

# **Orchard Park Soccer Club**



## **2nd/3rd Grade (Under 8) Coaching Manual**

## CHARACTERISTICS OF U - 8 PLAYERS

- Attention span is a bit longer than U-6 players but still not at a "competitive" stage
- Inclined towards small group activities.
- Always in motion: scratching; blinking; jerking; rocking....
- Easily bruised psychologically. They will remember negative comments for a long time. Shout praise. Give "hints".
- They want everybody to like them.
- Developing physical confidence. (Most are able to ride a two-wheeler.)
- Starting to imitate older players or sports heroes. Want the same "gear" as them.
- Lack sense of pace. They go flat out until they drop.
- Skeletal system growing rapidly. Often results in apparent lack of coordination.
- Cardiovascular and temperature regulation system is not developed. Their heart rate peaks quickly and they overheat quickly. Make sure that they get adequate water breaks.
- Limited understanding with personal evaluation. "If they try hard, they performed well" regardless of the actual performance. Thus, they need to be encouraged constantly, and asked "Now, can you do this?"
- Better at recognizing when the ball is out of play, and remembering what goal they are going for... but, in the heat of battle, they will sometimes still forget. They still find it difficult to really be aware of more than one thing at a time.

## THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT

Six, 7, and 8 year old players are a bit more compliant than their U-6 counterparts. They will be able to follow 2 or 3 step instructions and are starting to have a good understanding about what it means to play a "game". They are also starting to cooperate more with their teammates. In fact, they now will recognize that they even have teammates by the fact that they occasionally, and I mean occasionally, will pass the ball to a teammate, on purpose. Often, they will repeat the phrase "I can't do that!", but, will quickly run to you to show you that they can, even when they only think that they can. Some other things that you can expect to happen during a season with this age group are:

- There will be at least 200-300 falls during the season, but, now they will usually pick themselves back up.
- The puddle in front of the goal is still too tempting to resist.
- Keep a spare pump in your bag as the players usually do not realize that their ball is flat until they try to kick it, or the coach tells them that it is flat.
- Some of the girls are a lot tougher than the boys.
- They will still want to wear a pinnie, even when the color is identical to their shirt.
- It will be impossible to remember who is whose best friend as you try to make up teams.
- School conflicts will come up... please, let them go (they must face their teachers five days a week).

# INVOLVING THE PARENTS

**It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they are a major resource for your team, but the U-8 player still views their parents as the most significant people in their lives. A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team policies can be addressed.**

**Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are:**

- A means of contacting everyone without one person doing all of the calling. (Phone chains.)
- Choosing a team administrator-someone to handle all of the details.
- Complete all paperwork required by your league or club.
- Discuss the laws of the game.
- Carpool needs.
- Training and game schedules. How you feel about starting and ending on time, what your attendance expectations are, what you think is a good excuse to miss training.
- What each player should bring to training: inflated ball, filled water bottle, soccer attire, shin guards (Cleats are not mandatory.)
- Most importantly, your philosophy about coaching U-8 players. Let them know that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older player's games; that you are there to ensure that their player is safe and has a good time, as well as learn about soccer.
- What your expectations for them is during game time. How do you want them to cheer? Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines?
- Above all, try to enjoy yourself. If you do they probably will too.

# COACHING RATIONALE

**It is important to understand at the outset that players coming to any sport prior to the age of 6 years old, in general, do not do so by their own choice. As a result, their coaches need to give them something about which to get excited. Further, at this age, learning to play soccer is secondary to most other things in their lives.**

**With the above assumptions, let's look at some things that we can do to energize the U-6 players, and, hopefully, get them to the point where they will enthusiastically initiate the sign up for next year!**

- Each session should be geared around touching the ball as many times as possible. Involve the ball in as many activities as possible. Basic movements such as running, skipping, hopping, etc. need to be emphasized. If these can be done while kicking, catching, rolling, or dribbling a ball... all the better!
- Training should not last for more than one hour. This is primarily due to physical fatigue and attention span considerations. Train once or twice a week. Any more than this may lead to their and your burnout.
- Have as many different kinds of activities ready as you can get into one hour. Emphasis needs to be placed on what is FUN!.
- Every player should bring his or her own size #3 or #4 ball.
- Remember, although they may have very similar birthdates, their physical and / or mental maturity may vary as much as 36 months. Activities need to accommodate these individual differences whenever possible.
- Team play and passing is an alien concept to these players. They know that if they pass the ball, they may never get it back. In fact, they often will steal it from their own teammates. Do not get uptight if they do not pass, let them dribble to their heart's content.
- Plan for at least 4, 90 second drink breaks, especially in warmer weather. Their "cooling system" is not as efficient as in older players.

# Week 1

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Tag---**Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees. (10 minutes)

**2) Free Dribble---**Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot), and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. (10 minutes)

**3) Knock Out---**In same space as previous activity, have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player’s balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 sole of the foot touches or juggling 5 times). (10 minutes)

**4) Shield-Steal---**Two players (partners) with one ball. One player starts with the ball and, on the coach’s command, her partner tries to steal the ball from her. Play 30-45 second matches. Whoever has the ball at the end of the time allotment, receives a point. Play many matches. If ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back into play quickly. **Coaching points:** Show shielding technique with body sideways on to opponent, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (8 minutes)

**(5) Get “Outta” There---**Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. When the coach kicks a ball onto the field, the first player in each line runs out and tries to score on their opponent’s goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells “get outta there” and plays a new ball into the field immediately for the next two players. **Version 2:** Coach can stop yelling “get outta there” and see if the 1<sup>st</sup> players in each line recognize that they should begin play when a new ball is kicked into the field. **Version 3:** Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. **Version 4:** If the Coach calls out the number “TWO” before he/she kicks a ball on the field, the first 2 players in each line enter the field and play as a team of 2 against each other. (10 minutes)

**6) 4v4 Game---**Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete.  
**REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

## Week 2

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Shadow Dribble**---One player with a ball and another player behind them with a ball as well. The player in front can go anywhere in the 20x20 yard box and the player behind must try to keep as close to them as possible and follow where they are going and what they are doing. The leader determines where they are going and the player who is the shadow tries to keep up with them. Then reverse the roles. Players can use both feet to start, then can choose to use one foot, then the other. *Version 2:* Now the leader adds in moves while they are dribbling and the shadow player must do the same. (10 minutes)

**2) Snake**---In an appropriate space, have all players dribble their soccer balls, except for 2-3 players (the snake). The snake players hold hands or lock arms and work together to tag the other players. The players dribbling the balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands or lock arms with the snake. The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must work together and stay connected...they cannot break into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss. (8 minutes)

**3) Gates**---Set up many pairs of cones (with roughly 2 yards in between pairs) all around the playing area. These pairs serve as gates or small mini-goals. Players each have a ball and must dribble through the gate in order to score. Players must count how many goals they score; when playing a second time, ask them if they can beat their score by one goal. Coaches can vary this by asking players to dribble with left foot or right foot. If players end up dribbling back and forth through only one goal, introduce a rule to protect against this. (8 minutes)

**4) Gates with Bandits**---Same game as above, but add 2 or more bandits (without soccer balls) who try to steal soccer balls from the other players. If bandits are successful and steal soccer balls, they are no longer bandits. Players who lose their soccer balls become bandits! Play multiple 1-2 minute games. Play is continuous for the 1-2 minute period. Players who have possession of a soccer ball at the end of time are awarded a point. (10 minutes)

