

Coach Education Series



SSA Coweta

A Guide to Coaching U8 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. SSA Coweta 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, U6 players' cognitive abilities are limited so we have to tailor our practices to suit their ability level. 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 U6. 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 U6 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 U6 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 U6 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 the USSF National Youth License. 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

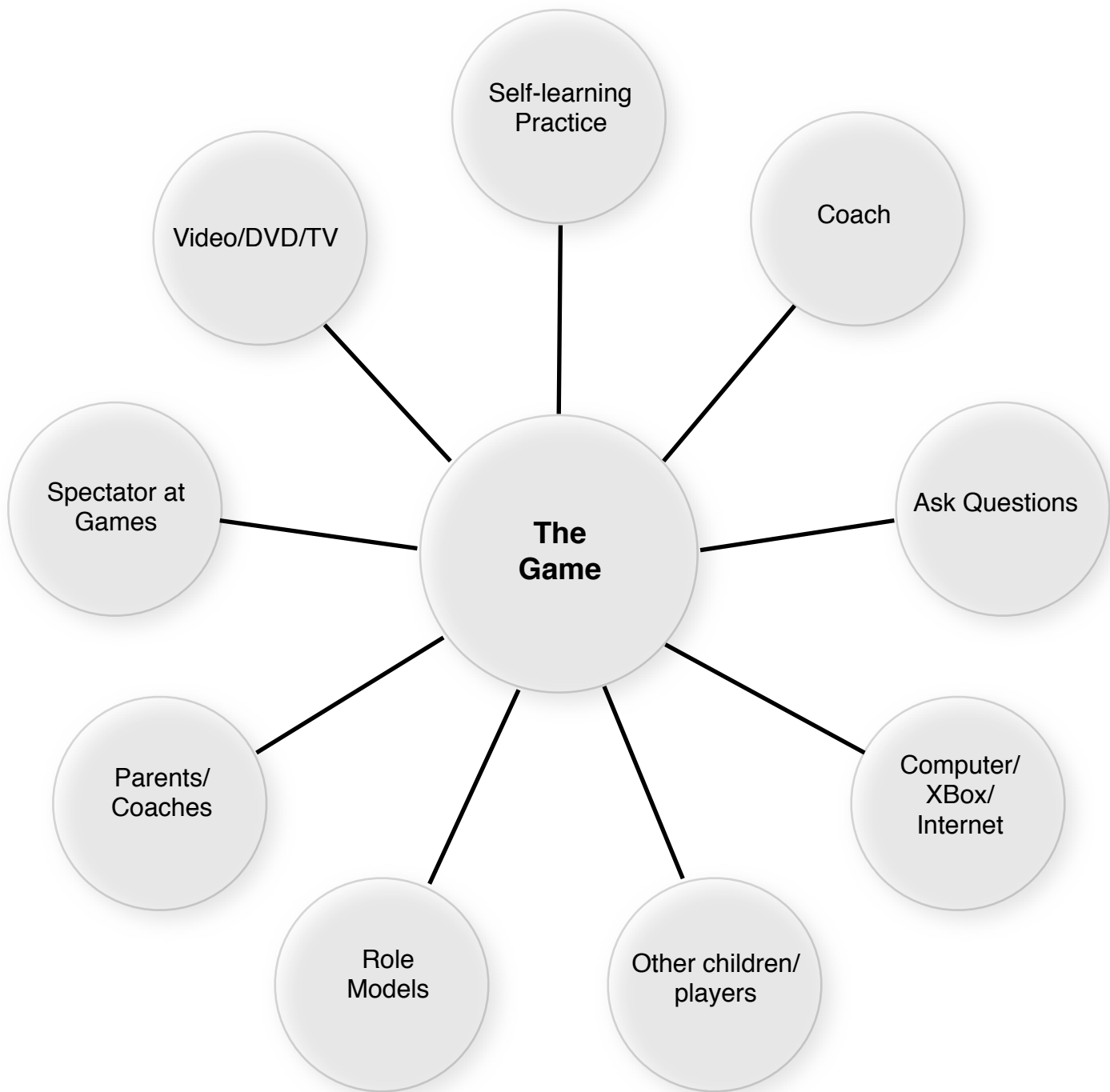
Other children – By watching and playing with other children, includes peers, siblings etc.

