

EDSON MINOR SOCCER COACHING GUIDEBOOK FOR UNDER 8'S



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For
Edson Minor Soccer Association

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And
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SKILLS CHECKLIST

(What skills should my players be able to perform, and at what age)

2 – 4 Year Olds

FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Goals
Fun Games
2 V 2

MAIN THEME: LOCOMOTOR AND STABILITY

SKILLS PERFORMED

Running/Jumping/Turning/Kicking with Both Feet/Stopping and Starting/Falling /Dodging/Balancing/Coordination

4 – 6 Year Olds

FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Lines
Goals
Fun Games
1 V 1, 2 V 2, 3 V 3

MAIN THEME: SMALL-SIDED GAMES

SKILLS PERFORMED

Running/Jumping/Turning/Kicking with both feet/Stopping. All these skills should be done with and without A ball. Passing over very short distances using the inside of both right and left feet.

6 – 8 Year Olds

FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Lines
Goals
Fun Games
Triangles
1 V 1, 2 V 2, 3 V 3

MAIN THEME: RUNNING WITH THE BALL

SKILLS PERFORMED

Running/Jumping/Turning/Kicking ball using the instep of both right and left feet/Stopping/All these skills should be done with and without a ball. Passing over short distances using the inside of both right and left feet. Basic Goalkeeping skills

8 – 10 Year Olds

FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Lines/Circles/Relays/Grids
Triangles/Rectangles/Diamonds
Goals
Competitions and Fun Games
1 V 1, 2 V 2, 3 V 3

MAIN THEME: INDIVIDUAL BALL POSSESSION

SKILLS PERFORMED

Dribbling/Turning/Kicking/Shooting with instep of both right and left feet/Stopping/Passing/Control with lower body/Goalkeeping/Throw-ins/Tackling/Basic Heading skills/Team Shape

10 – 12 Year Olds

FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Grids/Lines/Circles/Relays/Goals
Triangles/Rectangles/Squares
Diamond Shape/Small Sided Games
Competitions and Fun Games
1 V 1, 2 V 2, 2 V 1, 3 V 3, 2 V 3

MAIN THEME: GROUP POSSESSION OF BALL

SKILLS PERFORMED

Dribbling/Turning/Shooting/Volleying/Heading
Passing/Control with upper body/Goalkeeping/Support/Throw-ins/Tackling/Team Shape/Overlaps

12 – 14 Year Olds

FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Grids/Lines/Circles/Relays
Triangles/Rectangles/Squares
Diamond Shape
Goals/Small Sided Games
Competitions, Fun, and Tactical Games
Offence Vs. Defence,
2 V 2, 2 V 1, 3 V 3, 3 V 2, etc.

MAIN THEME: INDIVIDUAL TACTICS

SKILLS PERFORMED

Dribbling/Turning/Shooting/Volleying/Heading
Passing/Control/Goalkeeping/Crossing/Finishing/Support/Throw-ins/Tackling/Team Shape When Attacking and Defending/Set Pieces/Tactics of Attack and Defence/Overlapping/Teamwork

INTEGRATING PLAYER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND COACHING

What should you do with your players? This Guidebook will help you answer that question. Think about the characteristics of the players on your team. They are becoming more and more coordinated in their movements. For some of them adding a soccer ball to control may make it more difficult. At this time we are concerned with the player learning to control their bodies and the Soccer ball. They are still very egocentric or self-centered and are beginning to understand concepts like cooperation or competition. At this age players will begin to move from being very egocentric, to learning to cooperate by working with a partner or in small groups (2 or 3 others). These kids are highly creative, imaginative and great at imitating. The activities at under eight should be geared towards games that are structured very informally. In short, “PLAY”, and this is where you can jump in and have just as much fun as your players.

This last point is the key to our program being successful. What do kids do when they are not in school or sleeping? They are playing and this is how they learn about their world. Like most players, young soccer players do not learn soccer skills by standing in long lines doing structured drills and receiving formal coaching. Young Soccer Players learn best when the coach sets up a game, then stands back (or even better joins in) and lets the learning happen naturally.

This Philosophy of letting the “Game Be The Teacher” is also realistic given the characteristics of the average coach of a 6 – 10 year old team. Generally, parents with little or no soccer background coach these teams. If we ask these parent-coaches to run drill driven practices using methodological progressions, we must also ask: how effective are they going to be at running such sessions?” The answer to this question is likely not very effective given the inexperience of the parent-coach with regards to both soccer and coaching in general. How can they possibly teach and correct technical skills if they themselves cannot demonstrate or even recognize fundamental errors? If we insist they run drill driven practices geared toward technical improvement, they are simply not going to be very good at what they are being asked to do. Even an excellent coach may have difficulty making practices fun for a group of 6 – 10 year olds, and to ask an inexperienced coach to do likewise is being unrealistic.

If they are not capable of running methodological practices as advocated in many soccer textbooks, what then are they capable of doing and how should they do it? The answer to this question is that these parent-coaches are capable of organizing their players and placing them into fun small-sided games where skill development can be enhanced by trial and error. This accomplishes three things:

- It does not ask the parent-coach to do anything that he/she is not capable of doing.
- It allows the children to play in an uninhibited fashion where they have the opportunity for many touches on the ball and are being placed in physical and mental situations, which are realistic to the game of soccer.
- It gives the children an opportunity to have fun and this is ultimately the most important function of all.

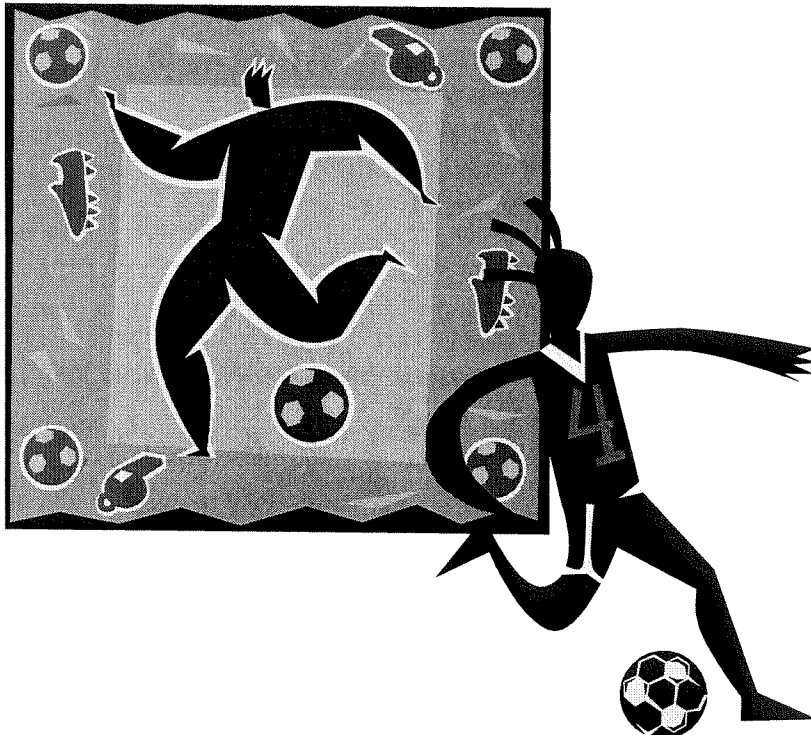
We must recognize that our players need to develop technical skills and enhance neuromuscular co-ordination at a young age. However, we must also recognize that the people teaching them the game of Soccer Football at a young age often do not have the expertise to instruct children about the fundamentals of the game. We must never stop trying to educate our coaches in these areas, but we must also be realistic and recognize that what appears sound in theory is not always sound in practice.

