

“Dummies-U7” Guide to Coaching Soccer

Aim of the Game

The team scoring the most goals wins, and if both teams score the same amount or no goals are scored then the match is called a draw.

To score a goal the ball must pass between the goalposts and beneath the crossbar, with the whole of the ball crossing the goal line.

Observations

Teach the first commandment of Soccer: "Never kick the ball in front of your own goal": Most goals that will be scored against your team during the season will be a result of violating this rule..

Emphasize defense at the start of the game. Teams take a while to get warmed-up, so your first half line-up should be strong on defense, the second half on offense. Better to be tied 0-0 at half than down 3-1.

Natural athletes usually aren't great soccer players because they usually lack superior dribbling and passing skills. When they were little they were better than everyone else so they never had to learn. Play them as stopper, sweeper or goalkeeper.

Try to have as many players on the team as possible score a goal during the season All decent players want to remember that they scored at least once. Since forwards have the best chance of scoring, you can put your best player who doesn't have a goal yet as a forward to give her a good chance.

You need an assistant: Or else your practices will not be productive. Before you agree to coach insist that someone else agree to assist. Make sure its someone you already know, and not someone who has head-coached before. Assistants can help run drills at practice.

Don't over-practice once the games start: Once pre-season is over the payoff for additional practice time is meager. In fact, players that miss practice *will usually play harder next game* . A one hour practice early in the week to review any mistakes from the last game and praise their performance is plenty.

Some Soccer Concepts:

In soccer where the ball starts depends on why play was last stopped:

Kick-off: If a period is starting (unless the last period ended with a penalty) and after each goal the ball is kicked off from the center mark at midfield.

Goal Kick: If a player puts the ball over the other team's end of the field without scoring, the referee will set the ball down and let the other team have a "goal kick**".

Corner Kick: If a player causes the ball to go over their own team's end of the field (unless a goal was made - you can score on yourself) the referee will put the ball down in a nearby corner of the field and give the other team a "corner kick".

Throw-in: If a player causes the ball to go past one of the sidelines, the other team may pick-up the ball off the field with their hands and throw it back in.

The goalkeeper is allowed to use her hands on the field when she's in the penalty box - a rectangle drawn in front of the goal. Otherwise players can't touch the ball with their shoulders, arms or hands (except to protect themselves from injury).

Penalty kick: Causing a serious foul near your goal gives the other team a free kick with the ball placed in front of your goal and no one to defend but the goalkeeper.

Free kick: Causing a foul elsewhere on the field gives the other team a free kick from where the foul occurred. Less serious fouls only give an "indirect" kick where the ball has to be touched by another player before a goal can be scored

1-2 - Essentially, a give-and-go

📍 **50/50 ball** - A loose ball contested by players from each team.

📍 **advantage** - When an official allows play to continue for the attacking team even though a foul occurred.

📍 **air-mail** - A shot or chip sent way over the intended target.

📍 **ambitious ball** - An overly aggressive pass which had little chance of success.

📍 **and-again** - See wall pass, 1-2.

📍 **assist** - The pass which leads to a goal.

📍 **away** - Tells a defender to get the ball out their end of the field.

📍 **back** - Pass ball straight behind you.

📍 **back and face** - Following an attack, when midfield players are in advanced positions, this is an instruction to return to their positions and face the opponents ready for the counter attack.

📍 **back door** - The furthest goalpost from the ball.

📍 **back of square** - Player is just behind a square ball to allow space in case of a bad pass.

📍 **balance** - Used to describe the concurrent presence of coverage by a team in important areas on the pitch.

📍 **banana Kick** - A kick that makes the ball bend or swerve in the air instead of going straight.

📍 **bending ball** - See banana kick.

📍 **bicycle kick** - A spectacular backwards kick that ends with the player on his back and the ball going the other direction.

📍 **booking** - When a player commits a foul and either receives a yellow or red card.

📍 **boots** - Term used for soccer cleats.

📍 **bunny-ball** - Playing a ball to another player in a terrible position in order to make that player look bad.

- Ⓢ **caught square** - When two or more defenders have been beaten by a through ball because they were positioned in a straight line or square to one another.
- Ⓢ **center** - A lateral pass to the inside, similar to a "square pass."
- Ⓢ **challenge** - To "challenge" the player with the ball.
- Ⓢ **charge the ball** - Not waiting for the ball to come to you, but instead running up on the ball and taking it from your opponent.
- Ⓢ **check** - To come back to receive a ball from a teammate.
- Ⓢ **check to** - An offensive player running towards the ball carrier and usually calling for a pass.
- Ⓢ **chip** - A pass made by a stabbing motion of the kicking foot to the lower half of the ball to loft it over the heads of opponents.
- Ⓢ **chop** - A deliberate change of direction with the ball usually using the inside of the foot.
- Ⓢ **clear or clearance** - Usually used in the defensive 1/3 of field. To play the ball out of the area taking away the opponents chances of offense.
- Ⓢ **close down** - When a defender gets close to the attacker without letting the attacker get by him with the ball.
- Ⓢ **contain** - Do not allow a person with ball to beat you on the dribble.
- Ⓢ **cover** - To provide defensive cover to the defender pressuring the ball.
- Ⓢ **cross** - Pass or kick the ball across the mouth of the opponent's goal.
- Ⓢ **dispossess** - To take the ball away from a dribbler.
- Ⓢ **dive** - To fall down deliberately with the intention of fooling the referee into giving a foul.
- Ⓢ **don't dive** - Telling a defender to stay on his feet against a dribbler.
- Ⓢ **drive** - Hitting a low, hard shot on goal with the instep.
- Ⓢ **drop** - To pass the ball back to a supporting player.
- Ⓢ **drop and mark** - The defending team needs to move to their goal, picking up and marking opponents.
- Ⓢ **drop in** - support on defense
- Ⓢ **earn your shirt** - Put in the effort in practice to get to play in the game.
- Ⓢ **eyebrows** - A flick on header at the near post from a corner-Ron Atkinson classic.
- Ⓢ **face up** - Face the direction of the ball. Don't turn back on ball during any stoppage of play.
- Ⓢ **far post** - The goal post furthest from the ball.
- Ⓢ **field goal** - When ball is blasted over the net {looks good that's all}.
- Ⓢ **finish** - When a player shoots the ball into the goal using anything but an instep kick.
- Ⓢ **first time** - Shoot or pass the ball with the first touch.
- Ⓢ **flick** - Advance the ball past the defenders for a teammate.
- Ⓢ **football** - The proper name of the sport.
- Ⓢ **get up on that** - Means to get up for a challenge in the air, and don't let the ball hit the ground. Or, to challenge in the air for a cross, dive or a collision with the opponent as a goalkeeper.
- Ⓢ **ghost** - An extra position where you wonder around on your half of the field playing defense.
- Ⓢ **give him an oscar** - When players fake injury.
- Ⓢ **give-and-go** - To pass the ball to a teammate, run past the defender, and the teammate returns the ball.
- Ⓢ **goal-side** - The defender positioned between the goal and the offensive player.
- Ⓢ **golden goal** - A goal scored in overtime which ends the match.
- Ⓢ **good out** - A well cleared ball by a defender.
- Ⓢ **good up** - A good attempt at an executed head ball.
- Ⓢ **hack** - Someone who fouls way too much or an act of delivering a hard foul.
- Ⓢ **half volley** - Hitting the ball with the instep just after the ball has bounced off the ground.
- Ⓢ **hard tackle** - A fair, but rough tackle.
- Ⓢ **hat trick** - Three goals in a game by a player.
- Ⓢ **have one** - Tells a player to go ahead and take a shot at goal.
- Ⓢ **heal** - Backwards pass with the heal of your foot.
- Ⓢ **hold** - Usually means hold the ball while a player moves into a supporting position for a pass.
- Ⓢ **hospital pass** - A pass which might result in injury to a teammate striving to reach it first.

- Ⓢ **in swinger** - Kicker will deliver corner kick swinging towards the goal.
- Ⓢ **jockey** - slow down the attacking player who has the ball with your back to your own goal trying to make attacker go wide being close enough to him that if he shoots you will block it. No attempt to play the ball is made while JOCKEYING.
- Ⓢ **karaoke** - Moving sideways in a fast motion and crossing legs.
- Ⓢ **keeper** - Stay away from the ball, the goalkeeper is coming out!
- Ⓢ **killer pass** - A pass that splits two defenders and puts your teammate in a great position.
- Ⓢ **late tackle** - A tackle after the ball was played by the offensive player. Should result in a foul.
- Ⓢ **leave It** - Don't touch the ball, let it roll by you.
- Ⓢ **let him know you** - Make contact with the striker early in match in attempt to put him off his game.
- Ⓢ **line** - Requesting a pass up touch line.
- Ⓢ **man on** - An opponent is approaching the player with the ball from behind.
- Ⓢ **man to man marking** - Follow him everywhere.
- Ⓢ **mark up** - Telling your teammates to leave no one unmarked.
- Ⓢ **marking back** - A fullback whose primary responsibility is to mark one of the opposing forwards.
- Ⓢ **meg** - When the ball is dribbled or passed between the legs of a defender.
- Ⓢ **my bad** - Said from one teammate to another to apologize for a poorly played ball.
- Ⓢ **near post** - The goal post nearest the ball.
- Ⓢ **nothing** - Either to tell your defender's that there will be no getting through them, or to clear the ball away out of the back field!
- Ⓢ **nutmeg** - To put the ball between an opponent's legs.
- Ⓢ **off the line** - Referring to the goalkeeper moving from the goal line to get the ball.
- Ⓢ **on the carpet** - Pass on the ground.
- Ⓢ **one more** - Let a crossing pass through or pass to the next guy.
- Ⓢ **one two** - See all pass.
- Ⓢ **one-timer** - A goal scored on a cross or corner kick that is booted into the goal before it touches the ground.
- Ⓢ **open up** - Use wingers and play wide.
- Ⓢ **out swinger** - Kicker will deliver corner kick with a ball swinging away from the goal.
- Ⓢ **overlap** - When a player runs around and ahead of the ball for a pass into space.
- Ⓢ **pace** - Referring to the speed of the ball from a pass.
- Ⓢ **parry** - A controlled and deliberate deflection by the goalkeeper using the hands.
- Ⓢ **pitch** - Another term for soccer field.
- Ⓢ **play around them** - To switch the ball from one side of the field to another with a succession of passes.
- Ⓢ **play feet.** - To pass a ball directly to a teammate's feet.
- Ⓢ **play on** - Yelled and signaled by the referee when he sees a foul but allows the play to continue because an advantage for the attacking team.
- Ⓢ **play space** - To push a ball into an open area of the field for another player to run on to, as opposed to playing to feet.
- Ⓢ **play the way your facing** - Keep football simple and pass the way you are facing then move to space.
- Ⓢ **playing kickball** - When a team uses the system of just kicking the ball as far as they can with no regard to passing.
- Ⓢ **poser** - A player who looks good but has no game.
- Ⓢ **pressure** - Refers to a defender placing pressure on his opponent with the ball.
- Ⓢ **professional foul** - A deliberate foul calculated to obtain an advantage such as intimidation of the opposition, or prevention of a subsequent goal scoring opportunity.
- Ⓢ **pulling the string** - A shot off a free kick that looks as if it will go over the crossbar but at the last second dips into the goal.
- Ⓢ **push-up** - A sweeper telling his/her fellow defenders to stop lagging in the back, in an attempt to draw the opposing team off sides, or to get the defenders to get in on the offensive transition.
- Ⓢ **rainbow** - When a player pops the ball up and flicks the ball over their head in a forward motion

with the back of their heel.

- Ⓜ **recover** - When a defender gets beat he turns and sprints to get between the ball and the goal.
- Ⓜ **recovery** - Referring to a beaten defender running to get back into a defensive position.
- Ⓜ **roll Infield** - Switch positions with another player in the middle of the game.
- Ⓜ **shape** - The players positioning on the field in relation to the formation and the ball location.
- Ⓜ **shell** - A drop back past to the mid player with a shot and goal.
- Ⓜ **show** - Move from a position with an intervening defender to a position with a clear line to the ball.
- Ⓜ **skip** - Let it run to another player.
- Ⓜ **smoked** - When an offensive player performs a great move and leaves the defender in the dust.
- Ⓜ **snap Him** - Get stuck in and tackle him hard.
- Ⓜ **sniper** - Yelled when someone takes a dive with little or no contact.
- Ⓜ **soft touch** - A player has this when he can trap any pass that comes to him at any speed or height.
- Ⓜ **sold him like a kipper** - Sent him the wrong way with a turn.
- Ⓜ **split** - To pass the ball between two defenders.
- Ⓜ **spot kick** - A penalty kick.
- Ⓜ **spun like a top** - A defender who gets turned by a skilled dribbler.
- Ⓜ **step or step It.** - Instruction for defensive line to pull out for offside trap.
- Ⓜ **stopper** - The defender assigned to mark the other team's best forward.
- Ⓜ **support** - I am here in case you want to pass me the ball, or if you try to take on an opponent and loose possession I will be here to challenge immediately for the ball.
- Ⓜ **sweeper** - The player positioned behind the fullbacks and in front of the goalie who has the authority to play either the right, middle or left side of the field (hence sweeps)to block the opposing team's shot or player.
- Ⓜ **switch** - Means to switch the point of attack (i.e. switch the ball from the right side of the field to the left).
- Ⓜ **switch off** - Trade marking assignments on defense.
- Ⓜ **tackle** - Trying to take the ball from opposing player. Always play the ball first, if contact is made with the player first a foul is usually committed.
- Ⓜ **take ball** - Put pressure on the dribbler now!
- Ⓜ **through ball** - To serve the ball through a flat defensive alignment into a forward space creating an opportunity on goal.
- Ⓜ **time** - Having enough time to control ball and look around before a defender can pressure you.
- Ⓜ **trail** - I'm behind you if you need to pass it back.
- Ⓜ **turn** - Telling your teammate he has time to control the ball and turn up field.
- Ⓜ **turn and face** - Turn around and get ready for the kick.
- Ⓜ **two-touch** - To either shoot or pass a ball with the second touch, the touch after controlling the ball.
- Ⓜ **unlucky** - A nice short way of saying, "That wasn't your fault, just bad luck."
- Ⓜ **upper v** - The intersection of the crossbar and goalpost.
- Ⓜ **wall** - A human barrier between the ball and the goal on a free kick.
- Ⓜ **wall pass** - To pass the ball to a teammate, run past the defender, and have the teammate return the ball.
- Ⓜ **weak side** - The side of the field without the ball.
- Ⓜ **well done** - Great execution of a skill.
- Ⓜ **well marshalled** - Tightly marked. To defend and stay with a very good player with one or two designated players.
- Ⓜ **what a cracker** - A hard shot.
- Ⓜ **what you see** - The player with the ball has no one marking them, in other words, they are unmarked.
- Ⓜ **wheel man** - Central midfielder with primary responsibility for distributing the ball when team is on the attack.
- Ⓜ **winger** - A wide attacker.

How to manage parents

Parents are, obviously, necessary. Sometimes they can even be useful! You can, for example, get them to transport children, fetch balls during practice sessions and provide financial support.

There will, however, be occasions when you have difficulty with one or more parents. Some may want their child to play more while others may question your judgment as a coach. You can minimize the number of times you have to deal with an angry or upset parent by following these guidelines:

1. **Have a parent meeting** before the first practice to discuss your plans and expectations for the season. Encourage questions from the parents and let them know that you have given a lot of thought to how you're going to coach their children.
2. **Express appreciation** for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
3. **Always listen** to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement.
4. **Know what your objectives are** and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not to the parents. No coach can please everyone!
5. **Know the club and game rules.** Be prepared to abide by them and to explain them to parents.
6. **Handle any confrontation one-on-one** and not in a crowd situation. Try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk while you listen. Often a parent will vent their frustrations just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, then thank them for it.
7. **Resist unfair pressure.** It is your responsibility as coach to make the final decision. This doesn't mean that you can't still listen to parents.
8. **Don't discuss individual players with other parents.** The grapevine will hang you every time. Show the same respect for each player on the team that you want the parents to show toward you.
9. **Ask parents not to criticize their children in front of anyone else.** Don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.
10. **Don't blame the players** for their parents' actions.

11. **Be consistent!** If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. At the very least, inform players and parents of any change as soon as possible.

12. **Most importantly, be fair!** If you treat all your players fairly and equally you will gain their respect and that of their parents as well.

Remember that your children (and their parents) are not all the same. They will have a wide variety of backgrounds, beliefs and ideals. This diversity is to be valued.

The challenge for you as a coach is to address these differences in a positive manner so that the season will be enjoyable for everyone involved.

A typical U-6 training session

Warm-up

A very brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically and mentally for the practice session. This should involve individual body activities that may or may not involve the ball. They can chase a ball thrown by the coach and bring it back with different parts of their body. Or they can chase someone with their ball at their feet. When they've been running around for a few minutes you can do some static stretching but try doing it with the ball.

Individual activities

Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not a real 1 v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals in a game environment. An example would be a kind of tag game, or "[Red Light - Green Light](#)", or a game where players are trying to knock their ball through gates. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait in lines. Play games of "inclusion" instead of games of elimination.

Play the game

Move on to the real game, but, make sure it is a 2 v 2, 3 v 3, or 4 v 4 so that everyone gets plenty of touches. You can have more than one game going on at a time if necessary. Switch the game every 5 minutes or so. Be creative. Play with 4 goals or 2 balls. Play with or without boundaries. Use cones if you don't have real goals. Keep all the players involved.

Warm-down

Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with.

It is important to finish on time!

How to teach soccer to pre-school children

My thanks to the Clovis Soccer Club for the information in this section.



What to expect from U-6s

Coaching pre-school, (i.e., under six), children is a lot of fun! Their enthusiasm knows no bounds, they will turn up for practice in the most severe weather conditions imaginable and they smile all the time!!

Developmentally, however, they are very different from children who are just two or three years older.

For example:

- Most of your players will cry immediately when they get hurt. Some cry even when they are not hurt,
- No matter how loud you shout, or how much they "practice" it, they can not or will not pass the ball,
- Somebody will come off the field in need of a toilet. Somebody will stay on the field when they should be going to the toilet!
- The only player to hold a position is the goalkeeper (if you play with one.) Don't even consider teaching positional play,
 - Twenty seconds after the start of a game, every player will be within 5 yards of the ball.
 - Several players will slap at the ball with their hands, or pick it up. Several parents will yell at them not to do that.
 - A model rocket that is launched from a nearby field will get 99% of the player's attention. By all means, stop whatever you are doing and watch for a couple of minutes.
 - During a season, you will end up tying at least 40 to 50 shoelaces
 - They will do something that is very funny. Make sure that you laugh.

What I say to the children every week

You won't be coaching children for very long before you seem to hear an echo on the practice field. But it's not an echo – it's you, repeating yourself over and over again!

You will soon realise that it takes a long time and many, many repetitions before most children, (especially children under the age of nine), really understand new concepts. You have to be very patient – your kids are not deliberately ignoring you when – for the hundredth time – you tell them to “Get wide!” or “Play the way you're facing!”

It's just that young children are very single minded in their approach to games. For example, in soccer they are attracted to the ball so strongly - like iron filings to a electromagnet! - that it is very hard for them to detach themselves from this cat like impulse enough to understand that they can help their team by running AWAY from the ball sometimes.

So you have to be patient.

Don't worry, the penny will drop one day!!

If you were to stand on the touchline at one of my practice sessions, these are the three instructions you'd hear most often:

“Open up!”

This term refers to the way players must prepare to receive the ball by opening up their hips away from where the ball is coming from and in the direction they want to go next. In practice, this means that your children must receive the ball with the foot farthest away from where it was just passed.

Look at the way some coaches get their children to warm up. They get them to kick the ball back and forth to each other while standing still. **There is a lot wrong with this activity**, (how often do you stand still and pass/receive the ball in a match?!), but the primary problem is that it encourages children to face only the passer and ignore the rest of the field. This is a habit that is hard to break. Make sure your passing exercises DO NOT include passing back and forth to a stationary target.

Even if the receiver plans to pass it back to the area from where the ball is coming, opening up the hips will cause the defence to hesitate. They don't know which direction the ball is going to be passed. If the hips are closed there is only one direction the ball can be played. Defenders will spot this and either compress the space or intercept the pass.

You must incorporate into your training some exercises that develop this crucial skill. It is not an exaggeration to say that the more ingrained this skill is, the more successful your players will be.

“Get wide!”

Watch any group of six to nine year olds playing soccer and I guarantee that most of them will be crowding around the ball like bees round a honey pot. It doesn't matter how good the coach is – most children of that age group simply cannot understand why they have to 'get wide'.

You can help your kids appreciate the benefits of making space for themselves by not letting them play large sided games on a standard pitch. Limit the games you play at the end of your practice sessions to 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 and play on a wide than normal pitch. Even better, don't use standard goals but set up with four small goals in each corner and no goalies. This will, eventually, help your children to understand the benefits of getting their heads up and looking across to the other side where – hopefully – one of their team mates will be waiting to slot the ball into an empty 'net'.

