

Off-Day Ball Mastery

A clear, repeatable close-control session for U13 and U14 players—with the coaching language you will hear at training.



About 42–45 minutes, plus warm-up

One ball • five cones • timer • water

Get ready in two minutes

This session builds comfort on both feet, balance over the ball, and the ability to escape pressure in tight spaces.

BRING

Your setup

- ☐ One soccer ball
- ☐ Five cones—or five safe household markers
- ☐ A timer you can hear without holding it
- ☐ Water and appropriate footwear
- ☐ A clear, level training area

YOUR GOAL

Quality before speed

- Learn the movement slowly.
- Use both feet and both directions.
- Increase tempo only while balanced.
- If control breaks down, reset and continue.



Train safely

Warm up with your club-approved routine before beginning at speed. Clear furniture, pets, loose rugs, and breakable objects. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness, or unusual discomfort, and tell a parent/guardian or coach.

CLOSE-CONTROL ZONE

Keep the next touch available

During tight-space mastery work, keep the ball in front and never more than arm's length away. Open-space controlled dribbling uses a different touch distance; see page 14.

INDOOR OPTION

Reduce the bounce, not the space

If a coach approves indoor training, use a soft or low-bounce ball and a clear area. Do not train next to glass, stairs, furniture edges, or anything that can move under your feet.

Know the route before you start

Set your timer once, keep this page nearby, and use the skill pages only when you need a reminder.

Before

● Club-approved warm-up

Begin the timed session only when your body feels ready to move.

21:30

● Block A • Ball Mastery Circuit

19:30 work: two 9:45 sets with a 2:00 rest between sets.

10:00

● Recovery + mobility

Water, easy movement, and light mobility.

5:00

● Block B • Five-Cone Touches

2:00 work, rest 1:00, then 2:00 work again.

6:00

● Block C • The Wiggle

0:30 work + 0:30 rest × 6 rounds.

Finish

● Cool down + check in

Easy movement, water, and one quick note about your control.

Balance

Chest up. Knees soft. Stay over the ball.

Both feet

Train your right and left sides equally.

Eyes up

Glance at the ball; scan the space around you.

New space

After every turn, find and attack the opening.



Timing correction from the original packet

The listed Block A intervals total 9:45 per set. Two sets equal 19:30 of work—not “just under 19 minutes.”

Your 9:45 ball mastery playlist

Start with Pendulum. After each skill, do Pendulum again. Rest 2:00, then repeat the playlist once more.

START

Pendulum

0:15

THEN REPEAT

1

Do the next skill
Use the time shown

2

Pendulum reset
15 seconds

Keep moving down the list until all 13 skills are complete.

01 Toe Touches + Circles

0:30

02 Toe Roll Series

0:30

03 Back + Forths

0:30

04 In + Outs

0:30

05 In + Outs • Double Tap

0:30

06 Pull Back Series

0:30

07 Baby V Series

0:30

08 Baby V • Double Tap

0:30

09 Foot Triangles

0:30

10 Back Arounds

0:30

11 Outside-Foot Turns

0:30

12 Step-Overs

0:30

13 Scissors

0:15

✓ Set complete

9:45

1

First set

Learn the rhythm. Work cleanly enough that you could explain the movement.

2

Second set

Raise the tempo without losing balance, both feet, or the next touch.

Rhythm under the body

These movements establish cadence, balance, and comfort using both feet.



Pendulum

INSIDE FEET

Play the ball side to side with one inside-foot touch from each foot. Move it just outside the shoulder line before returning it.

- Stay on your toes and let the non-touching foot rebalance you.



Toe Touches + Circles

SOLE

Touch the top of the ball lightly with one toe, hop, and switch feet. Once the rhythm is steady, turn around the ball in both directions.

- The touch is light—the ball should stay centered while your feet move.

Roll, return, rebalance

Use the sole, inside, and outside surfaces without letting your upper body chase the ball.



Toe Roll Series

SOLE

Place the sole lightly on top of the ball and roll it across your body. Repeat with one foot, then alternate feet as control improves.

- Keep the support foot active so your body stays centered.



Back + Forths

INSIDE / OUTSIDE

Touch the ball away with the outside of one foot, then bring it back with the inside of that same foot. Repeat on both sides.

- The other foot keeps adjusting so your hips stay over the ball.