GOALS FOR THE UNDER 8 PROGRAM

The goals of this program are grounded in individual games and creative play. The majority of activities center on learning movement concepts such as Running, Jumping, Kicking, Catching, etc. as they relate specifically to soccer. The emphasis is also placed on play in small groups. The games are simple, easily taught and not demanding of skills. As children mature, they enjoy participation in Running, Tag, and Ball Games. This guidebook provides you with a few of those type games. A few team activities are also included and the ball games require the skills of Throwing, Catching, Dribbling, Passing, and Shooting.

The amount of learning that will take place and the level of stress encountered by the players will hinge on their abilities to treat the practice environment you have set up like play. Remember the more structured, formal and organized you make the training, the harder it becomes for the players to stay relaxed, have fun and learn. "Let the game be the Teacher".

It is important to understand that each coach makes a special contribution to the developing "football player". You are as important as every other coach within Edson Minor Soccer's developmental process. Think of it this way. If a child starts soccer at Three years old and plays to adulthood, that gives us about fifteen years of development which has to be planned in order to ensure each player receives the greatest benefits from organized youth soccer. It's like a big puzzle in which you are one piece. You may be a big piece or a small piece. You may be the first piece put down or the last. Whatever your role and position, you are important to the long-term development of each player. Without your piece, the puzzle of soccer development is incomplete. So ask yourself, "WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH PLAYER?"



WHY PLAY 4 V 4 (small sided games)?

The priority is to motivate players in an environment that is conducive to learning. The more pleasure kids derive from their participation, the more they wish to play and practice on their own. While their instinct to play is natural, their appreciation and passion for “football” must be cultivated. Playing 4 v 4 is the foundation to set such goals because it:

- Allows a player to frequently touch the “TOY” on the field.
- Presents many opportunities to score gooooooooooals and score often.
- Encourages defending by making regaining possession of the ball a productive, fun and rewarding part of the game.
- Maximizes active participation and minimizes inactivity and boredom.
- Provides well-organized playing environment with improvised fields.
- Reflects the philosophy of player development expressed in Alberta, Canada, and the World.
- Eliminates the complicated rules such as offside that may hinder younger kids from “playing”.
- Reflects the appropriate role of the coach as a “COAXER”
- Make the game more “first year coach” friendly, because the game is simpler. This should make it easier to recruit more volunteer “coaches”.
- Helps stop over coaching of the game
- Allows for all of the components that are present in the 11 v 11 game.
- The basic team unit of soccer is three. Triangles form the basic tactical formation.
- Most importantly it allows the GAME to be the TEACHER.

Goalkeepers are not really used in the 4 v 4 game because they must become field players first. Because of this we use a Sweeper/Keeper system for the last player back. Before specializing as goalkeepers, kids must learn the broader parameters of “play”. This would be very difficult to do when they hide between the post and swing from the crossbar. Keepers must also learn intuition, and anticipation, from moving in and playing the game of Soccer. Goalies must possess field-playing skill. This is particularly true since the *Laws of the Game* require the goalkeeper in the 11 a side game to play without the use of their hands, at certain times of the game.

Starting with small-sided games will help develop “**SKILL**” that is realistic, such as:

- Motor ability
- Balance
- Agility
- Coordination
- Perception; insight and awareness
- Vision and problem solving
- Choices and decisions
- Physical fitness
- Fun, enjoyment, and competition
- Learning by discovery
- PLAYING

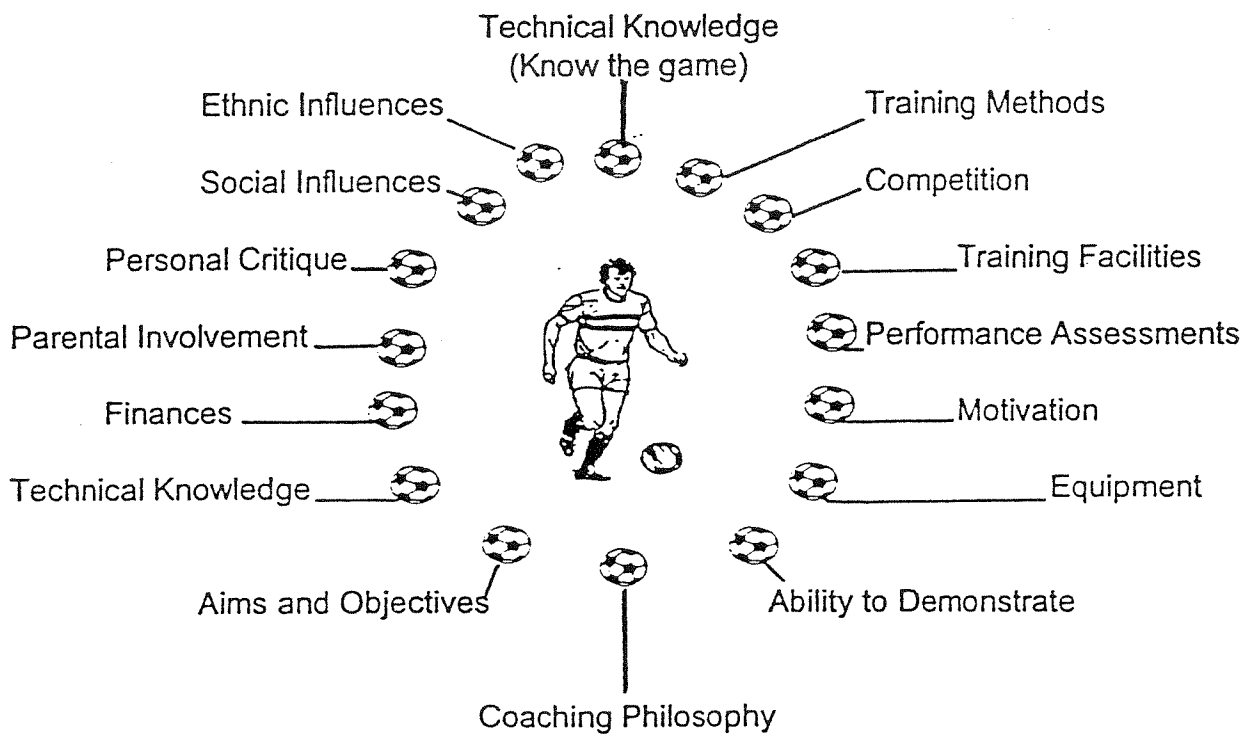
Repetition is one of the most important aspects over the long process of developing soccer skills. Playing this new structure will minimize lines and waiting, and maximize participation. Youngsters will recognize differing situations that are constantly repeated. Repetition influences: skill required to play the game (dribbling, passing, shooting, etc.), decisions and choices that occur during the game.