“Play the way you face”

This instruction simply means that your players should pass the ball in the direction they are currently facing, even if it is back towards their own goal.

You need to demonstrate that passing the ball to a player who is facing the goal you are attacking, even if he is farther away than you, is almost always the right thing to do.

This has direct implications for defenders who are running on to a ball as they face their own goal. Instead of trying to turn against the pressuring forward, they should either kick the ball out of play (the safest option by far!) or pass the ball back to the goalkeeper.

This one can also be called “don't turn into pressure.” This is for the players who must ALWAYS try to go forward with the ball even when they have pressure all over them. You can be successful beating a defender occasionally, but if you try to turn into the pressure every time the defender just waits until you make your move and then she takes it from you. Midfielders and forwards do this a lot in the younger age groups.

The concept of unpredictability comes into play here as well. If you always make the same move, then you will become very predictable for the other team to defend. If a defender doesn't know whether you will pass or dribble, then she is less certain and hesitates. This uncertainty is usually enough to allow you to win most of your 1 v 1 challenges.

This also covers the concept of shielding the ball as well. The point of shielding the ball is to keep it away from the defender. If you turn into the defender, you are exposing the ball to her and your chances of successfully beating her are low.

“Don't dive in.”

This is simple 1v 1 defender stuff. Most children who are defending their goal against an attacker will automatically challenge for the ball no matter what the situation. Often they will be beaten by the forward thus creating trouble for the rest of the team as once the 1st defender is beaten, one team has one less defender and the other has one more attacker.

With younger players, you need to teach them to close quickly on the attacker. You want your defender close enough to be able to reach out and touch the player with the ball. This limits the time that the player has to think about what she will be doing with the ball. This is the first step in good defending.

We also need to teach them to approach the attacker at an angle. If she runs straight on to the attacker, then the attacker can still go in any direction to beat her. We want to cut off at least half of the field from the attacker by approaching from the side. this reduces the amount of ground that our team has to defend. The rest of the players can then

defend a smaller part of the field with greater numbers, thus increasing our chances of success.

“Make diagonal passes”

Most children will kick the ball straight up the field as this seems to be the most direct way to advance the ball. However, it is not normally the best way to advance from defence into attack. Why? Because the defence can predict with accuracy where the ball will end up.

This means that the defending team are more likely to intercept the ball and create a counter attack.

Defenders love it when the ball is played straight up the middle!

If the ball is played diagonally instead, not only does the ball move, but also the defender has to turn to see it. If several diagonal balls are played, then the defenders have to turn each time a pass is made. If they are not perfect, then gaps will open up in their defence. This creates opportunities for penetrating passes or 1 v 1 moves with good attackers against weaker defenders. Any time we can make the defence turn and face their own goal, we are in a very good attacking position.

**You should demonstrate to your children that they can also see more of the field when making diagonal passes. This can only help you keep possession of the ball.

An example lesson plan

By now you should have got a good idea of what you're going to teach your children and how you're going to teach them.

What you have to do now is to write it down.

The process of jotting down notes will help you to keep focused on your objective for the lesson as well as remember the sequence of activities you've decided on. It will also help you to understand how you're going to join them all up so that your children are not standing around while you're moving cones around.

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to have a clear, written plan before you step onto the practice field. If you don't you could easily turn into the sort of coach who gets her kids running endless laps while she thinks about what to do next.

Having a written plan will give you confidence in the early days of your 'career' as a youth soccer coach. In my experience, knowing what you're going to do also enables you to relax and deal much more confidently with any small discipline problems.

Nothing (by the way) encourages children to misbehave as much as a coach who is clearly fumbling her or her way through the session!!

You don't need to write hundreds of words. In fact, a few simple 'memory joggers' on a postcard or in a small notebook is ideal.

This is one of my lesson plans:

<p>Objective: to improve fitness and passing skills</p>
<p>Need: poles, cones, bibs, balls (one each) Set up 30x30 grid before the kids arrive.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Warm up</p> <p>A couple of minutes in pairs, one touch passing Every step touch the ball, leave it and find another. Take one ball away. Loser runs round grid. A few stretches (get Callum to lead them)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Main activity - Squares</p> <p>Set up as in the diagram below. C1, C2 etc. are cones marking the corners of a 30x30 diamond grid. P = poles marking the corners of a 3x3 centre zone.</p>
<p>Place 4 children in the middle zone. Each should be standing in a gap between the poles facing an outside player standing on one of the cones.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">P P</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C2 P P C3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">P P</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C4</p> <p>The children run towards the player on the outside who they are facing, hi 5, run back into the centre grid, run clockwise to the next outside player etc. The first to get all the way round wins. Do this three times without ball. See who is quickest. Then introduce a ball. Pass and receive from the outside players. Children to call for the ball!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">End game</p>
<p>15 minutes, 4 goals, no goalies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or...</p> <p>Warm up extension Blob tag with players dribbling ball. Leaving the ball, ball going outside the grid = player joining the blob. Last two are winners and start the next blob.</p> <p>Main activity: Receiving square Half the players in grid with ball, half outside without. Players on the inside dribble ball, pass to outside player, get return, turn and pass to another. Call names.</p>

You will see that my lesson plan has two alternative activities jotted down at the end. This is very important as quite often you will find that the activity you planned so carefully simply isn't working. This can happen for a variety of reasons, i.e.:

- 🌀 you don't have the 'right' number of children,
- 🌀 the kids don't understand what they are supposed to do (despite your best efforts!),
- 🌀 it's raining cats and dogs (or it's too hot and sunny!)
- 🌀 the activity turns out to be too difficult for your kids or
- 🌀 the activity is just plain boring!

Whatever the reason, **do not persevere with an activity that isn't working.**

Try something else.

Ideally, move onto something simple that you know your kids will enjoy.

Don't forget that you're on the practice field to help your kids have FUN – not to torture them with activities they can't or don't want to do.

How to run a practice session - summary

- 🌀 Utilise the K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Short and Simple) when introducing new skills,
- 🌀 Give short, effective demonstrations while **briefly** explaining the new skill or concept,
- 🌀 Keep practices short, clear and well-planned,
- 🌀 Be positive - focus on what the player does correctly ("catch them being good").
- 🌀 Make practices meaningful, fun, challenging and exciting,
- 🌀 No static line drills,
- 🌀 Don't play "elimination games" – the players most in need of improvement and repetitions are usually the first to be eliminated,
- 🌀 Provide competitive challenges for athletes that can help define success not only by comparison to others but also by improving one's own standard of accomplishment,
- 🌀 Don't play large sided games for more than 10 minutes per hour. In 8 v 8 or 10 v 10 etc, players don't get enough touches on the ball, the weaker players tend to get the fewest touches and bad habits can be reinforced because players

tend to do the same things they have always done. If you do play large sided games, do so without a goalkeeper.

 Be organised and above all - have a practice plan.

This last point is perhaps the most important of all.

Nothing is more likely to create discipline problems than a coach who fumbles their way through a session with no clear idea of what they're going to do next.

Spend ten minutes or so before every practice session considering exactly what it is you will be trying to achieve.

Have **one** clear objective (to improve passing technique, practice shielding the ball etc.) and think about how you will organize each activity.

Then:

1. Write your objective down on a small piece of paper or a notebook that you can refer to during the practice session then
2. Make a note of how you're going to teach the skill or technique to the children and finally
3. Write down how you are going to warm them up and what equipment you will need.

The teaching part of the practice (number 2 in the list above) should normally have three distinct phases:

Individual/Fundamental:

Players working individually or in pairs on desired technical or tactical topics. (Your chosen objective may be impossible to instruct in this phase. If this is the case, use this phase to reinforce fundamental technical skills and start coaching your topic when you move to the small and large group phases.) Progress your activities from

low to high pressure. Start slow and gradually increase the speed at which the skills are performed. 1v.1 and 2v.2 games are ideal in this phase.

Small Group/Match Related:

This is the phase of practice where coaches need to show the greatest amount of creativity. Here we create competitive games (usually 2v.2 to 4v.4) that have imposed conditions/restrictions that allow the team to easily learn and experiment with the chosen topic. Players are under increasing pressure when compared to the individual phase. Four vs. four games are the preferred method of teaching in this phase.

Large Group/Match Conditions:

Bearing in mind what was said earlier about large sided games, we now let the game be the teacher. You should be aiming to create fun, competitive games, 5v5 up to 11v11.

Remember, the smaller the number of players in a game, the more each player gets to touch the ball and practice what they have learned earlier in the session. This is also an opportunity for coaches to watch and evaluate their team's performance under match like conditions.

Coaches should also be asking themselves, "Are my players using the skills they've just been taught?"

Don't be afraid to stop the game at critical points if the players aren't doing what you want them to do.

In the next section we'll look at the [basic skills](#), how to teach them and how to reinforce them with [fun, soccer like games](#).

Warm ups



Young children (up to the age of ten) hardly need to warm up at all - some jogging, swinging of the arms, twists of the hips or other movements to loosen up will suffice.

Children between the ages of ten and twelve only need a short, ten minute series of stretches preceded by some jogging to warm the muscles.

Don't forget that stretching exercises at any age can be harmful if the muscles are cold - **always** start your sessions with a gentle soccer type activity then move on to appropriate stretching exercises.

This is a selection of good, fun games that will get your children warm, focused and ready for work:

Every step touch the ball

Players dribble a ball slowly in a defined area. Then tell them to try to touch the ball with every step they take – (not as easy as it sounds!). On the command 'Go', the players must leave their ball and find another. Let them try this a few times then take one or two balls away. The players who end up without a ball have to run a lap of the activity area.

Spiders and bugs

Mark three lines 20 yards long and fifteen yards apart as shown by the x's in the diagram below:

x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x
x	S x B	x

Divide your children into two equal teams. Each team should stand along side the centre line about two yards apart and all facing forwards. Name one team Spiders (the 'S' in the diagram above) and one team Bugs (the 'B's). When you call 'Spiders!' or 'Bugs!' that team has to sprint for the end line nearest them. The other team tries to tag them. Anyone who is tagged joins the other team. Continue until there is only one team left (or the children are exhausted!).

Pass and follow

A player in the centre of the circle passes to a player standing on the outside of the circle. She follows her pass and exchanges places with the player she passed to. That player then dribbles into the centre of the circle and passes to another player on the outside. As the players improve, put another ball into play and/or impose restrictions (one-touch play, alternate side-of-the-foot and lofted passes, etc).

You could also try putting half the players on the outside of the circle and half on the inside. The players on the inside look to the players on the outside for a thrown-in ball,

receive it and one-touch it back (vary the service so that the ball is thrown to feet, to thigh, to chest, to head).

Note: The main reason to stretch pre-adolescent athletes is to begin good training habits. Therefore, emphasis should be placed upon developing a consistent routine, rather than which individual stretches are performed.

Although the order of stretching is probably not very important, establishing a consistent routine (i.e., doing the same stretches in the same order each practice) is important.

Two final words about warm ups – **NO LAPS!**

I cringe whenever I see a coach watching her children run round and round the field. Why?

Because I know that I'm watching a coach who doesn't know what she is going to do next – the children are running laps so that she can have a think.

Some coaches may say "Yes, but I make them dribble while they run the lap."

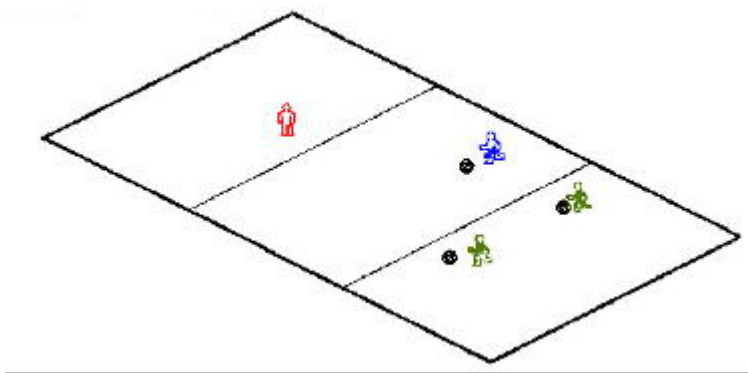
Is this (as the Dutch would say) a 'soccer like' activity? No. Is it a situation that children are likely to encounter during a match? No, it's not.

So...no laps!

Drills/Games – 7 & Under

Red light, Green light

This should be familiar to most U6's. Again, the game is fun, simple to set up, and has direct application to the game of soccer. It is particularly good for reinforcing dribbling and ball control skills.



THE GAME

- Each player has a ball, except the one player that is designated as the "light".
- Lines from start to finish should be approximately 20 - 30 yards.
- Players start from the line opposite the "light".
- The "light" then turns away from the group shouting out "GREEN LIGHT".

- At this signal, the players start to dribble towards the "light".
- When the "light" turns round, calling "RED LIGHT", players must freeze and stop their ball.
- If the "light" catches players or a ball still moving that player must take 5 steps back.
- The first player to cross the line where the "light" is standing is the winner and becomes the new "light".

You can start the game without using balls for younger players, then have them roll the ball with their hands, then use their feet.

The following games will be enjoyed by all children, especially (but not exclusively) the very young.

The blind leading the blind

Group your players into equal sized, even numbered teams and put the players in each team into pairs.

Position each team about 5 yards apart, all facing forwards in their pairs.

Place 3 gates in front of each team about 5 yards apart. Each gate is 2 cones on the ground, about three feet apart.

One player in each pair covers the eyes of their partner with a sweatshirt tied with sleeves behind the head. They then place a ball between their partner's feet.

When the race starts the sighted partner works as a guide, talking the blindfolded partner through the gates by voice. The guide can not touch the ball or the blindfolded partner.

When the pair has navigated the 3 gates, they quickly change roles, navigating the 3 gates in the reverse direction, returning the ball to their line.

When the first pair returns to the line, the second pair takes their turn.

Lines compete to be first to return both pairs and the ball to the line after navigating the gates in both directions.

Shorten the distance between gates for younger ages and stagger the gates left and right for older ages to make it more difficult. The objective is to encourage communication, so don't make anybody feel like a loser - it's just for fun!

Explode

Every kid has a ball. You get them all around you dribbling their balls as close as they can get. Make sure they begin their dribbling using the insides of both feet...no toe-poking! Make them keep control of the ball....always within one step....and do not let them run into one another or dribble their ball into another ball or another player. Keep telling them to get their heads up and see the open spaces. Yell "Explode!" at which point they all run away (dribbling their balls) as fast as they can. First one to get to a boundary or cone "wins".

Dribble Relay

The basic game is Team 'A' racing team 'B' by dribbling through a series of gates. If a player loses control and misses a gate they have to regain control and go through the gate.

One variation is to have a small 'square' at the end. The children have to stop the ball in the square, then sprint back and high-five the next player before he/she can start. Another variation is to have several parents positioned at different places along the 'course' and have a different one hold up a number of fingers at random times during the race - and award points to the player that sees it and correctly yells out the number first. This encourages the children to play with their heads up.

Freeze Tag

Set up a large rectangle with cones and have the players dribble in the rectangle. After a short time, take the ball away from one or two players who then become "it." Any player whose ball is touched by an "it" player becomes frozen and has to stop dribbling, spread her legs apart, and hold her ball above her head. He is frozen in this position until another player dribbles her ball between the frozen player's legs. Switch the "it" players often and make it a contest to see who can freeze the most at one time.

Follow the leader

Pick a leader and have her dribble anywhere on the field, encouraging her to make lots of turns, changing speed, etc. All other players have to follow the leader and do whatever that player does. Switch leaders often.

Last Man Out

Play in a large grid. All the players stand at a cone about 20 feet from a group of balls. There is one less ball than the number of players. On the coach's command, the players run to the balls, get one and begin dribbling. The player who didn't get a ball tries to steal one from the others. The coach keeps time and after a preset period has passed, the coach stops the game. The player who doesn't have a ball has to perform a minor penalty (such as running round the grid) before re-joining the game.

Tag

Very simple and surprisingly effective. Mark off a grid or circle. Everybody has a ball. Whoever is "it" must dribble to another player and tag her. The other players avoid being tagged by dribbling away from "it." If the player being chased loses her ball outside the grid, dribbles out of the grid, or is tagged, he is "it" and the game continues.

Ball Tag

Just as simple as 'Tag' and just as useful! Everyone has a ball and dribbles in a confined area. The player who is "it" must pass her ball so that it hits another player's ball. The player whose ball was hit then becomes "it."

Egg Hunt

Have more balls than players. Have the players line-up across one end of the field. Take their balls and spread them out around the field, these are the eggs. If you have an unusual coloured ball --make it the Golden Egg or something similar). At the other end of the field is a goal. I use a portable goal and call it the "basket." Blow a whistle and turn them loose. The object of the game is to get the "eggs" in the basket as quickly as possible. They are all on the same team, and aren't allowed to take a ball away from another player. Time them with a stopwatch.

Snake

Players are grouped into threes. First player is the "head" of the snake, and does not have a ball. She's essentially the leader in a follow-the-leader game. Second player has a ball at her feet, and must follow the head of the snake, dribbling wherever she goes. Third player is the "rattle". No ball, just following. Emphasise to the "heads" to vary their lead -- some fast, some slow, some sideways, some stopping, etc. I let one lead for about 20 seconds or so. Then, on a whistle from a coach, 2 drops the ball to 3 and becomes the head of the snake. The rattle (3) becomes the dribbler and the former head circles around to become the rattle.

Coloured circles

Set up a 20x40 yard grid, make a centre circle, and split players into to teams that can be identified by a colour. Have all the kids dribble their balls in the centre circle. Call out a colour. That team dribbles toward their goal. The other team leaves their ball and runs to slow the attackers down. Encourage the defenders to push the attackers wide and make sure they don't dive in. If the defenders can keep the attackers outside of the penalty area for 10 seconds they get a point. Attackers get 1 point every time they dribble the ball into the box. Play to 10 points.

Sharks and Minnows

Play in a large grid. Half the players have balls and are the Minnows. The rest don't have a ball and are the Sharks. The Minnows start at one end of the grid. The Sharks stand on the opposite line. The Minnows must try to cross the Shark's line without losing possession of their ball. The Sharks defend their line, trying to kick the Minnows' balls out of the defined area. Minnows who successfully dribble across the Shark's line go back for round two. Each Minnow who loses their ball join the Sharks. The last Minnow left in is the winner.

Death Square

Everyone dribbles around trying to keep their own ball and kick out everyone else's ball. If a player's ball is kicked out, he must retrieve it, then dance on the ball for 10 touches before getting back in. A player gets a point for every ball he kicks out (so if you spend time outside dancing on your ball, you have less time to win points).

Under Pressure

Get all the kids dribbling around in a grid then remove one, two, or three balls depending on how much pressure is needed. Then announce that whoever has possession of a ball after 1 minute is a winner. If they can chase someone out of bounds they automatically win that ball. Count down the last 10 seconds out loud to increase the pressure. The children who finish without a ball have to perform a token penalty - a couple of pushups, run a lap of the grid, etc.

1v1 to goal

Divide players into two teams. Play in a large grid with a goal on one edge and a supply of balls. Station each team on a goal post, standing off but facing the field. Place a GK in goal facing the field. Coach/assistant stands behind the centre of the goal with a supply of balls. Coach tosses a ball over the crossbar to about the penalty spot. A player from each team both sprint to the ball and attempt to control it, turn, and get a shot off. The second to the ball defends (if he then wins the ball, then he tries to shoot). When there is a score, save, or ball goes out of play, restart the same way with a different pair of players.

The Name Game

Players stand in a circle and pass the ball to one another, but they must call out the name of the person they are passing to. This is great at the beginning of the season, so they (and you!) learn everyone's names. If the players are doing well and you have enough players, add additional balls.

Monkey in the Middle

The players make a circle with one player (the monkey) in the centre. The players try to pass the ball around and the monkey tries to intercept it. When the monkey gets the ball he joins the circle and whoever made the "fatal" pass becomes the monkey. This game can be modified by increasing the number of 'monkeys' and/or balls that are used.

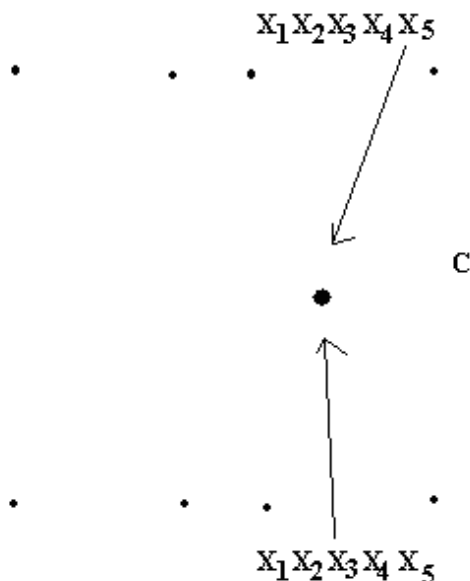
Who's Open

Players stand in a circle about 15 yards in diameter (adjust for age). All players except one have a ball at feet. Two players inside circle with one designated as attacker and the other defender. To start, attacking player moves and calls name of player he wants to serve her a ball. He must control ball and return to the open player who did not have a ball at start of exercise (you can't give it back to the player who served it). Attacker then asks for another ball (calling name and making appropriate run) and repeats the exchange. Defender tries to dispossess attacker.

