

Coach Education Series



SSA Coweta

A Guide to Coaching U10 players

Researched, Written and Compiled

by



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Glossary of terms

Psychomotor Development is the process of acquiring skills as related to mental ability to recognize cues and respond with the appropriate action

Cognitive Development is mental development. This includes not only memorization, but also creativity and problem solving

Psychosocial Development is the development of the sense of self in relation to others. It covers a range from individual awareness, to pairs (playmates), to small groups and to large groups.

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Sensory-Motor Stage – The stage ranging from infancy to becoming a young child (0-2 years). At this stage sensory input is the primary method of learning. The early acquisition of language and the ability to walk occur in this stage.

Pre-operational Stage – Begins at the onset of early childhood (2-7 years). At this stage the differences between reality and fantasy is fuzzy. Children in this stage are naturally curious and individually orientated.

Concrete Operational – This is the age of rules during the preadolescent years (7-11 years). Rules play a significant role for youth at this age. Rules provide the basis for cooperative play with playmates.

Formal Operational – The stage of “adult” logic (11+). At this stage the motivation for a given action is important as the outcome of the action.

Principles of Youth Coaching

- Developmentally Appropriate
- Clear, Concise and Correct Information
- Simple to Complex
- Safe and Appropriate Environment
- Decision Making
- Implications for the Game

Coaching Activities Checklist

- Are the activities fun?
- Are the activities organized?
- Are the players involved with the activities?
- Is creativity and decision making being used by the players?
- Are the spaces used appropriate?
- Is the coach's feedback appropriate?
- Are there implications for the games?

It is important that even though you are a volunteer, you should try and meet the all of the criteria above to ensure a fun, learning environment for your players to flourish.

Introduction & Objectives

The aim of any soccer body, be it a professional club or a local YMCA, is to ensure the players' enjoy and develop within the sport. The CCSA is no different. Before we start to coach, we must first realize that we have to know what the players are capable of understanding. We must also realize that we are preparing these children to play this sport, hopefully, for the rest of their lives. A good measure of your success as a coach is if the players enjoy practices and return each season to play the sport and request you as a coach. Your win-loss record is not something to emphasize and is not important at this age group.

As you will see in this manual, some of the U10 players' cognitive abilities are limited so we have to tailor our practices to suit their ability level but also to the cognitively advanced players. We have to coach to the player's needs and not what the coach wants to coach, which has unfortunately been the inclination in the past. We must also realize that time spent on coaching skills that they cannot understand is time wasted better spent on coaching them what they need. Each coach must also ask themselves why they are coaching U10. If it's to win, then you might need to change the way you look at the game. This manual is player centered and not coach centered. That means that we have to understand what motivates kids and utilize this in our teaching to their needs. Children at U10 and below learn faster from playing, exploring and experimenting so we need to allow this within a soccer environment.

Soccer is a game of decision making and as a coach we should guide the players but never dictate to them what they should do. As soon as we take away the decision making from the players, we will take away the creativity that the sport demands at the highest levels. This is something that we also need to relay to the parent's as they have the tendency to 'coach' from the sidelines. As a coach, you play an important role in educating the parents.

As a coach, what you do at U10 could promote or restrain the development and enjoyment of a player for years to come. Your role can not be underestimated. That's why this guide should help you create a fun and healthy learning environment for the players that you coach. It will list the abilities of the players at U10 and the best practices to use to promote their development.

This manual will utilize some of Georgia Youth Soccer's KINS (Kicking Is Not Soccer) manual and recommendations from Jacob Daniel, Director of Coaching for the State of Georgia as well as information from the USSF National Youth License coaching manual. However, it is highly recommended that coaches attend the USSF National Youth License course for the practical guidance you will receive from the instruction as well as the manual.

What Motivates Kids to play?

What is motivation?

“The direction and intensity of one’s effort” (Sage 1977)

“Motivation specific to soccer is linked to the performance of the players and the team” (Eubank & Gilbourne 2003)

What are the factors that motivate children 6-12 years of age to play soccer?

- Enjoyment, the love of the sport
- Meet friends
- Learn new skills and improve as a player
- Parents and peer influence
- Observed “Idols” and want to become a professional soccer player
- To get muddy (UK)

Why do children stop playing soccer?

- Bored with the sport
- Not enough fun
- Don’t like the coach
- Excessive pressure
- Overemphasis on winning
- Other changes of interest

How can motivation influence soccer performance?

Generally, a highly motivated player will be committed no matter what the score is, will work hard and be committed. Players with less motivation will demonstrate a decreased level of effort and will have less enthusiasm. A lack of commitment will mean lower performance levels and they will let down their team mates.

What are the types of motivation?

There are two types, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic is when the participant is motivated to play the sport for its own sake, for the enjoyment and to take pride in learning and mastering new skills. Extrinsic is when players participate to win trophies, cups etc and to please significant others (parents, peers).

How does the player's personality or goal orientation affect motivation?

The goal orientation can be either task-orientated or ego-orientated. Task orientated individuals will evaluate their own performance against previous performances. They will monitor how a particular skill improves over a time period. Ego-orientated individuals will compare their own performance to that of others. E.g. "I scored 8 goals and Taylor scored 4". Players can demonstrate both goal orientations at the same time.

Can the coach affect motivation levels?

Yes, by goal setting and positive reinforcement are the main factors. Keeping them interested in a task or challenging them will keep them motivated. Too high or too low of a challenge will drop levels of motivation as players will experience success too easily or not at all. The coach can also include the players on the decision making process of what they need to work on and what practices they can do.

Criticism, sarcasm, physical abuse and intimidation are strategies coaches should avoid.

What is self-confidence?

"It is the belief that you can perform a desired behavior successfully" (Weinberg & Gould, 2003).

Are there different types of self-confidence?

Yes. There are a number of different types. Individuals may have different confidence limits about their own ability, to execute physical skills, to use psychological skills to improve performance, their physical condition and their ability to learn and improve new skills.

What is self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy is "the perception of one's ability to perform a task successfully" (Weinberg & Gould, 2003).

It is a situational specific form of self-confidence

How does self-efficacy work?

Self-efficacy is based on previous experiences of performing the skills, the behavior of the coach, level of encouragement by the coach, positive or negative physiological factors associated with the performance (heart rate, fatigue) and the mood of the player. These factors all combine and influence the self-efficacy and performance of the particular skill performed by the individual.

Why is self-confidence so important in young players?

There are several benefits associated with increased self-confidence:

- Players will go into situations during games and practices with a positive frame of mind. This will increase their chances of performing a certain skill successfully. If all individuals have high self-confidence this may ultimately benefit the team's performance in matches.

- Players will go into tasks/situations with an increased level of concentration if they have high self-confidence.
- Self-confident players will also set themselves higher goals compared to less confident individuals.
- Self-confident players will display more effort compared to less confident players.
- It is very important that coaches and parents use strategies to try and improve or maintain the confidence levels of the children.

The majority of the material has been obtained from Weinberg, RS and Gould, D. (2003). Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

How Players Learn

Reviewing influencing factors – these can be as detailed or simple as you like and should be objective (i.e. early, average, late).