COACHING OBJECTIVES

To coach the modern player you must be able to deal with a variation of problems that the cosmopolitan players bring to the practice field.

The organizational skills that are so vitally important if the coach expects to get the maximum from his or her players.

Below are just a few of the Factors that the coach would need to deal with successfully if he or she ever expected to be a successful coach.



Which of these soccer balls do you find hard to control? As a coach you must control them all!

COACHING MUSTS

- YOU MUST BE ORGANIZED
- YOU MUST DEMAND STANDARDS
- YOU MUST BE ENTHUSIASTIC
- YOU MUST CREATE ENJOYMENT
- YOU MUST LOOK THE PART

Every coach has his / her own philosophy on the game of soccer and how they feel it should be played. The philosophy is what will guide you through all your coaching decisions regardless to what they may be. Knowing your personal philosophies and the demand on you at your club level, you must realize that you are not being asked to make radical changes to your thoughts when you are asked to coach with this mission statement, to develop players to perform at the professional & national level with A "POSSESSION OF THE BALL MENTALITY".

Having established your own goals and being in belief of this possession of the ball mentality, you must ask yourself the following questions:

- DO I UNDERSTAND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME
- WHY I AM COACHING
- CAN I ACCEPT CRITIQUE
- DO I HAVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

THREE KEY INGREDIENTS

- YOU MUST HAVE TARGETS
- YOU MUST HAVE SUPPORTING PLAYERS
- YOU MUST HAVE OPPOSING PLAYERS

Role of the COACH

In the 4 v 4 game the role of the coach is more of a “COAXER”. The coach sets up the games and the conditions for learning, provides a safe supportive environment and allows the game to teach. The coach becomes a manager of the games with the idea to develop and improve the soccer performance of the players. The small-sided games help the coach to become more familiar with the three main areas of the game:

1. When the team is in possession of the ball (*attacking*).
2. When the team is trying to regain possession of the ball (*defending*).
3. When the ball changes possession (*transition*).

When the players and parents are being introduced to small-sided games for the first time, things will not go perfectly. The teaching of the game and the organization of the practices will require time for everyone to familiarize himself or herself with the game. After a week or two, I hope, there should be no difficulties. We need to be **patient**, the principles of the game are right. The game is right. **The rewards will be in the children’s enjoyment of playing.**

Teaching Soccer Football to children requires that the information provided to them is appropriate for their maturity level through some means – THE GAME – that makes sense to them. The environment for play must essentially meet the needs of the players. Reducing the number of players to 4 per team allows for all of the components that are present in the 11 v 11 game: the ball, teammates, opponents, realistic pressure, appropriate space, guidelines, attacking, defending, and team shape.

The basic team unit of soccer is three. In 3 v 3 Soccer the triangle introduces the basic tactical formation. An attacker with the ball has at least TWO passing options. Now in 4 v 4 soccer the coach will continue to build on the basic triangle tactical formation, by introducing the “Diamond Shape”. Forward support (*length*) gives the player a creative, positive passing option. Support on the sides (*width*) gives the player a forward or rear passing option, while rear support (*depth*) gives the player insurance in case a mistake is made, or the player with the soccer ball cannot use the front supporting player but wishes to pass.

Coaching in Games and Competitions: Triangles and Diamonds

Your time to really shine and take full charge of your team’s coaching will occur during their practice games and competitions. Players must become accustomed to having teammates in which to pass to and receive passes from. This also means getting used to a much bigger field. Therefore, the focus of your game coaching should contain tactical comments as well as technical comments to reinforce what is being learned in the practice exercises. It is my recommendation that the following occurs:

- Do not worry about the score in practice or in competitions; instead ask yourself, “How is the team playing?” and “How is each individual playing?” I know that the kids will tell you the score after anyway, so try to not put a lot of importance on it.
- Play *all* players in *all* positions. It is maddening to hear a nine or ten year old say that he/she is a fullback and cannot or does not know how to play forward.
- Focus on the overall shape of the team more so than the actual positions as a means of keeping players properly spaced.
- Positively reinforce the effort, not the outcome, and reinforce all efforts, all the time.

Attacking Team Shape is a concept that should allow you to use all of the available space on the field. Players should not be bunching up. At the same time, it should also not cause players to become specialized at doing one thing. At this age it is too early for a player to feel that he/she is only a winger or a defender. Attacking team shape is based on the principles of play and requires that once your team has possession of the ball, players spread out from side to side (width) and from end to end (depth/penetration). Regardless of the system of play you use, the attacking shape is always the same. This shape, geometrically speaking, is a combination of *triangles and diamonds*.

The player with the ball should always have three passing options (one forward, one to the side or “*square*” as it is called in soccer and one back or “*support*” as it is called in soccer). This is a key point to maintaining possession of the ball. Remind yourself that whatever system of play you use, the players should be assuming this attacking shape as much as possible. So constantly remind your wide players to stay wide, and your forwards and defenders to spread out long. Wherever the ball goes on the field, the shape goes with it, constantly remaining in the basic diamond form, created by triangles. Whether your players are playing 4 v 4 or 11 v 11, the shapes within the larger team system shape remain the same.