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



U8 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.

U8 motor skills development

Players will tire quickly but will also recover very quickly. Young 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. They can basically manipulate the ball and other objects by throwing, catching and striking the ball. Players at U8 are still growing and there is a perceivable improvement in pace and coordination from U6 players.

Implications

Practices should last between 45–60 minutes with 1 practice session a week plus the games at the weekend. A second optional session can also be offered but it is not 'mandatory'. Players will still tire quickly at U8 so 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. Pay close attention to any injuries near the joints as this may be a growth plate injury.

U8 cognitive development

Children at U8 are transitioning between Piaget's Pre-operational Stage and the Concrete Operational stage of Cognitive development. The pre-operational stage is normally between 2 & 7 years of age and the Concrete Operational. For some players, play will still consist of a high degree of imagination and pretend activities. They can only deal with one task at a time in problem solving situations and can only process small bits of information at a time. They will start to develop a limited understanding of the relationship between space and time. They also have limitations when it comes to personal evaluation and differentiate between effort and ability.

Implications

Players at U8 can still not deal with long, sequential instructions. 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. If you tell a U8 player that they have 30 seconds left, they will probably not understand it because of their lack of conceptual time. You could carry on for two minutes and they would not ask why you haven't called time yet. Telling them to spread out will prove fruitless as they will bunch around the ball, so don't fight it. They will start to have a concept of space relations so teach them to attack or defend as a team. Do not limit the players to a position. Teach them to get wide, forward or back during the game and not just 'be a defender'. Players will think they have played well just because they have tried hard. Therefore, it is important to reward effort and not just the outcome. U8 Players are still very impressionable and will believe anything you say, so be aware of what you communicate to the children during practices and games.

U8 social skills

Players at U8 are beginning to develop self-concept, body awareness and self-image through movement. Players are still very egocentric so will see the world from only their perspective which is demonstrated through parallel play. They all want the ball. However, some players will start to stay away from 'the bunch' and look to pass the ball to a team mate. They need generous praise and the opportunity to play without pressure. The most influential person in their life is likely their mother or significant parent but crave the approval of adults and like to demonstrate their individual skills. They desire social acceptance and will start to develop 'playmates', however, they are still intrinsically motivated.

Implications

Even though players are on a team, they have a limited understanding of 'Team Identity'. They play on 'Coach David's team' or 'I play for the 'Hurricanes''. They have club or league concepts. Players will start to seek approval off the coaches. 'Watch me Coach David' will become a common theme as they seek to demonstrate their competence at dribbling or shooting. Players will start to look-up and pass the ball to a team mate. However, if they look up and make the decision to pass that is great. The coach should not be shouting at the player to pass the ball as you will be taking away the decision for them. Try to guide them to look up when they have the ball so they make the decision themselves. Try to make games which involves partner activities and cooperation. Do not make sarcastic comments to players at this age as they are easily bruised psychologically.

U8 technical development

The technical development of a U8 player's soccer skills should revolve around dribbling and striking the ball. We should also include gross motor skills in this development. Falling, rolling, jumping, bending are examples, as this is vital in a child's development. Gone are the days of players climbing trees and falling. It is important you add various movements into your sessions such as getting up off the ground and different start positions for players to get up (from belly, back, knees etc)

U8 tactical development

No tactics should be taught in practice at U8. Players should not be told where to be and where to stand but encouraged to 'get wide' or 'forward' during scrimmages. Practice should concentrate 100% on technical development.

