



# AMHERST SOCCER ASSOCIATION TRAVEL TEAM WARM-UPS



## Pre-Game Warm Up

A common problem in soccer games, voiced by many coaches, is: "Why does it take my players so long to start participating in the game?" A simple reply to that question is, "How you prepare your players, both mentally and physically, for the task ahead?".

There are many different styles and approaches that coaches take into preparing their players for a soccer game. In preparing, we are talking about the 60 minutes prior to kick-off, the pre-game warm up. This warm up should **not** see teams lined up, waiting 6 minutes before they even touch the ball. This is not game realistic. Preparing your players for the main tasks ahead are what you should concentrate on. Here are some things to keep in mind:

First, think about the game and the main tasks your players will be partaking in.

1. Running (at different speeds)
2. Checking, changing direction
3. Jumping
4. Passing the ball
5. Controlling the ball

These are the 5 major elements of a soccer game. Break them down and involve them in the warm up as elaborated below, of course not forgetting to add stretching.

Over recent years researchers have been looking into adding the elements of sporting movements into stretching exercises. This is known as **DYNAMIC STRETCHING** this should play a huge factor in your warm-ups as shown below:

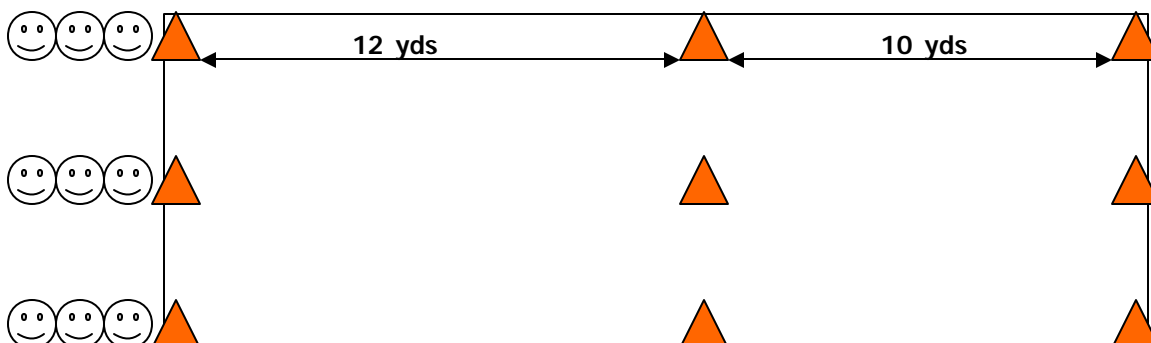
The warm-up should be broken down into stages:

### Stage 1 (5 to 8 mins)

- ? Have players arrive at the field 60 mins to 45 mins before kick-off
- ? Have the players pass the ball around in small groups
- ? Add Static Stretching during this time:  
Calfs, Hamstrings, Thighs, Groins

### Stage 2 (25 to 30 mins)

- ? Dynamic Stretching = Set up as below (max 4 players per line)