**5) Get Outta' There with Numbers**--- Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. The players on each team are assigned numbers (1-4 or 1-5, depending on the total number of players) The coach then calls out a number, kicks a ball onto the field and the player assigned that number on each team enters the field to play 1v1. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there", calls out a new number and plays the next ball into the field immediately for the next 1v1 dual. *Version 2:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 3:* Coach can set up particular match-ups and call out more than one number at a time for 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 competition. (10 minutes)

**6) 4v4 Game**---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

## Week 3

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Ball Tag**---Similar to other tag games except players try to tag others with their soccer ball, by kicking it at another player's feet or ball. Have them keep count of how many times they kick their soccer ball and tag another person. **Options:** If the players tag the coach, they are awarded 10 or 20 points. If the players tag other selected players, they can be awarded 50 or 100 points etc. (8 minutes)

**2) Team Ball Tag**---Split into two teams. One team (*the Taggers*) is trying to tag the players on the other team by kicking their soccer ball at them below their knee or on their soccer ball. They keep track of how many times they tag the other team; after each game the coach can help them add up their numbers. Then the other team gets a chance to do the same thing. In each game, only one team is designated as the *Taggers*. The other team is trying to keep away and shield their soccer balls. **Version 2:** Can only have the teams tag the other team's soccer balls. (10 minutes)

**3) Soccer Marbles**---Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player plays out their ball (using the inside of the foot) and the partner passes their own ball in an attempt to strike the ball their partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. **Version 2:** Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turn at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to their own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back. **Version 3:** Three players start the game in a triangle, ten giant steps apart. They take turns trying to hit another player's ball. Number one goes first and so on. They keep score, and the first to ten points wins. If they hit two balls with one shot, they get two points. (10 minutes)

**4) Clean Your Backyard**---Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at the other team's goals in an attempt to score through any one of the 3 small goals (below knee height). Players can only enter the buffer zone to retrieve a ball that has stopped inside. Otherwise they cannot enter the buffer zone or go into the other team's half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense, though no hands allowed. Options: Shots with laces are awarded 2 points. **Version 2:** Allow teams to defend with hands as well. **Version 3:** Take out the buffer zone and play a normal game except with 3 goals at each end. (10 minutes)

**5) Get "Outta" There**---Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. When the coach kicks a ball onto the field, the first player in each line runs out and tries to score on their opponent's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there" and plays a new ball into the field immediately for the next two players. **Version 2:** Coach can stop yelling "get outta there" and see if the 1<sup>st</sup> players in each line recognize that they should begin play when a new ball is kicked into the field. **Version 3:** Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. **Version 4:** If the Coach calls out the number "TWO" before he/she kicks a ball on the field, the first 2 players in each line enter the field and play as a team of 2 against each other. (10 minutes)

**6) 4v4 Game**---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)



## Week 4

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Freeze Tag**---Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team becomes the **Taggers**. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have teams reverse roles. *Version 2:* Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players; players continue to unfreeze each other. (8 minutes)

**2) Gates Passing**---Using cones, set up many small goals (gates) approximately 2 yards wide all around the playing area. Players are now paired up with one ball and must successfully pass the ball through the gates to their teammate to earn a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Coach can manipulate the game by requiring the players to pass only with their left foot, right foot, or the outside of their foot. (10 minutes)

**3) 4 vs. 1 keepaway**---In a grid 15yds x 15yds, five players play 4 vs. 1 timed keepaway. Four attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. The four attackers are awarded a point each time they complete 3 consecutive passes without losing possession. If the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately attempts to dribble out of the grid for a point. The four attackers try to prevent this from occurring by trying to win possession of the ball back immediately. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed into the grid by one of the attackers. Play multiple 1 minute games, changing the defender each game. (10 minutes)

**4) Capture the Balls**---Set up three or four "home bases" (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards apart. Organize the players into 3-4 teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coach's command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Players cannot use hands and there is no pushing each other or sitting/laying on the balls. Teams try to gather as many balls as possible into their home bases. Teams can steal balls from each others' home bases. Play multiple 2 minute games. When time is up, the Coach counts the number of soccer balls in each base to determine a winner. Coach allows each team 1 minute to make up a new team strategy before playing again. (10 minutes)

**5) Get Outta' There with Numbers**--- Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. The players on each team are assigned numbers (1-4 or 1-5, depending on the total number of players) The coach then calls out a number, kicks a ball onto the field and the player assigned that number on each team enters the field to play 1v1. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there", calls out a new number and plays the next ball into the field immediately for the next 1v1 dual. *Version 2:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 3:* Coach can set up particular match-ups and call out more than one number at a time for 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 competitions. (10 minutes)

**6) 4v4 Game**---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

## Week 5

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Juggling---**Everyone with a ball. Hold hands out with ball in between, drop ball directly down and kick back up to hands, etc. Players practice keeping the ball in the air with feet, thighs, and head. Players count how many times they touch the ball before it drops to the ground. **Version 2:** Controlled juggling...juggle on one thigh, then add other thigh, then add one foot, then add the other foot...thigh-thigh-foot-foot (10 minutes)

**2) Free Dribble---**Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. **Version 2:** As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. (10 minutes)

**3) 1 vs. 1 to Endlines---**In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yds) each player defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player's endline. *Note: Coaches should make multiple 1v1 fields and have 1 or 2 players on deck at each field.* (10 minutes)

**5) Get "Outta" There---**Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. When the coach kicks a ball onto the field, the first player in each line runs out and tries to score on their opponent's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there" and plays a new ball into the field immediately for the next two players. **Version 2:** Coach can stop yelling "get outta there" and see if the 1<sup>st</sup> players in each line recognize that they should begin play when a new ball is kicked into the field. **Version 3:** Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. **Version 4:** If the Coach calls out the number "TWO" before he/she kicks a ball on the field, the first 2 players in each line enter the field and play as a team of 2 against each other. (10 minutes)

**6) 4v4 Game---**Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

## Week 6

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Paint the Field---**In pairs, players move around the grid and pass their ball back and forth in the area defined. At first have each pair in their own grid. You explain to them that their ball is actually a paintbrush and wherever it rolls on the ground, it paints that area. The task is to paint as much of the area as possible in the time allotted by passing (kicking) their soccer balls all over the grid. Progressively build this so that players go from moving slowly in their own grid to having multiple pairs in the same grid moving at a faster pace. **Version 2:** Have players use opposite foot. (10 minutes)

**2) Doctor-Doctor---**Break team into 2 groups. Send each team into their own hospital (at opposite corners of the grid). Select a doctor for each team. The doctor will be able to unfreeze (cure) their own players if they are frozen (injured) by the other team. Each team tries to freeze the other team by kicking their own soccer balls and hitting either the other team's soccer balls or someone on the other team below the knee. If a player gets frozen, they must stay where they are, hold their soccer ball above their head and yell out "Doctor-Doctor". The doctors do not have a ball and their role is to rush to the aid of their teammates to unfreeze them, by simply touching them, so they can continue playing. The Doctor is always safe (cannot be frozen) if standing in their hospital, but once they leave the hospital and enter the open grid, they can be frozen by the other team. When a Doctor is frozen, the game is over. (10 minutes)