Organizing a Training Session 6–8 year olds

1. General Considerations

- All sessions must be fun
- Pick a topic for each session
- Skill development attained through games (not drills)
- Activity in place of explanation
- Create clear & simple pictures
- Length of sessions
- Prior Preparation
- Moving from one activity to another without boredom
- Attention span (limited or non-existent)
- Voice Projection
- Gaining control through activities and mannerisms
- Individual attention

2. Creating the Training Environment

A) Attitude

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

B) Content

- Games vs Drills
- Many activities/games of short duration

C) Organization

- Brief, clear, concise explanations

- Limited talking
- One teaching point at a time
- Let the game do the teaching
- Activities should be with a ball each as much as possible

3. Building the Session

A) Warm-up

- Fundamental stage of teaching technique
- Preparation for physical activity
- Mental preparation for session (focus & enthusiasm)

B) Skill Development

- Games to teach skills (Dribbling, shielding, control & shooting)
- Match related stage of teaching technique

The Game 3v3

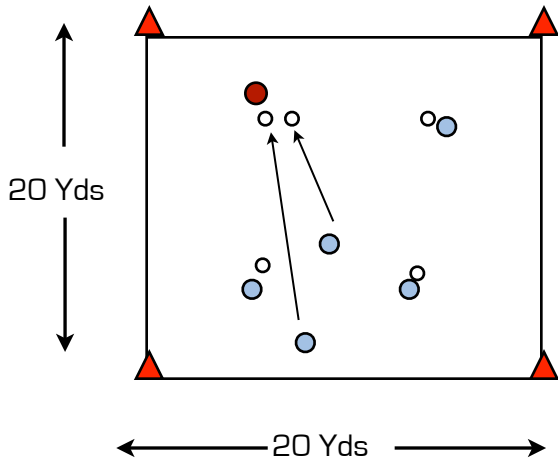
- Game condition stage of teaching technique
- Use conditions or restrictions to emphasize focus of session
- Allow players to play with no restrictions or interruptions

U6 Games and Activities

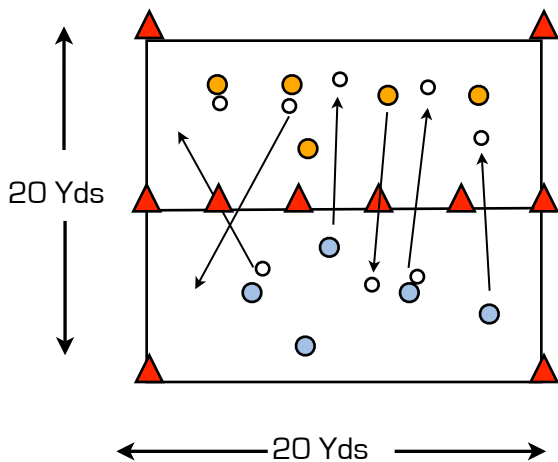
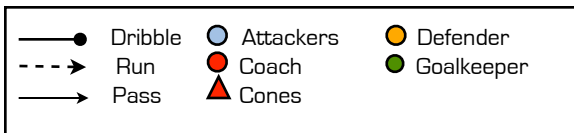
At U6 the emphasis for all players should be on dribbling and striking the ball games as these are the two skills they will use. Some of these games and activities are on the following pages and more can be found in a separate activity manual.