UNDER 8 PLAYING STRUCTURE

- Play 4 v 4 with a Coach/Coaxer and an Assistant Coach (Game Supervisor).
- Field size should be about 40yd x 30yd (with a 5yd goal area line), a size 3 ball should be used.
- Each team will have no more than 10 players.
- Teams practice for 20-minute then play two 20-minute games with a 3-minute rest in-between.
- You will split your team in half, and play one half of the opposing team.
- Switch opponents after 20 min.
- Each of the Coaches/coaxers will be responsible for one half of their team.
- Coach/Coaxer referees the game; this will help the Coach/Coaxer to coach their team, as they will be right on the field with them, all free kicks are indirect (ball must be touched by a player, other than the one taking the kick, for a goal to be scored). No Penalty kicks.
- Last player back plays as the Sweeper/Keeper.
- Game is started by a kick-off from center and restarted after a goal in the same manner
- No offsides, no throw-ins, ball is passed in by opposite team after it goes into touch.
- Goal kick or corner kick when the ball goes out the ends outside of the goalpost.
- Unlimited substitutions.
- Goals are about 10 feet wide and 5 feet high.



SEASON OBJECTIVES

The U-4 to U-10 coach's piece of the player development puzzle can be spelled out in the season objectives and skills checklist. Keep these objectives and skills in mind every time you spend a game or practice with your team. When you ask yourself what your contribution to these players is, just look over the season objectives and skills checklist to remind yourself. You should periodically monitor these objectives and skills throughout the season to see if players are on the right track and making progress.

Locomotor Skills – Players will show improvement in running, side stepping, leaping, jumping, starting and stopping.

Stability Skills – Players will show improvements in both static and dynamic balance, and dodging.

Dribbling – Players will attempt to use both feet and improve balance and coordination.

Shooting – Players will attempt to shoot the ball using the instep (laces) of both right and left feet.

Passing – Players will attempt to pass the ball using the inside of both right and left feet.

Controlling – Players will attempt to control the ball first before passing it. Do not let players simply kick it and chase it.

Heading – Players will make an effort and attempt to head the ball. Players will not be as afraid and shy away.

Catching – Players, as Goalkeepers, will be able to catch a ball rolled or thrown towards them as a ball thrown directly above them.

Rolling – Players, as Goalkeepers, will be able to roll the ball to the feet of another player over short distance.

Scrimmage – Players will attempt to use all the general space, spread out instead of swarm around the ball, and begin to appreciate and understand the basic rules and boundaries necessary to play soccer. Players will also begin to understand the concept of cooperation and attempt making passes to teammates.

Affective – Players will have “FUN”, develop self-confidence and intrinsic motivation towards the game of soccer football.



UNDER
EIGHT
SEASON
PRACTITIONER
PLANNING

Coaching Session Plan Sheet

Session No: _____

organization checklist

Date _____

Players

1	7	13	19
2	8	14	20
3	9	15	21
4	10	16	22
5	11	17	23
6	12	18	24

Equipment

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 _____ | 4 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 5 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 6 _____ |

Session Objectives

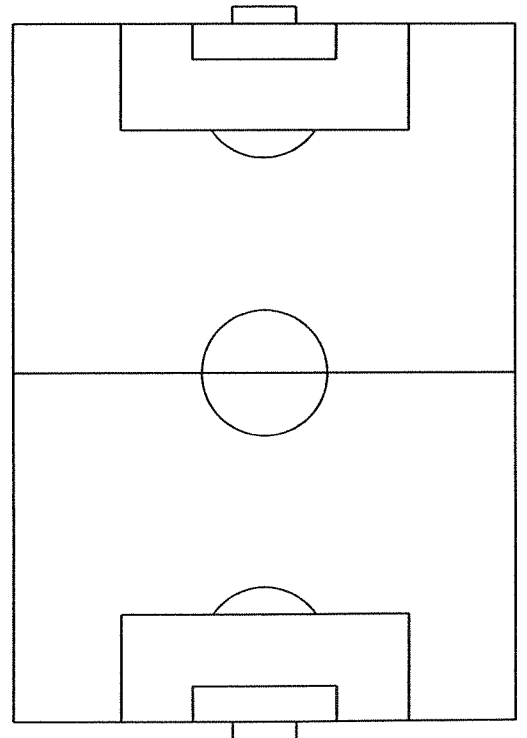
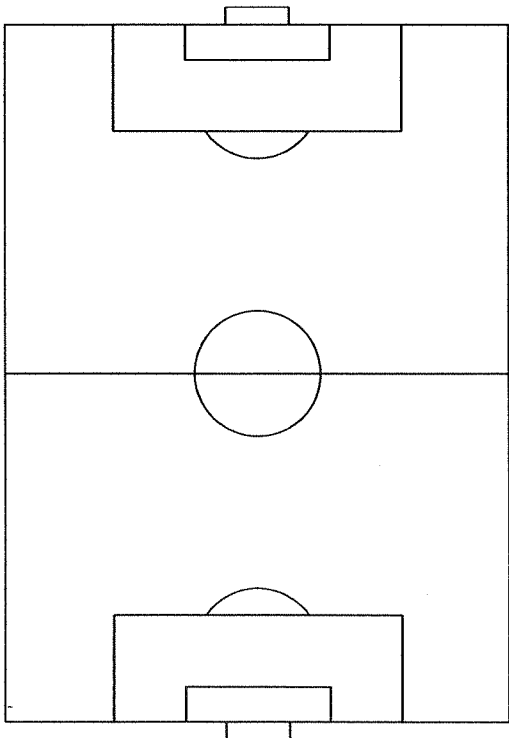
- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 _____ | 4 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 5 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 6 _____ |

Drills

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 _____ | 4 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 5 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 6 _____ |

Warm-up 1 _____ 2 _____

Comments: _____





**Practice Planning
Session Outline**



Team Name		Topic	
Date:			
Age Group		Level	
Equipment			
Players	Goals	Balls	Cones
Pinnies			
Equipment Notes:			

Phase	Diagram	Organization	Coaching Points
Warm-Up:			
Main Theme:			
Progression:			
Game Related Activity:			
Cool Down:			

Practice Summary Week #1

Theme: Introduction to basic body and manipulative control

Warm-up (10 min) [Learning To Dribble Game]

Purpose: To get players smiling and sweating and to introduce dribbling

- Ⓜ Everyone is inside half of the field with a ball
- Ⓜ Each player should have the ball at their feet
- Ⓜ Have the player tap the ball ahead out of feet and then run to the spot where the ball stops; repeat this process a few times
- Ⓜ Now ask players to try to get to the ball and tap it again before it stops rolling
- Ⓜ Ask them if it is easier to keep the ball rolling with larger taps or small taps (which is less work?)
- Ⓜ Using little taps (dribbling), have players dribble their ball around the area using right foot only, left foot only, both feet, inside of feet only, outside of feet only, etc.
- Ⓜ Finally, have players focus on using all the available space to dribble their ball so that collisions are avoided