**3) Clean Your Backyard---**Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at the other team's goals in an attempt to score through any one of the 3 small goals (below knee height). Players can only enter the buffer zone to retrieve a ball that has stopped inside. Otherwise they cannot enter the buffer zone or go into the other team's half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense, though no hands allowed. Options: Shots with laces are awarded 2 points. **Version 2:** Allow teams to defend with hands as well. **Version 3:** Take out the buffer zone and play a normal game except with 3 goals at each end. (10 minutes)

**4) Get Outta' There with Numbers---** Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. The players on each team are assigned numbers (1-4 or 1-5, depending on the total number of players) The coach then calls out a number, kicks a ball onto the field and the player assigned that number on each team enters the field to play 1v1. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there", calls out a new number and plays the next ball into the field immediately for the next 1v1 dual. **Version 2:** Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. **Version 3:** Coach can set up particular match-ups and call out more than one number at a time for 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 competitions. (10 minutes)

**5) 4v4 Game---**Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

## Week 7

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Tag---**Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees. (8 minutes)

**2) Shield-Steal---**Two players (partners) with one ball. One player starts with the ball and, on the coach's command, her partner tries to steal the ball from her. Play 30-45 second matches. Whoever has the ball at the end of the time allotment, receives a point. Play many matches. If ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back into play quickly. **Coaching points:** Show shielding technique with body sideways on to opponent, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (8 minutes)

**3) 2 vs. 2 to Endlines---**In a space that is wider than long (20 x 25 yds) each team defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball, under control, over the opposing team's endline. *Note: Coaches should make multiple 2v2 fields and have 1 team on deck at each field.* (10 minutes)

**4) Team Gates---** Using cones, set up many small goals (gates) approximately 2 yards wide all around the playing area. Players are split into two teams and each team has a ball and must pass the ball through the gates in order to score. Players must count how many goals their team scores in 45 seconds. After the two teams get comfortable moving and passing through the gates with their own soccer ball, play a competitive game with only one ball. (10 minutes)

**5) Get "Outta" There---**Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. When the coach kicks a ball onto the field, the first player in each line runs out and tries to score on their opponent's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there" and plays a new ball into the field immediately for the next two players. ***Version 2:*** Coach can stop yelling "get outta there" and see if the 1<sup>st</sup> players in each line recognize that they should begin play when a new ball is kicked into the field. ***Version 3:*** Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. ***Version 4:*** If the Coach calls out the number "TWO" before he/she kicks a ball on the field, the first 2 players in each line enter the field and play as a team of 2 against each other. (10 minutes)

**6) 4v4 Game**---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete.  
**REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

## Week 8

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Soccer Marbles---**Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player plays out their ball (using the inside of the foot) and the partner passes their own ball in an attempt to strike the ball their partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. **Version 2:** Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turn at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to their own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back. **Version 3:** Three players start the game in a triangle, ten giant steps apart. They take turns trying to hit another player's ball. Number one goes first and so on. They keep score, and the first to ten points wins. If they hit two balls with one shot, they get two points. (10 minutes)

**2) Gates Passing---**Using cones, set up many small goals (gates) approximately 2 yards wide all around the playing area. Players are now paired up with one ball and must successfully pass the ball through the gates to their teammate to earn a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Coach can manipulate the game by requiring the players to pass only with their left foot, right foot, or the outside of their foot. (10 minutes)

**3) Freeze Tag---**Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team becomes the **Taggers**. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have teams reverse roles. **Version 2:** Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players; players continue to unfreeze each other. (10 minutes)

**4) Get Outta' There with Numbers---** Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. The players on each team are assigned numbers (1-4 or 1-5, depending on the total number of players) The coach then calls out a number, kicks a ball onto the field and the player assigned that number on each team enters the field to play 1v1. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there", calls out a new number and plays the next ball into the field immediately for the next 1v1 dual. **Version 2:** Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. **Version 3:** Coach can set up particular match-ups and call out more than one number at a time for 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 competitions. (10 minutes)

**5) 4v4 Game---**Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

# ADDITIONAL WEEK

**Objective:** To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

**1) Paired Tag---**Pair players up, each pair has 2 balls. One player starts and is given a 2 second lead to get away from his/her partner. The chaser ("it") dribbles after the first player and tries to tag him/her with his/her hand. If tagged, the roles reverse and the player who was previously "it" has two seconds to get away before their partner tries to tag them. Players must always dribble their soccer ball during this activity. (8 minutes)

**2) Paint the Field---**15 yds x 20 yds rectangular grid. In pairs, players move around the grid and pass their ball back and forth in the area defined. At first have each pair in their own grid. You explain to them that their ball is actually a paintbrush and wherever it rolls on the ground, it paints that area. The task is to paint as much of the area as possible in the time allotted by passing (kicking) their soccer balls all over the grid. Progressively build this so that players go from moving slowly in their own grid to having multiple pairs in the same grid moving at a faster pace. *Version 2:* Have players use opposite foot. (8 minutes)

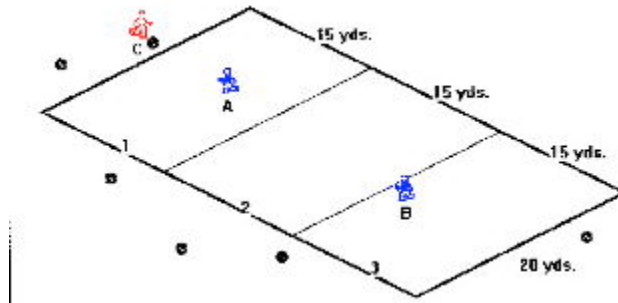
**3) Shield-Steal---**Two players (partners) with one ball. One player starts with the ball and, on the coach's command, her partner tries to steal the ball from her. Play 30-45 second matches. Whoever has the ball at the end of the time allotment, receives a point. Play many matches. If ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back into play quickly. **Coaching points:** Show shielding technique with body sideways on to opponent, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (8 minutes)

**4) Clean Your Backyard---**Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at the other team's goals in an attempt to score through any one of the 3 small goals (below knee height). Players can only enter the buffer zone to retrieve a ball that has stopped inside. Otherwise they cannot enter the buffer zone or go into the other team's half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense, though no hands allowed. Options: Shots with laces are awarded 2 points. *Version 2:* Allow teams to defend with hands as well. *Version 3:* Take out the buffer zone and play a normal game except with 3 goals at each end. (10 minutes)

**5) Get "Outta" There---**Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. When the coach kicks a ball onto the field, the first player in each line runs out and tries to score on their opponent's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there" and plays a new ball into the field immediately for the next two players. *Version 2:* Coach can stop yelling "get outta there" and see if the 1<sup>st</sup> players in each line recognize that they should begin play when a new ball is kicked into the field. *Version 3:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 4:* If the Coach calls out the number "TWO" before he/she kicks a ball on the field, the first 2 players in each line enter the field and play as a team of 2 against each other. (10 minutes)

**6) 4v4 Game---**Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

# 1 v. 1 v. 1



## The Game

- ☒ Player "C" starts on the end line and dribbles into Zone 1, trying to get past Defender "A".
- ☒ If "A" steals the ball, "A" tries to dribble past "C" and over the end line.+
- ☒ If "C" manages to get past "A", "C" continues through Zone 2 and tries to beat "B" over the end line.
- ☒ If "B" steals the ball, he takes on Player "A" who has been waiting in Zone 1.