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



Variable Coaching Points

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

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

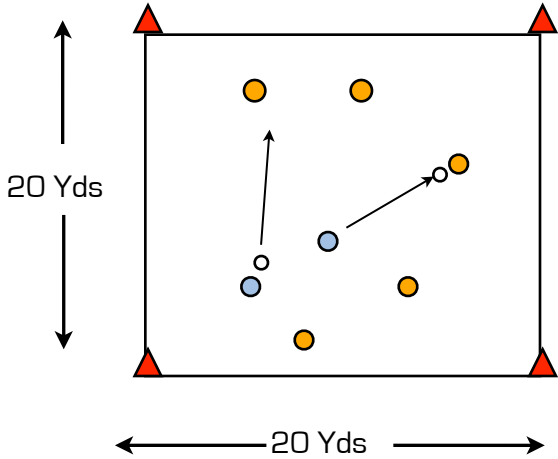
Coaching Points – Inside of foot

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

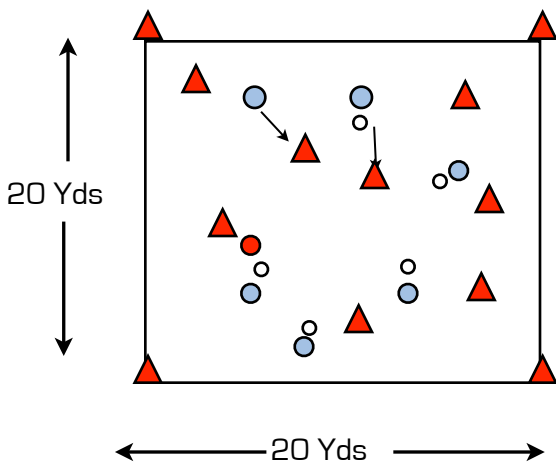
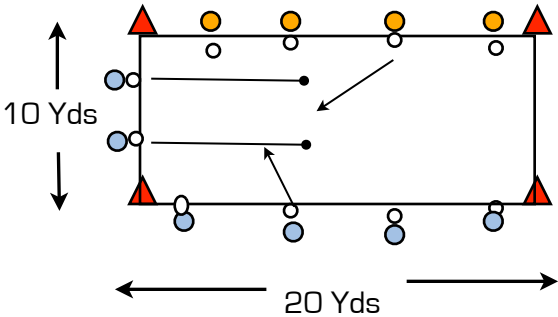
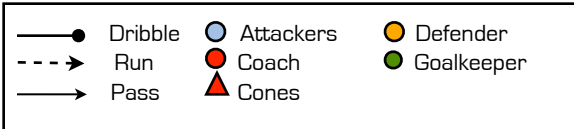
Coaching Points – Laces

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

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

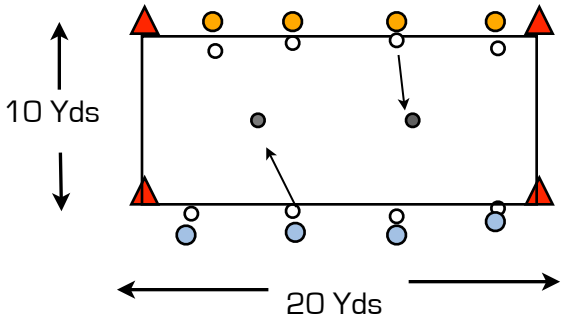
Coach tries to tip the cows over and the players protect.

Have two teams of players

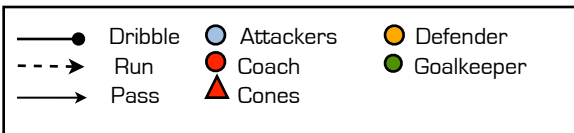
Coaching Points – All

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

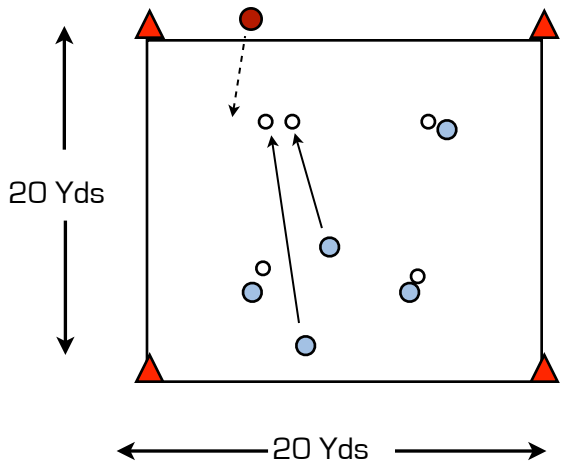
- 1) 20 x 10 grid (adjust for success and age group)
- 2) 2 target balls of a different color placed in the middle
- 3) Players are not allowed in the middle but can keep shooting their opponents balls that cross their line