Monkey See, Monkey Do (10 min)

Purpose: Soccer-specific body part awareness

- Ⓜ Each player has a ball, including coach and a semi-circle is formed around the coach
- Ⓜ The coach says a body part out loud and then will bounce the ball off the body part and catch it
- Ⓜ The players copy exactly what the coach did
- Ⓜ Body parts used include left and right instep (laces) of foot; left and right thigh; chest; left and right shoulder; and forehead
- Ⓜ Gradually increase the speed until you are bouncing the ball off a body part and catching continuously (try to get a flow going)
- Ⓜ Progress to asking players to show the group a new body part to bounce the ball off of and catch

Change Sides Game (10 min)

Purpose: Soccer-specific body/ball management

- Ⓜ Two parallel lines are established 15 to 20 yards apart with cones
- Ⓜ Half of the players are at each end standing side by side between a pair of cones
- Ⓜ On signal, all cross to the other line, face the center and stand at attention
- Ⓜ The first group to do this correctly wins a point
- Ⓜ Vary the locomotor movements (walking, running, sliding, hopping skipping, jumping, leaping, etc.); repeat 2 to 3 times with each locomotor movement
- Ⓜ Ask the players to show the group a different way to move and have everyone try it
- Ⓜ Next progress to players dribbling a ball under control to the other side; repeat 2 to 3 times

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #2

Theme: Introduction to basic body and manipulative control

Warm-up (10 min) [Goalkeeper Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to introduce goalkeeper catching/collecting and rolling

- Ⓜ Using half a field, get everyone inside that area with a ball
- Ⓜ have player carry ball in hands as they jog (or slide) around the area
- Ⓜ As they jog, players roll ball ahead of them so that they have to sprint to get it and pick it up again and then continue jogging
- Ⓜ After repeating this a number of times, have players throw the ball above their heads and try to catch it as they jog (or slide) around the area

Red Light Game (10 min)

Purpose: Soccer-specific body/ball management including stopping and starting

- Ⓜ A goal line is established at each end of half a soccer field
- Ⓜ The object of the game is to move across the area successfully without getting caught
- Ⓜ The coach is the leader and stands on the goal line furthest from the players
- Ⓜ The leader turns away from the players and says, "Green light!"
- Ⓜ In the meantime, the players move toward the goal line (running or sliding)
- Ⓜ When the leader faces the group and says, "Red light!" everyone must stop motionless
- Ⓜ If the leader catches any movement by any player, that player is required to go back in line with the last player in the group at that time
- Ⓜ The first player to reach the goal line successfully is the winner and becomes the leader for the next game; repeat 3 to 4 times
- Ⓜ It is the ball that must be stopped motionless not the player when "Red light!" is shouted
- Ⓜ Have players experiment stopping the ball with different parts of the foot (inside, outside, sole, heel)

Squirrels and Nuts Game (10 min)

Purpose: Soccer-specific body/ball management including dribbling

- Ⓜ Divide players (the squirrels) into four equal groups (using colored vests or by the colors of their shorts or socks or hats, no hats)
- Ⓜ Each group is to stand in one corner of half a soccer field (the nest)
- Ⓜ Soccer balls (the nuts) are placed in the middle of the area
- Ⓜ On the coaches command squirrels scamper around the area
- Ⓜ When coach calls, "Feeding time!" squirrels try to collect all nuts and bring them back to their nest (by dribbling one ball at a time)
- Ⓜ Squirrels can also steal nuts from other nests but are not allowed to stop other squirrels from taking the nuts

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #3

Theme: Introduction to basic body and manipulative control

Warm-up (10 min) [Dodging & Feinting Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to introduce players to the skill of dodging/feinting without a ball

- Ⓜ Using half a soccer field, have everyone inside the area with a soccer ball
- Ⓜ Players should jog into traffic (other players) so that they have to weave in and out of each other's way
- Ⓜ Instead of simply weaving in and out, players should try to fake out the person that they are approaching (make him/her think you are going one way but instead go the other)
- Ⓜ Encourage players to try using different body parts to initiate the fakes with (head, shoulder, arm, leg, etc.) and to make fakes that take them in different directions(not always forward)

Plastic Bag Tail Tag Game (10 min)

Purpose: To practice the skill of dodging (or feinting as it is called in soccer) and running, twisting, turning, stopping, starting

- Ⓜ To perform Everyone tucks a plastic bag into the back of their pants that must hang out at least ½ way (a tail)
- Ⓜ On the coaches command, all players try to pull out other players' tails while protecting their own (cannot protect with hands)
- Ⓜ When a player loses his/her tail, he/she must perform an activity (push-ups, jumping jacks, etc.) before re-entering the activity
- Ⓜ When the tail is lost, the player should step outside the area and replace his/her tail
- Ⓜ The area should be large enough that players are not bumping into each other but small enough that players have to work hard to not lose their tails
- Ⓜ Collect all plastic bags at the end of the activity and return them for recycling

Triangle Tag (10 min)

Purpose: To practice the skill of dodging (or feinting as it is called in soccer) and running, twisting, turning, stopping, starting and dribbling

- Ⓜ Groups of four, one person 'it', other three players join hands to form triangle
- Ⓜ 'It' player tries to tag a designated player within the triangle (cannot go through triangle, must go around)
- Ⓜ The triangle can move and spin around to avoid the 'it' player
- Ⓜ Switch players around so that everyone has a chance to be 'it'
- Ⓜ Progress to 'it' player dribbling a ball while players in triangle must hop on one foot

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #4

Theme: Introduction to basic body and manipulative control

Warm-up (10 min) [Everyone is 'it' Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to work on the skill of dodging (feinting)

- Ⓜ Everyone is 'it' and play occurs in an area 15 yards by 15 yards
- Ⓜ If you are tagged, you go down on one knee
- Ⓜ When on one knee you can free yourself by 1) reaching out and tagging someone else as they run past, or 2) reaching out and high fiving someone who is on one knee freeing both of you

Octopus Game (10 min)