## Coaching Points

- ☒ Individual Attack and Defense
- ☒ Attack: Try to unbalance defender, attack at pace, try to face the defender as much as possible, change pace and direction.
- ☒ Defense: Try to channel the attacker towards the sideline, use sideline as a second defender.

## Variations

- ☒ Allow defender "A" to chase "C" into Zone 2 if beaten. "C" must then hold "A" off while at the same time moving towards player "B". This also makes "C" not give up on the ball after being beaten, teaching how to recover "goalside".



# The Shooting Square



## The Game

- ☒ Set up game with 4 shooters (A, B, C & D), 4 Servers (corner passers) and 4 "Shaggers" (behind each goal).
- ☒ Shooters A & B check towards opposite corners of the field, receive a pass from the server, turn and shoot with as few touches as possible.
- ☒ After their shots are taken, shooters C & D repeat the sequence while A & B get ready to go again.
- ☒ After a set time, shooters become shaggers, shaggers passers and passers shooters.

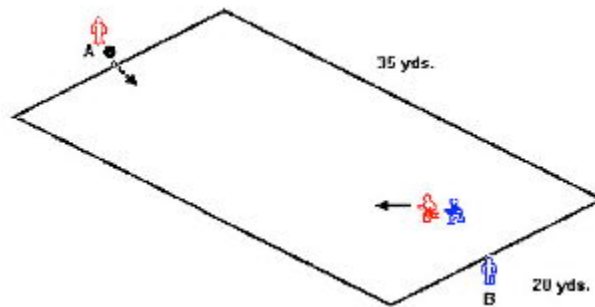
## Coaching Points

- ☒ Good shooting technique, ankle locked, toe pointed, hit top half of ball, proper follow through, plant foot pointing towards target, etc.

## Variations

- ☒ There are many possibilities, use your creativity.
- ☒ After receiving the ball, shooter passes to a target at the other end of the field, who lays it back to the shooter, who then takes a one time shot on goal.
- ☒ Play the ball to a server on the sideline who dribbles down the line and crosses it into the shooter.
- ☒ Shooters and passers play a "give and go".

## 1 + 1 v. 1 + 1



### The Game

- ☒ The object of the game is to get the ball from one target "A" to the other, "B" without losing possession.
- ☒ Each time this is done, it is worth one goal.
- ☒ The attacking team keeps this sequence up until possession is lost (they can score as many goals in a row as possible).
- ☒ If the ball goes out of bounds, it belongs to the other team.
- ☒ Targets can move back and forth along their line.

### Coaching Points

#### In Attack

- ☒ Encourage combination play between the players
- ☒ Have targets look for the player farthest from the ball
- ☒ Check away from the ball to create space for yourself, check back for the ball at angles.
- ☒ Receive the ball "sideways on" whenever possible.

#### In Defense

- ☒ Make the attackers play the ball back whenever possible.
- ☒ Keep the play in front of you.
- ☒ Never get flat with each other.
- ☒ Take away options for the attackers, make the play predictable, use sideline as extra defenders.

### Variations

- ☒ Limit target players to one touch.
- ☒ Limit field players to two touches.
- ☒ Do not allow field players to play the ball back to the target they received it from.
- ☒ Play 2 v. 2 or 3 v. 3 in the middle.
- ☒ Make field players play it to each other at least once before they make a goal.

# Gates

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## The Game

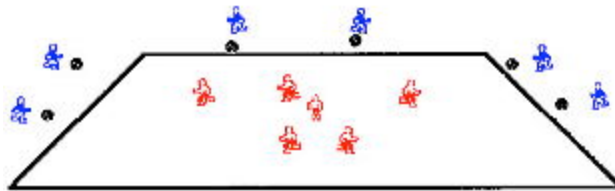
☒ Two players per gate. The gates are approximately two steps apart. One ball per group. First player must play the ball on the ground through the gate to second player. Second player must receive and play back through the gate within two touches. The game continues until players can not get ball back through the gate on the ground within two touches.

## Coaching Points

- ☒ Player receiving the ball should get in path of ball before it arrives.
- ☒ First touch should help player to get a good kick back through the gate.
- ☒ Keep score and rotate stations.
- ☒ Vary the serve to start the game: Long balls, short balls, inside of foot, instep, outside of foot, weak foot only, etc.
- ☒ Players should receive with one foot, play back with the other.

# Foxes & Hunters

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## The Game

- ☒ Players on the inside are "Foxes". Players on the outside are "Hunters".
- ☒ Hunters dribble into the grid and try to dribble their ball into the Foxes so that it hits them below the knees.
- ☒ If a Fox is hit, the Fox drops down to one knee and tries to kick the ball away from the Hunters that are dribbling by.
- ☒ Once all of the Foxes are down, the teams switch roles.
- ☒ Time each team. the team that "stays alive" longest wins.

## Coaching Points

- ☒ Discourage long range shooting at Foxes.
- ☒ Try feinting at the Foxes, trying to make them jump into the air, then get them when they come down.
- ☒ Work in pairs to try and corner elusive Foxes.

# Bread & Butter

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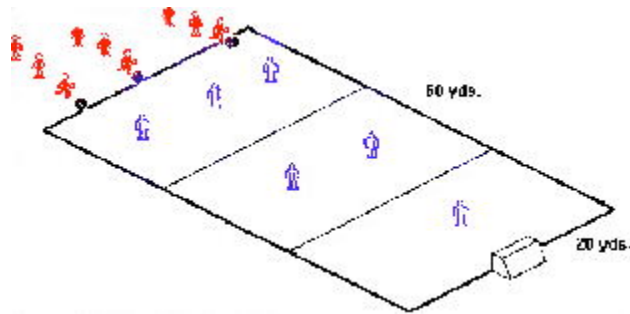
## The Game

Three teams of 4 (A, B, C) and two keepers (X, Y). Team A attacks against keeper Y. If they score, they then quickly try to attack keeper X. At this time, team B leaves the field and takes the place of team C who were the supporting players on the end lines, supporting both teams. The supporting players support for both teams and can move along the end line. They are limited to one touch one the ball. Have an ample supply of balls ready in each net.

## Coaching Points

- ☒ After scoring a goal, attacking players look to play quickly before the other team has a chance to come on and get organized.
- ☒ Try to play the ball to target players.
- ☒ Attacking and defending principles of play.

# War



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## The Game

- ☒ Dribblers (in Red) try to dribble through the three zones occupied by the blue defenders.
- ☒ Defenders must stay in their zones and try to kick any ball they intercept out of bounds.
- ☒ Dribblers go three at a time. If the dribbler ahead of you in your line gets their ball knocked out, you may start right away.
- ☒ As soon as the dribbler in front of you moves to the next zone, you can also go.
- ☒ After beating the last defender, the dribbler must shoot the ball into the goal to get a point for their team.

## Coaching Points

- ☒ Good dribbling technique.
- ☒ Look for an opening...perhaps sending a teammate in early to act as a decoy, then, when the defense opens up, take that clue to penetrate.