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

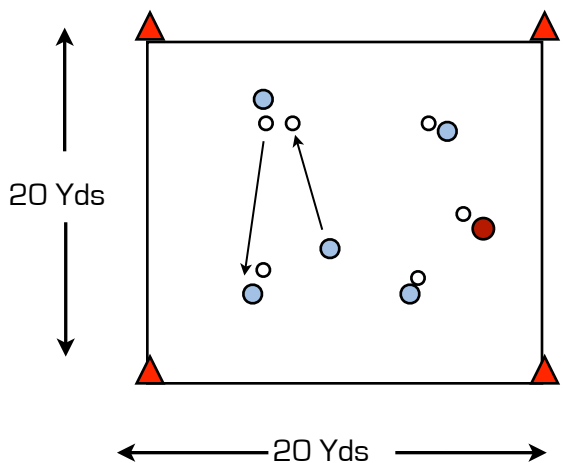
Organization

- 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

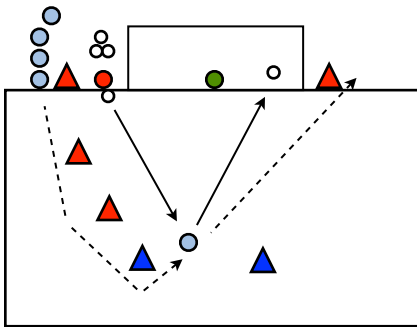
Players have to practice a move (Scissors, drag-back etc) when they get hit

Have teams and try to knock balls out of square by hitting them

Coaching Points – All

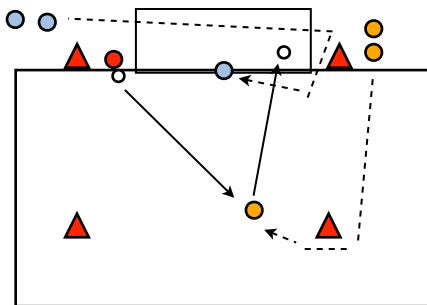
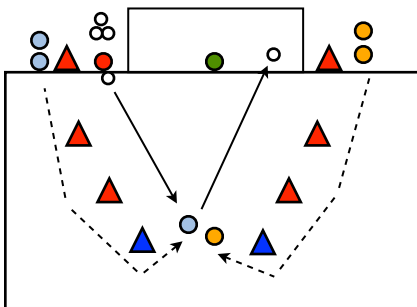
As before (inside/outside foot and Moving/Stationary targets)

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

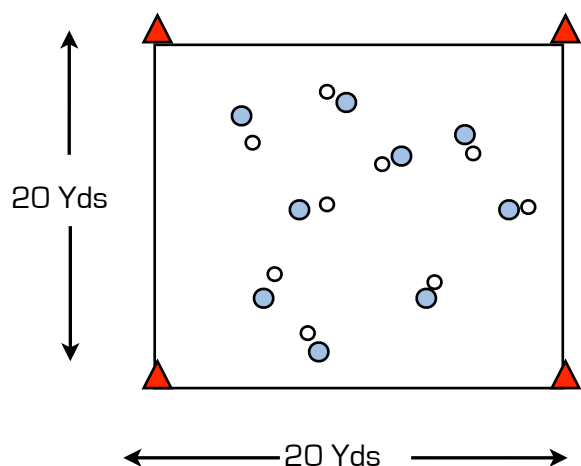
Number of touches allowed (to bring GK out or let them control the ball first)

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.