Marbles (for U6s)

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual colour (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble. The players try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball.

War



Setup: 20x40 grid with both ends of the grid open. Place a set of cones about 3 feet apart in the middle of both ends. These are your goals. After you have set up the field, divide your players into two equal teams.

The teams line up outside the grid opposite each other. Assign each player a number.

The coach starts the game by tossing the ball inside the grid and calling a number.

The players of that number from each team will then try to dribble the ball through the goal opposite.

They must have control of the ball and be no more than two steps away from the ball when they dribble it through their goal. If they do not have control or are more than two steps away from the ball, the goal does not count.

If the ball goes out of the grid, play stops.

Once a player scores, award that team 1 point.

Musical balls



Your players, each with their own ball, dribble around a large grid. They should be moving at a decent pace, avoiding each other and keeping their heads up.

After they have been dribbling for a while, call out the word "CHANGE." When you do this each player must stop their ball, leave it where it is, and run around the circle looking for another ball. It is important they get to new balls right away and continue dribbling.

After allowing them to get comfortable with the concept of the drill, remove one player's ball. This player now must run around the drill without a ball. When the next "Change" comes about that person must try and find a ball leaving another player without a ball to dribble.

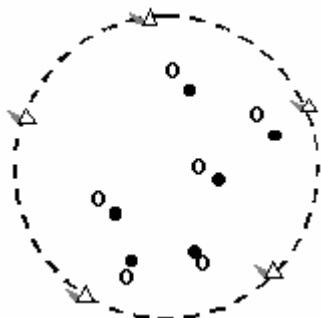
Any player who doesn't end up with a ball after a "Change" has to run round the grid. Just be careful that the same player doesn't lose out every time.

What to look for:

- 🏀 Players are not allowed to swap balls with the same person two consecutive times,
- 🏀 Make sure that the children are using the entire grid,

Finally, make sure that the athletes are practicing moves and turns within the area. You don't want them to just be dribbling straight all the time. They should be weaving in and out of each other at a realistic speed.

Kick it out



Players dribble around the inside of a circle. On command, each player tries to keep possession of her/his own ball while trying to kick the other players' balls out of the circle. The child whose ball is kicked out the fewest number of times in a set period (say, two minutes), wins the game.

COACHING POINTS

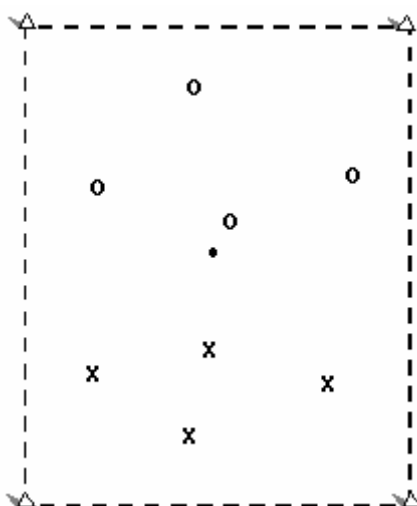
"Keep your heads up" - Players must always be aware what is happening around them.

"Keep dribbling" - no standing and watching allowed.

"Play the ball" - try not to kick the other players' legs!

"Use your body to protect the ball" - keep defenders a safe distance away from the ball.

Across the line



Two teams play soccer on a field without goals. A point is scored when a player dribbles the ball over and stops the ball within three feet of the end line.

COACHING POINTS

"Push the ball into space" - move ahead into open space.

"Keep control of the ball" - when crossing the line.

"Pass the ball if a teammate is open for a pass" - passing is more efficient than dribbling.

"If you can't dribble forward, look to pass the ball backward" - use this game to teach players the concept of support.

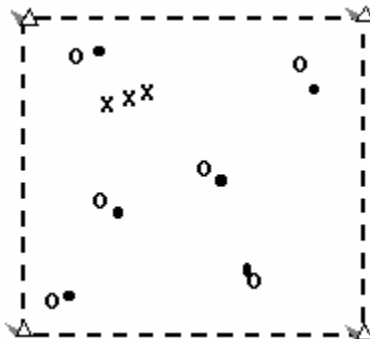
VARIATIONS

Harder: Stop the ball on the end line for a point.

Easier: Vary the field size. Wider field makes it easier for the offensive team.

Make smaller teams (2 vs. 2 or even 1 vs. 1). Winning team stay on.

Blob tag



All the players are inside the grid. All but three have a soccer ball at their feet. The three without a ball form a 'blob' by holding hands. The blob moves freely in the grid and tries to kick any player's ball out of the grid. If a player's ball leaves the grid he/she joins the blob.

Once a chain has six or more players, have it break apart into two smaller chains (of three people each). The last player dribbling is the winner.

COACHING POINTS

"Stay away from the blob"-- that's the purpose of the game.

"Don't get trapped" -- move into space away from the blob.

"Keep control of the ball" -- don't kick it too far away.

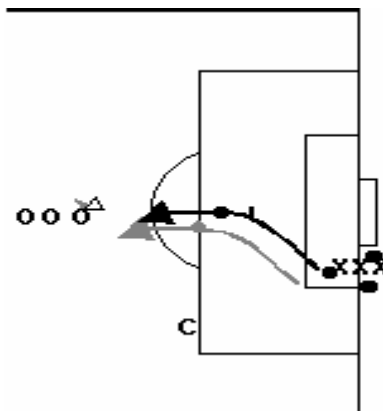
"Work together" -- the blob must work as a team. They must stay together when kicking balls out of the grid.

VARIATIONS

Change the size of the grid. Bigger grid makes it easier for dribblers.

Have blobs break into two players per blob. (Harder for dribblers).

Bring it on



Players start in two lines. One line forms 20-30 yards out from the goal. The other line forms at the endline about three yards to the side of the goal. The player at the front of this line kicks the ball out to the player at the front of the shooting line. This player (O) tries to dribble past X and score a goal.

- 🌐 Play on after rebounds (when the ball bounces off the posts or the goalkeeper).
- 🌐 Players switch lines after each turn.

COACHING POINTS

Dribbler

"Get behind the ball" when receiving it. Keep the ball in front of your body.

"Advance with speed." Once the ball is in control on the ground, players move quickly to goal.

"Beat the defender once" then go for goal.

Defender

"Close the space"- after the defender kicks the ball they should sprint toward the dribbler.

"Stay between the ball and the goal" - at all times.

"Don't dive in. Don't lunge" - as the defender nears the ball they should slow down and stay in control. Avoid getting beaten on the dribble.

VARIATIONS

Have the coach serve the ball in to start play.

Have the defensive player kick the ball to start play.

Play 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3.

Protect the cone – group



The Game

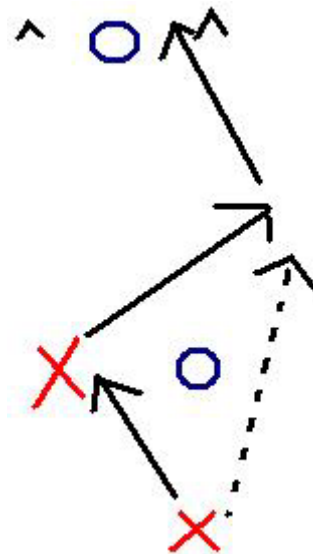
Use a 20x30 grid. Divide the players into four teams. Each player has a ball. Each team sets up three or four cones to protect on one side of the space. The coach chooses a captain for each team. The captain must decide which players will defend and attack. On command, the game begins with players defending their cones or attacking the other team's cones, while controlling their own soccer ball. When your cones are knocked down, your team is out. The team with the last standing cone is the winner.

Coaching Points

- 👁️ Allow players to organize themselves with as little interference from you as possible.
- 👁️ Watch which players have the most success at organizing their group. But make sure all get plenty of opportunities to be the leader.

Watch the group dynamics and switch players often so they all get to work together.

Give and Go



The first player plays a pass to his teammate, makes a run and shoots on goal.

A 'give and go'.

Coaching points

1. Make sure all passes are accurate. Don't play the ball first time if the ball is not an accurate one.
2. Timing the run so that the player arrives just as the ball does. But don't stand around waiting for it.
3. Correct shooting technique, i.e.,
Head over the ball, hit with laces and aim for the far post.

As a progression get the player knocking the ball off to follow the shot in.

Ball control games

Pig-in-the-Middle

Break the team up into groups of three, with one ball to a group. Volunteer one player to be the pig-in-the-middle. The two other players try to pass the ball past the pig without letting her control it. Once the pig traps the ball, one of the other players takes her place. The two outside players must control the ball, or they will have to switch with the pig.

Rapid Fire

Have the team form a circle around a single player. Every player except the middleman should have a ball. Have each team member take turns passing the ball to the player in the centre. This player tries to trap and control the ball, and then passes it back to the original player. Have each team member take a turn as the middleman.

Continue Down the Line

Divide team members into groups of four players with one ball to a group. Select one player to be the server. The three remaining players should line up, side by side, facing the server. The server will take turns serving the ball to each player who must trap and control before returning it to the server. Continue in this fashion, alternating the server.

Flight ball

Divide team into pairs, giving each pair one ball and a grid. One player will be the server, who is to serve the ball in the air to any location in the other player's half of the grid. This player must move to the ball, trap it, and return it to the server. Alternate roles after every 10 serves.

4 v 1 keep-away

I've used this drill many times with great success.

It demands total concentration and good ball control. It also encourages children to look up (not at their feet) otherwise they will run into each other.

Use a square grid about 10 x 10 yards. 4 v 1 with a player at each corner. Play keep away from defender in middle while keeping ball in the square grid. For more advanced players use 3 v 1 or 3 v 2 with one open corner (player must move to support).

Tips: Shorten grid as players get better. Keep score by counting passes. Don't be too strict in keeping ball in square - let play continue unless blatantly out of square.

Dribble across a square

This is a good warm-up to start your practice. It is 10 times better than dribbling through cones & is a good way to evaluate dribbling skill.

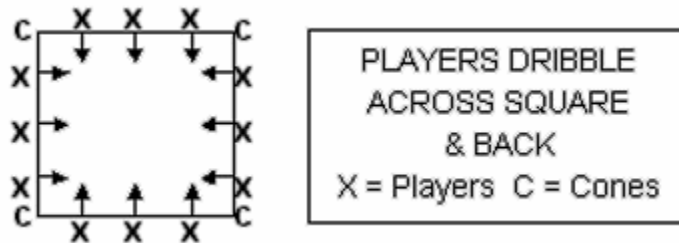
It teaches general ball control, dribbling, the importance of looking up while dribbling & how to do a "Pullback" & "Hook Turn".

Players also develop their peripheral vision, practice shielding the ball and that they can speed up if they get in the clear.

Use 4 disk cones to make a square about 10 or 12 steps wide (smaller or larger depending on age & number of players)

Every player has a ball

Spread players around the square, all facing inward (like below):



All players start on "Go" & each player dribbles across & back.

They must do a "Pullback" or a "Hook Turn" to turn. (do a pullback by putting the bottom of the foot on top of ball to stop it & pull it back in the direction you came from. Do a hook turn by pulling the toes up & turning the foot so the outside of the foot can "hook" the ball, stop it & pull it back).

Tell players to look up while they dribble so they don't run into each other (don't worry, there won't be many collisions!).

The first to 12 is the winner (each time he turns is "one"). Tell players to yell "Done" when finished and ask each player her score at the end of the game.

Play 2 or 3 games. For the second game, the first to 10 is the winner and for the third game, the first to 8 is the winner. Play at the start of practice as a warm-up and at the end of practice until dribbling skills improve or your team gets tired of this game.

Coaching points

When in traffic, keep the ball close to your feet so you can protect it; learn how to look up while dribbling by keeping the ball close to your feet so you know where it is.

When you get "open" (out of traffic), you can kick the ball & run to it so you can go faster, but you must still keep it under control so you can turn.

Dribbling Games

Beehive

Provide a 20 yd x 20 yd. grid (or approximately 1sq. yd. per player). Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside grid randomly using correct techniques and avoiding other players. Players should practice inside and outside foot dribbling, stopping changing direction and pace, and maintaining control while in the beehive.

King of the Ring

Provide a 20 yd. x 20 yd. Grid. Each player has a ball except one player (or coach) who is "it". Players start to dribble inside the grid while trying to avoid having their ball kicked

out of the grid by the player who is "it". Players may re-enter grid after retrieving their ball.

Attack and Protect

Provide a 20 yd by 20 yd grid. Each player has a ball. Players dribble around the grid trying to kick each other's ball out of the grid while protecting their own ball. Provide players with a minor 'penalty' that they must complete before they re-enter the grid

Shadow Dribbling

Have players pair up, each player with a ball. Leader dribbles while second player follows, also dribbling. Remind players to keep their heads up. Encourage creative dribbling - changes in direction, pace, and technique. Stress control and change leaders frequently.

One-on-One

Players pair up, each couple with a ball in a grid. Player with the ball is "on the attack" and the other player is the defender. The attacking player tries to dribble to any of the cones (aside from the one behind her/her) and touch the cone with the ball. Defending player tries to prevent this. Players switch possession of ball when attacker accomplishes her goal or when ball goes out of bounds.

Passing Games

Keep Away ring

Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle of cones. One player or coach stands inside the circle and tries to intercept passes made between the players. Passes made between the players count as goals. Change the players in the circle after a pass is intercepted or after a short time.

Cone Game

Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle. Set up 6 or 8 cones in the middle of the circle as targets. Players try to knock over the cones in the middle with accurate passes.

Triangle Pass

Set up a three player triangle. Each group has one ball. Players try to pass around the triangle shape. Make sure they reverse the direction of the passes from time to time.

After a certain level of proficiency is reached, add a defender to try and intercept the passes.

Four Corner Pass

Set up a 10 yd. x 10 yd grid with cones at each of the corners. Four players work with one ball, one on each side of the grid. A fifth player defends inside the grid.

Players may only run on their sides of the grid between the cones. They then attempt to pass the ball across the grid. Change the middle defender frequently.

Star Wars

This classic game is very exciting for younger players. Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid. Have all players' line up at one end prepared to run to the other end. The coach or player stands just outside the grid with several balls at the ready.

On command the players attempt to run to the endline while evading balls kicked at them by the coach. All shots should be kept below waist level. Players hit by shooting balls become additional shooters until only one player is left.

Basic passing

Split the team up into partners, giving each pair a ball. Have the players pass and trap the ball, while you evaluate their skill. Later, introduce one touch control passing

Circle passing

Many of the basic circle games can be used to practice passing. Try using a circle with two players in the middle trying to intercept passes made by the girls on the outside. The player whose pass is intercepted goes into the middle.

Triangles

This is a good way to reinforce basic passing skills with the added bonus of introducing vision and awareness.

Make some triangles on the field using small cones about ten yards apart.

To start the game, each cone has a player standing next to it. Player 1 passes to player 2 then immediately runs between player 2 and 3. Player 2 passes to player 3 and runs through the gap between player 3 and player 1. And so on.

Done properly, this is a fast game that reinforces the pass/move combination, makes players look carefully to find their next target and requires good passing technique. Just be careful the players don't all disappear out of sight!

Relays

You can use a passing and moving relay race with a set up like this:

F	F
E	E
D	D
A	A
B	B
C	C

The basic practice is A passing to D and running to the back of the line, D passing to B and so on. Practice this for a few minutes (watching for and praising correct technique) then add the requirement that players must shout out the name of the person they are passing to. If they don't, send them back and make them do it again.

Adding this rule has the following benefits.

- 👤 It makes the players talk,
- 👤 It makes them look up to see who they are passing to,
- 👤 If done at the start of a season, it helps introduce the new girls to each other and breaks down inhibitions.

This game can be made competitive by making the first team to do 30 passes the winner.

Many variations are possible – go from two touch to one touch, for example.

Three ball keep away

Start with two teams of equal numbers and three soccer balls. On your signal, players try to possess as many balls as possible.

On your second signal the play stops and the team in possession of two or more balls wins that round. Repeat several times.

In this game, players must be good passers of the ball to keep possession. They must also make decisions on where to run when they don't have the ball, when to pass or dribble, and whom to pass to.

Reinforcement Games

Note: When I collected the reinforcement games in the sections below I deliberately chose games that can be used to help children learn more than one skill. Many of the games are, therefore, multi-

purpose (a dribbling game will also help improve ball control etc.) so you can 'mix and match' them as you like.

Minutes: 10-20 **Players:** 4-16 **Ages:** 6-60 **Avg. Rating:** ★★★★★ **From:** [Mike Naughton](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Defense, Supporting

Objectives:

2v2 from the corners (dribbling, change of direction)

Description:

I usually warm up with the kids dribbling in a 20x20yd square & work on change of speed & change of direction moves & progress to this drill.

Split teams into 2-teams. Layout 25x25yd field w/goals at each end & at each side (4 goals, 3yds wide). Team 1 at opposite corners (diagonal) likewise for team 2. Server off to side at middle or end. Serve ball out, first player from each corner come out & try to win ball. You must control ball & dribble through a goal under control to win a point for your team. If goal is blocked use a change of direction move to go to another goal. Only pass if teammate is wide open. If defending teams wins ball they look to dribble through open goal.

I usually serve ball to different corners so there isn't a collision at midfield. Balls can also be served in the air. First team to 10 wins.

Mine Field [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20 **Players:** 4-20 **Ages:** 7-12 **Avg. Rating:** ★★★★★ **From:** [Ed Peers](#)

Search Objectives: Passing, Controlling, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

Fun game to work on passing in tightly constrained areas.

Description:

Set up:

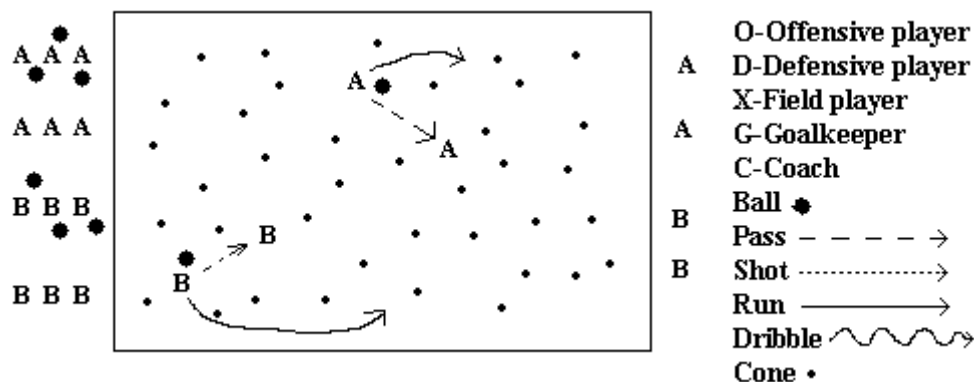
Randomly place cones throughout a defined area; I use the Penalty Area. Cones should be rather close together, 3 yards apart on average and no set pattern, but make sure that there are no clearly defined lanes, end to end. Divide players into two teams. Have each team line up in pairs, the two teams will be at one of the defined area's end lines.

Procedure:

The object of each pair of players is to pass to his teammate through the cones without the ball or a player's foot touching a cone. (I tell the players that it is a mine field and that the cones are land mines.) Do not allow players to dribble but only to make passes.

Begin by allowing the first pair from each team to go. Once a pair of players reach the far end line, the next pair from their team can go. If a ball or a player's foot touches a cone (land mine), that pair has to go back to the starting line and begin again. First team to successfully get all of their players across the mine field wins.

To deal with odd numbers of players or pairs, make one or more players or pairs go twice as needed.



Defend the Castle [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 2-18

Ages: 7-12

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Ed Peers](#)

Search Objectives: Shooting, Controlling, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

A fun game to work on strength/ placement of shot and receiving a well struck ball.

Description:

Setup:

Split players into two even teams, each player should have a ball. Place four parallel lines (lines 1, 2, 3 & 4) of cones that are spaced 5 yards, 20 yards, and 5 yards respectively. The length of the lines are the same and depends on the number of players per team but you should allow about 5 to 7 yards of length per player. One team lines up between lines 1 and 2, the other team lines up between lines 3 & 4; Teams face each other.

Lines 1 & 4 are goal lines (aka the Castle Walls) and lines 2 & 3 are shooting limit lines (aka Cannon Limit Lines).