Change the line of the ball

Move the ball across your body while your feet stay organized underneath you.



In + Outs

OUTSIDE / INSIDE

Use the outside of one foot to move the ball away, then the inside to return it toward the middle. Switch feet and repeat.

- Every touch should set up the next foot—not strand the ball.



In + Outs • Double Tap

TWO OUTSIDE

Take two quick outside-foot touches in the same direction, then use the inside of that foot to redirect the ball across your body.

- The second outside touch sells the direction; the inside touch escapes it.

Pull away from pressure

The sole removes the ball from danger; the next surface sends it into new space.



Pull Back Series

SOLE → PUSH

Pull the ball from in front of your body to your heel or just behind it. Push it forward again with the instep or laces. Train one foot, then alternate.

- Move your body with the pull so you are ready for the push.



Baby V

DIAGONAL ESCAPE

Push forward and out at roughly 45 degrees with the outside of one foot. Use the opposite sole to pull diagonally back, then use that pulling foot's inside to redirect to the other side.

- Finish outside the other foot so the next action is open.

Build a three-touch escape

These patterns train you to move the ball away, under, and around your body.



Baby V • Double Tap

TWO OUTSIDE

Take two outside touches along the 45-degree line. Use the opposite sole to pull diagonally back, then use that pulling foot's inside to redirect to the other side.

- Keep both outside touches short enough to reach the pull comfortably.



Foot Triangles

THREE SURFACES

Pull the ball straight back. Touch it outside with the same foot, then use that foot's inside to play forward. Repeat on the other foot.

- Trace a clean triangle instead of three disconnected touches.

Turn your body into a shield

Move the ball behind or around your support foot while keeping yourself between pressure and possession.



Back Arounds

BEHIND THE HEEL

Pull the ball behind the heel of your support foot. Use that same pulling foot to touch across, then use the opposite foot to play forward.

- Your hips turn first; the ball stays protected behind you.



Outside-Foot Turns

RIGHT + LEFT

Use repeated outside-foot touches to turn in a full circle. Turn right with the right foot and left with the left foot.

- Keep your body between the defender's side and the ball.

Sell one direction, leave another

The foot action is the feint. The next touch is the escape.



Step-Over

OVER THE BALL

Move one foot from outside to inside across the front of the ball. Plant it, then use the outside of that same foot to exit in the opposite direction.

- The step-over creates the reaction; the exit touch takes the space.



Scissors

AROUND THE BALL

Circle one foot from the inside around the front of the ball. Plant it, then touch away with the outside of the opposite foot.

- Keep the ball still during the circle so the feint stays believable.



Progression

Practice every feint from both sides. Add speed only after the footwork and escape touch connect without a pause.

Five-cone touch drill

Organize your feet through a straight line, then connect both feet at speed.

FIRST**Right foot only**

Use inside and outside touches with the right foot to weave around each cone and stay close to the line.

SECOND**Left foot only**

Repeat the same inside-outside pattern with the left foot. Let the right foot adjust your balance.

THIRD**Pendulum through**

Stay on your toes with a light hop as alternating inside touches move the ball through the cone line.

RIGHT ONLY



LEFT ONLY



PENDULUM

**2×****Work pattern**

Cycle through all three patterns for 2:00. Rest for 1:00, then complete another 2:00 with clean touches and good balance.

The Wiggle

Use your close-control tools to escape trouble—not to dribble into more of it.