## Variations

- ☒ Put a "free zone" between each zone shown. The free zone can be 5 yards wide.
- ☒ Once the dribbler gets in the free zone, they can rest before they take on the next defender.
- ☒ You can also have people that make it into the free zone, leave their ball and assist the next person to try to get past the defender by passing.

- ☒ Limit target players to one touch.
- ☒ Limit field players to two touches.
- ☒ Do not allow field players to play the ball back to the target they received from.
- ☒ Make field players play it to each other at least once before they make a goal.

# The Triangle Goal Shooting Game

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## The Game

- ☒ Set up a triangular goal in the middle of a 50 x 50 grid.
- ☒ Play an even sided game with both teams having their own keeper.
- ☒ Both teams try to score through any one of the three sides of the triangular goal.
- ☒ It is best to place the goal in the center of a 20 yard in diameter circle, with only the keepers allowed inside the circle.
- ☒ If the keeper catches the ball, his or her team must take the ball outside of the grid before they may attack again.
- ☒ Play with 2 balls for real excitement.
- ☒ Goalkeepers may become attacking players when their team has possession.

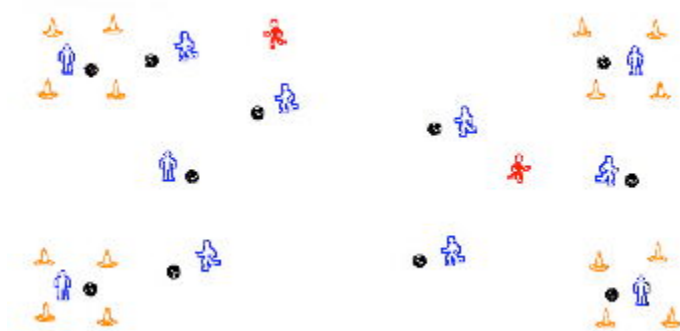
## Coaching Points

- ☒ Attacking and defending principles of play.
- ☒ Shooting
- ☒ Finishing
- ☒ Possession
- ☒ Goalkeeper positioning, shot saving and distribution.



# Running Bases

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## The Game

- ☒ Players try to dribble their ball without being tagged. If they get tagged, they exchange places with the **"tagger"**
- ☒ Have taggers carry a pinnie to distinguish themselves. Hand pinnies over to the player that is tagged and use their ball to dribble.
- ☒ Players are save in any one of the 4 bases. Only one player allowed in a base at one time. If a new players enters a base, the old player must leave.

## Variations

For younger players:

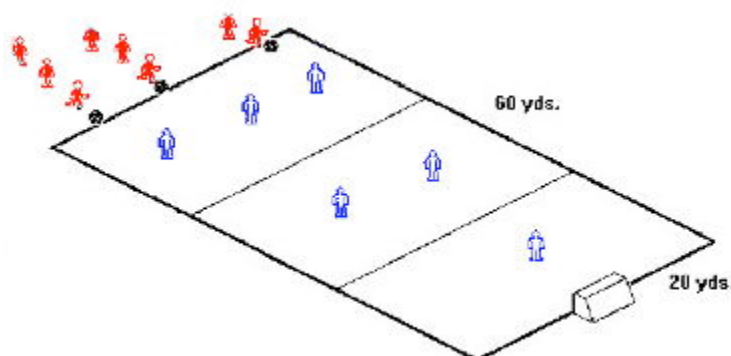
- Only one tagger
- Fewer bases
- Only one player in a base at a time

For older players:

- More bases and taggers.
- 2 players allowed in each base.
- Play with fewer balls: can only be tagged if you have the ball. or, if you don't have a ball (balls must be passed).

# Dribble To Score

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## The Game

- ☒ Dribblers (in Red) try to dribble through the three zones occupied by the blue defenders.
- ☒ Defenders must stay in their zones and try to kick any ball they intercept out of bounds.
- ☒ Dribblers go three at a time. If the dribbler ahead of you in your line gets their ball knocked out, you may start right away.
- ☒ As soon as the dribbler in front of you moves to the next zone, you can also go.
- ☒ After beating the last defender, the dribbler must shoot the ball into the goal to get a point for their team.

## Coaching Points

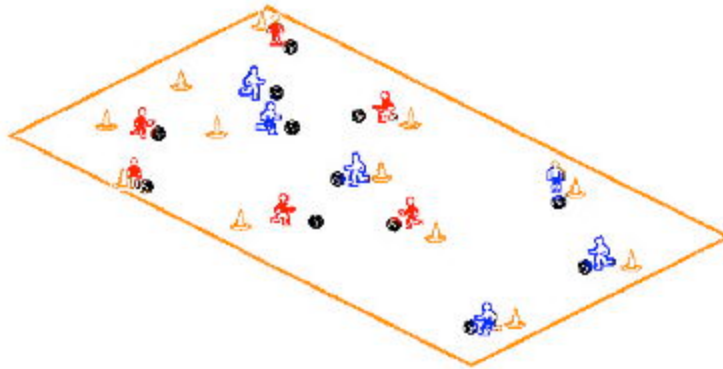
- ☒ Good dribbling technique.
- ☒ Look for an opening..perhaps sending a teammate in early to act as a decoy, then, when the defense opens up, take that clue to penetrate.

## Variations

- ☒ Put a "free zone" between each zone shown. The free zone can be 5 yards wide.
- ☒ Once the dribbler gets in the free zone, they can rest before they take on the next defender.
- ☒ You can also have people that make it into the free zone, leave their ball and assist the next person to try to get past the defender by passing.

## Protect The Cone - Individual

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### The Game

Define a rectangular space. Each player starts with a ball and a cone. Each player must control their own cone while trying to attack and kick over other cones. Player must keep the ball under control while defending and attacking. When defending, try to block attackers by keeping your ball and body between the cone and the attacker. On attack, try to maneuver around defenders while controlling your ball to get a clear kick at their cone. If your cone is kicked over, you can set it up again after you do an exercise (situps, pushups, etc.), dribbling move or juggling of the soccer ball.

### Coaching Points

- ☒ This game allows players to stay included by doing some remedial exercise. Choose activities that can be performed quickly so players can get back involved.
- ☒ Vary the activity to include exercises like pushups, situps, cartwheels and also dribbling; pull backs, stepovers, touches on ball, hopping over ball, etc.
- ☒ Make sure players control the ball while defending and attacking.
- ☒ Watch for players who DEFEND or ATTACK more often.
- ☒ Watch and help players determine when to attack and when to leave the cone, also when to defend and stay at home around the cone.
- ☒ Help players remember to keep their body and the soccer ball between their cone and the attacker.
- ☒ Explosive, quick move will help attackers maneuver around defender.

## Protect The Cone - Group

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### The Game

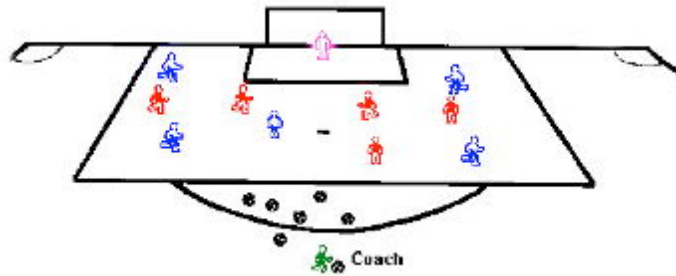
Same space as in previous activity. Divide the group into four teams. Each team sets up three or four cones to protect on one side of the space. Each player must have a ball. Group leader can choose a group captain. Captain must organize the group; which players will defend and/or attack. On command, 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 can no longer attack. The team with the last standing cone is the winner.

