SESA Warm-up protocol:

Proper warm-up is paramount in reducing the incidence and severity of injury for all athletes. It is our goal to provide proper warm-up procedures to achieve the desired effects of limiting injury in our athletes. Every coach should have the knowledge and ability to provide a proper warm-up for their teams. To assist in this, a standardized warm-up protocol will be used by SESA coaches. The coaches will be shown how to run the warm-up and the proper technique for each movement. The SESA warm-up is based largely off of the FIFA 11+ warm-up protocol with some variations added to replicate more soccer specific movements and increase time efficiency.

There are different needs in pre-exercise warm-ups that correlate with different ages. While not directly correlated to age, age is a good indicator of the recommended warm-up needs for athletes. Older players, U-23 through U-15 should follow the full SESA WU. Ages U-14 through U-11 should follow the modified SESA WU. Ages U-10 and younger should follow the SESA technical and agility WU. Players who are at different developmental ages can include more of the dynamic full warm-up as needed. Players should not use a “lower” warm-up; doing a lower WU might allow for greater risk of injury than doing a higher WU when done properly. All players at every age should be given additional time to do individual stretching as needed.

SESA Full Warm Up: U15+

Set up two lines, 20 yards long.

Use 9 cones per line. First 5 cones spaced roughly 2 feet apart. The next cone placed 5 yards from the very first cone, the following cones placed 5yrds further from the last for a total distance of 20 yards.

Phase 1: light, active mobility

Jog full length x2 with backwards jog back; skips with arm swings x2 (swings/windmills); quick shuffles forwards-up, backwards-back x1; side shuffles x1 (face same direction up and back).

Phase 2: Deep dynamic stretching (stretch up, jog back)

Hug knee; Foot back; Lunges W/ twist; Side lunges; figure 4’s; calf sweeps; Spartan kicks; back swings

Phase 3: Full dynamic activation (increase intensity)

Jog up/ backwards back; speed skips up and back with swings; shuffle up/ backwards shuffle back; side shuffle up and back; open gate; close gate; high knees to half with strides to end x2- second time faster; butt kicks to half with strides to end x2- second time faster; build up sprints x2; side hops into low pistol squat with strides x2 L/R (once on each last 4 cone); quick feet x5 with 5 yrd sprint (one foot in strides, two foot in strides, shuffle, backwards shuffle with back peddle, up 2 back 1stutter steps)

Phase 4: Individual stretching

Suggested groin, hamstring, IT band, Quad, shoulder, glute, back, hip flexor.

If not stretching, on the ball juggling or light dribbling/ passing to stay warm.

Modified SESA Warm Up: U11-U14

The modified WU should be technical based but include 6 major functional movements. Add these movements with focus on proper technique. Also include quick feet/ plyometric movements. This is a way to train players and have them become familiarized with the concept of proper stretching and technique.

Include the dynamic movements: open gate, close gate, skips with arm swings, butt kicks, high knees, and shuffles forward and backwards. Quick feet/ plyometric movements can be done in space, over a cone or line. QF movements: single foot front/back hops L/Rx10, single foot side/side hops L/Rx10, stutter steps front/back x10, stutter steps side/side x10. Allow players to “stretch as needed” at some point as well. Some players will be further along developmentally and need to stretch more than others. As with the full warm up, build the intensity. Start with a slower drill and end with game speed sprints and movements. The functional movement warm up should not take long, but the warm up as a whole should be 15 minutes or more. The technical side will probably take longer as it is the focus of the drill.

SESA Technical Warm Up: U10 and younger

The technical warm up is a 10 to 20 minute period of focus on technical ball control with each player on the ball the majority of the time. The technical box, “sharks”, “crabs”, passing patterns, rondo, outplaying skills etc. are all good examples of technical warm ups. At this age a “warm up” period is more about getting prepared mentally for training than physically. Using a play-practice-play model is also a good warm up for using the first play period. Let them run off some energy, get some fun touches on the ball and play before going into a more instructional practice portion.

The idea behind the modified and tech. warm ups are to introduce the concept of a proper warm up and begin teaching the proper technique of the full warm up. U10 do not typically need a dynamic warm up, they should have no problems starting immediately. U12 is more dependent on the individual. At U13/14 some of the boys and more of the girls are likely to be growing and developing physically to the point that having some light dynamic warm up and the opportunity to stretch as needed can help prevent injury and reduce soreness or strain. As players mature and progress through their physical development it becomes crucial to implement proper warm up and cool down periods. U15 and above are to follow the full SESA warm up and should be given time to stretch as needed. A pre training warm up should take about 10 minutes. A pre-game warm up should take at least 25 minutes and include parts of the technical warm up as well as passing, shooting, tackling, and contact exposure.

Cool Down

A cool down period should be used with the u15 and above groups. A simple cool down begins with dynamic movements and ends with some static stretching as needed. Static stretching is helpful with relaxing already tight or sore muscles. Static stretches should be held for 30 seconds at the point of stretch (can feel a “pull” in the muscle or tight). Some players may not need any static stretching, other may spend 10 minutes stretching following training or a game, allow players to do what they need to feel properly stretched out and encourage static stretching following training and games beyond the basic amount. Teams should do the dynamic cool down together and static can be done individually.

Standard SESA Cool Down: U15+

Phase 1 (dynamic cool down with decreasing intensity): 10-15 yards (sideline to edge of 18 works well)

Skip with arm swings up and back; light jog up and back; open gate up, close gate back; butt kicks slowly up; high knees slowly back; light shuffles forwards up, backwards back; calf sweeps up; figure 4’s back: lunges up; side lunges back; spartan kicks up; back swings back; toe walks up; heel walks back.

Phase 2 (static holds, everyone does together) hold 30 sec:

Toe touch right/left/middle; pull foot back R/L; lunge hold with arms up and lean back R/L; Hurdlers R/L; kneeling side lunges R/L; knee to chest R/L; partner hamstring holds; side plank raises R/L (IT band stretch).