Purpose: To practice dodging while dribbling a soccer ball

- Ⓜ Divide the team into two groups
- Ⓜ Half of the players will be taggers (octopii) and they must spread out from each other at arms length inside a 30 yard by 10 yard area
- Ⓜ Their formation should be staggered so that there is enough room for other players to weave through
- Ⓜ Taggers must stand perfectly still but can try to tag oncoming players(with their tentacles) by reaching out as far as possible
- Ⓜ Other players have a ball and start at one end of the area
- Ⓜ They try to dribble through to the other end with out getting tagged by an octopus
- Ⓜ If successful, they turn and dribble back along the outside of the area to the starting line again

Freak Out Dribble Tag Game (10 min)

Purpose: To practice dodging (feinting) while dribbling a soccer ball

- Ⓜ Every player has a ball and stands in an area roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ of a $\frac{1}{2}$ of a soccer field ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the field or one corner of the field)
- Ⓜ The coach and/or other adult(s), are 'it'
- Ⓜ This is the same as normal tag but everybody is also dribbling a soccer ball at the same time (except for 'it' people)
- Ⓜ When player gets tagged, he/she must stop on the spot and freak out for a couple of seconds (that is, have sort of a nervous breakdown with lots of shaking but limit the amount of screaming done - players love it when the coach demonstrates how to 'freak out')
- Ⓜ Once the player has 'freaked out' he/she returns to dribbling

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #5

Theme: Introduction to space

Warm-up (10 min) [Where's My Space Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to make players aware of the differences between personal and general space

- ☞ Mark off an area about the size of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the soccer field with cones
- ☞ Have players run (or do any other locomotor movement)
- ☞ When coach says, "Freeze!" all players stop very quickly where they are
- ☞ Players should be spread evenly throughout the entire space (if not show them how to); repeat 3 to 4 times
- ☞ Tell players that this is called the general space
- ☞ Now have each player explore all of the space around them as they stand on the spot
- ☞ Each player should reach their arms out forward, backward, left and right as well as above and below them
- ☞ Tell the players that this is called personal space (it is like a bubble that surrounds them)
- ☞ Have the players travel in general space noting to them that as they move, their personal space goes with them like a suit of armor they are wearing
- ☞ Progress to each player dribbling a soccer ball in the general space and as the coach says, "Freeze!" players must stop the ball and stand like statues spread out in the space

Frogs and Alligators Game (10 min)

Purpose: To help players learn to protect the ball when it is in their personal space as well as to make good use of general space

- ☞ Mark off an area about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the field with cones and then within the middle of this area make a smaller square about 10 yards by 10 yards
- ☞ The small square is the lilly pad which sits on top of the water (the larger square)
- ☞ Most of the players (the frogs) have a soccer ball each and spread out along the perimeter of the large area
- ☞ Two or three players (the alligators) do not have a ball and stand (swim) inside the large area (water) around the lilly pad
- ☞ The frogs try to dribble (swim) across the water to the lilly pad
- ☞ As long as they are on land or on the lilly pad the alligators cannot eat them (take their balls)
- ☞ Frogs try to go from land to lilly pad and back again as many times as possible
- ☞ If an alligator gets a frog's ball, the two switch roles
- ☞ Half way through, explain how frogs can better protect the ball
- ☞ By occupying more of their personal space (making themselves bigger) the alligator will not have as easy a time getting the ball
- ☞ Frogs should get their arms out to the side and use them to hold off alligators (they can lean against the alligators using their forearm but they cannot push using their hand)

Looking for Space Game (10 min)

Purpose: To help players look for and recognize useful space in soccer

- ☞ Players travel around inside an area about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the field
- ☞ As the players travel around they should be looking at the general space carefully
- ☞ What they are looking for are big pockets or areas of space where no one else's
- ☞ As soon as they see an open space they should sprint into it
- ☞ They sprint into it because everyone else is looking for space and it may become a race for whoever sees it first
- ☞ After sprinting into an open space keep jogging around the area looking for other areas to open up and sprint into them
- ☞ Progress to each player having a ball and dribbling
- ☞ As they dribble around, they look for space and when they see it, they should accelerate with their ball into it, then stop their ball and begin dribbling at normal speed again

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #6

Theme: Introduction to space

Warm-up (10 min) [Steal a Ball Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to help players learn to protect the ball when it is in their personal space as well as to make good use of general space

- Ⓜ Have all players inside an area the size of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the field with a ball (except for two players)
- Ⓜ The two that do not have ball try to take one from those who do
- Ⓜ If the takeover is successful there will be a new person without the ball who will look to take one off of someone else
- Ⓜ Remember to stress the importance of using the arms to become bigger and hold of challenges
- Ⓜ Dribblers should also be encouraged to try and keep their body between the ball and the challenger (in soccer this is called **shielding**)

Follow the Leader Game (10 min)

Purpose: To make players aware of the common pathways used in soccer to make passes along or runs into space by

- Ⓜ Make 20 x 20 yard squares using cones and break players into groups of four; one group per square
- Ⓜ One player, the player at the front of the single file line of group members, is the leader
- Ⓜ He/She must lead the others along the perimeter of the square
- Ⓜ The leader must also call out the pathway/direction that he/she is leading the group in
- Ⓜ The directions would include forward, backward, sideways, diagonally (cutting from one corner to the other on an angle; show players what a diagonal is) and curved (leader takes players into center of square and goes around in a half a circle; show players how)
- Ⓜ When coach gives signal, the leader drops to the last and the second person in line becomes the new leader
- Ⓜ Progress to having a second signal that means the lines change directions (the player who is last in line becomes the new leader)

Pirates Game (10 min)

Purpose: To help players learn to protect the ball when it is in their personal space as well as to make good use of general space

- Ⓜ Two goal lines are established about $\frac{1}{4}$ a field apart
- Ⓜ Most of the players stand spread along one goal line with a ball except for one player
- Ⓜ This one player stands at the other goal line without a ball and is referred to as the pirate (should make lots of pirate noises- ARRHHH!)
- Ⓜ On the coach's signal all dribblers try to get their ball safely to the other goal line
- Ⓜ The pirate tries to kick the ball away from as many dribblers as possible
- Ⓜ If this happens, they become pirates too
- Ⓜ The last person or two with a ball become the new pirates for the next game; repeat 2 to 3 times

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #7

Theme: Introduction to basic movement quality (effort), basic body control

Warm-up (10 min) [Sky High Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to help players determine the differences between strong and light movements using the goalkeeper skills of throwing and catching/collecting as well as the player skill of controlling