- Chronological age within the group
- Body size, athleticism and mass
- Physical maturation stage
- Physiological maturation stage
- Psychological maturation stage

Children find it hard to understand negative instructions and easier to understand positive reinforcement. This means frequently playing up the performance and playing down the result. This reduces the child's anxiety and decreases their worry about failing. Remember that children do not mean to make mistakes and we should accept mistakes as a necessary part of learning.

"If nature is not nurtured then the weaker and less suited often fail to cope with the challenge and move to an environment more suited". Why so many players quit youth soccer is because the better players are targeted and given the best coaching at a young age. A weak player at U6 could be a strong player at U10 so we must nurture all players regardless of their ability.

As coaches, it is important not only do we recognize that both players and ourselves learn in different way but that we positively encourage those we work with to experience different types of learning opportunities.

Self Learning Practice – "The more I practice, the luckier I get."

The coach – He/she may be perceived as the most important way to enable the learning process to move forward

Video/TV – Influences: watching games on TV and reviewing skills on video

Spectator at games – Watching first hand

Parent/Coaches – Parent participation; playing in back yard or just talking about the game

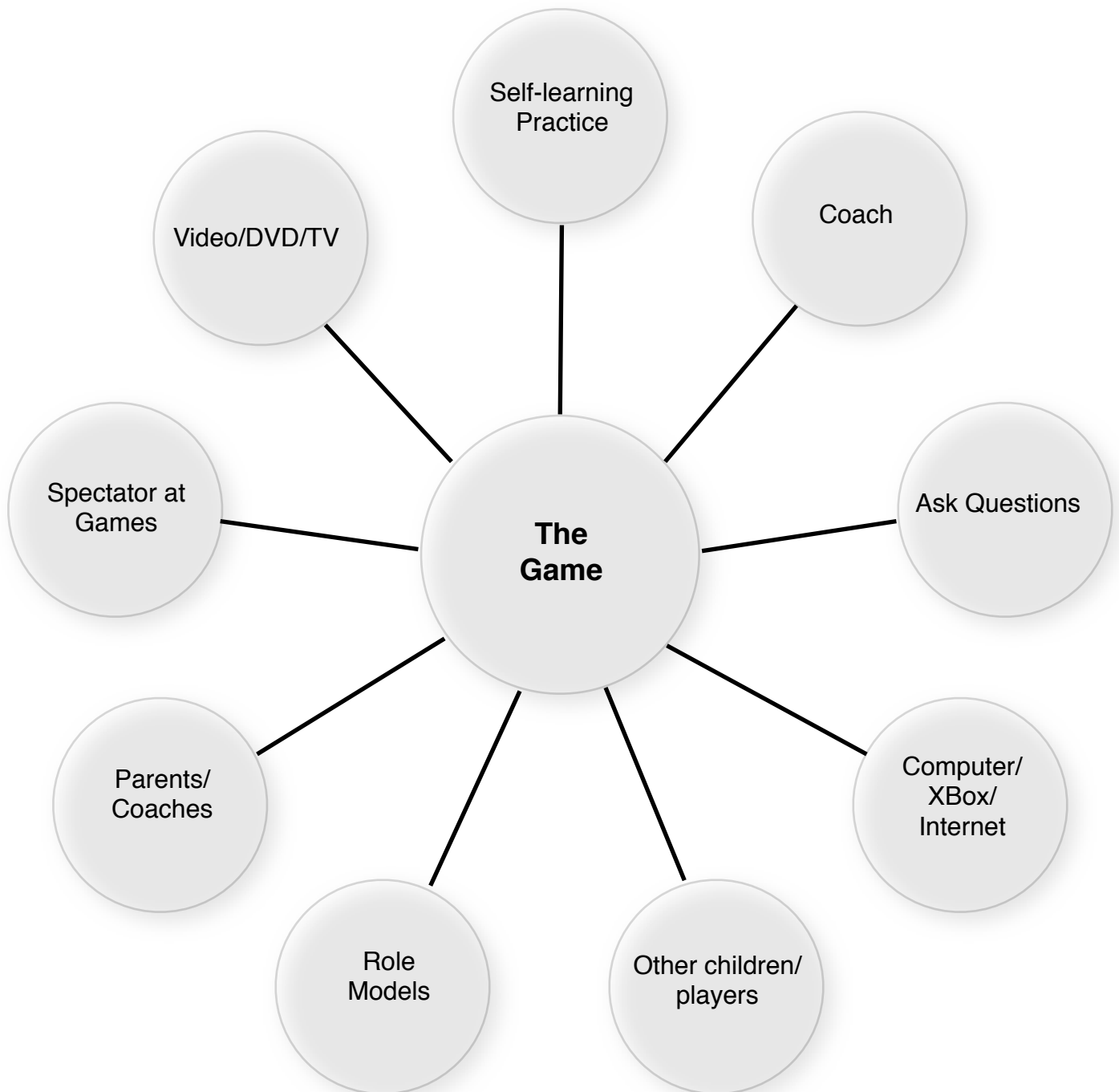
Other children – By watching and playing with other children, includes peers, siblings etc.

Role Models – Watching role models do/try new tricks

Computer/Playstation/Internet – Watching the skills and then trying them. Viewing internet sites or reading.

Ask Questions – Players and coaches should be encouraged to ask questions

The Game (at the heart of learning) – Let the game be the teacher



U10 Player Characteristics

Before coaches can start designing practices, they must understand the skill level, characteristics, and maturity level of the players. It is common to see coaches design a practice based on what they want the players to learn, as opposed to what the players can handle. This manual should help you understand how to observe, diagnose and coach to the needs of your players.

As a club, we have to ensure that all coaches are coaching developmentally appropriate skills and techniques. The United States Soccer Federation's (USSF) National Youth license, aimed at coaches working with U6 to U12 has the philosophy THE GAME WITHIN THE CHILD. This course has expert analysis from child psychologists and educators of the motor skills, cognitive (problem solving) skills, and social characteristics of each age group. Much of this course is sampled and referenced in this manual and is a must for any coach or coordinator looking to coach and develop players seriously from U6 to U12.

U10 motor skills development

U10 players are at more risk than adults to heat injuries. Their core temperature elevates quickly and it takes them longer to cool down. They also lose heat quickly so they are at more risk to hypothermia. There will be a greater diversity in playing ability and size. Girls and boys will start to develop at different rates and girls will tend to be more coordinated than the boys. They can stay on a task for longer periods and both their fine and gross motor skills have become more refined.

Implications

Practices should last between 60-90 minutes with 1 or 2 practice sessions a week plus the games at the weekend. A third optional session can also be offered but it is not 'mandatory'. Players will still overheat quickly at U10. They will need plenty of water breaks as we would like to keep the players fresh for each activity, which will mean coaches will have to plan lots of activities to keep them interested. You will have a group of players with a wide range of skills and physical ability. You have to ensure you give individual goals and targets to all players as the bigger, stronger players may win all of the games. Rather than say first to 30 passes in 30 seconds, say how many can you get in 30 secs. A progression from that would be 'Can you beat your last score' rather than concentrating on a group winner.