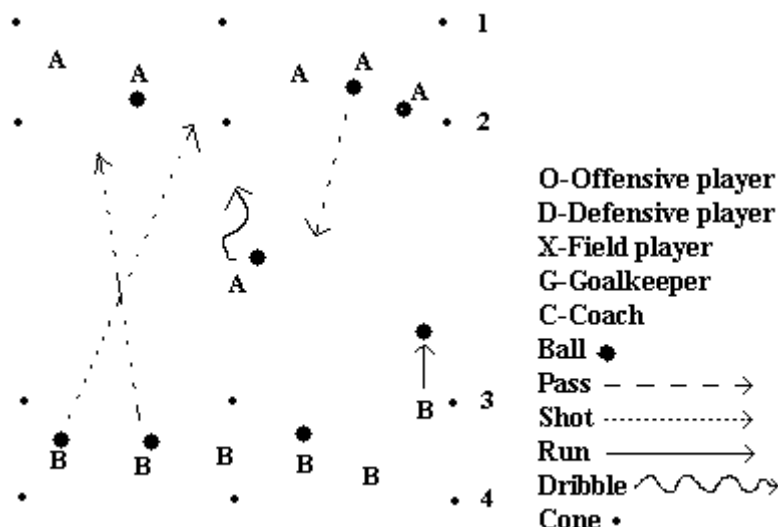
Procedure:

The object of the game is for players to shoot the ball past their opponents goal line (head height or below), if they do their team gets a point; (I tell the players that their legs are the Cannons and the goal lines are Castle Walls). Players must shoot from only between the last two lines on their side(aka the Castle Wall and the Cannon Limit line). Players should defend their goal line (aka the Castle Wall) by using their feet, chest, thighs, head, etc.

Players can retrieve balls from the center area or from beyond the goal line but must return to the shooting area before "firing the cannon".

Play for a set time limit or first to a number of points. Depending on player ages the distances may need to be adjusted.

My players really enjoyed this game. It was interesting to see them develop strategies to work with their teammates as well.



Raptors [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-20

Players: 4-14

Ages: 6-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Ed Peers](#)

Search Objectives: Defense, Tackling, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

A fun game, similar to Knock Out, when beginning to teach the second defender concept.

Description:

Set Up:

Define an area (square or circle does not matter) with cones of a size appropriate for the number of players. Have two players wear bibs, they are the Raptors. The remaining players have a ball at their feet; they are the Prey. All of the players will be inside the defined area. Have extra bibs laying around in pairs in many colors.

Procedure:

First, explain to the players how Raptors would attack their prey in groups; the lead Raptor would go in first and if the prey escaped, the second Raptor was waiting just behind, and to the side, of the first to finish him off, with the first defender rotating behind the second to prevent further escape.

Next, have the "prey" move about the area dribbling their ball. The lead Raptor attacks a Prey and the second Raptor sets up behind, and a little to the side, of the first Raptor. The Raptors work together to dispossess the prey of his ball; the first Raptor attacks if it is possible to do so, or directs the prey into the second Raptor. Raptors then clear the ball from the area and go to attack more Prey.

All prey that are "done in" go outside the area until there are a pair out; these become another pair of Raptors and wear a different color bib. They begin to attack as well. Game goes on until all prey are gone.

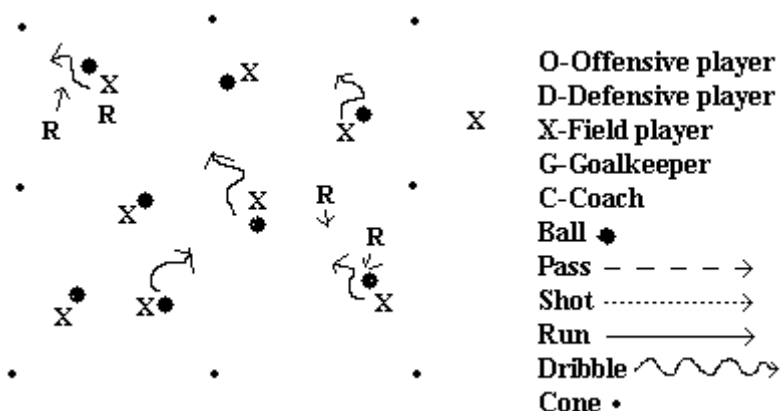
Coaching Points:

Have second "Raptor" set up on the same side as the prey is relative to the first Raptor. Switch as necessary if the prey moves. Do not let Raptors switch to new Prey until they finish off the one they attacked first.

If a Prey gets around the first Raptor, then the second Raptor becomes the lead Raptor and the former first Raptor must rotate behind to become a new second Raptor.

At the conclusion of the game(s), tell the players how this translates to a game situation (no, no, no! you can't

eat the other players). My players' eyes used to roll to the back of their heads when I would use the terms first and second defenders but when I called them first and second Raptors, they caught on immediately!!!



Boxes [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 15-60

Players: 4-22

Ages: 5-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Ed Peers](#)

Search Objectives: Supporting, Passing, Other

Objectives:

To teach younger players to hold positions, keep spacing, and to pass - i.e. to squash the bee-hive! Also good for getting a ball-hog to play nice with others!

Description:

Set Up:

You definitely want to set this up ahead of practice. Divide a field or a practice area using cones, loose colored string (as long as it is not a tripping hazard) or paint (if you can) into a grid pattern that is five grids wide and ten grids long. Grids (or boxes) should be about 5 to 10 yards wide, depending on age. Have unmanned goals at each end. Create two equal teams of players.

Procedure:

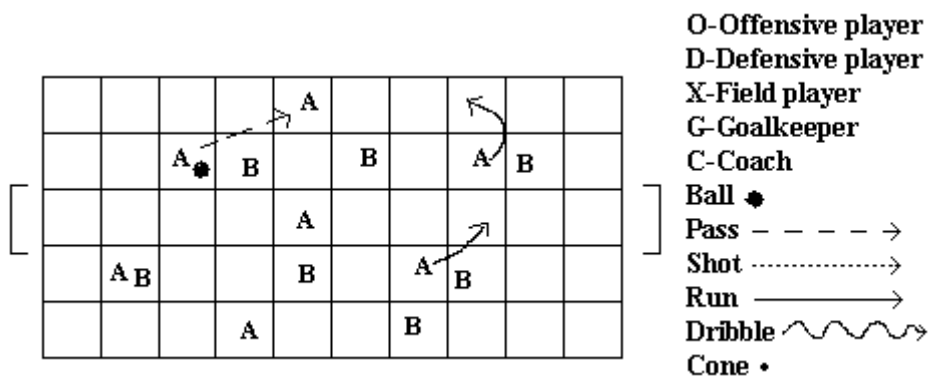
Players are instructed that there can only be one player from each team in any one of the "boxes" at any one time; other players need to be in other boxes, again only one per team per box. Players can move from one box to another unoccupied box.

Play as regular soccer but with the exception that a player cannot dribble the ball across any of the lines of a box but must pass it across. Remind players that they can pass it forwards, backwards, sideways, and diagonally and that they can pass the ball beyond just the adjacent boxes. Any violation of a rule is a free kick for the opposition.

This game can also be played without opposition. Have the players begin at their own end line and attack towards the far goal. If they violate a rule, such as two players in the same box or dribbling across a box line, bring the ball back to the end line and start again.

Coaching Points:

When they get the game down cold, stop the game and tell them to look at the spacing they have created and how they have been moving the ball; relate that to a game's conditions. If you can, switch the players to a similar size field that does not have the boxes and see how they play. My experience has been that once young players see that by holding positions and passing they will all get their chances with the ball, the bee-hive begins to go away.



Add up the Passes - Version 2 [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-30 Players: 4-22 Ages: 7-99 Avg. Rating: ★★★★★ From: [Ed Peers](#)

Search Objectives: Passing, Supporting, Shooting

Objectives:
Stresses passing while attacking.

Description:
Set up two equal teams with goals at either end of a grid sized for the number of players. Keepers are optional.

Play game as regular soccer but award a point for each goal AND A POINT FOR EACH CONSECUTIVE PASS THAT PRECEDED THE GOAL. Thus an unassisted goal would be worth one point, if only one pass preceeded the goal then award two points, two passes before goal award three points, etc.

The game can be based either on a time limit or on a point limit.

Minutes: 2-10 Players: 4-22 Ages: 7-99 Avg. Rating: ★★★★★ From: [Ed Peers](#)

Search Objectives: Passing, Supporting, Tactics

Objectives:
Stresses passing and off-ball support

Description:
Set up two equal teams inside a grid sized for the number of players, without goals. Teams try to maintain possession by passing. Coach counts the number of successful passes in a row before possession is lost. If the number is greater than a set minimum number of passes (i.e. 3 to start), the number of passes is added to that teams score. The team with the higher score at the end of play wins; losing team must do "punishment".

As the players get more proficient, raise the minimum number that needs to be achieved before score gets added.

King of the Square [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15 Players: 4-8 Ages: 7-99 Avg. Rating: ★★★★★ From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Defense, Conditioning

Objectives:
Fun and competitive 1v1 exercise with transition

Description:
SETUP
Mark a 15x15 yard square, one ball, and divide players in two groups with the groups on opposite sides.

PROCEDURE

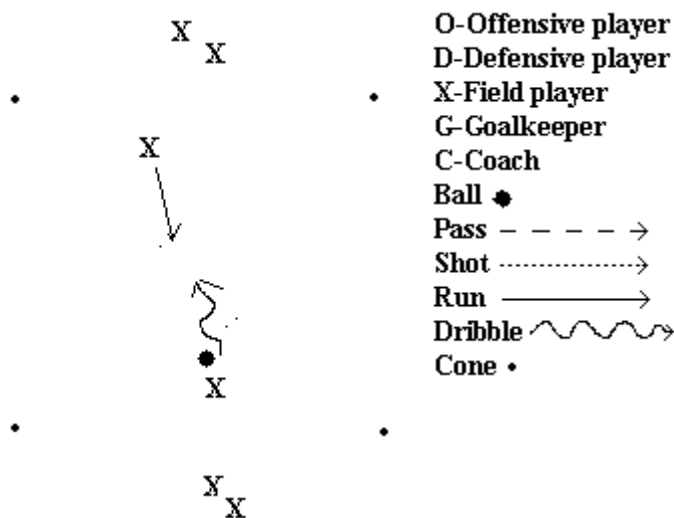
1. Player with ball attacks and plays 1v1 against first player in opposite line.
2. Each player tries to take ball across the opposite line while showing control (i.e. step on ball or have close control).
3. When a player scores he leaves the ball for next player in that line and immediately backs up to defend.
4. Player who lost goes to back of that line.
5. The player first in line where score occurred dribbles ball to attack and play 1v1 with previous winner.

RULES

1. No width boundaries are necessary.
2. If ball goes over a goal line not under control then player defending that goal gets ball to start again.
3. Players in line must stand a few yards outside the square.
4. (Optional) Keep track of individual goals and/or team goals. Players will always be attacking the same goal.

COACHING POINTS

1. Encourage feints and moves to beat defender.
2. Look for quick transition from attack to defense after a score.



Mini Fun Game [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 1-20

Players: 5-6

Ages: 4-111

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [coach bob](#)

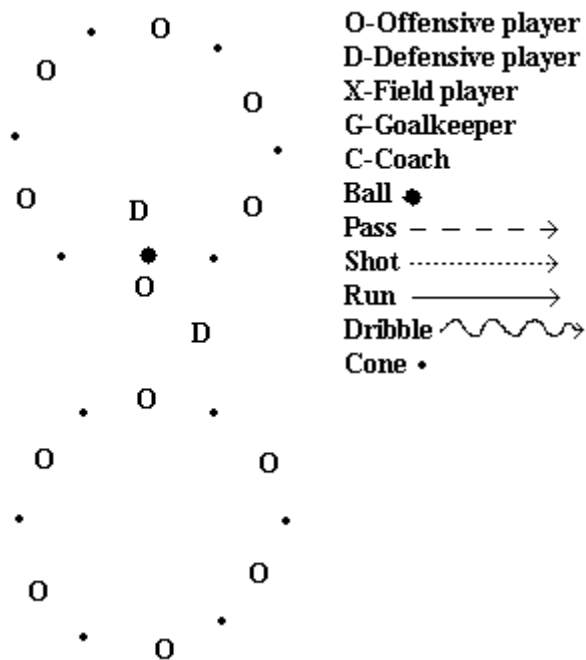
Search Objectives: Supporting, Tactics, Conditioning

Objectives:

Very fun for the kids and very skill oriented.

Description:

Make 2 uneven circles about 3 metres apart. Have different colour teams/pinnies. One person stands between the 2 circles and 1 defender goes in on whichever team you choose to start with the ball. They have to make 5 successful passes and then they can kick it to the other circle if they make it they get a point that's if they get 5 passes and the person in the middle doesn't intercept on the kick across. The first team to 5 wins and o ya if they get a point they stay in the circle but if they don't they have to run out and one person has to immediately defend and one in the middle.



Shoot the Rabbit [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 8-10

Ages: 6-9

Avg. Rating: ★★☆☆☆

From: [BillB](#)

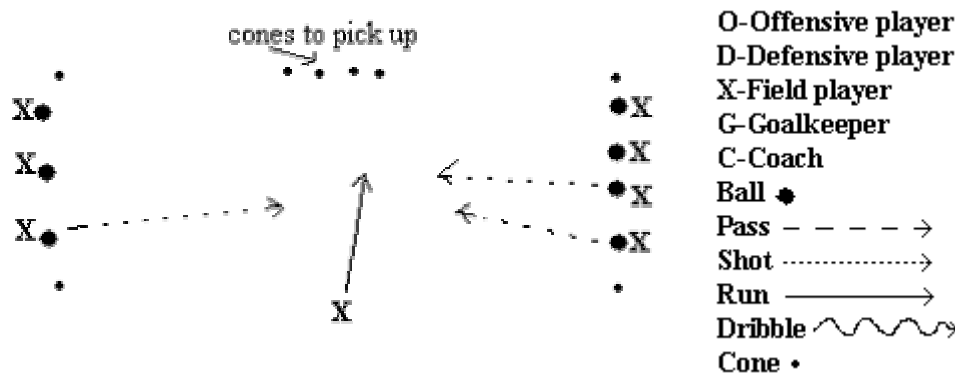
Search Objectives: Shooting, Silly and Fun, Warm-ups

Objectives:

Fun kicking game for young teams

Description:

Grid 10 yards wide by 30 long. Line players with balls on both sides of the short side. One player without a ball begins on one end of long side and place 3 or 4 cones on opposite long side. The player without the ball tries to retrieve all the cones, one at a time, while the players with the balls try to shoot at the him. All shots must be taken behind the line and should be below the waist. Let everyone be the rabbit and keep track of which rabbit was the shot the fewest times. A variation is have the rabbit dribble a ball and the shooters try to hit his ball.



Circle Kicking [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 5-99

Ages: 4-6

Avg. Rating: ★★☆☆☆

From: [Brandie Ford](#)

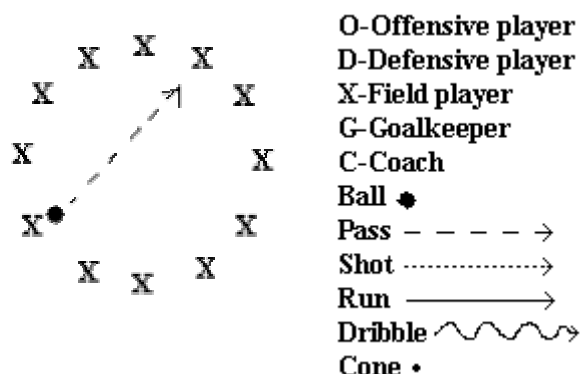
Search Objectives: Passing, Controlling, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

Emphasizes to younger players to rely on their feet for kicking, and not to use hands. And most importantly...to keep their eye on the ball at all times.

Description:

Gather players and have them hold hands forming a circle. Kick a ball around in the circle trying to keep it from getting out of the circle. Vary this drill by first having the player who kicks the ball say the name to the player he is trying to kick to. Remind kids that the bigger the circle, the harder the kick must be.



Exercise for oriented control [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 4-4

Ages: 7-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Andreu Vigo](#)

Search Objectives: Controlling, Passing, Dribbling

Objectives:

This is an exercise in order to improve the oriented control, first without opposition and second, with a little opposition.

Description:

Use three cones to mark a triangle (9 yards each side). Arrange two players with a ball each in cone a and two players in the cones b and c.

Player with a ball from cone a makes a pass to cone b and run to cone b. Player in cone b makes an oriented control, pass to cone c and runs to cone c. Player in cone c makes an oriented control and dribbles as for cone a where the second player with ball starts.

(see image 1)

Progression: Player with a ball pass to player without ball and runs to press him. Player without ball makes an oriented control in order to beat the press, then he must dribble until the start.

(See image 2)

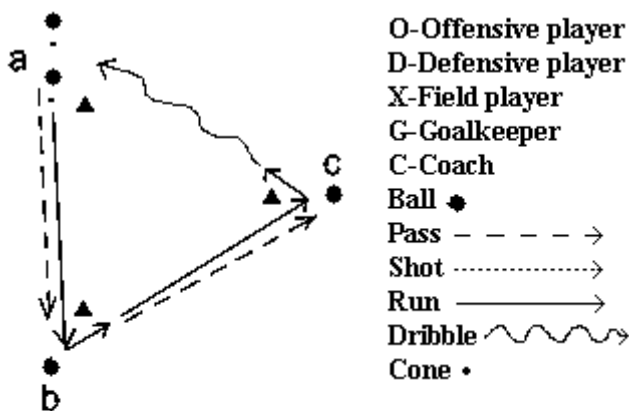


image 1



image 2

Ball mastery plus [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 1-12

Ages: 7-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [CoachKevUK](#)

Search Objectives: Controlling, Dribbling, Warm-ups

Objectives:

Progressive Ball mastery by BOTH feet

Description:

Players in waves of 3 or 4 each with a ball.

On signal, player sole rolls the ball with his right foot, and as his right foot touches the ground again after the roll, there is a slight tap with the inside of the left foot, instant tap with right foot then the sequence is reversed the other way with a left foot sole roll followed by a tap with the inside of the right foot instant tap with the inside of the left foot and then they are back to where they started.

The idea is to keep a momentum going like a pendulum clock effect with the head hardly moving and the legs swaying back and forth. At first the players only move right and left, but as they get more confident they are asked to progress in a diagonal zig zag forward movement.

Progress is made when after the sole roll and the two taps with the insides of both feet, instead of then completing a sole roll back in the opposite direction, there is an extra touch with the outside of the foot first, then the direction is reversed.

So now the full sequence will be:

Right foot sole roll to left. Tap inside left foot, tap inside right foot, TAKE with OUTSIDE of left foot to the left,

STOP the ball then sole roll to right with left foot, tap with right foot, tap with left foot, TAKE with OUTSIDE of right to the right then stop the ball.

Then you can pair off players with a ball between them and then have them pass to each other then instantly do the 2 sequences before returning the pass.

These sequences are SO important to maintain the correct balance between controlling a ball between BOTH feet.

You can even progress these sequences to a game where you award double goals fro every goal score AFTER trying either sequence above. I promise that players WILL definately improve their close control skills if the coach perserveers with this in training.

CoachKevUK

Foxes and Rabbits [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 10-16

Ages: 5-12

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Marky](#)

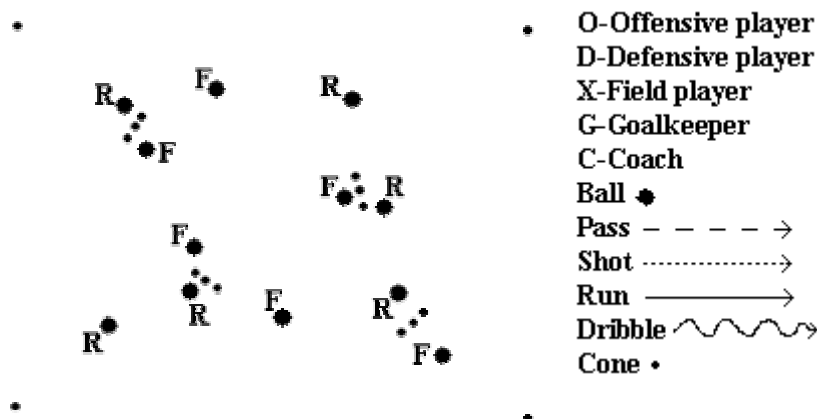
Search Objectives: Dribbling, Shielding, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

Great game for youngsters to encourage using feints and moves

Description:

Every player has a ball and there are two teams. One team is designated as the foxes and they must try to dribble their ball close to a rabbit and hit or touch the rabbit's ball with his ball. The foxes or coach should keep track of the number of touches. Use a large area and play for 5 minutes or so and change teams. A good progression is to use cones and create small 2-3 yard fences randomly around the area. No balls or players can go through a fence and these will encourage the foxes and rabbits to use moves and feints. It's a fun game! Enjoy.



Pass and Split The 2 [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 3-3

Ages: 7-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [CoachKevUK](#)

Search Objectives: Warm-ups, Passing, Conditioning

Objectives:

Warm-up with a ball, passing, moving and knowing the next pass

Description:

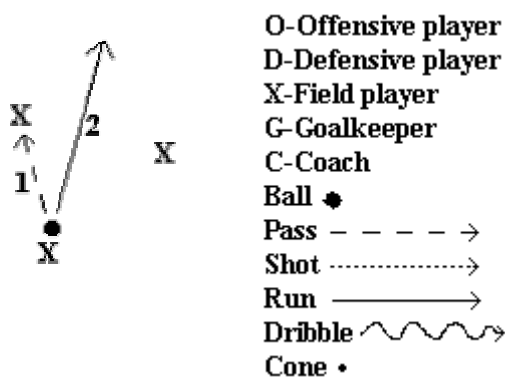
3 Players with one ball. They form a triangle shape, with each no more than 5 metres apart. The player with the ball plays to any of the other 2 X's to begin. Instantly after the pass, the passer has to 'Split the 2' (which means running BETWEEN the other 2 x's), and await his next pass. The X who receives, passes to the X which hasnt touched the ball yet and he too Splits the 2 after the pass.

