**AFL Juniors Lesson Plans**

**⭐ Lesson 1: Kick, Mark, & Go**

**Objective:** Improve kicking accuracy, marking, and movement
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Kick & Chase* – Players kick to a teammate, then chase their own kick. Increase the distance for progression.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *Marking in Motion* – Players practice leading to the ball and marking while on the move. Focus on timing and position.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *Kick-to-Mark Challenge* – Teams kick to specific markers (cones) on the ground. Players must mark the ball after the kick.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 4v4 – Focus on leading to space and kicking to players who are moving.
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Partner stretching, focusing on hip flexors and shoulders.
🗨 “How do you judge where the ball will land when leading for a mark?”

**⭐ Lesson 2: Handball & Playmaking**

**Objective:** Develop quick handball skills, support play, and decision-making
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Handball Relay* – Players in pairs pass the ball over increasing distances while running.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *Quick Release Handball* – Players work in pairs or small groups, practicing fast, low handballs with accuracy under pressure.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *Support Play Drill* – Players must handball to teammates in motion, then move quickly to receive a return pass.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 5v5 with a focus on handball chains to transition play quickly.
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Gentle jog and dynamic stretching.
🗨 “What should you look for when you handball to a teammate in motion?”

**⭐ Lesson 3: Tackling Technique**

**Objective:** Refine safe tackling technique and improve tackling timing
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Tackle Shadows* – Players practice shadowing each other with quick, controlled footwork.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *Tackle Bags* – Players practice tackling technique using tackle bags, focusing on body position and wrapping the arms.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *Tackle & Release* – Players in pairs: one tackles the other, who immediately gets back up and runs or handballs to a partner.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 5v5 with light tackling (no full-contact).
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Stretch, especially focusing on hamstrings and legs.
🗨 “What’s the most important part of a tackle?”

**⭐ Lesson 4: Running with the Ball**

**Objective:** Improve running with the ball, evading opponents, and decision-making
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Dribble & Dodge* – Players run with the ball through a slalom course of cones, practicing evasive footwork.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *Change of Pace* – Players run with the ball and then explode into a sprint after making a 90-degree turn or fake.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *Evade the Tagger* – Players with the ball run through zones, trying to evade defenders by using a change of direction or pace.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 4v4 – Players must dribble through zones without being tagged.
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Partner stretching and deep breathing.
🗨 “How can you protect the ball while running?”

**⭐ Lesson 5: Defensive Positioning & Zoning**

**Objective:** Improve defensive positioning, zoning, and pressure
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Defensive Shuffle* – Players shuffle sideways to different cones, practicing quick lateral movements.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *1v1 Defending* – Players work in pairs, one attacking and one defending. The defender focuses on positioning and applying pressure without tackling.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *Defensive Zone Play* – Create zones on the field. Defenders must prevent the attacking team from entering their designated zones.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 5v5 with a focus on defensive setups and structure.
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Team stretching and cool-down jog.
🗨 “How do you know when to press the player and when to contain them?”

**⭐ Lesson 6: Transition Play**

**Objective:** Improve quick transitions from defense to attack
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Attack/Defend Relay* – Players work in two teams. One team attacks, the other defends. Switch roles after each round.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *Switch the Play* – Players practice transitioning the ball quickly from one side of the field to the other with handballs and kicks.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *End-to-End Drill* – Teams practice quickly moving from their defensive half to attacking half while focusing on quick passing and movement.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 5v5 with an emphasis on transitions (a point is awarded for the team that can successfully transition from defense to attack).
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Light jogging and stretching.
🗨 “What makes a transition from defense to attack successful?”

**⭐ Lesson 7: Contested Marking**

**Objective:** Improve contested marking and reading the play
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Marking Challenge* – Players practice marking the ball in pairs. The kicker throws high balls for the mark.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *Contested Marking* – Players practice jumping and timing their mark, ensuring proper body positioning.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *Mark & Go* – Players in pairs: one kicks high to the other, who tries to mark under pressure from a defender.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 4v4 with emphasis on contested marking. Award points for marks under pressure.
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Stretching with a focus on shoulders and legs.
🗨 “What’s your key focus when going for a contested mark?”

**⭐ Lesson 8: Match Simulation & Game Sense**

**Objective:** Combine all skills in a match simulation while enhancing game sense
**Duration:** 60 mins

* **Warm-Up (10 mins):** *Footy Skills Circuit* – A quick series of handball, kick, and marking drills in a circuit setup.
* **Skill Activity (15 mins):** *Decision-Making Drills* – Players practice a series of game-like scenarios where they need to decide whether to kick, handball, or run with the ball.
* **Game-Based Activity (20 mins):** *Full Field Simulation* – A full-field simulation with 7v7 or 8v8. Coaches focus on reinforcing structure, roles, and teamwork.
* **Mini-Match (10 mins):** 10v10 match with stoppages to review skills, tactics, and positioning.
* **Cool Down (5 mins):** Full-team stretch and feedback session.
🗨 “What did you notice about how the game changed when we made quick decisions?”