U10 cognitive development

Most children at U10 are in Piaget's Concrete Operational stage. Some players will show more advanced cognitive abilities and are in the Formal Operational Stage of Cognitive development. The Concrete operational stage is normally between 8 & 11 years of age and the Formal Operational stage is 11 and older. Players will start to develop a better understanding of the relationship between space and time. Players start to differentiate between effort and ability and can sequence thoughts and actions. They can also understand more complex instructions and have a more lengthened attention span. Start to recognize fundamental tactical concepts such as changing direction of the ball

Implications

Players at U10 can start to deal with sequential instructions but this does not mean coaches need to spend large amounts of time talking. Games should have simple rules and include everybody. These games should

be explained and demonstrated quickly as the players do not have the attention span to listen to long, complex instructions. Players may still tend to bunch around the ball, but concentrate on coaching this in scrimmages and at games. They will start to have a concept of space relations so teach them to attack or defend as a team. Do not pigeon hole the players to a set position. Teach them to get wide, forward or back during the game and not just 'be a defender'. It is still very important to reward effort and not just the outcome of games try to create a positive learning environment with a 'fear of failure'. U10 Players are still very impressionable, so be aware of what you communicate to the children during practices and games.

U10 social skills

Players at U10 are more likely to initiate play on their own and are becoming more serious about their play. Their friends opinions and interests mean a lot to them and 'Peer Pressure' starts to be a factor. Adults outside of the family may start to have a bigger influence on them but they are still easily harmed by negative comments from players and coaches.

Implications

Players will start to look-up more often and pass the ball to a team mate. Try to guide them with their decisions rather than give them the answer. Try to make games which involves partner activities and cooperation. Concentrate on positive reinforcement and be aware of the bigger influence you may have over a player. You may be one of their main role models in their lives at the moment

U10 technical development

The technical development of a U10 player's soccer skills should still revolve around dribbling and striking the ball. Using different surfaces to shoot and strike will become more important as well as receiving the ball with different surfaces and out of the air. Some basic Goal-keeping techniques should be utilized but players should not be put in goal for a whole game. Teaching players to head the ball should also start to be added into practices but not for long periods or a lot of repetitions in a short amount of time.

U10 tactical development

Individual and small group tactics (2v2, 3v3) can be introduced. Decision making on when to pressure, when to drop off or when to pass backwards rather than forwards is well within the capabilities of your players at U10. You can teach players to force the attacker on to their weaker foot or away from goal

However, 80% of practices still need to be technical and most tactics should be taught in scrimmages and games.

Organizing a Training Session 8-10 year olds

1. General Considerations

- All sessions should be designed to use pairs or groups of three players
- All sessions should have a focus
- Game should be included to maintain element of fun
- Warm-up should reflect the session
- Lengthy explanations still will not work
- Keep players moving from one activity to another
- Development of individual skills to be a primary focus
- Introduction of individual and small group tactics (2v2, 3v3)
- Teach players to think

2. Creating the Training Environment

A) Attitude

- Coach (focused - upbeat – positive – enthusiastic - encouraging)
- Player (focused - excited to play – anxious to return

B) Content

- Match related activities
- Several teaching points in each session
- Include fun games
- Include pertinent terminology used in game

C) Organization

- Pairs or groups of three to accomplish goals of session
- Show activities by briefly creating picture using players

3. Building the Session

A) Warm-up

- Stretching to increase/maintain flexibility
- Activity to be related to focus of session
- Include individual and small group activities

B) Skill Development

- Isolate pieces of the game to teach in small groups
- Use games/activities to illustrate teaching points encouraging players to think ahead to solve problems
- Keep session light by interjecting fun games with tactical overtones

C) The Game 3v3 to 6v6

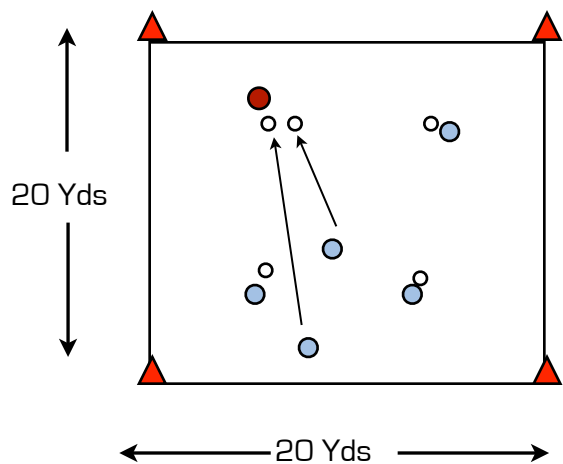
- Increase numbers to make environment more complex
- Allow the game to create demands upon the players (conditioned games)
- Encourage players to think instead of watching the game

U10 Games and Activities

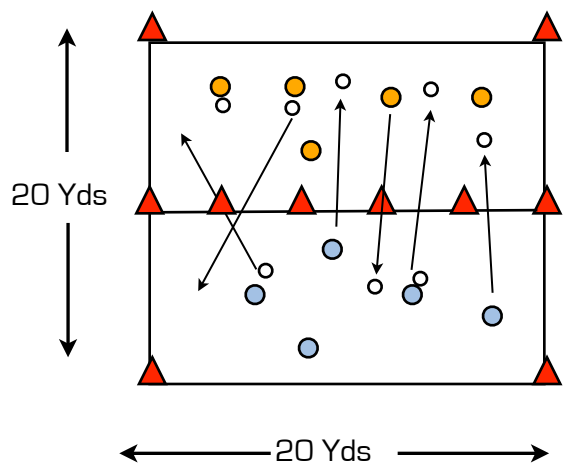
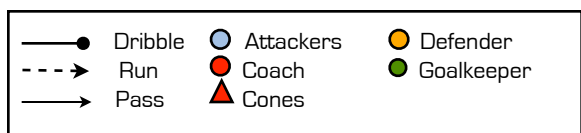
At U10 the emphasis for all players should be on creativity and risk taking. The game is the biggest teacher so let them try new moves and techniques. It is OK for them to make mistakes. The following games are very similar to U8 games but can go for longer periods of time or have more complex rules. The use of conditioned games is vital at this age and lots of 1v1 opportunities should be created or manufactured by the coach during his sessions.

Striking the ball games

Striking the ball games are a great way to introduce the different methods of passing and shooting. At U6 and U8 we should work on the technique of striking the ball rather than concentrate on passing. If you can shoot with your laces or inside of the foot, you can pass using the same methods. The coaching points which are listed at the bottom of the pages and can be used in every game depending on whether you are teaching shooting technique (laces) or passing (inside of foot)



Key



Hit the Coach

Each player tries to hit the coach below the knee. Coach can start by walking and then proceed to running depending on the age and level of the players.