- 🎯 Each player should have a ball and be in their own space
- 🎯 Start by having players throw ball up in air and catch it
- 🎯 Begin with a light toss and catch using two hands and progress towards a much stronger toss and catch
- 🎯 Next have players drop ball from hands and kick it in the air using the instep (laces) of the foot and then catch it
- 🎯 Again, have players toss ball in air (lightly) and use different body parts (head, chest, thigh, foot) to try and catch the ball
- 🎯 The object is to try and absorb as much of the force of the ball as possible as it descends

5-Ball Dodge Tag (10 min)

Purpose: To help players with running at contrasting speeds as well as practice dodging, throwing and catching

- 🎯 5 taggers, each with a ball, chase other players within a ¼ area of the field
- 🎯 Taggers can throw/kick or tag the other players with ball (below waist)
- 🎯 When tagged you can have players frozen or they perform an activity (push-ups, bunny hops, etc.)
- 🎯 If frozen, free players can 'unfreeze' others by giving them a 'HIGH TEN'
- 🎯 Give all players a chance to be both roles; repeat 2 to 3 times

Guard the Castle (10 min)

Purpose: To practice rolling, shooting, passing and controlling the ball as well as changing directions quickly

- 🎯 A couple of soccer balls (or things that can be hit or knocked over) are placed inside the center of a circle made by the players
- 🎯 One or more players are assigned to guard the balls/cones
- 🎯 The ball is rolled/passed/shot at the cones
- 🎯 If a cone/ball is hit, the thrower/kicker switches places with a guard
- 🎯 Variations: add more guards, more balls/cones, or a second set of ball/cones within the circle to be guarded (more work for the guard players, easier for throwers/kickers)

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week # 8

Theme: Introduction to basic movement quality (effort), basic body control and basic relationships

Warm-up (10 min) [Activity Dribble Tag Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to review dodging (feinting) and dribbling

- ⌘ All players have a ball inside an area the size of ¼ of the field
- ⌘ The coach and/or other adult(s), are it
- ⌘ If a player is tagged, he/she leaves the area and performs a specified activity (sit-ups, run around a tree, parent sitting in lawn chair, etc.)
- ⌘ Once the activity has been performed the player re-enters the activity dribbling around and trying not to get tagged

Partner Tag (10 min)

Purpose: To practice dodging (feinting), dribbling and working together with other players

- ⌘ Two players are in a pair with an arm locked to each other at the elbow (they are 'it')
- ⌘ All players (including 'it' pair) travel around an area about ¼ of the size of the field
- ⌘ Try to tag free players, if successful player tagged joins the pair (by linking an arm to the player who tagged him/her)
- ⌘ When the three tag another player, they separate into two pairs
- ⌘ Continue only one player remains
- ⌘ Progress to have free players dribble a soccer ball while trying not to get tagged

Star Wars Game (10 min)

Purpose: To practice throwing, catching, running fast, changing directions quickly and dodging (feinting) while working together with other players

- ⌘ Divide players into two teams (Imperial Army and Rebel Resistance)
- ⌘ The area is ¼ of a soccer field divided by cones into two halves; each half also has a 10 by 10 yard grid (a base)
- ⌘ Each team occupies one half of the area and cannot cross the halfway line
- ⌘ One player from each side is made a Jedi (Luke/Princess Leah for the Rebels and Darth Vader for the Imperials)
- ⌘ All soccer balls are lined up at the center of the area
- ⌘ When the coach shouts "May the force be with you!" all players run to center and try to grab as many soccer balls as possible
- ⌘ They throw the balls at their opponents trying to make contact below the waist
- ⌘ If hit, player is frozen in a time warp
- ⌘ Jedi can free frozen soldiers by tagging them. Jedi must be careful because he/she can be hit and frozen when off of the home base (must protect Jedi or game is over if he/she gets frozen).
- ⌘ One player from either team (Han Solo/Princess Leah or Boba Fett) is allowed to enter the other team's half and try to tag the Jedi and freeze him/her
- ⌘ This player cannot be hit and frozen until he/she comes into the opponents half (this player is always safe within his/her own half)
- ⌘ If this player gets hit, he/she returns back to own half of field and a new Han Solo/Princess Leah or Boba Fett is chosen

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #9

Theme: Introduction to basic relationships

Warm-up (10 min) [Partner Warm-up Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to introduce players to the concept of working together with another individual

- ⌘ Players pair up with one ball per pair
- ⌘ Players stand back to back and pass the ball to each other by going over their heads and then bending down and going through their legs
- ⌘ Players next twist side to side pass the ball to each other
- ⌘ Next, without the ball, pairs race against each other
- ⌘ The race is to see how many over/unders a pair can do in a time limit set by the coach
- ⌘ One over/under consists of one of the partners leap frogging his/her partner from behind and then crawling through his/her partner's legs from the front
- ⌘ Switch so that stationary partner gets to do over/unders and active partner gets to rest

Twins Game (10 min)

Purpose: To help players with body management, running and dribbling while working with one other players

- ⌘ The area should be about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a soccer field
- ⌘ Each player should have a partner (twin)
- ⌘ Coach gives commands such as "Take three hops and two leaps" or "Walk backward four steps and three skips"
- ⌘ When the pairs are separated, the coach says, "Find your twin!"
- ⌘ Players find their twin and stand frozen back to back
- ⌘ The goal is not to be the last pair to find each other and assume the frozen position
- ⌘ Progress to each player dribbling a ball
- ⌘ Coach gives commands like, "Dribble with left foot only," "Dribble with inside of feet only," "Stop your ball and touch your right knee to the ball," and "Stop your ball and get someone else's"
- ⌘ When the coach shouts, "Find your twin!" players dribble toward their twin and freeze back to back with ball under foot

Circle Straddle Ball Game (10 min)

Purpose: To help players improve on ball rolling, catching, passing and faking while working with others

- ⌘ Players are in a circle formation, facing inward, each stands in a wide straddle stance with the side of the foot against the neighbor's foot
- ⌘ The hands are on the knees; two balls are used
- ⌘ The object of the game is to roll one of the balls between the legs of another player before that player can get hands down to stop the ball
- ⌘ Progress to having one child in the center of the circle with the only ball
- ⌘ The center player tries to pass the ball through the legs of any child, masking intent by using fakes and changes of direction
- ⌘ Any player allowing the ball to go through changes places with the center person

Game (40 min)

Practice Summary Week #10

Theme: Introduction to basic relationships

Warm-up (10 min) [Shadow Game]

Purpose: To get players ☺ and sweating and to help players improve their ability to work with one other individual while dribbling a soccer ball