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

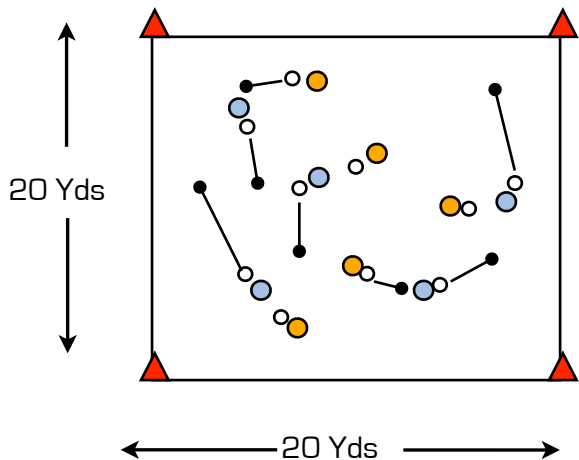
1. Players dribble around and on coach's instruction start to tag each other on the back.
2. Players cannot repeatedly tag the same player over and must be in control of the ball
3. # of players tagged in 30 secs
4. Who can be the first person to tag every other player?

Dribble Tag/Math

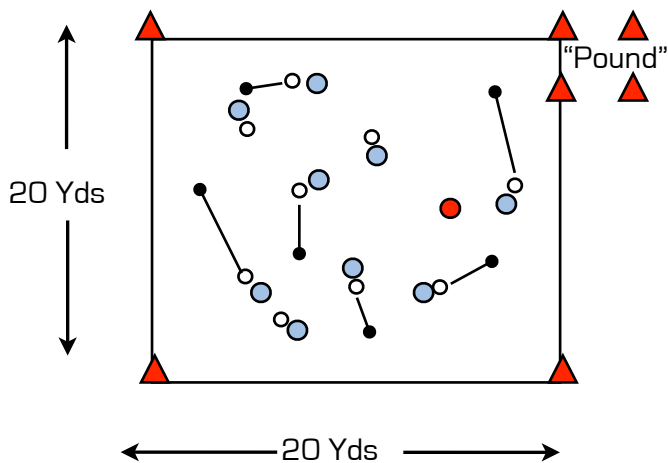
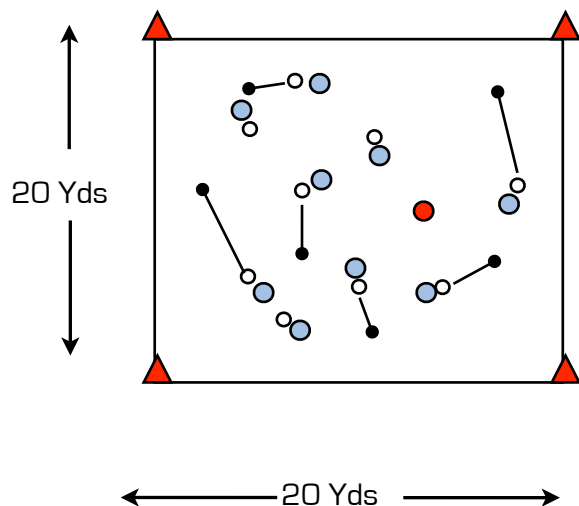
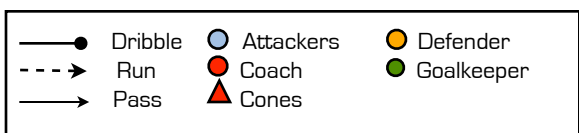
1. Combine both of the games
2. Players have to tag each other (essentially spreading out and away from each other)
3. When the coach shouts a number or math sum they have to get into that group
4. Fun forfeit (or technique to practice) for any players who are left out of a group or who are the last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

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



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 their ball gets kicked out they join the coach or
- If the ball is kicked out then they have to do 10 toe-taps before they can start driving again

