player ‘L’ touches the ball with the wrong foot from the Mentee Line to Cone #6, they must return behind the Mentee Line and start dribbling again.
- When Player ‘L’ emerges from Cone #1, they will have 2 yards to take a shot.
  - If Player ‘L’ misses a cone or touches the ball with the wrong foot while going through the cones, they must return to Cone #6 and resume dribbling with the correct foot.

**Station 3: Shooting—Round 1**

- When Player ‘L’ emerges from Cone #1, they must shoot before the ball crosses the Shooting Line.
- Player ‘L’ can shoot at either target.
- If the ball crosses the Shooting Line before the shot, or if the target is missed, 10 seconds must be added to the final time.

**Detailed Instructions**



**Station 4: Return to Mentee Line**

- Once the shot is taken, Player ‘L’ returns behind the Mentee Line.
- Player ‘L’ must run backwards, looking over their shoulders to see where they are going.

**Station 5: First-Touch and Passing—Round 2**

- Station 5 is a repeat of Station 1, including what is defined as a successful sequence.
- The only difference is that in Station 5, Player ‘L’ must receive the 5th pass with the opposite foot. For example, if during Station 1, Player ‘L’ received the 5th pass with the right foot, in Station 5, Player ‘L’ must receive the ball with the left foot.

**Station 6: Dribbling—Round 2**

- Station 6 is a repeat of Station 2, including ‘penalties’ if the drill is performed incorrectly.
- The only difference is that in Station 6, Player ‘L’ must dribble with the opposite foot. For example, if during Station 2, Player ‘L’ used the right foot for all the dribbling, Player ‘L’ must use the left foot in Station 6.

**Station 7: Shooting—Round 2**

- Station 7 is a repeat of Station 3, including the 10-second penalty for missing the target or crossing the Shooting Line. The only differences are:
  - The opposite foot from Station 3 must be used for the shot.
  - At this point, there is only 1 target to aim for.

**Station 8: Finish**

1. Once Player ‘L’ has taken their 2nd shot, they sprint back to the Mentee Line, running forwards.
2. Time stops when Player ‘L’ crosses the Mentee Line.

## Soccer Skills Tested in Instepper Challenge

### **First-Touch (Receiving)**

- EVERY SINGLE PLAY begins with the FIRST-TOUCH! **EVERY. SINGLE. PLAY.**
- A good FIRST-TOUCH will lead to a better 2nd-touch.
- The inside-of-the-foot is best surface to receive most passes.
- It takes a lifetime to develop a good FIRST-TOUCH with the inside-of-the-foot. Having 'Heart & S.O.U.L.' is the key to a good FIRST-TOUCH.
- Receiving the ball must become instinctual.
- Players will never reach their full playing potential without a strong FIRST-TOUCH foundation. NEVER!
- The best players on a team are the ones with the best FIRST-TOUCH.

### **Passing**

- The inside-of-the-foot makes the most accurate and well-paced passes.
- Again, having 'Heart & S.O.U.L.' is the key to a good pass.

### **2-Touch Soccer (minimum)**

- Like the FIRST-TOUCH, the importance of this skill can't be overstated.
- Practicing 2-touch soccer forces players to receive the ball.
- 2-touch soccer helps build first-touch confidence.
- When 1-touch soccer is over-emphasized, especially at an early age, the FIRST-TOUCH is not developed. The result is kickball and 'hot potato' soccer.

### **Dribbling**

- Dribbling sometimes requires the ball to be under a players' feet (through the cones)
- Sometimes the ball can be dribbled further away from a player's body (from the Mentee Line to the Cone #6)

### **Shooting**

- Shooting is not all about power. Accuracy is more important.
- The inside-of-the-foot is the ideal surface for shooting.
- Don't shoot blindly. Look up first and pick out a target.
- Shots on goal are just stronger passes.
- Professional score more than 2x as many goals with the inside-of-the-foot and the top-of-the-foot (laces).

### **Use of Both Feet**

- Players will always have a preferred foot. That's OK.
- However, it is very important for players to feel comfortable using both feet.
- When asked if you are right or left footed, the correct answer and your belief should be "Both"!