Organization

- 1) 20 x 20 grid (depends on number of players)
- 2) Ball each
- 3) 1 point for hitting coach
- 4) Coach has 5 lives
- 5) Challenge the players to who can score the most points

Variations

Multiple coaches
Change the point system {2, 5, 10 etc}
Have 1 player protect the coach to make it harder

Clean the Yard

Each team tries to keep their yard clean by kicking their trash (ball) into their neighbors yard. The winning team is the one that has the least amount of trash in their yard

Organization

- 1) 20 x 20 grid (Two 10 x 20)
- 2) Two teams
- 3) Ball each
- 4) 30 seconds time limit

Variations

Coach vs the players
Vary the time
Amount of balls

Coaching Points - Inside of foot

Aim with non-kicking foot ("Aim and Fire")
Kicking foot toes pointed out to the side and slightly up
Ankle locked
Follow through
4 qualities of a good pass - Accuracy, Weight, Timing, Disguise

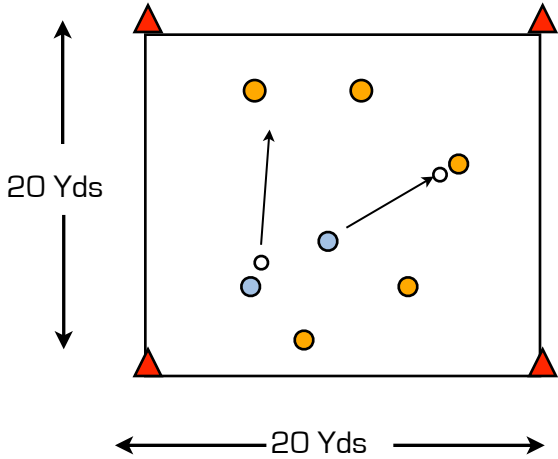
Coaching Points - Laces

Aim with non-kicking foot ("Aim and Fire")
Toes pointed down and ankle locked
Follow through with kicking foot

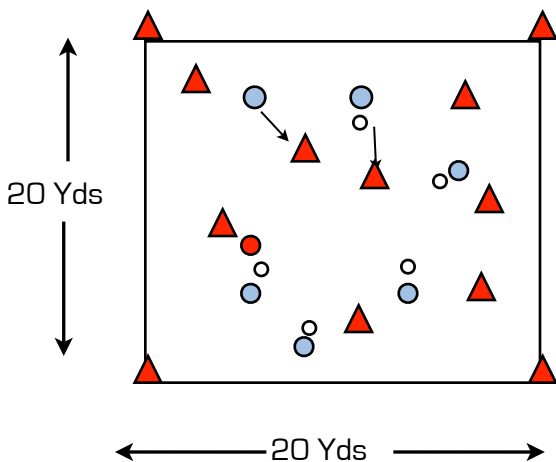
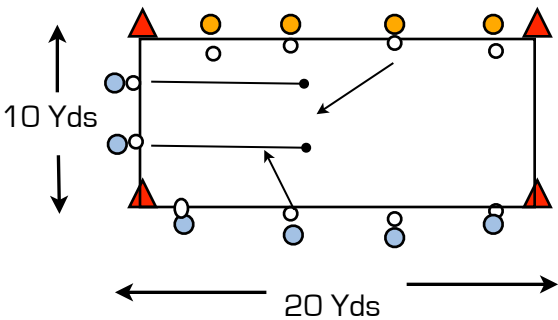
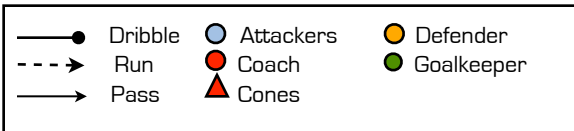
Variable Coaching Points

(Hit the Coach - Aim in their path)
(Clean the yard - pass in to the space)

Striking the ball games



Key



Stuck in the Mud

Two player's (shooters) try to hit the other players (runners) below the knee. If they get hit they are 'stuck in the mud' and have to stand still with their hands in the air. To get free another runner has to crawl through their legs.

Organization

- 1) 20 x 20 grid (depends on number of players)
- 2) 2 players with pinnies on and a ball
- 3) Challenge the players to see how quickly they can get all players stuck in the mud

Variations

Add extra shooters if needed.

Submarines and Torpedoes

Two or three players with a ball (their submarine) try to dribble through a channel while the torpedoes try to sink them by hitting their balls. Each time they get hit they lose a life. Torpedoes are not allowed in the channel.

Organization

- 1) 10 x 20 grid
- 2) Ball each
- 3) Submarines get three lives
- 4) 30 seconds time limit to get across

Variations

Coach vs the players

Vary the time

Amount of lives

Submarines do not have a ball and players try to hit their legs

Split the torpedoes into teams for extra competition

Cow Tipping

Players try to knock the cows over by shooting the cones with their balls. The coach is the farmer who tries to protect them.

Organization

- 1) 20 x 20 grid
- 2) Ball each
- 3) 6-12 tall cones

Variations

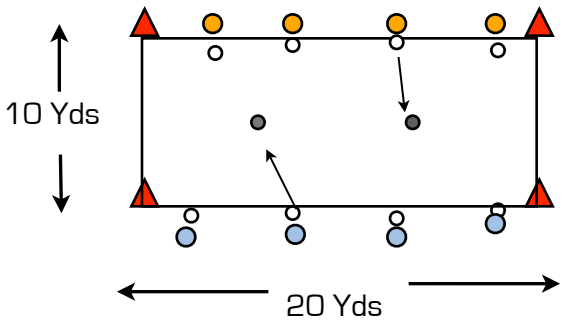
Coach tries to tip the cows over and the players protect.

Have two teams of players

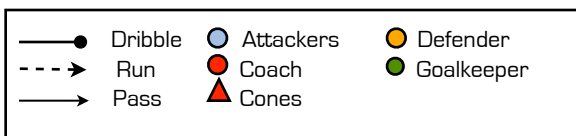
Coaching Points - All

As before (inside/outside foot and Moving/Stationary targets)

Striking the ball games



Key



Soccer Pool

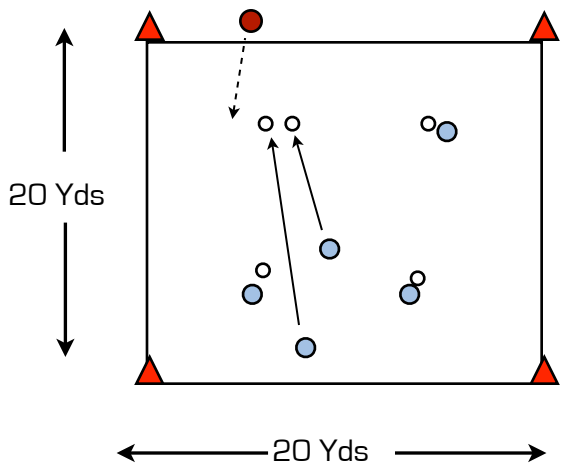
Players try to knock the two balls in the middle over their opponents line. Keep shooting until the balls are over a line or are all in the middle

Organization

- 1) 20 x 10 grid (adjust for success and age group)
- 2) 2 target balls of a different color placed in the middle
- 3) Players are not allowed in the middle but can keep shooting their opponents balls that cross their line

Variations

Number of Target Balls
Distance of Balls (closer to one team etc)
Size of grid



Buzzing Bees

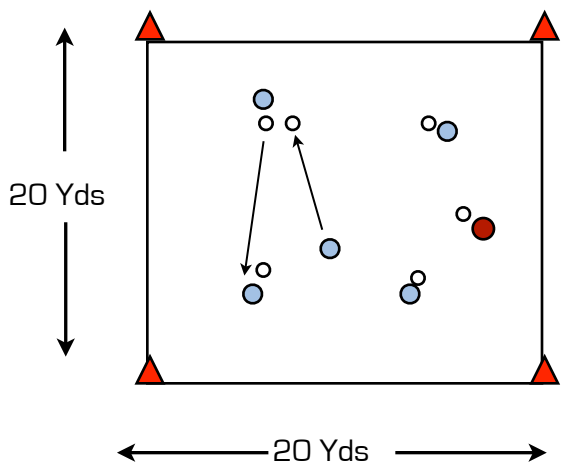
The coach is the hornet and tries to enter the bees nest. The players are the bees and have to sting the hornet by hitting him with the ball