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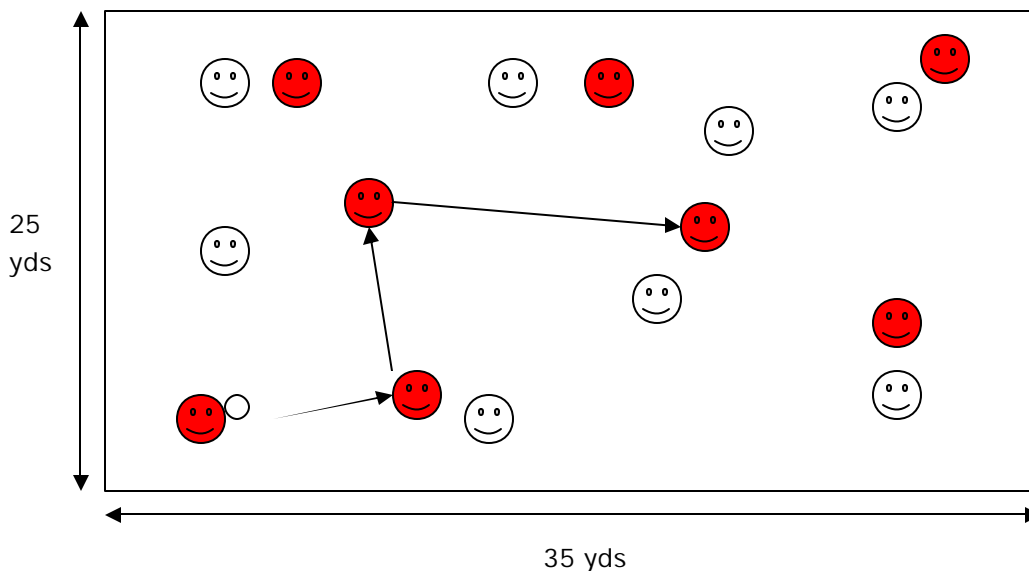
1. Skip swinging arms out X3
2. Skip Circling Arms Forward x 2
3. Skip Circling Arms Backwards X2
4. Skip twisting at the Torso X 3
5. Knee Raises X 3
6. Heel Flicks x3
7. Groins, Up & Out x 3
8. Groins, In & Down x 3
9. Side Step Facing one way x 2 **(DO NOT CLICK FEET TOGETHER)**
10. Side Step Facing the other way x 2 **(DO NOT CLICK FEET TOGETHER)**
11. Kick Out Foot to opposite hand x 3
12. Knee lift into Lunges **(Make Sure Knee does not over extend the foot)** x 2
13. Lunge into quad stretch (keep upper half of the body upright) x 2
14. Groin Walk x2
15. Calf Kicks (keep shoulders back) x2
16. Push-Up position, walking the feet in (do not move the hands) x 2
17. 80 % run
18. Backwards to first cone 80% run to second

Each exercise is done to the first cone with the players then jogging to the second and back to the beginning.

You can also add other types of dynamic stretching in such as Slalom Steps and Grapevine

### Stage 3 (10 to 15 mins)

- ? Make it game realistic



- \* Size of area will vary on age group and number of players
- \* Keep Away



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### **Goal-Keeper**

The Goal-Keeper should warm-up separately away from the team. He/She should work in the 18 yard box working going through numbers 1 to 11 of the Dynamic Stretching exercises. Follow this with some static stretching concentrating on the upper torso as much as the legs

Have the Keeper then work with the ball:

1. Drop Kick Ball in to the Keepers Hands
2. Keeper lying down, through ball for them to catch either side
3. Keeper on their stomach reaching up to collect the ball
4. Shot into the keepers hands from 12 yards then 18 yards
5. Quick Fire shots from close range at angles
6. Player through keepers legs to dive on to it
7. Collecting Crosses
8. Distribution

When warming the keeper up you should never be attempting to score, test them but make all the efforts reachable and obtainable.

### **Cool Down**

A cool down is important to help prevent soreness and increase flexibility. It has been shown that flexibility is best increased when working on muscles that are completely warmed up, such as after physical activity. Cool downs are very simple with players performing light jogging, skipping, high heels, high knees, side-to-side movements, etc., at a medium to slow pace. After 2 to 4 minutes of light motion, the players spend about 5 to 10 minutes static stretching. Although it is easy to overlook, we must always have our players perform cool downs to help their bodies adjust from intense activity to little activity.

### **Miscellaneous**

Players should be constantly encouraged to drink fluids during both warm-ups and cool downs.

### **Pre-Practice Warm Up**

As space and time is limited especially indoors, I feel it is very important that you encourage the players to arrive at least 30 mins before practice is scheduled to take place. Players need to start fitting into the routine and developing good habits.

Have your players follow these simple guidelines before practice:

1. Until every player arrives at practice they are to juggle a ball
2. When everyone arrives, start working on some of the dynamic stretching, due to indoor space the numbers per group will have to be bigger
3. Dribble with the ball, working on ball manipulation skills such as:  
? Fast Feet



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- ? Triangles
- ? Inside-Outside
- ? Drag Push
- ? Slaps

Other ball manipulation skills can be found under the Coaches Corner of [www.amherstsoccer.com](http://www.amherstsoccer.com)

### **Other Issues**

I recently placed an article on the ASA web-site about Player Homework. Encourage your players to do this or some other kind of skills such as a juggling competition.