### **Communication**

- The more communication and communicators a team has, the better.
- Player 'L' can encourage and guide during the Challenge.

### **Thinking Ahead (Strategize)**

- A good strategy will lower players' Challenge times. Think ahead. Have a plan.
- Coaches, let players come up with their strategy on their own. This will help them better strategize and think ahead during practices and games.

### **Athleticism/Conditioning**

- Soccer players must be ambidextrous.
- Players must be able to run backwards while glancing over their shoulders.
- Players must be in shape. Well-conditioned players will have faster Challenge times.

## Additional Thoughts, Considerations, Rules, and Suggestions

### **Players**

- You are allowed to take the Challenge multiple times in 1 day.
- However, you should wait several weeks or months before taking the Challenge again.
- Don't focus on the times of other players. Just focus on yourself. You can only control you.
- Your goal should be a to get a new PR (personal record) each time you do the Challenge. But a PR will not happen every time. Should you not get a PR, don't get discouraged. Get motivated.
- Work with your Instepper Mentor to improve your fundamentals in a fun and relaxed environment.
- If you are old enough to be an Instepper Mentor, use your experience and expertise to mentor younger players. Your fundamentals will also improve. And it will be FUN for you and your mentees!

*What is Heart & S.O.U.L.? It is an acronym that describes the technique players should adopt to improve their first-touch and passing. This and other unique, fun, memorable Instepper drills and exercises can be found at [www.instepper.com](http://www.instepper.com) and other social media sites. Please visit and follow.*

### **Coaches**

- Consider having an early season, mid-season, and end-of-season Challenge. This will give you quantifiable data to measure team improvement. Plus, it will be a fun break.
- Don't have a practice that specifically prepares for the Challenge. Nearly all practice drills you use develop and improve the fundamentals used in the Challenge.
- Use the Team Challenge form to track your players' and team's times.
- If you are the coach of a young team, consider using Instepper Mentors for some of your practices. Take it from Instepper, don't be that coach whose players see you as just another 'Peanuts Cartoon Parent'. Plus, for many new-to-soccer and House coaches, Instepper Mentors will have the fundamental expertise and experience that you can leverage. Plus, they will make the fundamental sessions FUN!
- If you are the coach of an older team, consider having your players be Instepper Mentors. This will develop their personal/soft skills that they can use once their playing careers are over, and you can spend more time in practice developing, tactical, psychological, and physical skills.

Challenge Name: **Dream BIG!**

Team Score Sheet

Date:

Average Time:

Player	Time
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	

Player	Time
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
18.	
19.	
20.	
21.	
22.	
23.	
24.	
25.	
26.	

**Coaches Notes:**

Strengths, weaknesses, surprises, etc.  
 What do work on for the next few practices?

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Date	Your Time	Date	Your Time	Date	Your Time
1. _____	_____	16. _____	_____	31. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	17. _____	_____	32. _____	_____
3. _____	_____	18. _____	_____	33. _____	_____
4. _____	_____	19. _____	_____	34. _____	_____
5. _____	_____	20. _____	_____	35. _____	_____
6. _____	_____	21. _____	_____	36. _____	_____
7. _____	_____	22. _____	_____	37. _____	_____
8. _____	_____	23. _____	_____	38. _____	_____
9. _____	_____	24. _____	_____	39. _____	_____
10. _____	_____	25. _____	_____	40. _____	_____
11. _____	_____	26. _____	_____	41. _____	_____
12. _____	_____	27. _____	_____	42. _____	_____
13. _____	_____	28. _____	_____	43. _____	_____
14. _____	_____	29. _____	_____	44. _____	_____
15. _____	_____	30. _____	_____	45. _____	_____

**Player Notes:**

What are you Challenge goals?  
 What are your soccer career goals?  
 What are your post-soccer career goals?  
 Do you see yourself as an Instepper Mentor or Mentee?

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*Players, if you came across this Challenge on your own, and enjoyed taking the Challenge, why not challenge your teammates and members of your Club? If you post results/videos to social media, please tag Instepper. Let's improve the first-touch of all players in the USA and around the world. Visit [www.Instepper.com](http://www.Instepper.com) for more info.*