Organization

- 1) 20 x 20 grid (depends on number of players)
- 2) Ball each
- 3) Coach gets hit 5 times he has to leave the nest
- 4) Players get points for hitting the hornet

Variations

Multiple hornets
Change the point system (2, 5, 10 etc)



Soccer Marbles

Players try to hit each player's ball

Organization

- 1) 20 x 20 grid (depends on number of players)
- 2) Ball each
- 3) If a player gets hit they have to leave the square and do 10 toe taps

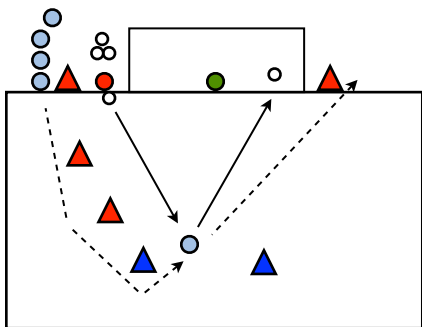
Variations

Number of toe taps
Players have to practice a move (Scissors, drag-back etc) when they get hit
Have teams and try to knock balls out of square by hitting them

Coaching Points - All

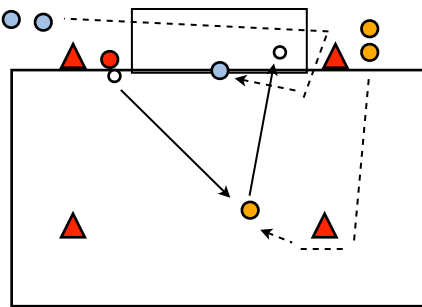
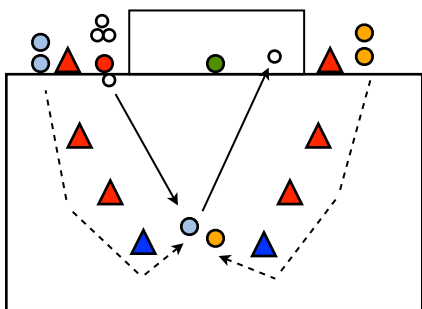
As before (inside/outside foot and Moving/Stationary targets)

Shooting Activities



Key

—●	Dribble	●	Attackers	●	Defender
- - ->	Run	●	Coach	●	Goalkeeper
—>	Pass	▲	Cones		



Coaching Points

Head up before shooting to look at GK or opponents position
 Shoot back across GK, far-post etc depending on GK's position
 Inside of Laces Coaching points as before

Round the World

Players run round some cones and coach/server passes a ball out for a first time shot.

Organization

- 1) Cones 2 different colors
- 2) 1 player runs out and turns at the blue cone
- 3) Server passes the ball to player who shoots
- 4) Player runs around the back of the goal so they don't get hit (may need to put a cone down to run around)
- 5) Next player in line runs when the player in front gets to the blue cone

Variations

Number of touches allowed (to bring GK out or let them control the ball first)
 Vary the service (in the air, bouncing etc or to different feet)

Round the World

Players run round some cones and coach/server passes a ball out for a 1v1 to goal

Organization

- 1) Cones 2 different colors
- 2) 2 player runs out and turns at the blue cones on command
- 3) Server passes the ball to the players to compete in a 1v1

Variations

Number of touches allowed (to bring GK out or let them control the ball first)
 Vary the service (in the air, bouncing etc)

GK-Striker

- 1 player runs round the back of the goal and becomes the GK.
- 1 player runs around the cone for a shot

Organization

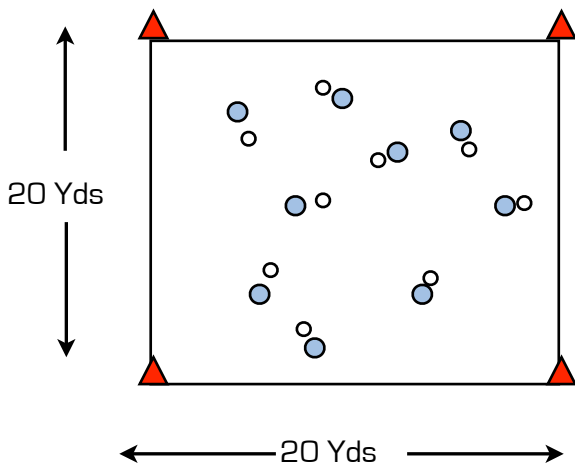
- 1) Cones 2 different colors
- 2) 2 player runs out on command from Coach
- 3) Switch lines after each go so players switch roles

Variations

Number of touches allowed (to bring GK out or let them control the ball first)
 Vary the service (in the air, bouncing etc)
 Switch sides so players shoot with different feet

Dribbling Games

Dribbling is the most common and basic skill used in the game of soccer. It is very important that all players become comfortable in possession and can dribble out of trouble. Encouraging players to take risks and play without fear of failure is very important at a young age. Once players reach U10 they start to process sequential thought - "If I do this, we might lose the ball...". It is important we encourage players to keep trying new skills without the fear of being chastised by the coach or parents. Players need to make mistakes as it is part of the game. Coaches don't need to add any undue pressure to players as self confidence is paramount in players being creative and risk taking. Play lots of dribbling games and activities so players can try new moves and techniques in a fun environment and involves movement. Dribbling in between cones or flags is not realistic. Dribbling into space and reacting to moving defenders is.



Coaching Points

- Listening skills – be aware of what is going on around you whilst dribbling
- Communication skills – Organize players into groups by calling their names.
- Keep your head up so you can see other players to chase or get away from
- Dribbling – Keep the ball very close so you can turn/change direction quickly to get into a group or away from a player
- Can you use a move to get away from a player (U8 and above)?
- Drag-back, step-over, inside cut, outside cut, scissors etc
- Concentrate on or demonstrate one move at a time so you don't confuse the players

Dribble Math

Organization

20 x 20 grid for the following games

Adjust if needed to ensure success

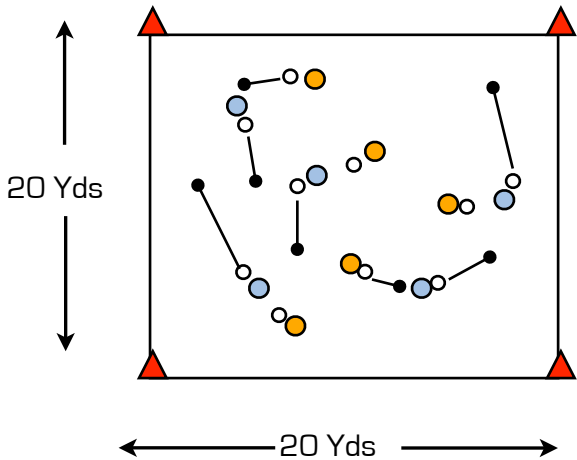
1. Players dribble the ball around inside grid.
2. Coach shouts out a number and players have to get into a group of that number
3. Coach shouts out a math sum, "2 + 1" and players have to get in that group
4. Fun forfeit (or technique to practice) for any players who are left out of a group or who are the last to get into a group