WORK / REST

Six-minute pattern

0:30 Wiggle

0:30 Rest

× 6 rounds

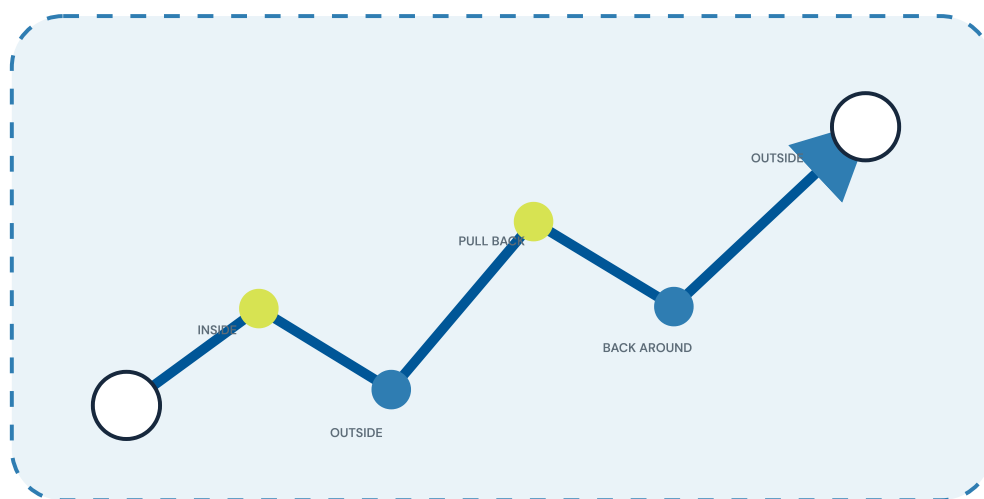
Every work interval should contain new directions and new foot surfaces.

THE COACHING IDEA

Every touch finds new space

Imagine pressure arriving from a different side after every touch. Use upper-body feints, cut away, rebalance, scan, and attack the opening.

ABOUT 10 YARDS • CLEAR SPACE



NEW DIRECTION • NEW SURFACE • HEAD UP

Short

Keep touches reachable.

Sharp

Make each direction change clear.

Scan

Find the opening after the cut.

Explode

Leave the tight space when it opens.

Three dribbling decisions

The field tells you which type of touch you need. The ball mastery work gives you options.

01

Go to goal

Use control and speed to create a shot, a final pass, or a service into the box.

Ask: Can this action create an end product?

02

Attack open space

Use larger, faster touches when the space ahead is clear and pressure cannot reach the next touch.

Ask: Can the ball move faster another way?

03

Escape pressure

Use the Wiggle: short touches, quick cuts, and shielding to get out of trouble and keep possession.

Ask: Where is the first safe exit?

TEAM IDEA

The Wiggle is a way out—not a green light to take on everyone.

Use it when a defender closes a passing lane or tries to win the ball. Once you escape, look to pass, combine, accelerate into space, or go to goal.

CLOSE CONTROL

Tight space

Short touches. Ball in front. Body balanced. Multiple foot surfaces available.

CONTROLLED DRIBBLE

Open space

About one touch every two steps. At cruise-control pace—about quarter speed—the ball can sit a little farther ahead.

Words you will hear

Only the terms that help you complete this workout and connect it to training.

Quality

Improve the accuracy, weight, balance, or clean execution of the action.

Tempo

Change the speed of the action—sometimes faster, sometimes calmer and more controlled.

Shift gears

A cue to the whole team to change the speed or rate of play.

Wiggle

Use evasive close control to escape pressure in a tight space.

Touch

Adjust the weight or direction of your contact so the next action becomes easier.

Punch the clock

Training has started: bring effort, attention, and purpose.

Keep it moving

Use fewer touches when a teammate or new space is available.

Head on a swivel

Scan before and after receiving so you know where pressure and space are.

Join up

Move closer to a teammate so a controlled pass and combination are available.

Possess

Keep the ball with your team instead of forcing a low-percentage action.



Terminology moved out of the main workout

The original six-page tactical appendix included defending, passing, shooting, heading, and team-coverage language. Those concepts belong in a separate coach/player glossary, not in the path of an off-day dribbling session.

ONE PHRASE TO REMEMBER

“Every touch should leave you ready for the next decision.”

Track control—not just completion

A clean session gives you one thing to repeat and one thing to improve next time.

Session	Date	Best movement today	One focus for next time
01			
02			
03			
04			

PLAYER CHECK

Three quick questions

Did both feet get equal work?

Could I raise my eyes without losing the ball?

Which movement helped me find new space?

VIDEO LIBRARY

Seven short demonstrations

Pendulum, Toe Touches + Circles, Toe Roll Series, Back + Forths, In + Outs, In + Outs Double Tap, and Pull Back Series are available at seacoastconnected.com/training/ball-mastery.

Keep the next session simple

- Repeat the movement that felt most controlled.
- Slow down the movement that broke your balance.
- Use both feet and both directions again next time.
- Bring one question or observation back to training.

Demonstration footage credits and Creative Commons reuse information are available on the Seacoast Connected Ball Mastery page.