This carries on as a nonstop warm up and passing routine. The players should constantly be moving , trying to keep the basic triangle formation. After 2/3 mins.Rest. Then Increase or decrease the distance between all 3 players fro increased work. If decrease the distance, all passes are first time. For longer distances 3 touch (control with inside of one foot, angle touch with outside of opposite foot, pass with that foot).

For the more experienced and older groups, headers and volleys could be tried instead of just passing.

Hope you enjoy the routine

Key



Many Goals Game [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 8-18

Ages: 5-14

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Sergie](#)

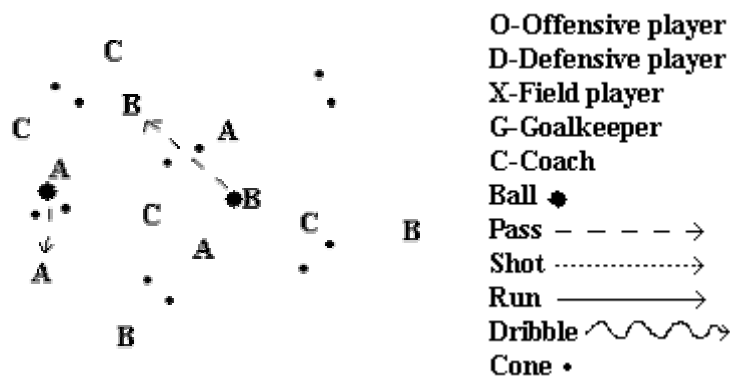
Search Objectives: Passing, Controlling, Supporting

Objectives:

Encourages players to move to open space to support the player with the ball

Description:

Using cones randomly place 4-8 small goals around an area about 30x30 yards. Divide players into 2-3 teams of 4 to 6 players. Play with 1-4 balls. The number of goals, the area size, and the number of balls should increase as the number of players increase. You may need to experiment to find a good balance. There are no boundaries and no restarts, play is continuous. A goal is scored when a team completes a pass through one of the goals. The receiving player must demonstrate control of the ball to count as a score. Coaches should keep score.



Quick Close Goal Shooting Drill [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 14-20

Ages: 6-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Jayne](#)

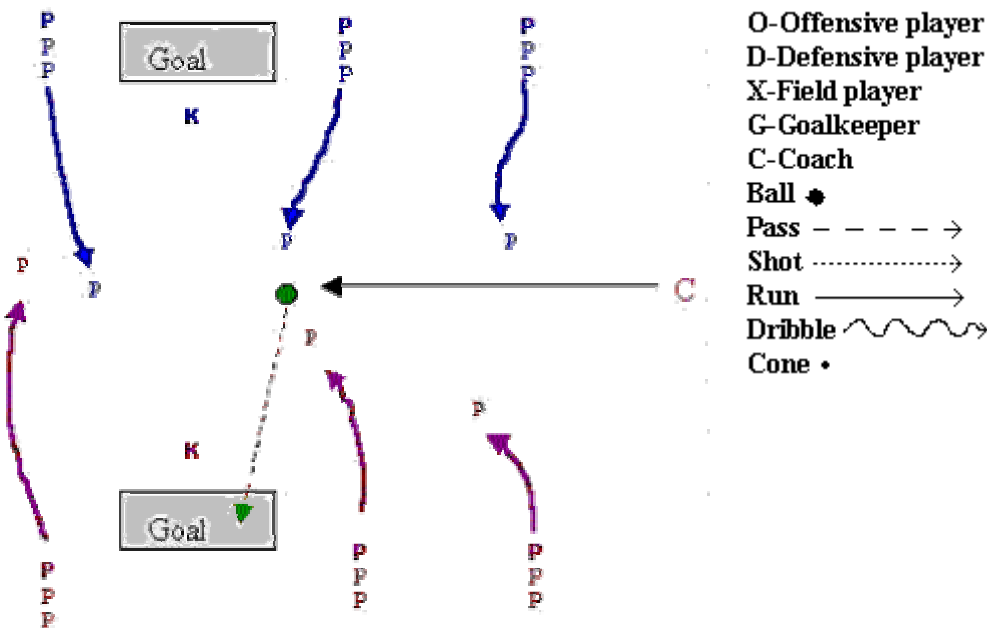
Search Objectives: Shooting, Defense, Tactics

Objectives:

Fast moving shooting game

Description:

Use 2 goals about 25 yards away from each other. Use cones if goals are not available. Form 2 teams and have them line up in 3 lines even with each other's goal. The 1st player from each line enters the field when the coach kicks the ball down the middle. Players from each team work together to shoot and score on the other teams goal. Set a time limit for each group. If a goal is scored or the time expires, a new ball is kicked onto the field and the next groups begin play.



Tigerball [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 8-16

Ages: 5-16

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Jimmy](#)

Search Objectives: Defense, Dribbling, Silly and Fun

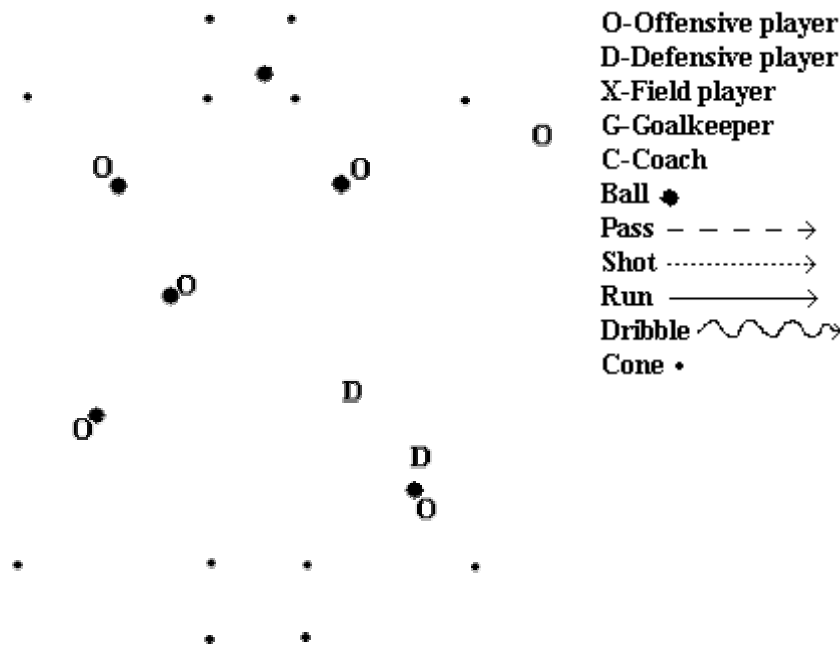
Objectives:

Fun game to teach first and second defender principles

Description:

Mark off a field about 30x20 yards with two 5v5 yard squares at each end. Start with 8 players on the field, 6 players with a ball each, and 2 players as the "tigers" or defenders. On the whistle the pair of tigers work together to win a ball and place the ball in one of the collection squares. The tigers must work together and can only attack and win one ball at a time. If a dribbler loses his ball to the tigers he can attempt to regain possession until the ball is put in a collection square, then the dribbler must leave the field. If a ball goes out of bounds the coach should have 1 or 2 extra balls at his disposal and immediately throw another ball onto the field towards the player(s) who did not play the ball out. Keep track of how long it takes each tiger pair to collect all 6 balls. Rotate the "tigers" and rotate in the players on the sidelines. If you have 16 just have two groups of 8 players.

Tip: Before playing explain how one tiger should pressure the dribbler while the other tiger should lurk 3-8 yards behind and to the side of his partner anticipating where the dribbler might go. The first tiger wants to force the dribbler into his partner or into a mistake and the second tiger, if necessary, should pounce on the ball when that happens. There are many books which go more indepth about first and second defender tactics.



Shielding [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 1-1

Ages: 5-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [David](#)

Search Objectives: Shielding, Dribbling, Warm-ups

Objectives:

Shield the ball, ball on far foot, keep shoulder turned.

Description:

Warmup

In a circle dribbling around the coach the ball is always on the outside foot AWAY from the coach.. Change direction with a chop, outside of foot turn, etc. always AWAY from the opponent. In this case the coach in the center.

Free Play

No instructions.

In pairs keep the ball away from a partner. Change every thirty seconds. Don't worry about resting. They will stop. Just keep circulating and keep them moving. About 2-3 minutes worth. Observe errors, who you will have to work with later, and who's good, so they can help you demonstrate. (Free play is an excellent opportunity to also train YOU. Increasing your observational powers and coaching eye).

Drill(s)

Critique the free play. Demonstrate with yourself and an opponent. Point your shoulder to her with the ball on the near leg and have a player try to steal it. They will. Ask the question/ What should you have done.

The emphasis should be ball on the far leg.

(Verbalizing)Put the ball on the on the far leg, shoulder pointed toward opponent. Now ask the player to get the ball. (I assume your big enough that body size, compared to player, will overcome any lack of skill)

Now demonstrate dribbling with the opponent on the shoulder. Take a few steps. Then reverse direction with the same move you had them perform in the circle. Involve another pair of players to get them to demonstrate. Make corrections by asking the group what goes wrong.

Split them up in pairs and have them try it. Circulate and correct. Wild body movements are a common error. Get them to calm down and perform. "Be cool. The man can't get it with the ball on the far leg, etc."

Another common error will be turning their back on the opponent THE NEXT PRACTICE -NOT THIS ONE. Start at the beginning of drill above. "Yeah we got it coach- you did that last time". Now show the difference of having the back to the opponent vs the shoulder. Do this by letting the opponent kick the ball away from you by poking. Illustrate with the shoulder turned the distance between the ball is increased. Repeat all of the above.

Your two main points are: ball on far foot, keep shoulder turned.

Box Drill 3 v 1

Same as usual, but this time change the emphasis from one or two touches to four or five. Alternatively, holding the ball for a five count before passing it.

Small sided Game

Carry over the condition from the box drill.

Warm up

Soccer dancing with sole of foot per pervious posts.

Free Play/Drills

Keep ball under sole of foot, opponent leans on shoulder and tries to get to it. Reverse direction when opponent commits.

Handling an opponent on the back.(Note this is not taught at the start since in earlier ages getting the shoulder around is preferred). The body lean is more, and the ball leg is extended to avoid being poked. Vary degree of physical pressure and pushing. {For new refs: try this with NO OPPONENT and you will see your arms have to be out for balance. Don't get caught up in the hands by the sides routine} Box drill again but 3 v 2 hold ball longer and include takeovers.

Small sided game

Condition : forwards must hold ball from long passes until help arrives, takeover, etc.

Coerver Move

Stop ball by stepping on ball. Take giant step with same foot to put body between ball and opponent. Turn in opposite direction to dribble or pass. Practice using standard Coerver drills, buildup. Insist this turn be used through practice for all aspects of practice where a 180 turn is required, such as running down stray balls and returning to a group.

1 vs 1 Competition [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 15-20

Players: 10-14

Ages: 6-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Edward](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Defense, Shielding

Objectives:

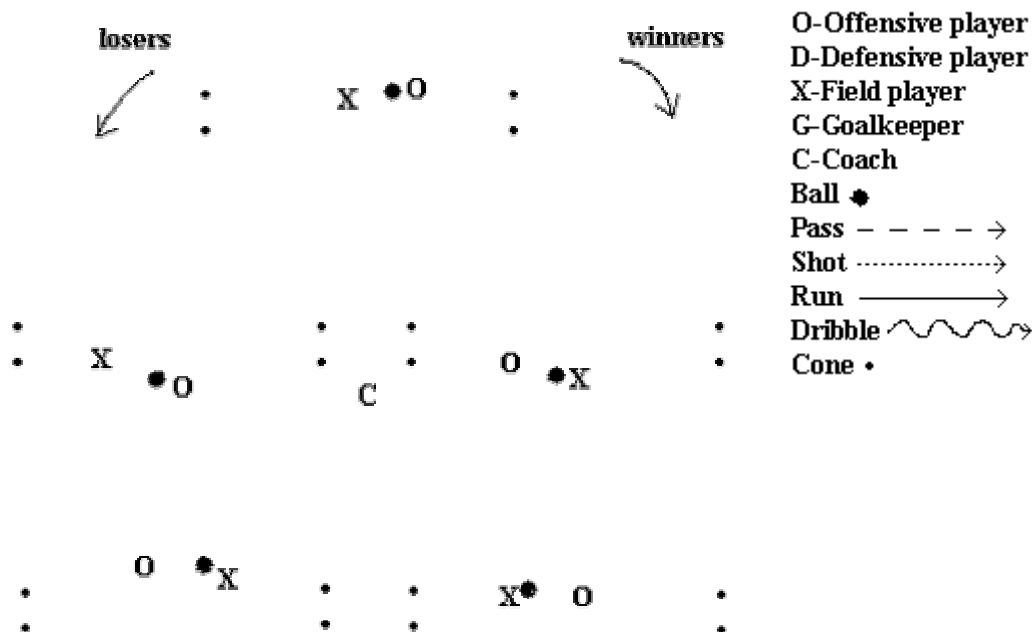
A good 1 versus 1 competition to foster competition between equal skill levels

Description:

Setup five different 1v1 fields in a horseshoe shape facing down. Each field should be 10-14 yards long. You do not need the width marked but be sure each field is far enough away from each other to minimize collisions. The goals should be around 1 1/2 yards wide.

It's 1v1 and each game is 2-3 minutes long. The winner in each game moves clockwise to the next field and the loser moves counter-clockwise. The loser at the bottom-left field and the winner at the bottom-right field stay put. If the game is tied the challenger, the player who had moved clockwise, wins the match. If the ball goes over the endline the player who is defending that goal gets possession no matter who knocked it out. Play 5-6 rounds.

Tips: Add more fields if you have more players. Encourage the use of moves and using a good defensive stance.



Freeze Tag [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-15

Players: 10-16

Ages: 5-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Colin](#)

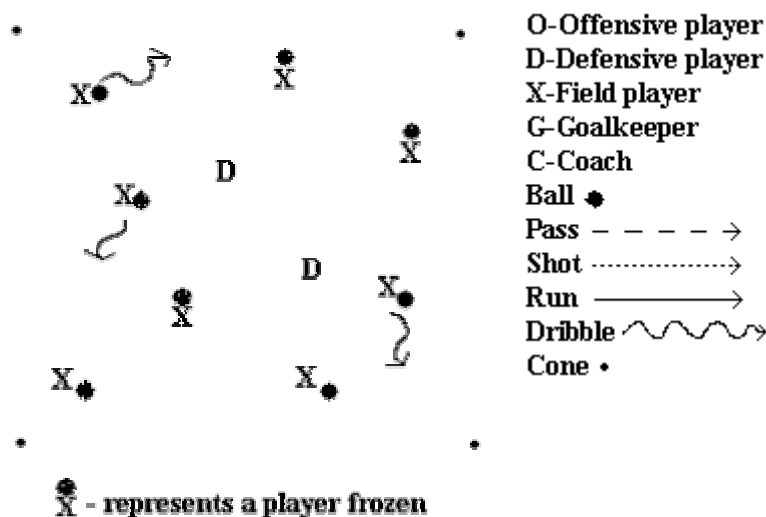
Search Objectives: Dribbling, Silly and Fun, Warm-ups

Objectives:

Fun drill for dribbling and team play

Description:

This is just like the kid game of freeze tag but with soccer balls. Use cones to mark off an area 40x40 yards or so. Designate one or two players as the taggers and the rest of the players have a ball. The two players try to tag the other players. If a player is tagged they must hold their ball over their head and spread their legs. An unfrozen teammate can free the frozen player by dribbling or passing the ball between the frozen player's legs.



Hit the Ball [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 10-10

Ages: 5-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Jay K.](#)

Search Objectives: Shooting, Passing, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

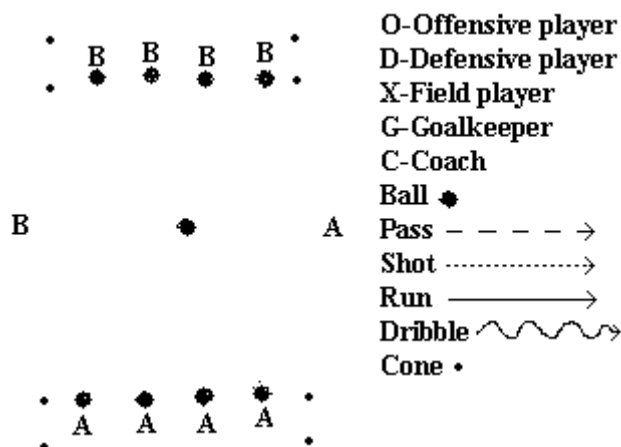
Fun exercise to improve kicking accuracy

Description:

Setup: Mark a 25x10 yard field with 4 yard zones on each end. Divide players into two teams with each team in a zone. Place a lighter type ball (for example a beachball or volleyball) at the center of the field. Divide soccer balls evenly between the two teams. Have one team place a player on the right side and the other team place a player on the left.

Procedure: Players, from their zones, kick the soccer balls at the center ball. The objective is to push the center ball into the opponent's zone to win. Side players collect stray balls and pass to their teammates. Players can come out of their zone to get stray balls but they must be in their zone to shoot at the center ball.

Tips: Use inside of foot for accuracy. For very young players consider making the field 20 yards long.



Through the Cones [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 10-16

Ages: 5-14

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Sir Alex](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Warm-ups, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

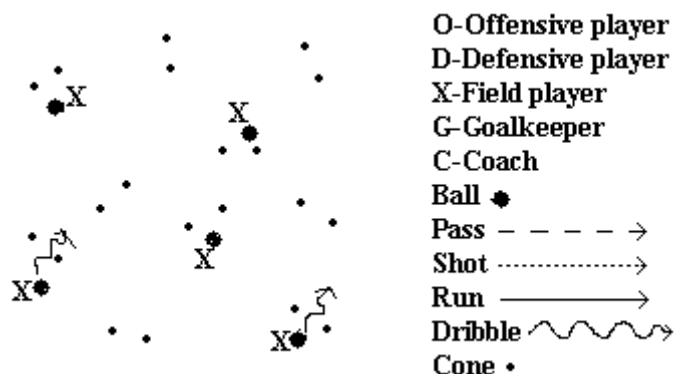
Fun drill to work on dribbling skills

Description:

I do this for a warm-up before almost every practice.

In a 15-20 yard area set up 10-12 pairs of cones randomly with each pair about a yard apart. Divide the team in two groups and have one group at a time try to dribble through as many pairs of cones in 60 seconds. Keep score for individuals and/or teams. Vary the dribbling rules such as left foot only, outside foot only, use the sole of the foot through the cones, make a certain move after going through the cones, etc. One rule is you can not dribble through the same pair of cones twice in a row.

If you think of other variations please include them in a review.



Give and Go [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 2-3

Ages: 5-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Christian Petrowski](#)

Search Objectives: Passing, Controlling, Warm-ups

Objectives:

Give and Go

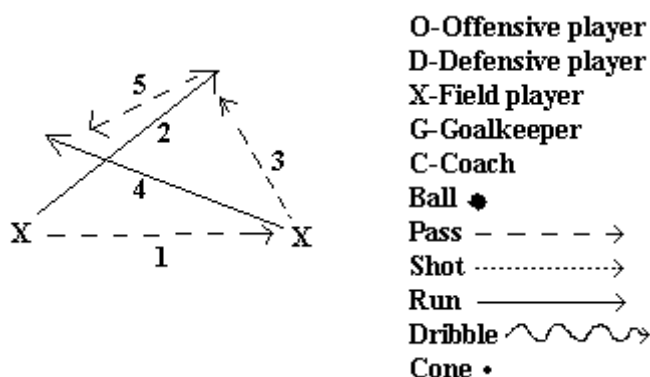
Description:

Setup: 2 players 1 ball

Procedure:

- 1) Players should be spaced 10 yards apart.
- 2) Player 1 pass's the ball to player 2
- 3) Player 1 than moves in a clockwise motion.
- 4) Player 2 pass's to player 1
- 5) Player 2 than moves in a clockwise motion
- 6) Player 1 pass's to player 2 etc..