Walk the dog/Dog Catcher

Organization – As above

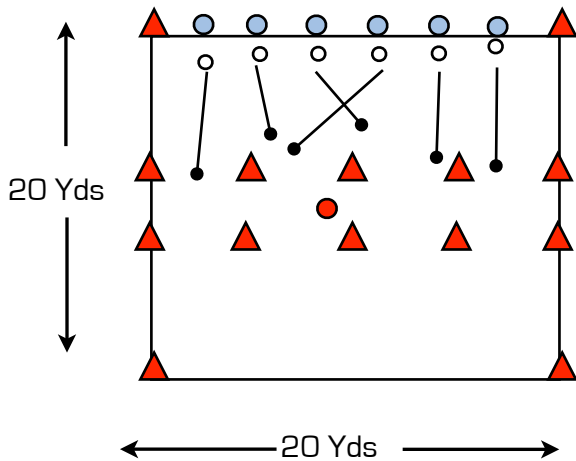
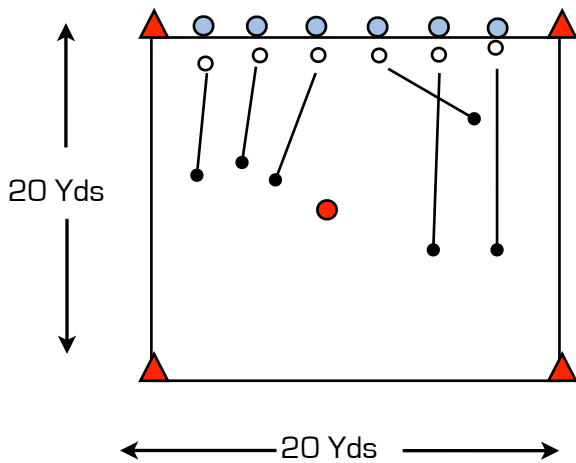
Activity Info

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

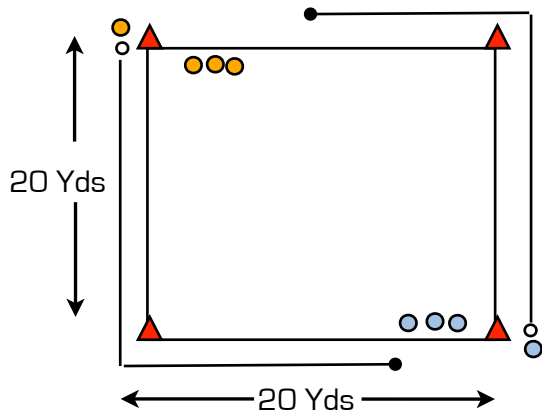
Activity Info

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

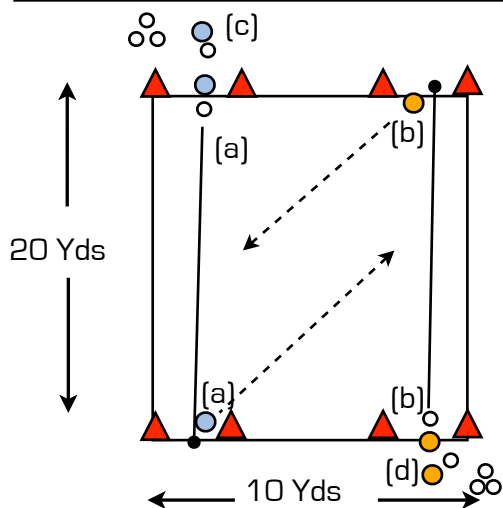
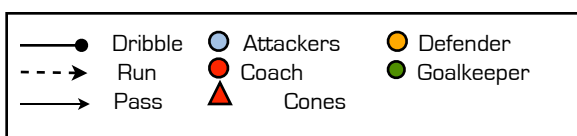
Variations