Dribble Tag

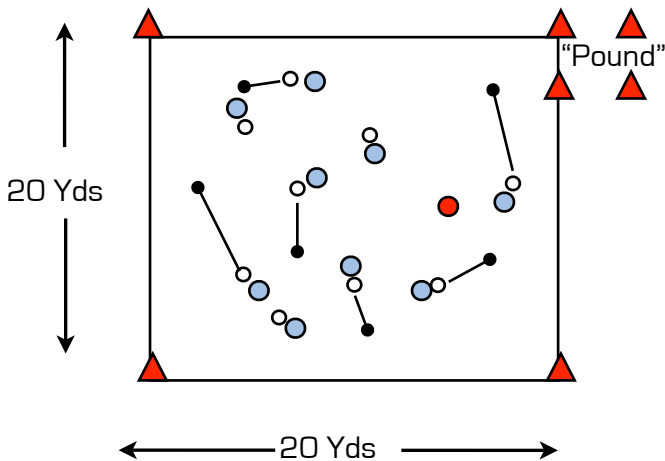
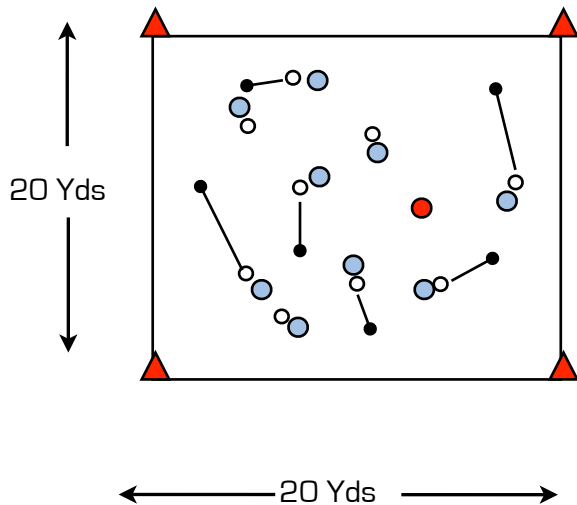
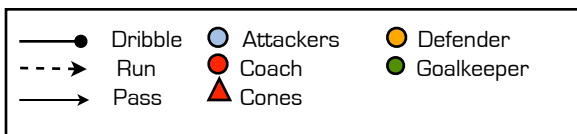
1. Players dribble around and on coach's instruction start to tag each other on the back.
2. Players cannot repeatedly tag the same player over and must be in control of the ball
3. # of players tagged in 30 secs
4. Who can be the first person to tag every other player?

Dribble Tag/Math

1. Combine both of the games
2. Players have to tag each other (essentially spreading out and away from each other)
3. When the coach shouts a number or math sum they have to get into that group
4. Fun forfeit (or technique to practice) for any players who are left out of a group or who are the last to get into a group



Key



Shadow Dribbling/Getaway

Organization

20 x 20 grid - adjust if necessary

Ball each

Activity Info

1. Players are in pairs and are numbered "#1 and #2"
2. #1 dribbles their ball and tries to lose #2
3. #2 has to keep control of their ball and follow #1
4. Have a time limit 15, 30 seconds etc.
5. Switch roles (#1 follows #2)

Variation

- Have two players follow #1 to make it harder
- #2 does not have a ball and only follows #1 as a shadow
- Make #2 active and they can steal the ball
- Walking or standing start

Red Light/Green Light

Organization - As above

Activity Info

1. "Green Light" = Go - start dribbling
2. "Red light" = Stop with foot on ball
3. "Yellow Light" = slow down/toe tapping
4. "Blue light" = tap ball side to side (Police pull you over to the side of the road)
5. "Interstate" = Go faster
6. "U-Turn" = Change direction

Variation

- Coach is a driver and gets "Road Rage" and tries to kick the players ball out of the square
- If there ball gets kicked out they join the coach or
- If the ball is kicked out then the have to do 10 toe-taps before they can start driving again

Walk the dog/Dog Catcher

Organization - As above

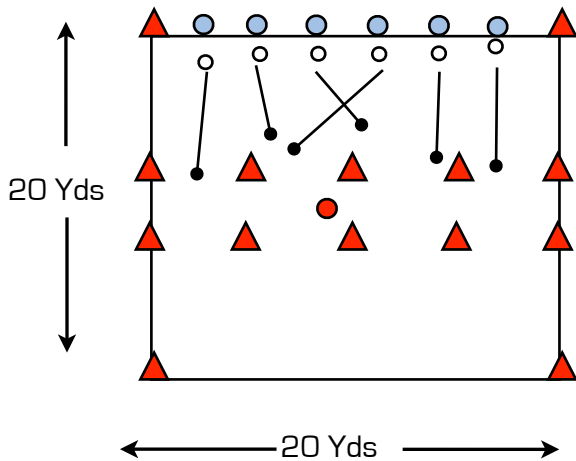
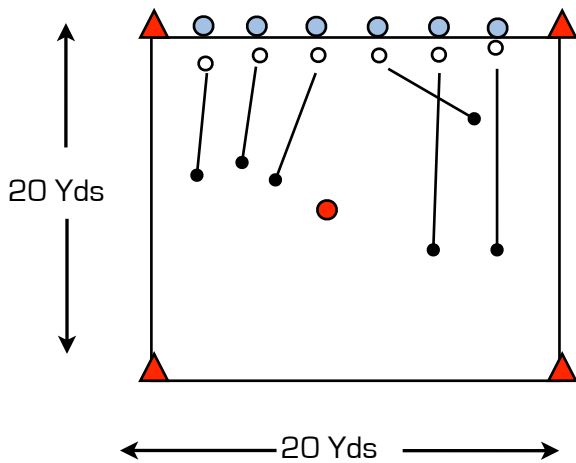
Activity Info

1. Players take their dog (ball) for a walk in the park
2. Coach is the "Dog catcher"
3. Coach will put their dog in pound (coned area to side) if they lose control of their dog
4. Players have to try and break their dog out

Variation

- Two coaches, one dog catcher and one guard
- Have some players be "Rottweilers" who are aggressive and try to chase the other dogs

Coaching points for all games on following page



Coaching Points

- Keep your head up to look for coach to dribble away from or space to dribble into
- Keep the ball close to change direction to get away from coach/defender
- Try to dribble at speed to get past the defender
- Fake one way and then dribble another to get away from defender
- Try not to dribble with the toe as it is the smallest surface of the foot which means less control
- Encourage use of both feet and all the surfaces - inside, outside, laces and heel
- Can the player do a move or turn to get away?