This drill has proven to be excellent in Conditioning and teaching my kids to keep thier heads up and anticipating correct timing, direction and location of recieving player



Changing Squares [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 9-16

Ages: 5-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [John](#)

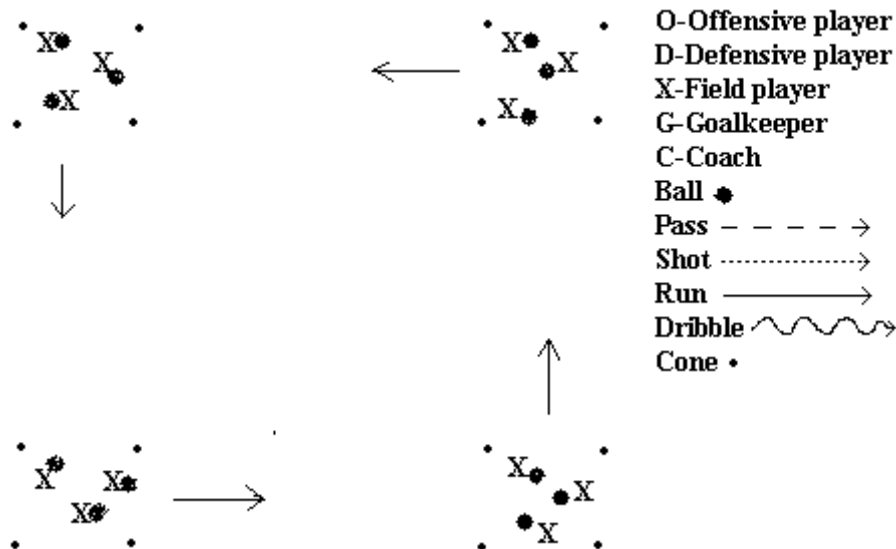
Search Objectives: Dribbling, Silly and Fun, Conditioning

Objectives:

Fun drill to work on dribbling skills

Description:

Setup, using cones, four 10x10 yard squares about 20-30 yards apart. Divide players evenly into each square with each player having a ball. While in square give various commands such as toe-taps, dribble with left foot, roll-overs etc., etc. After a minute or two announce "clockwise" and whistle. All players race with ball to the next square which is clockwise. First player to control his/her ball in each group in the next square wins round. Keep score. Continue for 5-6 rounds and alternate "clockwise" and "counter-clockwise" for the direction. For fun, use "diagonal" and watch all players race and avoid other players. Be sure to adequately explain "clockwise" and "counter-clockwise".



Terminator [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-20

Players: 4-10

Ages: 5-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Lee Konicki](#)

Search Objectives: Shielding, Dribbling, Defense

Objectives:

ball control, dribbling, shielding, stealing

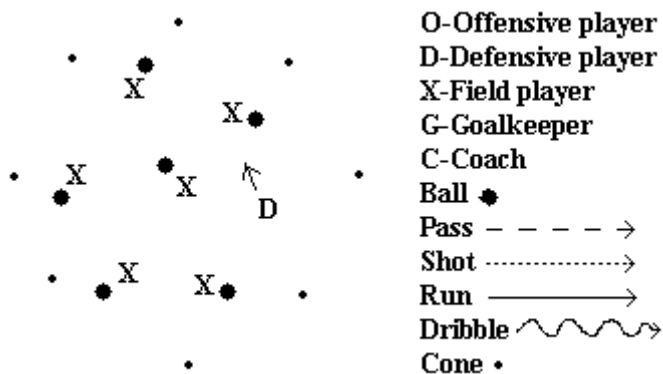
Description:

Setup : a circle or square marked with cones , the size will depend on the age group. For my 5 yr olds I use a circle of about 15 yards in diameter.

Players : all players are in the circle one w/out a ball this is the terminator.

Object : the terminator attacks the others in the circle and attempts to kick the balls out of the circle. If a players ball is kicked out they retrieve it and sit out until one player remains in the middle with the terminator. The last player is the terminator for the next game.

Extra : my kids love this , we start the game when the terminator growls and we let the last player and terminator go at it until the terminator kicks that one out as well.



Clear the Balls [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 10-14

Ages: 5-9

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Coach](#)

Search Objectives: Silly and Fun, Shooting, Controlling

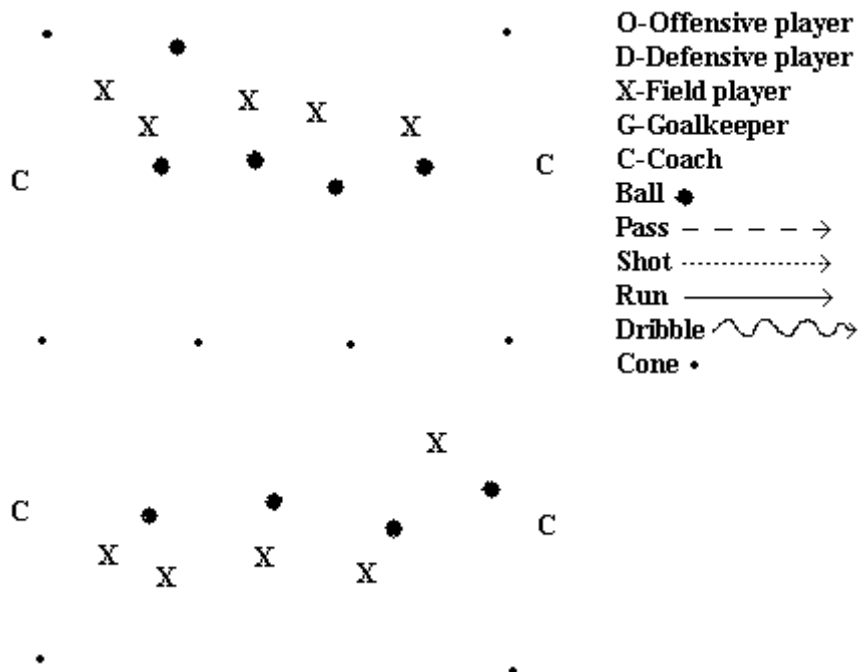
Objectives:

Improve instep kick while having fun

Description:

Mark a rectangular grid about 40x20 yards with cones marking a center line. Half the players and balls on one side and the other half on the other side. the object is to kick the balls to the other side and have the fewest balls when time is up. play for 1-2 minutes and 3 to 5 rounds. lastly, place coaches or helpers along the sides to redirect balls going out of bounds.

Encourage players to kick with the laces!



Rob the Bank [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 10-16

Ages: 5-12

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Tactics, Silly and Fun, Dribbling

Objectives:

Good for team work, dribbling, passing, and fun

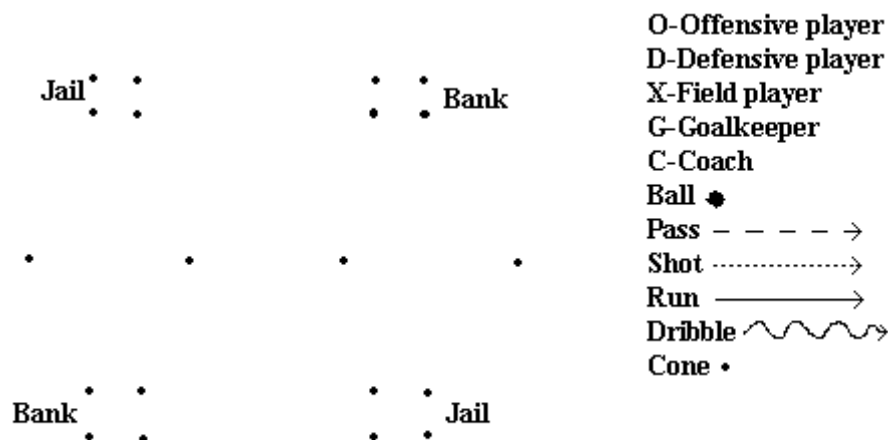
Description:

Setup: Divide your field in two with a center line of cones. Mark 2 5x5 yard squares on each half about 20 yards from the center line and about 25 yards apart (see figure). One square on each half is the jail and the other is the bank. Place X number of balls in each bank where X equals the number of players per team.

Procedure: The object of the game is for a team to gather all the balls in their bank while following these rules:

1. Players are safe in their half but if a player is tagged while in the opponent's half he or she must go directly to jail.
2. A player is released from jail if a teammate tags them.
3. Players must use their feet to move the ball. A hand ball results in that ball being placed in the opponent's bank.
4. Players are not allowed to hang out in their bank or jail. Infraction results in loss of ball.
5. There are no out of bounds.
6. Have fun!

Tip: Might have to put a time limit on the game and say most balls in the bank at end of time wins. Have a coach or helper at each end to enforce rules.



Numbers Game [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 15-30

Players: 10-18

Ages: 6-13

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Jamie Webb](#)

Search Objectives: Defense, Dribbling, Tackling

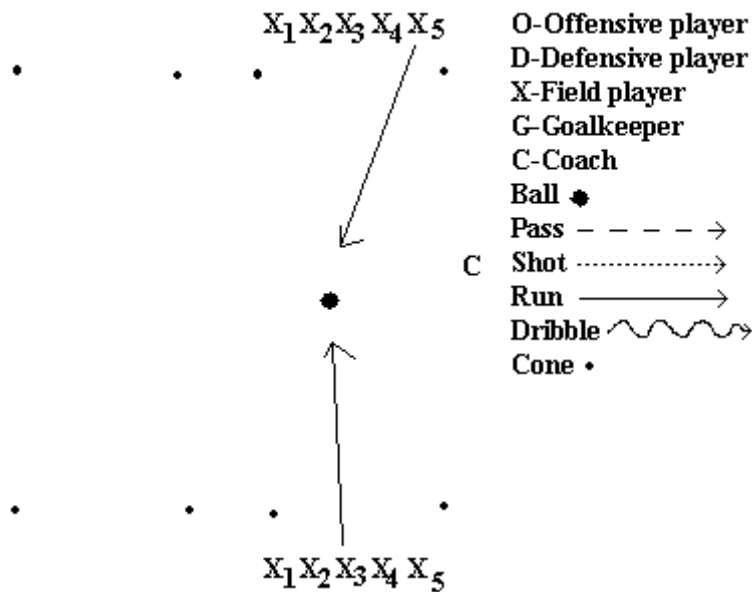
Objectives:

Good small sided game

Description:

Setup: 20x40 grid, leave both ends of grid open. Place a set of cones in the middle of both ends, having the cones about 3 feet apart. These are your goals. After you have set up the field, divide your players into two equal teams. (for instance, two teams of eight) Have both teams line up outside of the grid opposite of each

other. Assign each player a number.(ex. Team 1:1-8, Team 2:1-8) Then assign each team a goal. The Coach will start the game by tossing the ball inside the grid and calling a number(#1). The players (#1) from each team will then try to dribble the ball through their goal. They must have control of the ball and be no more than two steps away from the ball when they dribble it through their goal. If they do not have control or are more than two steps away from the ball, the goal does not count. If the ball goes out of the grid, play stops. Once a player scores, award that team 1 point. After players are back into position call out another number. To make the game more interesting, call out another number(#4) while players #1 are playing. Now you have players #1 and #4 on the field at the same time. This will encourage passing and team play. As the game goes on, you can continue to call out more numbers.



Home base [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20 Players: 10-14 Ages: 5-14 Avg. Rating: ★★★★★ From: [Dave Rice \(English F.A. coach\)](#)

Search Objectives: Silly and Fun, Passing, Other

Objectives:

A fun game that gets a little crazy. Look at Home run (progression) for follow up drill that develops passing, support play and creating angles.

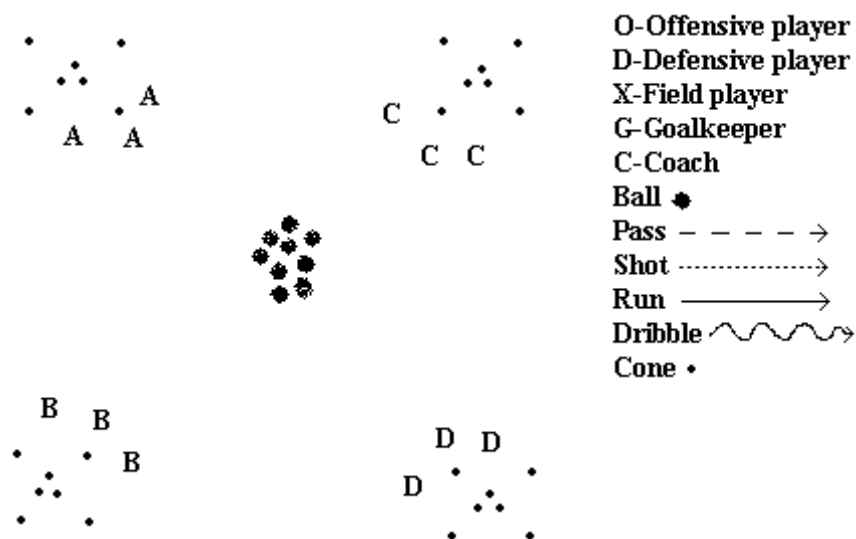
Description:

Set up a 20x20 yard grid. In each corner of the grid, mark out a 2/3 yard square (home base)with three marker cones in the center on which you can balance a football(you know, those cones with the holes on top). This drill works best if you have four teams of three players, one team in each Home Base. If your numbers do not work you can have uneven teams or set up two seperate games. For this discription i will assume you have four teams of three. Place nine footballs in the middle of the grid. Players start the game in thier own Home Bases. They have to run to the center and dribble a football back to thier Homee Base and place it on a cone. Each team can only have one ball at a time and each team member must touch the ball once (encourages passing). They can only pick a ball up when it is in thier Home Base and no player is allowed to linger in the Home Base. If any of the rules are broken, the coach/parent/helper must take a football off the cone of the offending team and serve it back into the grid. Players can steal a football from other Home Bases and there is no tackling or blocking allowed. If there are more than two players from the same team in thier own Home Base when they place a ball on the cone, then the ball must be served back into the grid. If the ball goes out of the grid it must be served back into the grid. The first team with three footballs in thier Home Base, wins. This game is best played with a coach/parent/helper in each corner to check on who is cheating (because they will) or breaking the rules (because there are a lot of rules). You will be suprised how quick the youngsters pick it up and it is fun for all to watch and play. The game may take a while to finish because a lot of footballs will be served back into the grid.

If time does not permit, you can set a time limit and the winner is the team with the most footballs in thier Home Base.

I think I rememberred everything, it may pay to print this out and take it with you if you plan to use it.

Yours in sport,
Dave Rice.



Find the Coach [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 3-15

Players: 1-12

Ages: 5-8

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Eric Moore](#)

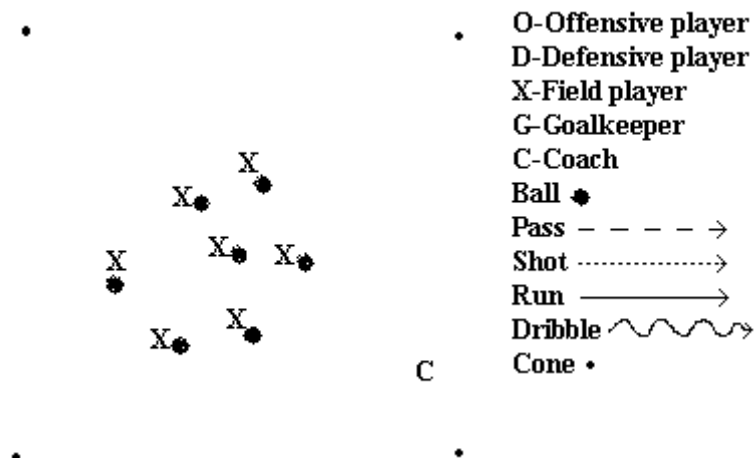
Search Objectives: Dribbling, Shooting, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

Helps to keep players heads up while passing.

Description:

This drill is best for younger kids. Each player has their own ball and is spread out around the field (any size field larger than 20 X 20 yards will work). Each player gets on knees and places their forehead on the ball and closes their eyes. The coach moves to a far away area from the players and when in place blows the whistle to start play. The players must get up quickly from the ground (an important concept for 5-8 year olds) find the coach, and then dribble to the coach and shoot at him. The first one to have a ball strike the coach wins. In addition to keeping their head up while dribbling, this drill also teaches quickness shooting, and dribbling with a crowd. Most important the kids absolutly love this one. You can alter the drill by adding additional coaches, having the coach move rather than a stationary position. doesn't work well if field is wet or muddy.



Switching Scrimmage [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 11-13

Ages: 6-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Tactics, Supporting, Passing

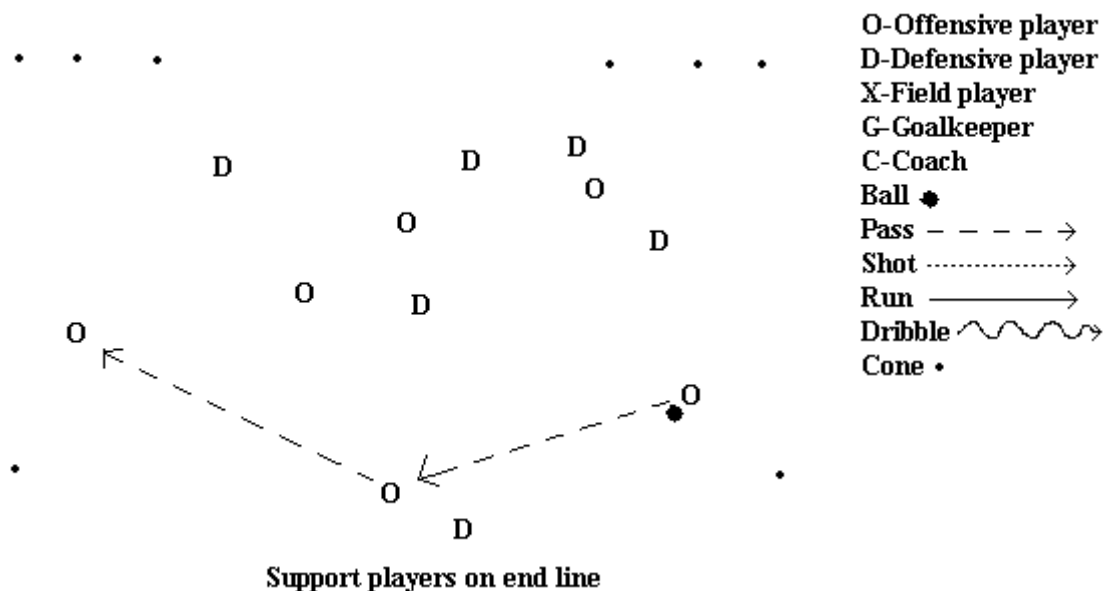
Objectives:

Encourage switching the point of attack

Description:

Setup and Procedure: Use cones to mark off a field 25 x 30 (width) yards (adjust for age), and mark two five-yard goals near each corner at top of the field (see diagram below). It's 5 vs 5 with each team having a support player running along the bottom endline. Each team tries to score in either goal; however, when a team gains possession they must make at least one pass to their support player before attacking a goal (sort of like half court basketball). The support player can move anywhere along the endline but he cannot dribble with the ball. He should be doing one, two or three touches at most. No players can take the ball from a support player! Normal soccer rules apply except there are no offsides and no goal kicks. Always restart with throw-ins when ball goes out of bounds. Balls must pass through the goal on the ground to count.

Tips: Encourage teams to use the support player to switch the attack. For younger teams I would recommend the coaches play the support player role. If there is only one coach have him/her support both teams. Extra players should rotate after every goal.



Dribble and Turn [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 9-16

Ages: 5-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Conditioning, Other

Objectives:

Improve speed dribbling abilities and various turns (reversing direction)

Description:

SETUP

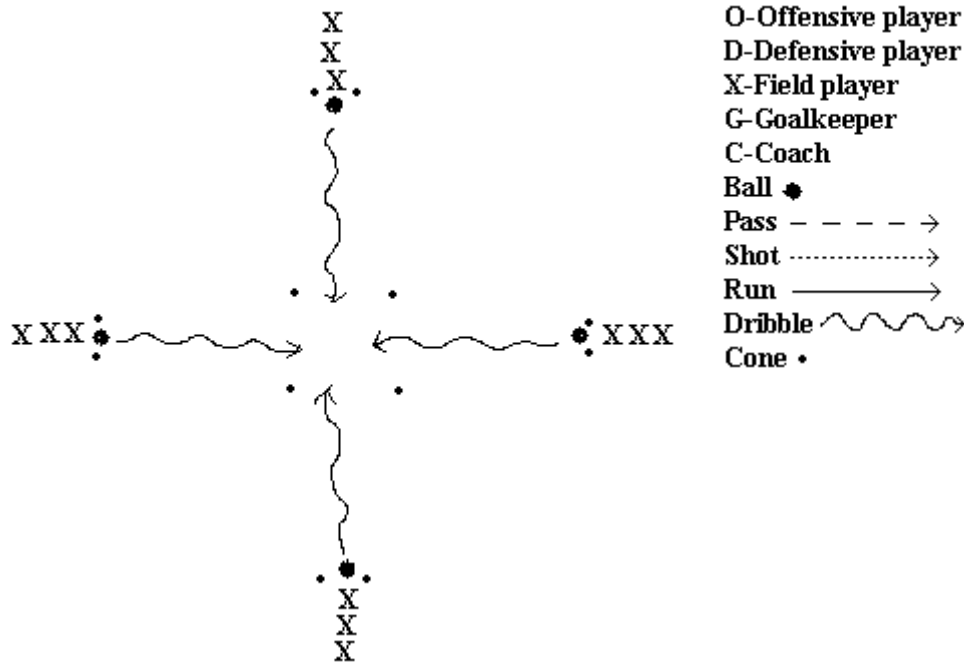
Mark a small square about 7x7 yards, mark four starting points around the square and about 15 yards from the square, evenly divide players to the four starting points, and one ball for each line.