### Coaching Points

- ☒ Allow players to organize themselves with as little interference from group leader as possible. This will be a valuable experience for when they are playing in an organized soccer game.
- ☒ 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 so all get to work together.

# Penalty Box Shootout

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## The Game

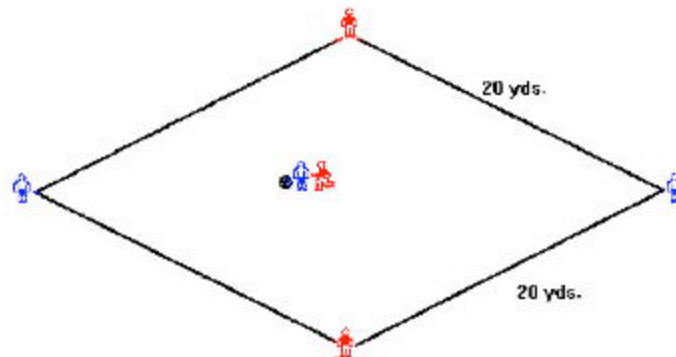
- Play takes place inside the penalty box.
- Play continues until keeper makes a save and maintains possession or until the ball goes out of bounds.
- Coach immediately serves a new ball when this happens.
- The team in possession attacks, the other teams defends. When possession is won, that team immediately tries to score.

## Coaching Points

- ☒ Teams are encouraged to shoot rather than play "good soccer".
- ☒ Look for half chances and rebounds.
- ☒ If play becomes too bunched around goal, prohibit players from entering keeper's box unless in pursuit of a rebound..

# 1 v. 1 Possession/Penetration

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## The Game

- ☒ 1 v. 1 in the middle. Offensive player attempts to receive ball from one of their target players and then play it to the other target on the opposite end of the diagonal.
- ☒ Whenever they play the ball out, to one of the targets, they switch positions with the player they passed to. The target brings the ball into play and become the field player.
- ☒ If defender wins possession of the ball, they start by playing it to any one of their targets, changing places with them when they do so.
- ☒ Score can be kept by allowing a goal every time the ball is played out to the opposite target.

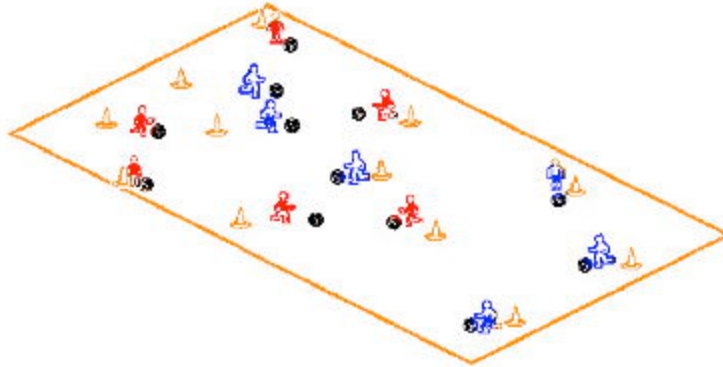
## Coaching Points

For younger players:

- Focus on possession vs. penetration decisions of the field players.
- First attacker penetrates if possible, possesses when penetration is not possible.
- Start the activity having the field player just try to keep it from the defender, not allowing them to play the ball back. Teach escape moves at this stage as well as sideways on shielding.
- First attacker can then work on dribbling the ball sideways, across the field:
  1. This allows the attacker to possess the ball individually.
  2. It also opens up space for the second attacker who can thus immediately penetrate once a back pass is made, which often happens in a real game setting.
  3. Attacker decides to penetrate with a dribble if they are able to:
    - Face the defender
    - If the defender is "lunging out"
    - Has open space in front
- Defenders must look to constantly recover goal side and in line of penetrating passes.

# Hospital Tag

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## The Game

All players with one ball in a defined space. Set up a second space for the hospital. Players must dribble around in the main space and try to tag other players while controlling the ball. If tagged, player must hold the part of the body that was touched by the ball. After a player is tagged for the third time, he must go to the hospital. While in the hospital space, the players practice more dribbling. After competition, they come back to the game and begin to play with a fresh start.

## Coaching Points

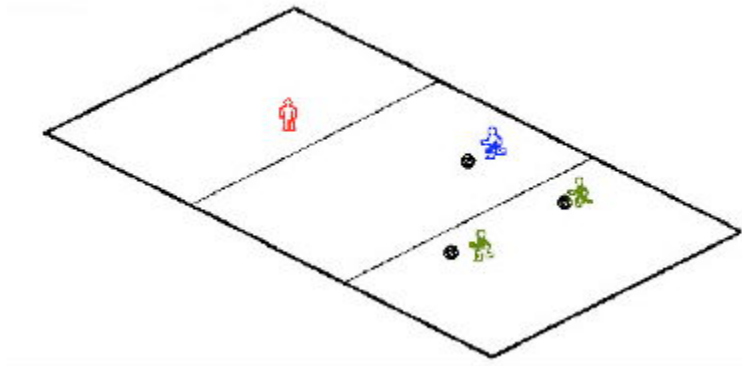
- ☒ Make sure players are controlling the ball while tagging others.
- ☒ Encourage rapid changes of speed and direction. This will help them catch the other players by surprise.
- ☒ Encourage players to attack while they have free hands, but when both hands are holding tagged body areas, they must employ defensive dribbling and go away from attackers.
- ☒ Give players various dribbling moves, such as pull backs, step overs or quick feet.

## Try These Variations

1. Can only dribble with one foot. Use one sock up, the other down to help players remember.
1. Can only use the inside of foot to dribble.
2. Can only use the outside of foot to dribble.

# Red Light, Green Light

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## The Game

Each player has a ball except the player designated as the light. Lines from start to finish should be approximately 20-30 yards. Players start a line opposite the light. The player who is the light faces away from the group and calls out "green light". Players begin to dribble towards the light. When the light turns around and calls out "red light", players must freeze their bodies and the ball. If the light catches players still moving, or dribbling, he send them back tot he starting line. The first player to cross the line where the light is standing is the winner and becomes the new light.