Crab Soccer

Organization

20 x 20 grid - adjust if needed

Activity Info

1. Players try to dribble past the Crab (Coach) to the other line
2. Coach is in sitting position and can only move sideways using his hands and feet
3. Players try to dribble past the Crab (Coach) to the other line
4. Coach is in a sitting position and can only move sideways using his hands and feet
5. Coach tries to burst the balls using his big claws or "pinchers"
6. If the crab gets you, you become a crab

Variations

- Same game but call it "snakes" and coach moves on his belly

Sharks & Minnows

Organization

20 x 20 grid

2-3 yard area in the middle marked by cones

Activity Info

1. Players (minnows) try to dribble past the Coach (shark)
2. Coach cannot leave the middle zone
3. Players try to dribble down far end line
4. If coach gets them they become a shark

Variations

- Take away zone
- Coach's position - Standing, kneeling etc

Cowboys & Indians

Organization

As above

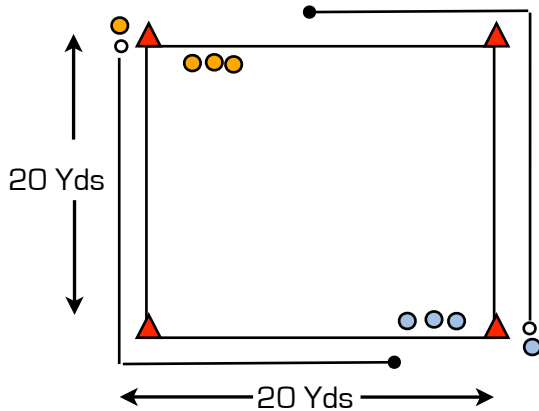
Activity Info

1. Players (Cowboys/girls) try to dribble past the Coach (Indian) and steal his land
2. Coach cannot leave the middle zone
3. Players try to dribble down to end line
4. If coach gets them they become an Indian

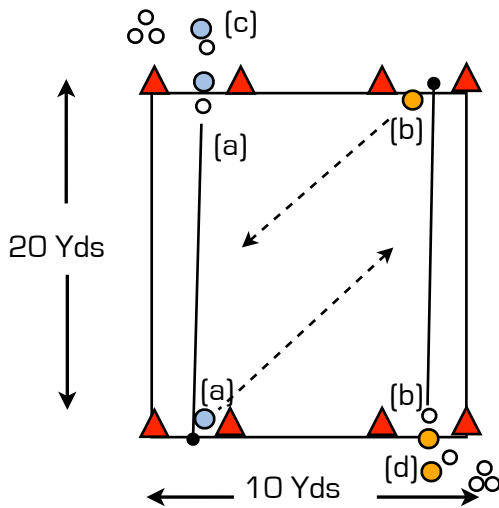
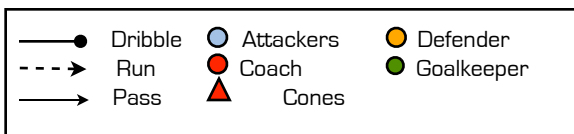
Variations

- Take away zone
- Coach's position - Standing, kneeling etc

Running with the Ball



Key



King Cone - Relay Race

Organization

20 x 20 grid - Adjust if needed

Players with ball on outside of square, players without ball inside the square

Activity Info

1. Players are two groups of 4
2. Relay race around the outside of the square back to their corner
3. 1st player dribble around the outside of the square and then gives the ball to the 2nd player to dribble
4. 2nd player passes to 3rd and they dribble etc
5. 1st team to have everyone back to the corner wins

Variation

- Have teams in each corner
- Number of teams may be conditioned by weather - if it is hot have less teams with more players or if it is cold have more teams with less players on
- Put a cone in the middle of the square so they have to dribble around the cone in the middle 1st and back to their corner before going around the square

Chase the Ace

Organization

20 x 10 grid

Adjust if needed to ensure success

Plenty of spare balls

Activity Info

1. Players are in two teams
2. Blue player (a) dribble the ball between the two cones and put's his foot on it
3. When (a) goes through the cones, the Gold player (b) dribbles to his goal and (a) has to try and beat (b) through the cones
4. (b) then chases (c)
5. (c) chases (d) and (d) chases (a) and it continues

Variation

- Number of players on each team
- Try to steal the ball off them rather than just beat them through the cones

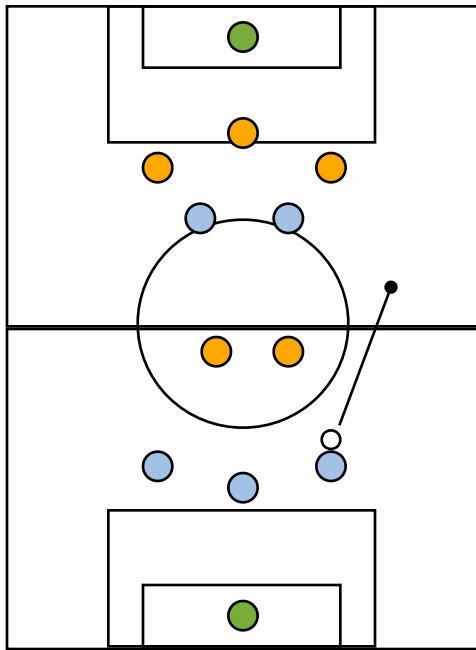
Coaching Points

- Take big touches over greater distances
- Take small touches when you change direction or are coming to a stop
- Use the laces to dribble as your toes are naturally pointed down when you run
- Big first touch
- The more touches you take the slower you will dribble

Conditioned Games

The use of conditioned games is under utilized by coaches in the US. The NSCAA, US Youth Soccer and the USSF continue to highlight the need to let players play without constant coaching. However, it is a common occurrence that you have just designed and planned a session that concentrated on dribbling moves and turns. You finish your session with a scrimmage and straight away, your players start to pass the ball or kick the ball away when under pressure and do not utilize the practice and training you just gave them. This is when the use of conditioned games is an excellent coaching tool as it enables you to manipulate the players to ensure they focus on the topic or skills you are trying to cover. It allows the players to get into a game environment and directs them to work on a certain skill without the coach constantly reminding players or coaching them to do so. These games should be utilized at ages U10 and older.

1. Games to encourage dribbling



Key

	Dribble		Attackers		Defender
	Run		Coach		Goalkeeper
	Pass		Cones		

Condition: Players cannot pass forward - they can pass sideways and backwards

Exceptions: Throw-ins, Goal-kicks and free kicks

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims -e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) A free kick is give to the opposing team if a player passes the ball forward

Coaching Points:

A) Positive mindset - go forward whenever you can

B) First touch into space and attack the opposition

C) Create width and depth to provide space for your self and your team mates to dribble

D) Try to unbalance the defender by using a move or fake

D) Support behind the ball

Variations/Add ins:

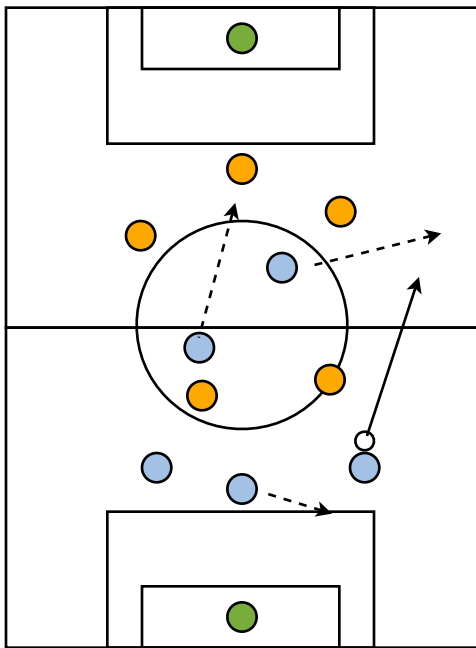
You can add the condition that a player has to do a move (scissors/step-over etc) as soon as they receive the ball so it encourages quick feet and so moves become second nature.