- Take away zone
- Coach’s position – Standing, kneeling etc

Running with the Ball



Key



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

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

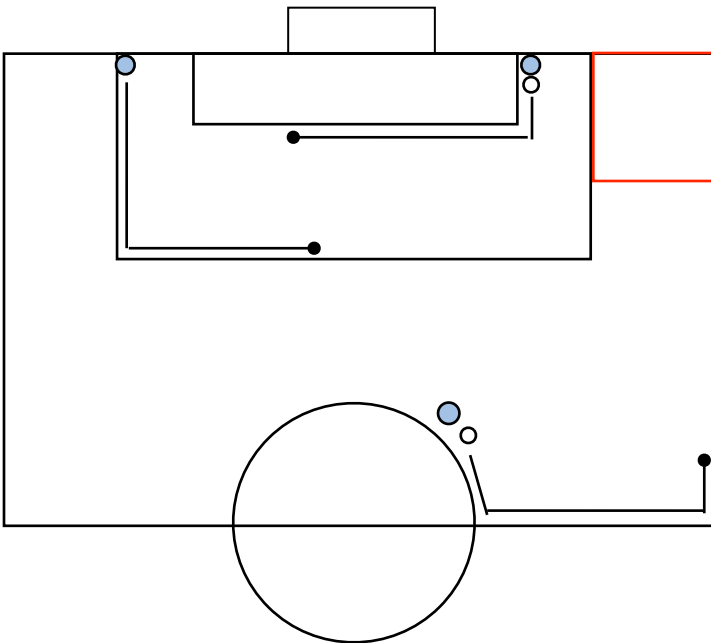
Activity Info

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

Activities to Teach the Laws of the Game



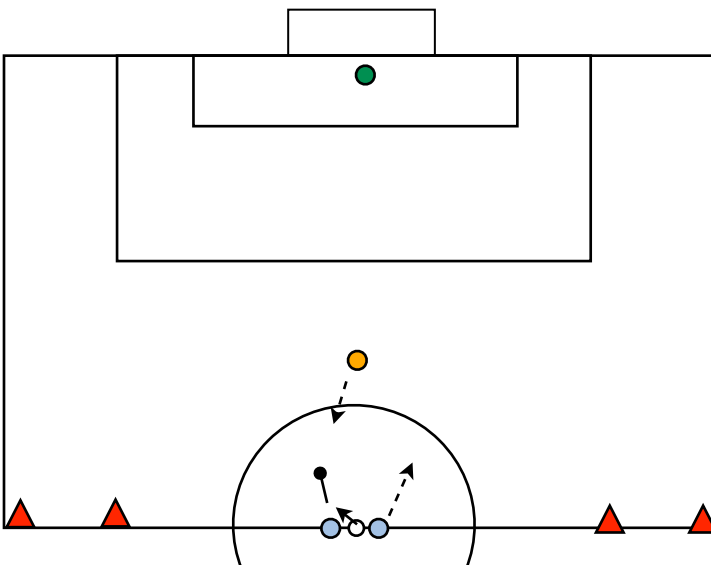
Dribble the Lines

Have the players dribble the lines and explain what the lines are for

Have dribbling races to:

- Penalty spot and back
- Center Spot and back
- Goal area and back
- Penalty area and back
- Touchline to touchline
- Halfway to goal line etc

Utilize the areas already marked to form coaching areas (E.g. Touchline to penalty area – in Red above)



Kick-offs/restarts

Play 2v1 to goal to teach the kick off

- Defender goes to two goals on halfway line
- Ball must go forward
- Defender must be outside of the Centre Circle
- Have 2v2, 3v2, 3v3, 4v3, etc
- Play Attack vs Defense – Attack go to goal, defenders go to two goals marked by cones
- Use restarts for Goal kicks, throw ins, corner kicks etc
- Use drop balls to restart and tell them why, when and where these are used to restart the games

Games to work on throw-ins

- Play a scrimmage on a narrow field so the ball goes out of play more often across the touchline
- More active than just having players throw the ball back and forth
- You can coach player movement on throw-ins and when to throw to feet or space

Games to work on Goal-Kicks or corner kicks

- Play a scrimmage on a short field so the balls goes out of play more often across the goal-line
- More active than just working on corner after corner in a static environment
- You can coach player movement on corners and goal kicks during a live scrimmage

Games to work on Free-kicks

- Play a scrimmage but call more free-kicks than normal
- More active and you can coach movement and quick free kicks within a live scrimmage rather than taking free-kicks over and over again in a static environment

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