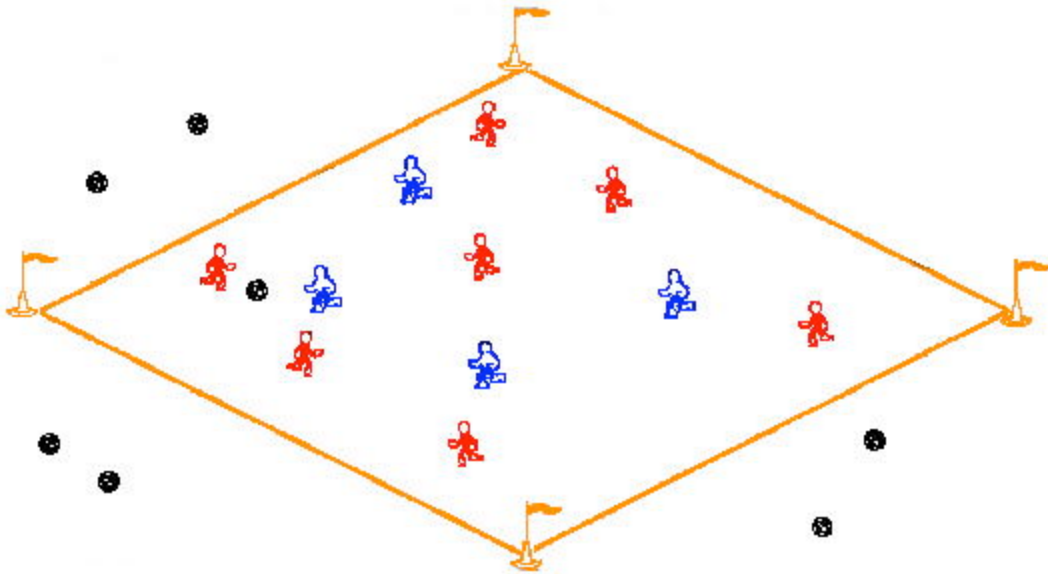
## Coaching Points

- ☒ Encourage players to dribble under close control.
- ☒ This drill promotes quick reactions and dynamic balance..



# Escape

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## The Game

Seven players try to possess the ball. 15 passes equals 1 goal. 4 players are collectively trying to gain possession and get the ball out of the space. One goal each time they get it out. 3 points wins the game

# Receiving Through Gates

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## The Game

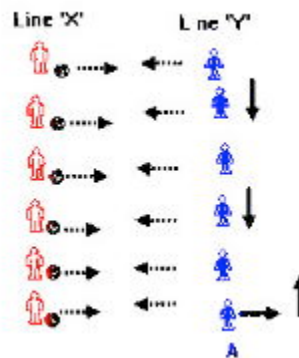
Two Players per gate. The gates are approximately two steps apart. One ball per group. First player must play ball on ground through the gate within two touches. The game continues until players can not get ball back through gate on the ground within two touches.

## Coaching Points

- ☒ Player receiving the ball should get in path of ball before it arrives.
- ☒ First touch should help player to get a good kick back through the gate..
- ☒ Keep score and rotate stations.
- ☒ Receive with thigh, pass back with instep.
- ☒ vary the serve to start the game: long balls, short balls, inside of foot, instep, outside of foot, weak foot only, etc.
- ☒ Players should receive with one foot and play it back with another.

# Gauntlet

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## The Game

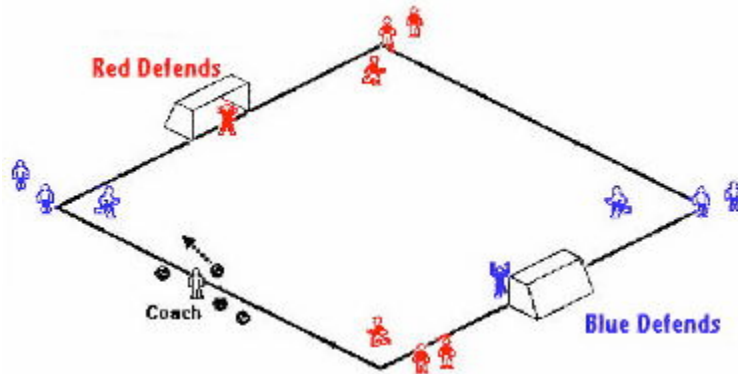
- Each player starts with an activity as shown, facing their partner. Players on Line X each have a ball.
- Each players starts the activity with their partner and advances down the line, repeating the activity at each successive player. Line Y players receive the ball and return it to the player in Line X that gave it to them.
- When a player gets to position A, they recycle and start again at the top of the line.

## Try These Activities

- ☐ One touch back with either foot. (Make sure players go in both directions, up and down.)
- ☐ Two touch returns, receiving with inside and outside of foot.
- ☐ Pass back with inside or outside of feet.
- ☐ Receive with thigh, pass back with instep.
- ☐ Chest - instep
- ☐ Chest - thigh - inside of foot.
- ☐ Outside of foot volley.
- ☐ Preparation touch with the head, back with head ("double header").
- ☐ Chest - head.
- ☐ The possibilities are endless.

## 2 v. 2 From Corners

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### The Game

- First player on each line comes into the game and plays 2 v. 2.
- Coach serves ball to one of the four corners.
- Game continues until goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds.
- Coach immediately puts a new ball into play when ball is out of bounds.

### Coaching Points:

#### Attacking

- Playing quickly, one or two touch.
- Finding the open player with the best opportunity to score.
- Recognizing passing "seams".
- Passing and receiving.
- Combination play.

#### Defending

- Goalkeeping
- Recovery runs.
- Pressure, cover (first and second defender principles).

### Try These Variations:

1. Vary the type of the serve to each corner (high, low, hard, chipped, driven).
2. Increase the size of the grid for greater fitness demands (44 X 40).
3. Decrease the size of the grid to make the attackers play quicker (20 X 20).

# Monkey in the Middle



## The Game

- Three teams, A, B and C.
- Teams A and B attempt to keep the ball from Team C by:
  1. Possessing the ball using their own players.
  2. Passing the ball over or through the middle zone to the other team waiting in their own zone. (Team A can pass to Team B as shown in the diagram)
- The defending team (Team C) is able to get out of the middle by:
  1. Replacing the team that loses the ball out of bounds.
  2. Dispossessing a team and making a pass into the other grid to the waiting team. (eg. Stealing it from A and passing it to B).
- The defending team is only allowed to send three players into one of the grids at one time. The three remaining players must be back in the "middle" before the ball is sent into the other grid. They can not enter the grid until the ball does.
- If a ball is lost out of bounds, the coach immediately puts a ball into play in the other grid area, making the new defending team run to put immediate pressure on the ball.
- Make the grids bigger to allow attacking team more success, smaller to challenge them more.

## Coaching Points:

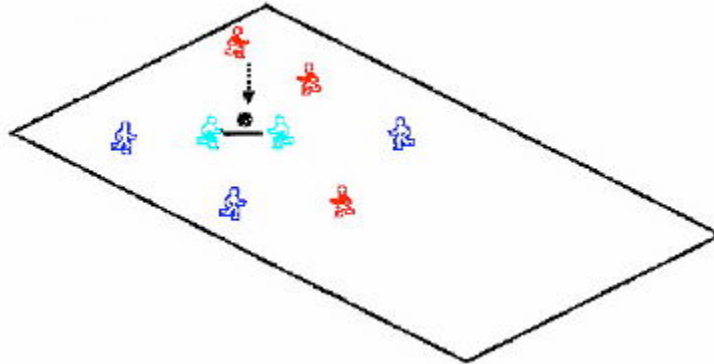
1. Transition
2. Attacking principles: Long passing, attacking shape, receiving long passes, support.
3. Defending principles: Pressure, cover, balance, compactness, immediate chase.

## Make Sure:

1. If teams are not even, it is OK for a team to play one player down.
2. Keep the game flowing, if a ball goes out of bounds, immediately call out who is in the "middle" and put the next ball into play.
3. Defending team defends as a unit and keeps compact.
4. If the attacking team loses possession of the ball, they try to win it back before the defending team plays it out of their grid.