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages players not to panic and just get rid of the ball and subsequently lose possession
- Develops all 3 types of dribbling:- i) Dribbling for possession ii) Running with the ball & iii) Dribbling to beat players
- Encourage the players to develop their shielding technique
- Encourages the players to become 'attack minded' and develop a positive mindset
- Encourages the players to utilize moves and skills to beat players
- Helps the players identify when to pass and when to dribble

Conditioned Games

2. Games to encourage passing



Key

—●	Dribble	●	Attackers	●	Defender
- - ->	Run	●	Coach		
—>	Pass	▲	Cones		

Condition 1: Players can not dribble forward - they can dribble sideways and backwards (a dribble is classified as 3 touches forward into space or away from a player) or

Condition 2: Limit the number of touches a player can take to 2 or 3

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) A free kick is give to the opposing team if a player dribbles the ball or takes more than the allowed amount of touches

Coaching Points:

A) Get your head up early - before you receive the ball or immediately after you control it

B) Support in front and behind the ball

C) Forward runs

D) Off the ball movement

E) Communication - Calling for the ball and putting names on passes

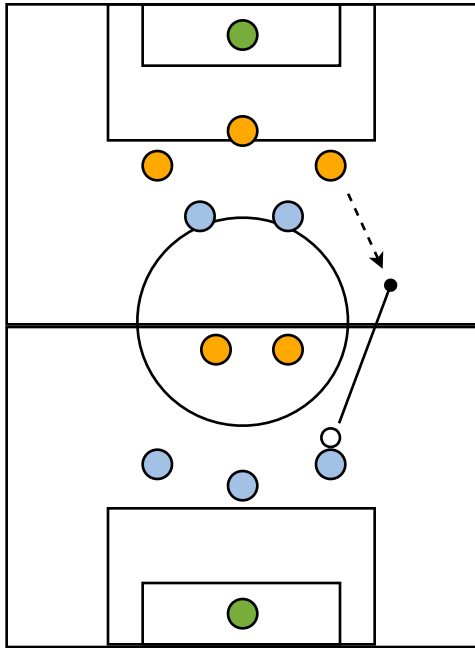
F) Control the ball quickly

Benefits of this Activity

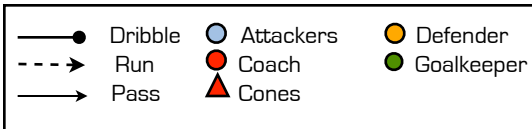
- Increases the player's awareness and vision
- Encourages players to support in front of and behind the ball
- Encourages attacking runs from the midfielders and forwards
- Encourages 'off the ball', 'blind side' and overlapping runs
- Encourages players to communicate (calling for the ball quickly as the player has limited touches)
- Encourages players to concentrate on their first touch
- Encourages quick play and decision making
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 attacking Principles of Play
 - Penetration - through passing or shooting
 - Width - support and creation of space
 - Depth - support in front of and behind the ball and creation of space
 - Mobility - penetrating runs with and without the ball to unbalance the opposition
 - Creativity/Improvisation

Conditioned Games

3. Games to encourage 1v1 defending



Key



Condition: Players can not pass forward (only dribble forward)- they can pass sideways and backwards

Exceptions: Throw-ins, Goal-kicks and free kicks

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) A free kick is give to the opposing team if a player passes the ball forward

Coaching Points:

A) Pressure the ball

B) Angle your approach to force the attacker onto their weaker foot, away from goal or towards another supporting defender

C) Stand up and do not dive in to win the ball.

D) Keep your eye on the ball

E) Body position should be sideways on. Angle your body to force them where you at them to go and make them predictable. It will also aid your recovery if you are beaten.

F) There are two types of tackle to make when facing an opponent: i) Poke with front foot ii) Block with back foot if they try to beat you

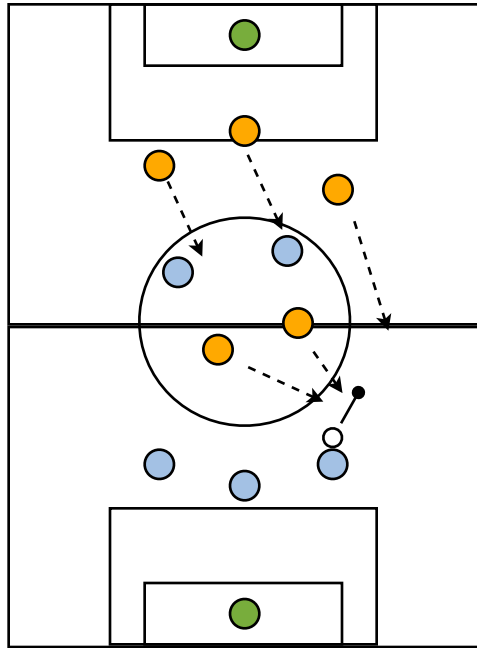
G) Players can try to win the ball and be more aggressive when they have cover

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages defenders to pressure the ball early
- Encourages defenders to adopt the correct defensive stance
- Helps players understand that you don't have to be to win the ball to be a good defender
- Helps players recognize if they are patient and stand up they will increase their chances of their team winning the ball
- Encourages the defenders to make play predictable by forcing players to play it back or play long
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 defending Principles of Play
 - Pressure
 - Deny
 - Delay
 - Depth
 - Balance

Conditioned Games

4. Games to encourage High Pressure



Key

—●	Dribble	●	Attackers	●	Defender
- - ->	Run	●	Coach	●	Goalkeeper
—>	Pass	▲	Cones		

Condition 1: If the red team makes 5 passes they score a goal (blue team being coached)

and/or

Condition 2: If the red team maintains possession for 15 seconds they score a goal (Blue team being coached)

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) # of passes or time of possession can vary depending on age

Coaching Points:

A) Pressure as high up the field as possible from a 'goal side' position.

B) Pressure as a pair or defensive unit i.e. forwards, midfielders, defenders, wide defenders and wide MF's etc

C) Forwards force play into their supporting players (normally central)

D) Try to get the player in possession to 'get their head down' - put them under pressure so they look down at the ball and not at their team mates

E) Communication - Telling specific players when and where to pressure and where to show them (inside/outside)

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages the players to play at a high tempo - great for fitness
- Helps the players understand how quick possession changes and how important it is to win it back
- Helps encourage the work rate of all players, especially the forwards
- Helps players understand when to pressure high up the field depending on the position of the ball, the time and score of the game
- Encourages communication from all of the players
- Helps players recognize that if they make play predictable they can win the ball back easier
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 Defending Principles of Play
 - Pressure
 - Deny
 - Delay
 - Depth
 - Balance

Helpful Websites and Resources

Websites

Name	Web URL
NSCAA Coaching Tips	www.nscaa.com/coachingtips.php
Ken Gamble's Drills	www.dprsports.com/drills.htm
Fine Soccer Drills	www.finesoccer.com/finesoccer_drills_archive.htm
Fine Soccer Tips	www.finesoccer.com/kids.htm
USYS Resource Center	www.usyouthsoccer.org/USYouthSoccerResourceCenter.asp
USYS Sample Sessions	www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/CoachConnect_LessonPlans.asp
World Class Coaching Archives	www.worldclasscoaching.com/tsarchives.asp
Footy for Kids	www.footy4kids.co.uk/
Parent Education	www.usyouthsoccer.org/parents/resourcelibrary.asp