PROCEDURE

1. Players with ball dribble to the middle square and then reverse direction once they are inside the square.
2. Dribble back to their line and leave ball for next player.

COACHING POINTS

1. Work on different ways to reverse direction: inside of foot, outside of foot, using sole and spin, etc..
2. After practicing a few turns do relay races.



The 3-Pass Game [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 4-99

Ages: 5-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Ina Neiser](#)

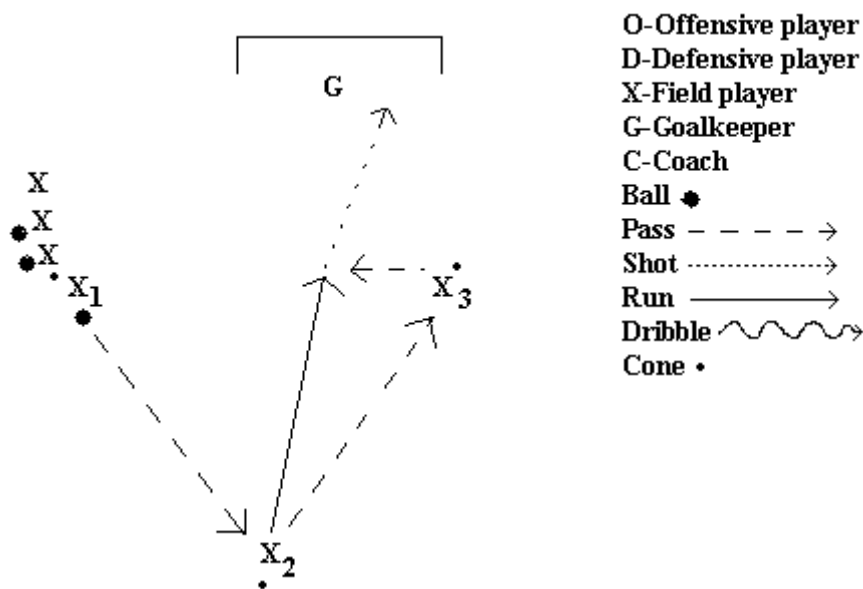
Search Objectives: Shooting, Passing, Controlling

Objectives:

For work on long, controlled passes and following your pass.

Description:

SETUP: you will need 3 cones, a goal, and a few balls. Put the 3 cones in a triangle about 30 yards away from each other in front of the goal. Line kids behind Cone1, one kid in front of Cone2 facing goal (this kid is eventually the shooter), and one kid in front of Cone3. 1st kid in line at Cone1 passes ball to "shooter" (kid at Cone2). As passer is running to take shooter's place, shooter passes the ball to kid by Cone3. Shooter then either cuts to the middle asking for the ball or goes around Cone3 asking for it while still running. Shooter immediately shoots when he gets the ball and then takes spot at Cone3.



Specialist Game [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-30

Players: 8-22

Ages: 5-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Rick Vincent](#)

Search Objectives: Heading, Tackling, Controlling

Objectives:

To improve particular weaknesses with individual players in a team game situation

Description:

Start with an equal amount of players on each side if possible uneven can work ok as well. Give each individual player a specific task i.e 1 touch only, shoot first time, play the ball backwards only, this drill is endless i.e if you have a player that is not very good on his left foot he can only pass or shoot with his left, or as with my centre forward he kept turning every time he had the ball I gave him the only play the ball backwards drill and it helped him learn hold up play.

D-PIT [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 4-115

Ages: 5-99

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Joe P.](#)

Search Objectives: Controlling, Tactics, Passing

Objectives:

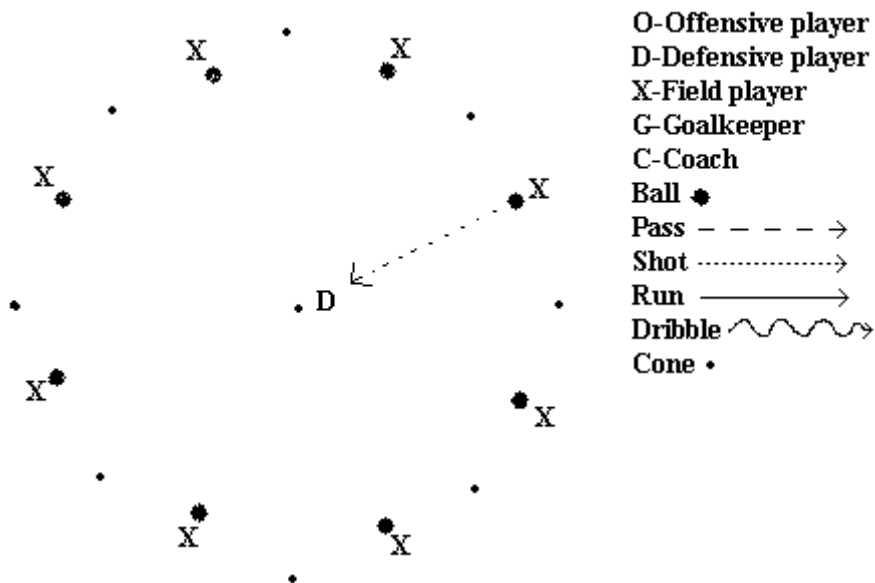
Marking a player & accurate kicks. It forces the "defender" to step in front of the opponent "cone" before he touches the ball.

Description:

10-15 yard perimeter(circle or square). One cone in the center.

All players spread out around the perimeter except one defender that get in the middle "marking the cone". The players on the perimeter shoot at the cone, one at a time. The "defender in the middle blocks the balls from hitting the cone.

Variations of this drill can be done by either calling the players name that's going to shoot or having less balls than shooters so the shooters have to challenge each other for the balls.



Mini Soccer [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 6-6

Ages: 6-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Don Granger](#)

Search Objectives: Tactics, Passing, Shooting

Objectives:

Good scrimmage which teaches small group tactics in 3 vs 2 situation

Description:

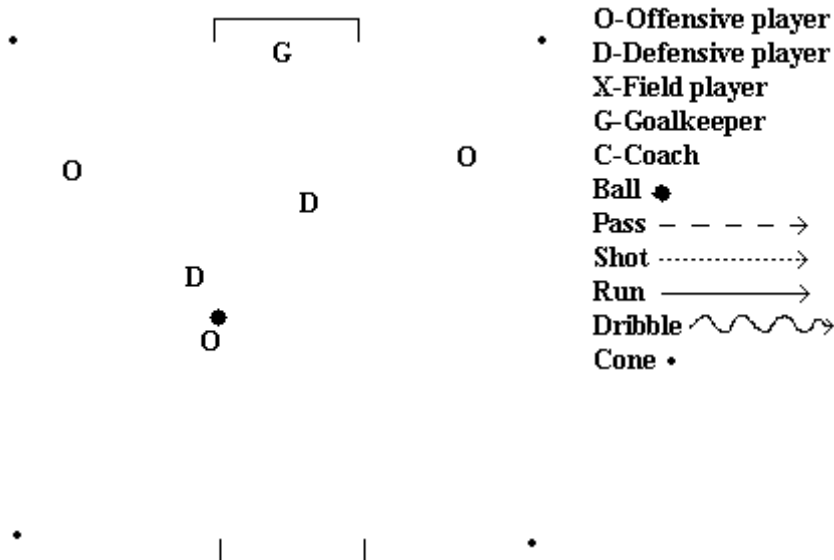
Setup: A 30 yard long soccer field with two 5-yard goals at each end. There is really no need to mark a width boundary but if you want to make it 20-25 yards.

Procedure: Regular soccer rules apply except for the following exceptions:

1. The team on defense must always have one player in goal and the goalkeeper is not allowed to come off the line. Therefore, if a team loses possession a designated player must immediately retreat to the goal.
2. When the defending team wins possession they must pass back to the goalkeeper before attacking.
3. Goals are scored by shooting the ball through the goal below the goalkeeper's shoulders.

This scrimmage teaches just about everything about soccer just by playing - spacing, runs, pressure, transition, etc...

Tips: Have extra balls available to expedite play. Encourage possession of the ball and quick low shots. Spread the attack and use the extra man advantage wisely. Alternate the designated goalkeeper after each goal.



North, South, East, West [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 8-10

Ages: 6-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Coach M](#)

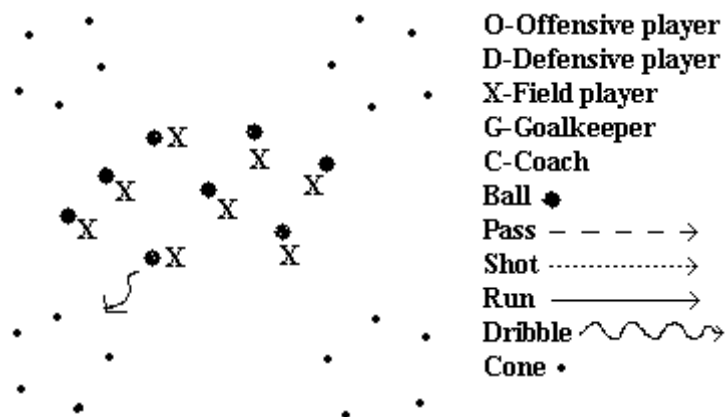
Search Objectives: Dribbling, Silly and Fun, Shielding

Objectives:

Improve ball control while keeping head up

Description:

Mark off a 20x20 yard square with small circles at each corner. Designate a north, south, east and west circle. Players begin with a ball each in the square and dribble around avoiding other players. When coach whistles players stop ball with foot on the ball. At command of "north", "south", "east" or "west" all players dribble to that corner circle. Winner is first to control ball in circle. Play again and keep score of winners. For variation have players dribble with just their left or right foot.



Learning the Instep Kick [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 1-4

Ages: 5-12

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Shooting, Controlling, Dribbling

Objectives:

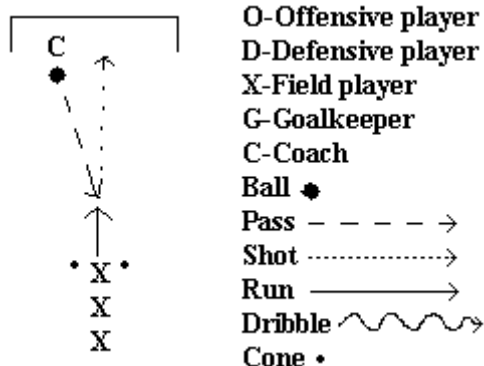
Simple way to teach the instep kick to youngsters

Description:

The easiest ball to kick is the ball rolling towards you (remember playing kick ball?). Therefore, in my opinion, the best way to teach a youngster the instep kick is to roll the ball, not too firmly, to him and have him run to the ball (3-4 steps) and kick it. Emphasize three things: kick it hard, keep the toes pointing down, and bend the knee. Everything else important for a good soccer kick (the foot plant, arms out, head down, eyes on the ball...) will come naturally with time.

Setup and Procedure: Form a line of 1-4 players about 15 yards from the goal. The coach, with soccer balls, is in the goal somewhat near the goal post to his right. The ball coming from a slight angle helps a bit. The coach serves the ball on the ground and the first player runs to the ball and kicks it in the goal. Tell them to kick it hard and remind them to bend the knee for power. Discourage kicking with the toes, and when a player accidentally kicks the ball with their instep (this will happen), praise him/her and tell them "that was a soccer kick." Continue.

Tips: Once players begin to use the instep consistently, have them trap, dribble once, and shoot.



Side-Help Scrimmage [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 15-20

Players: 8-12

Ages: 6-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Passing, Controlling, Tactics

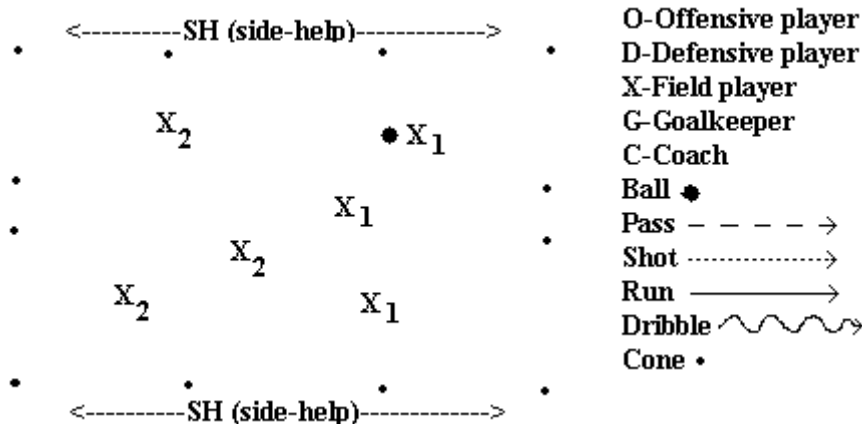
Objectives:

Improve team passing and possession using outside support

Description:

Setup and Procedure: Soccer field about 30 x 20, small goals, 3 vs 3 (up to 5 vs 5), and two "side-help" players. Normal soccer rules apply except the side-help players are neutral and roam up and down the side lines providing support to whichever team has the ball. The side-help cannot dribble and must pass back to the team which touched the ball last. Players on the field cannot take the ball away from a side help player. If the ball goes past the side-help player then it is a throw-in. This is a good scrimmage to which encourages passing and possession.

Tip: Really encourage the players to use their side-help. For younger teams it is better if the side-help are coaches and/or more skillful players. Encourage and-again's using the side-help. Also, for younger teams under 10) feel free to use a larger goal with goalies. Vary the field size taking into account age and number of players.



3-Goal Game [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 15-20

Players: 11-17

Ages: 5-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Tactics, Passing, Controlling

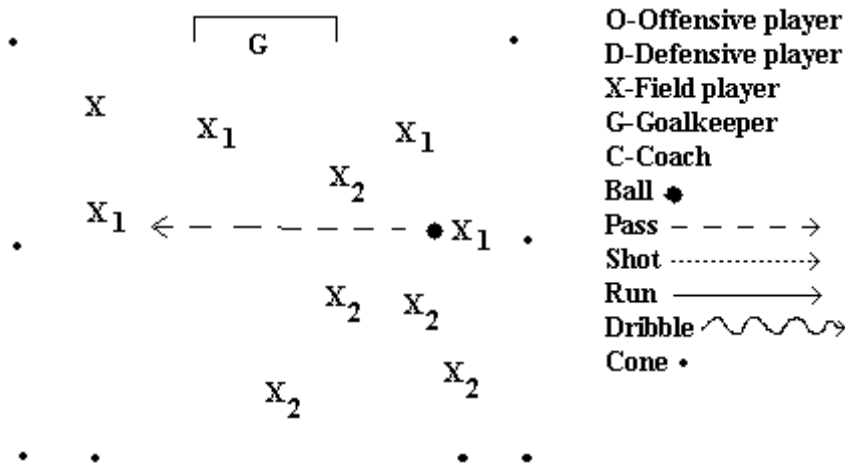
Objectives:

Scrimmage to encourage switching point of attack

Description:

Setup and Procedure: Soccer field about 25 x 25, one normal goal and two small goals at corners (see picture). One team tries to score on normal goal and other team tries to score in small goals (2,3 yards) by dribbling ball across goal line (cannot shoot). Team heading to small goals should be encouraged to "switch" play.

Tips: Adjust field size for age and number. Have teams switch sides every 5 minutes or so.



X₁'s score using small goals.

Dribble Relay [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 8-12

Ages: 5-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Conditioning, Silly and Fun

Objectives:

Dribble relay for fun, conditioning, and dribbling

Description:

SETUP

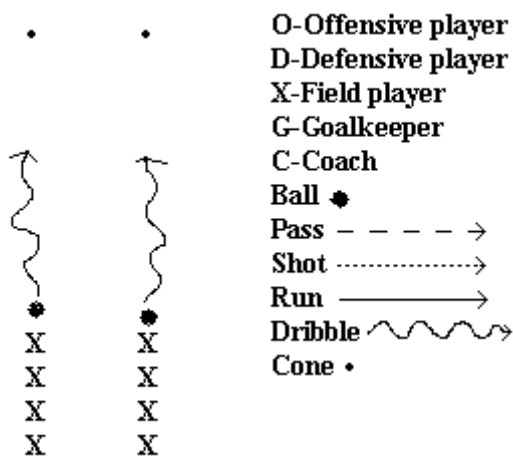
Two or three lines of players, two or three cones about 30 yards from each line, and a ball for each line.

PROCEDURE

1. On signal first player dribbles around the far cone and makes short pass to next player in line.
2. Continue until each player has gone twice and first team which does wins.
3. Do 3 or 4 rounds.

COACHING POINTS

1. Encourage players to keep ball close to feet especially when approaching cone.



Dont Crash While Dribbling [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 5-10

Players: 8-12

Ages: 6-12

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Conditioning, Warm-ups

Objectives:

Look up while speed dribbling

Description:

SETUP

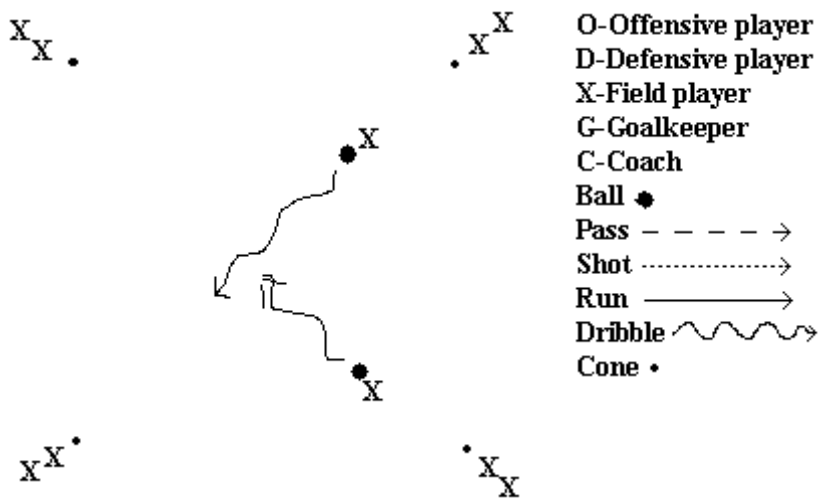
Mark a square grid about 30x30, divide players evenly to each corner, diagonal players on a team and each team starts with one ball.

PROCEDURE

1. On signal players with ball dribble to opposite diagonal corner and leaves ball for teammate.
2. The first team in which everyone dribbles 3 times wins.
3. Continue for 3 or 4 rounds.

COACHING POINTS

1. Encourage players to dribble with head up to avoid collisions.



Beach Crabs [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 8-14

Ages: 5-8

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Silly and Fun, Conditioning

Objectives:

Improve dribbling skills

Description:

SETUP

Mark a rectangle grid about 30x15 with all players at one end with a ball. Coach is first crab on hands and feet.

PROCEDURE

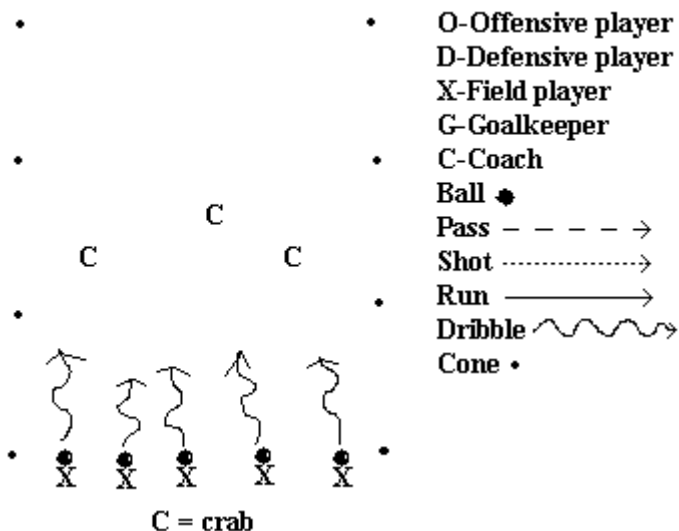
1. On signal players attempt to cross the island (rectangle) without letting the crab kick their ball into the ocean (outside rectangle).
2. If a player's ball goes into the ocean that player becomes a crab.
3. Wait till all players make it to the other side before signaling again.
4. Continue until one player is left.

RULES

1. Crabs must move using their hands and feet on their back.

COACHING POINTS

1. Encourage close dribbling and use of moves.
2. Expand rectangle for more players.



Stop-N-Go [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 8-20

Ages: 5-10

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Silly and Fun, Warm-ups

Objectives:

Encourages player to keep ball close to feet when dribbling.