# Moving Goal

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## Moving Goal Game

Two equal teams. Select two players to become the "moving goal". These players take the ends of a rope or beach towel and stretch it out as they move around the space. The other players play a game trying to score in the moving goal.

### Coaching Points:

1. Players should look at the ball during shooting motion.
2. Strike the ball with the instep (laces) with toe pointing down and ankle locked. This will give the players a firm hitting surface.
3. Hips should face the goal.

### Try These Variations:

1. Add two balls.
2. Add a second goal. With more goals, players will get more shooting chances and must play with their eyes off the ball. This will present more complex decision making.

# Steal The Bacon

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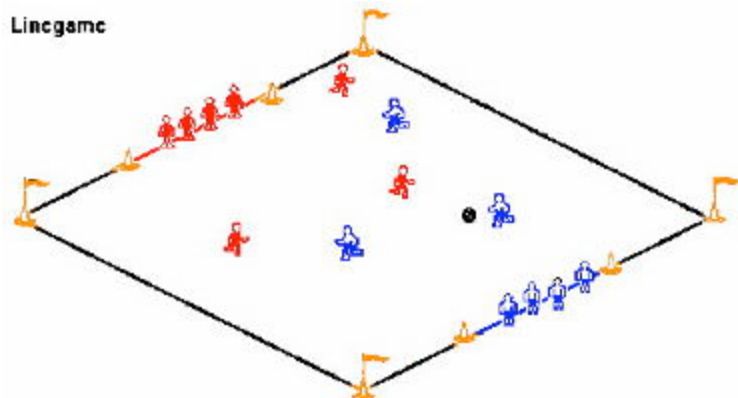
## The Game

- ☒ Two teams, each player is designated a number.
- ☒ The coach calls out the numbers of the players. These players then run out from the endline to play the game.
- ☒ The coach serves balls in from the sideline if the ball goes out of bounds or into a goal.
- ☒ Each group should play for about one and a half minutes of continuous action.
- ☒ Players waiting to come on should return loose balls to the coach, or act as "support" players for those that are playing, able to return passes made to them.
- ☒ The number of players playing at one time depends on the coach's objectives. However, this game is best when played in groups of 2 v. 2, or 3 v. 3.

## Coaching Points

- Combination Play
- Seeking and taking shots
- Attacking and defending principles of play

# Line Game



## The Game

Two teams of equal numbers. Coach calls out a number and that number of players go out into the field. The remaining players stay on the goal line, hold hands, and try to prevent goals. After a goal, or a period of play, coach calls out another number..

## Coaching Points:

1. Call out different numbers, so players learn to interact with different subsets..
2. Give advantages to certain teams so players can learn to deal with numbers of up and down situations (for example, red team 3 players, blue team 4 players).
3. After players understand the game, have them switch quickly. it is important that players control who comes out and how. This helps develop organizational skills and team dynamics.

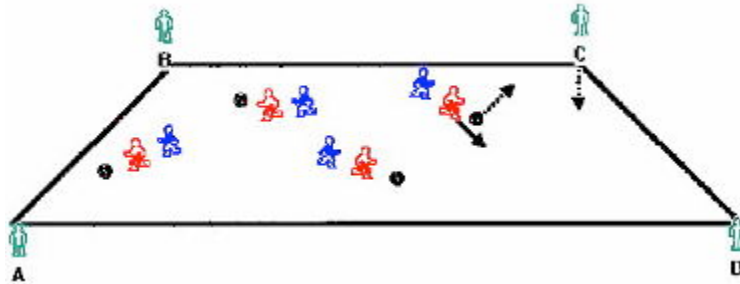
## Try These Variations:

1. Three touch: each player can use up to three touches.
2. Double points if scored off a head ball.
3. Double points if scored off combination (ie. give and go, take over, etc.).
4. Setup: Only one player from each team is allowed to score.



# 1 v. 1 with Support

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## The Game

1. Players in the grid play 1 v. 1.
2. Players A, B, C and D are support players, outside the corners, without a ball.
3. Attacking players get a goal when they make a pass to a support player and get the return pass.
4. Whoever has the ball is attacking, whomever doesn't is trying to win the ball.
5. Rotate support players with field players.

## Coaching Points:

1. Good dribbling, shielding and passing technique.
2. Make passes to support players when eye contact is made.
3. Play away from your defender.
4. Make sure you are keeping space open to receive the pass back.

## Try These Variations:

1. Make support players play with one touch.

## **Notice to Parents**

*It should be understood children are exposed to certain risks inherent in the sport of soccer when allowing them to play. All players play at their own risk. Such risks are body contact, getting knocked down and kicked to name a few. For safety reasons players will not be allowed on the field unless they are in uniform and have shin guards, soccer socks and cleats (no metal or toe cleats).*

*Regarding health issues, make sure you noted any medical conditions of your child.*

*Parents are asked to bring snacks for the end of the game celebration. We highly recommend that snacks containing peanuts or peanut oil are **NOT** brought to the soccer field. There can be players who are allergic to nuts and the mere smelling them can send them into a life-threatening allergic reaction.*

## **Code of Conduct**

*Parents, spectators, coaches and referees have responsibilities and obligations to keep our all-volunteer soccer program a fun sport for all. With this in mind, please observe the following:*

- 1. Cheer positively for the things you like and encourage your team. Have fun!*
- 2. Never put down the other team or any of the players on either team.*
- 3. Please leave the sideline coaching to the coach. Spectators frequently yell instructions to the players - these instructions often contradict those of the coach and only confuses the players.*
- 4. Our referees like all our officials and coaches, are volunteers, not professionals. While their decisions might not always be agreeable to all participants and spectators, they are final. No useful purpose is served by shouting disagreement or derogatory remarks. Please refrain from any degrading comments. We want positive comments only.*
- 5. For the safety of all, coaches and spectators must stand at least one yard from the sideline. Players will go to mid field for substitution. No one is allowed behind the goal or within 18 yards of the goal line on either side of the field. Coaches and referees are asked to enforce this condition.*
- 6. All players present and in proper uniform will play at least half the game, no matter what their skill level.*
- 7. Please use the fields and other facilities properly and keep the fields clean and free from litter. If you see anyone misusing the facilities (hanging on goals, littering the fields, throwing stones) please bring the matter to the attention of a coach, referee or OPSC official. Children are not allowed to play on the earth berm dividing the fields from the Recycling site. This is for their safety.*
- 8. No alcoholic beverages are allowed at the practices/games. Pets are never allowed on the fields, must be supervised, remain behind the team benches and on a lease at all times (bring supplies to discard their waste).*

## **Players' Code of Conduct** (From the American Youth Soccer Organization):

- **Play** for the fun of it, not just to please your parents or coach.*
- **Play** by the Laws of the Game.*
- **Never argue** with or complain about referees' calls or decisions.*
- **Control** your temper. Most of all, resist the temptation to retaliate when you feel you have been wronged.*

- **Concentrate** on playing soccer with your best efforts. Work equally hard for your team as for yourself.
- **Be a good sport** by cheering all good plays, whether it's your team or your opponent's.
- **Treat all** players as you like to be treated.
- **Remember** that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good. Don't be a showoff or a ball hog.
- **Cooperate** with your coaches, teammates, opponents and the referees.