Description:

SETUP

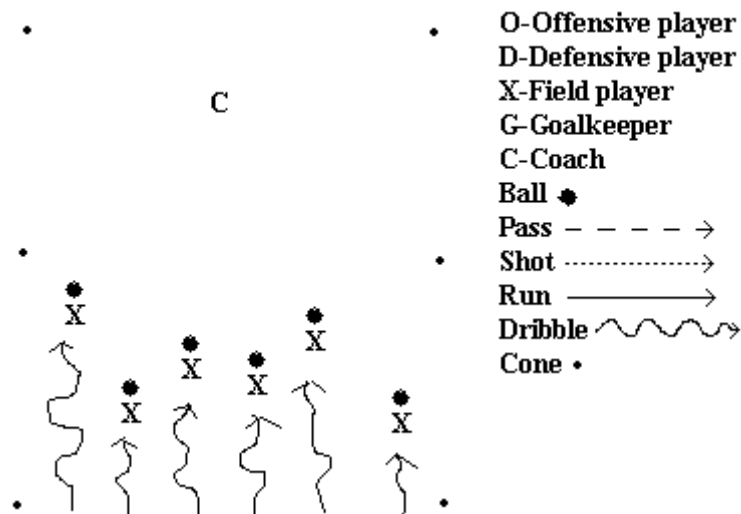
Mark a rectangle grid at least 50 yards long, players at one end with a ball each, and coach in middle of grid with a whistle.

PROCEDURE

1. Coach, with back turned to players, whistles and the players dribble forward as fast and under control as they can.
2. After a number of seconds the coach whistles again, waits a second or so, and jumps around to view all the players.
3. If any players do not have control of their ball (sole of foot on ball) then those players must go back to the start.
4. The goal is to be the first player to the far side of the rectangle.
5. Go back other way and play 3 or 4 rounds.

COACHING POINTS

1. Encourage players to dribble with the laces and keep ball close to feet.



Shield in Circle [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 8-12

Ages: 5-8

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Shielding, Dribbling, Silly and Fun

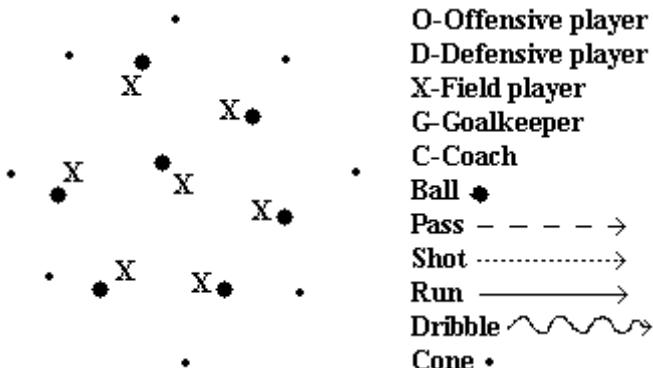
Objectives:

Improve shielding of ball

Description:

Setup and Procedure: In a 10-20 yard diameter circle all players start with a ball. Each player protects their ball while trying to kick other's ball out of the circle. When a player's ball leaves the circle 3 times that player must sit. Continue until one player left.

Tips: Demonstrate shielding techniques before playing.



Take the Ball [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 6-12

Ages: 5-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Other, Conditioning

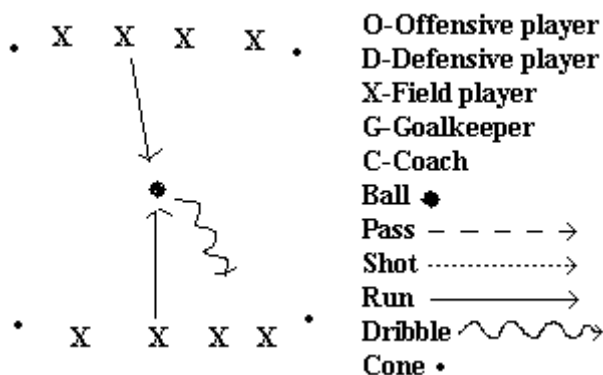
Objectives:

Reversing direction and aggressiveness.

Description:

Setup and Procedure: Square grid about 20 x 20 yards with players divided in two groups on opposite sides with one ball in middle of square. Coach calls one name from each group. On whistle the two players sprint to the ball and attempt to obtain possession and dribble the ball back to their side. It's one vs one.

Tips: Pair up players with equal skill and quickness. Keep score for each team.



Star Wars [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 15-20

Players: 10-16

Ages: 5-8

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Dribbling, Shooting, Silly and Fun

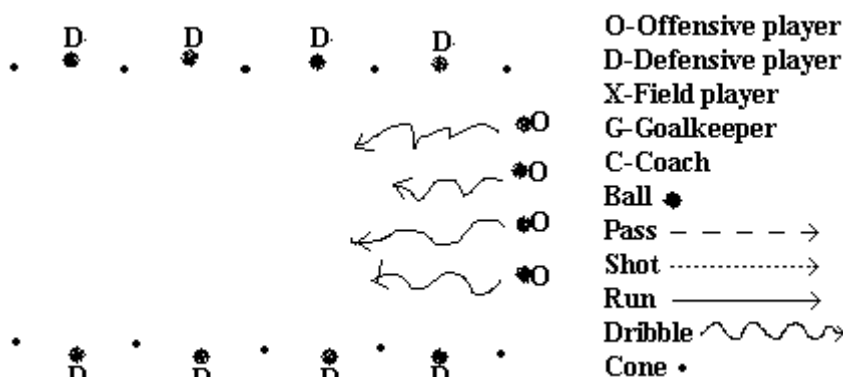
Objectives:

Fun drill to encourage player to look up when dribbling.

Description:

Setup and procedure: Rectangle grid about 25 x 15 yards. Each player has a ball. 3-4 players (shooters) on each long side of the rectangle. Remaining players (dribblers) at one end of rectangle with ball. On whistle, dribblers attempt to make it to the far side of rectangle grid while dodging balls from shooters. If dribbler's ball is hit by a ball that player becomes a shooter. Repeat until one dribbler is left.

Tips: Use star war names for roles, i.e. Jedi Knights as dribblers...



Side defenders shoot at dribblers' ball

Scrap-N-Shoot [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-20

Players: 8-12

Ages: 5-22

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Shooting, Defense, Other

Objectives:

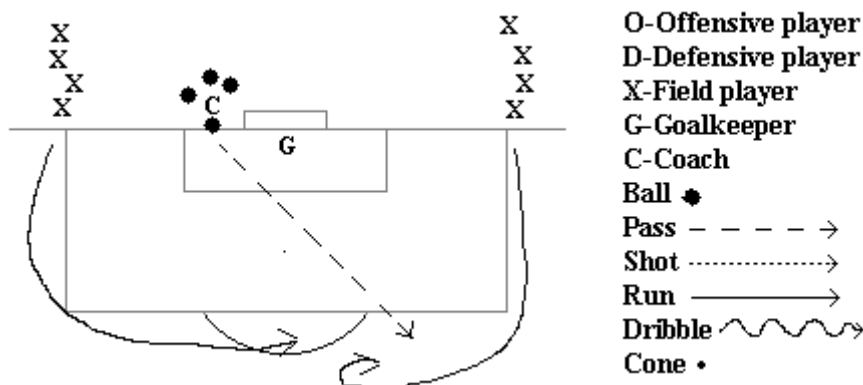
Improve ability to win 50-50 balls, beat players 1v1, and shoot on goal.

Description:

SETUP: Divide players in two groups and station each group where the penalty area lines intersect the goal line. One goalkeeper (or just have coach be keeper also) and the coach with soccer balls just outside of the goal or in the goal.

PROCEDURE: One signal from coach the two players first in line sprint around the penalty box toward the penalty arc (D). As the player get close to the arc the coach will throw, roll, or kick (vary how ball is introduced) the ball to the players. The players try to control and dribble for a shot on goal. The coach can give favorable balls to weaker players to even things up a bit and give them a chance with the ball.

VARIATIONS: 1. Call names to match up players evenly. 2. Call 2 names from one line and 1 name from the other creating a 2v1 situation.



4-Corner Keep Away [printer friendly page](#)

Minutes: 10-15

Players: 4-5

Ages: 6-50

Avg. Rating: ★★★★★

From: [Greg Marston](#)

Search Objectives: Passing, Controlling, Supporting

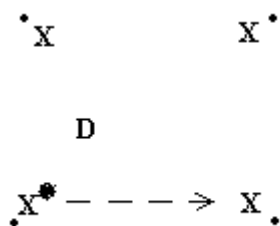
Objectives:

Improve trapping and passing skills in tight situations.

Description:

Setup and procedure: Square grid about 12 x 12 yards. 4 vs 1 with a player at each corner. Play keep away from defender in middle while keeping ball in the square grid. For more advanced players use 3 vs 1 or 3 vs 2 with one open corner (player must move to support).

Tips: Shorten grid as players get better. Keep score by counting passes. Don't be too strict in keeping ball in square - let play continue unless blatantly out of square.



O-Offensive player
D-Defensive player
X-Field player
G-Goalkeeper
C-Coach
Ball ●
Pass - - - - ->
Shot ·········>
Run —————>
Dribble ~~~~~>
Cone •

Soccer Coach Links

- [50 free soccer drills](#) -- 50 free soccer drills. Tactical games and more.
- [A Daily Tip \(Soccer\) Updated Weekly](#) -- I have created this page because I was tired of hearing. They can't learn that or it is too hard for them to understand and comprehend. Material on soccer coaching, soccer training, soccer drills, soccer drill, soccer skills, soccer skill, soccer strategy, soccer tactics
- [A Virtual Sports Injury Clinic](#) -- Offers a virtual diagnosis and self help information on over 100 sports related injuries.
- [A League Sports](#) -- Free Websites for Amateur and Youth Sports Organizations, Soccer Camps, Leagues and Teams, as well as a great Soccer Directory.
- [All Soccer Training](#) -- All Soccer Training utilized trainers and coaches to train technical and coach tactical soccer to players, teams, clubs and coaches on Long Island
- [Animated coaching plays & drills](#) -- Create your own drills & plans, save & e-mail them & also download & customize drills.
- [AskTheRef.com](#) -- Ask the referee a question about the rules of soccer
- [Backyard Soccer](#) -- Backyard Soccer comes with everything you need to install a complete mini-sized synthetic soccer field in your backyard!
- [benchtalk](#) -- Professional coaches in England identify the skills required to become a professional soccer player
- [Better Soccer More Fun](#) -- Small sided games including 4v4, inspired by the Dutch Vision.
- [BGFootball](#) -- BGFootball provides expert football (soccer) advice and tips on training and practice. The free drills and explanations are a great resource for coaches and players who want to improve their technical/tactical knowledge
- [BGFootball - Expert Football Advice](#) -- Training for the game of soccer/football with tactics, techniques, skills, tips, famous players and more
- [BJ Sports](#) -- Making balls for you to improve your skills and give value to your money
- [Bob's Youth Soccer World](#) -- Site dedicated to just youth soccer from around the world.
- [Chicago Eagles Soccer Camps](#) -- Youth soccer camps coached by high level committed collegiate players.
- [Coaching drills](#) -- Free newsletter and information about soccer drills and soccer school
- [coachmarino.com](#) -- The only QUALITY website for coaches and players. From a unique perspective.
- [Decatur Sports - Soccer](#) -- Drills, links, camps, tournaments, news... A large soccer resource!
- [DirectorOfCoaching.com](#) -- Elite soccer training, scouting for, coaching job service, and coaches education in southern California.
- [eteamz: Soccer](#) -- Drills, tips, free team sites, tournaments, discussion
- [FIFA](#) -- FIFA home page.
- [FineSoccer.com](#) -- Free newsletters for goalkeepers, drills, and general soccer. Drills and articles on site also.

- Ⓢ [Football Equipment](#) -- Suppliers of major football brands to teams and individuals of all levels.
- Ⓢ [footy4kids](#) -- A child centred soccer coaching web site offering a wealth of information for beginning and more experienced soccer coaches. The emphasis is on individual development and fun.
- Ⓢ [FUNdamental Soccer](#) -- Articles, training tips, books, videos, and on-line magazine devoted to coaching soccer.
- Ⓢ [Geofootiecoach](#) -- A newly established coaching site. New routines are uploaded weekly.
- Ⓢ [Gold Coast Soccer](#) -- A unique guide to soccer in Queensland Australia, covering everything from game skills to equipment.
- Ⓢ [H & R Trophies, Plaques and Awards](#) -- Soccer and other sports awards, including trophies, plaques, medals, ribbons, ice awards and more.
- Ⓢ [High Performance Soccer Academy](#) -- The academy is designed for youth players who have the desire, dedication, and determination to develop their technical skills, mental strength, and tactical knowledge in a competitive environment
- Ⓢ [House of football](#) -- Information on coaching courses, planning a fitness program as well as drills and many more
- Ⓢ [How to Coach Youth Soccer](#) -- Designed for the recreational coach who's never coached before, this essay goes over basic rules, practices, drills, skills, scrimmages, game line-ups, positions and what to do during the game.
- Ⓢ [Internet Soccer Clinics](#) -- This site is designed to help you with a variety of coaching topics such as drills for skills, understanding tactics, nutrition, soccer news and much much more.
- Ⓢ [It's All about Football](#) -- Football tours, collectibles and fun
- Ⓢ [JoeSoccer](#) -- Animated soccer drills with moving players and scholarship & recruiting advise from top college coaches.
- Ⓢ [kickanddevelop. soccer coaching](#) -- soccer coaching available in north east of england
- Ⓢ [Klein Forest Lady Eagle Soccer](#) -- INFORMATION ABOUT KLEIN FOREST WOMENS' SOCCER...
GAME SCHEDULE AND TIMES/GAME RESULTS/GAME CANCELLATIONS.
- Ⓢ [Lapel Pin and Button Company](#) -- Lapel pins and soccer trading pins custom made to order.
- Ⓢ [Lapel Pin Productions](#) -- Offers custom made lapel pins and trading pins for soccer teams.
- Ⓢ [Lapel Pins Express](#) -- Lapel pins Express offers lapel pins for pin trading and corporate identities.
- Ⓢ [Lapel Pins R Us](#) -- offers custom lapel pins and embroidered patches for soccer, basball and softball teams.
- Ⓢ [Maradona](#) -- This site is a tribute to Diego Armando Maradona.
- Ⓢ [Metropolitan Trophies](#) -- Huge range of soccer trophies and awards
- Ⓢ [MetroStars Soccer Academy](#) -- The first TRUE SOCCER ACADEMY in the United States. Run and Supported by the MetroStars of Major League Soccer.
- Ⓢ [Midfielder](#) -- One of the promising football player from Romanian's C Division.
- Ⓢ [Monkton Athletic under 10s](#) -- All about our team and players
- Ⓢ [O.C KNIGHTS.COM](#) -- A soccer club in southern caifornia
- Ⓢ [Petruzzi Soccer Academy](#) -- your opportunity to fulfil your potential as a player, train with one of the worlds leading trainers, special recomendations to clubs for players
- Ⓢ [Pika international - A Soccer and Glove](#) -- Manufacturers and Exporters of Sporting goods and Gloves.
- Ⓢ [Pin Depot - Custom Lapel Pins](#) -- Custom made lapel pins and hat pins. We specialize in trading pins.
- Ⓢ [Pin Promotions - Custom Lapel Pins](#) -- Custom made lapel pins and buttons. We specialize in soccer trading pins.
- Ⓢ [PLANET SOCCER](#) -- TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER; SOCCER JEWELRLY & ACCESSORIES: DEEP DISCOUNTS FOR TEAM ORDERS
- Ⓢ [Play Manager Coaching Software](#) -- Commercial Grade software for animating plays and drills for Soccer Coaches and Players.
- Ⓢ [Practice Sessions for Youth Soccer](#) -- Complete practice sessions for youth soccer teams.
- Ⓢ [Quick Kicks Arena](#) -- Portable, inflatable soccer arenas for youth & adults for fundraisers, tournaments, leagues, camps, and special events.

- Ⓜ [Reedswain Soccer Video & Books](#) -- World leader in Soccer Coaching Material - videos, books, and software.
- Ⓜ [Return2fitness.co.uk](#) -- Sports medical and rehabilitation products from a qualified sports injury therapist.
- Ⓜ [Soccer Coaching Courses](#) -- Help to pass Soccer Coaching Courses, from England, Scotland, USA and Canada. Candidates notes with all the practices and all the key coaching points you will need.
 - Ⓜ [Soccer Performance](#) -- Many articles regarding training, fitness, game analysis and more!
 - Ⓜ [Soccer Pictures](#) -- Visit for soccer pictures, files, drills, news, store, and games.
- Ⓜ [Soccer practice plans and drills](#) -- Soccer practice plans and drills ready for the coach to print and run effective and fun practices.
- Ⓜ [Soccer Pro - Icestorm Software](#) -- A software application designed to help coaches design set plays and drills with real time animation.

- Ⓜ [Soccer Racket of America](#) -- We are the inventor, manufacturer, and distributor of the RAPID-FIRE and RAPID-FIRE Jr. High Performance soccer training goals for the serious player.
 - Ⓜ [Soccer Scholarships Made Easy](#) -- U.S.A. College soccer coaches names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers.
 Order our peel and stick mailing labels and enclosed your soccer resume. Get the soccer scholarship you have been dreaming about.
 - Ⓜ [Soccer Store](#) -- Soccer related gifts, t-shirts, hats, mugs, wall clocks, and more
- Ⓜ [Soccer Training Information](#) -- Training tips, including information on passing, dribbling, shooting, and strategies.
 - Ⓜ [Soccer Unlimited](#) -- Soccer training, Soccer Store, News, Live Scores and Updates, Nutrition Store
 - Ⓜ [SOCCER-COACH-L Basic Coaching Man.](#) -- The Manual was created by a dedicated group of soccer coaches who are members of the SOCCER-COACH-L mailing list, in the hopes that this Manual will assist youth soccer coaches in teaching the "beautiful game" to their players.
 - Ⓜ [soccerconditioning.net](#) -- custom designed soccer specific conditioning programs by Pierre Barrieu, USMNT fitness coach
 - Ⓜ [Soccerhead](#) -- Soccerhead is a soccer recruiting website which brings together college coaches and potential college players.
 - Ⓜ [SoccerROM](#) -- The soccer coach's online reference
 - Ⓜ [SoccerSkills.com](#) -- Welcome to SoccerSkills.com, a site dedicated to encouraging players to improve their footballing (soccer) skills.
 - Ⓜ [Soccertutor.com - drills, skills/techni](#) -- high-quality animations/skilled videos of numerous drills, skills and techniques that you can stop, pause and rewind at any time, print the drills out and take them with you on your next training session.
 - Ⓜ [sportpins.com](#) -- Hundreds of stock soccer pins etc. including all MLS and WUSA and custom soccer tournament awards.
 - Ⓜ [Sports Lapel Pins By The Monterey Compan](#) -- We Offer lapel pins including wholesale and retail, military service, recognition, custom cloisonne pins, key tags and rubber softies including luggage tags, coasters, and magnets.
 - Ⓜ [Sports Web Hosting](#) -- A Sports League management System building your Leagues, Clubs and Teams Web Presence.
 - Ⓜ [Superior Embroidered Patches](#) -- Manufacturer and designer of custom embroidered patches and iron on patches.
 - Ⓜ [T&L ink](#) -- T&L ink creates customized soccer car window decals for your club to sell. You don't have to invest any money, purchase any product from us, or make a minimum order. So, it's in our best interest to make your fundraiser as profitable as possible. For every \$10 decal your organization sells you get \$3. That's a 30% margin on no investment.
 - Ⓜ [Tadcaster Albion Junior Girls FC](#) -- Yorkshires finest female soccer team.
 - Ⓜ [TeamSoccerDirect.com](#) -- Elite soccer training, scouting for, coaching job service, and coaches education in southern California.

- teamsoccerdirect.com -- Elite soccer training, scouting for, coaching job service, and coaches education in southern California.
- [The Coaching Store](#) -- Online store for soccer coaching resources: magazines, videos, books & CDROMs.
- [The Patchworks Company](#) -- Every type of patch from traditional Embroidery to hi-tech Dye Sublimation & brand new PrisMatic Patches.
- [The Virtual Library of Sport](#) -- The Virtual Library of Sport provides global links to key resources with a strong section on coaching
- [Trophy Toolbox](#) -- Create your own "Build-A-Trophy". Have fun ordering your soccer trophies!
- [TrophyMan Soccer Video](#) -- The oldest super hero teaches soccer. Great for parents and kids.
- [welcome to prince's humble site](#) -- its all about my self , my autobiography and my life style . u see some more things right in there.
- [Womens Soccer 24 Seven](#) -- Women's Soccer news from around the globe. Up-to-the-minute results,news,fashion,and more...
- [World Class Coaching](#) -- Newsletter detailing today's tactics, methods and practices of the world's top teams and coaches.
- [world cup 2002 fan HQ](#) -- world cup soccer media and fun
- www.yahoo.com -- I need information on how to take a club that training with . thanks
- [Youth Coaching Drills and Information](#) -- Youth coaching drills for baseball, basketball, soccer, softball, volleyball and track.
- [Youth Soccer Coach Long Island](#) -- A soccer coaching site with information from beginners to advanced level coaches
- [Youth soccer fitness and conditoning](#) -- Contains information on conditioning and speed training for youth soccer players

The material in this coach's guide has been collected from the numerous soccer manuals and information on websites.