- Ⓜ All players have a ball inside an area ($\frac{1}{4}$ of a soccer field) and finds a partner
- Ⓜ Inside the area, one partner dribbles around and the other partner mimics all actions (shadow)
- Ⓜ Then have partners switch roles on you command; the follower becoming the new leader
- Ⓜ Remember to tell players to use all the available space and try not to run into each other
- Ⓜ The goal is for the leader to use all his/her tricks and fakes while dribbling to try and 'shake' the follower

Passing on the Move Game (10 min)

Purpose: To help players improve their ability to work with one other individual while passing

- Ⓜ In an area $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of a soccer field, have players pair up with one ball per pair
- Ⓜ As partners move throughout the space, they pass the ball back and forth trying to always keep the same distance apart
- Ⓜ Players should not move around the area in a circle but instead should cut across the space frequently as they pass the ball
- Ⓜ Have players experiment using the different surfaces of the foot to pass and control while running with their partner
- Ⓜ Next, progress to where the passer varies his/her pass (directly to the receiver, slightly ahead, slightly behind)
- Ⓜ See if players can figure out which pass works best and under what circumstances

Monkey in the Middle Game (10 min)

Purpose: To have two players learn to work together in order to keep a ball away from another individual using throwing, catching, passing and controlling skills

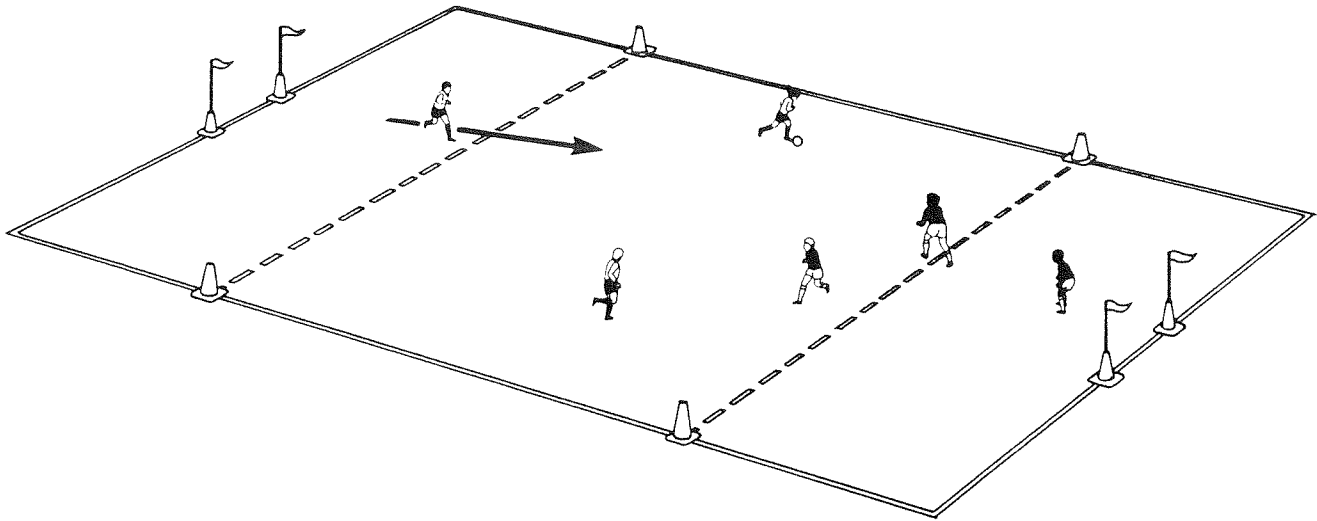
- Ⓜ Have players get into groups of three with one ball per group
- Ⓜ Two players work together throwing the ball back and forth while the third person tries to intercept it
- Ⓜ If the pair can make three catches and throws in a row they get a point
- Ⓜ If the one intercepts the ball he/she gets a point
- Ⓜ Coach gives signal for players to switch roles
- Ⓜ Progress to using passing and control with the feet to play the game
- Ⓜ Coach should make the point that the cooperating player trying to receive the ball should not stand directly behind the monkey in the middle (tell the player not to stand in that player's shadow but instead to move to one side or the other in order to be open to receive a pass)

Game (40 min)

ROLES in *Micro Soccer*

The Goalkeeper

The goalkeeper plays a vital role in the success of “team play” in 3-a-side soccer, including the offensive plays. The coach should encourage the goalkeeper to think in terms of becoming a goalkeeper *and* supporting defender.



The goalkeeper moving outside his zone to give rear support

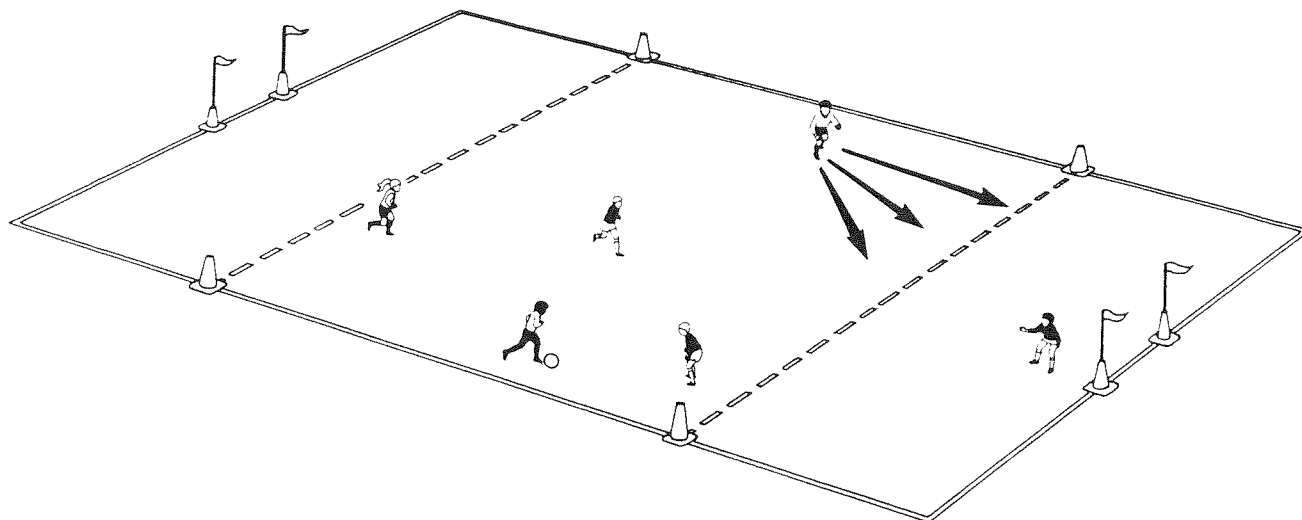
In providing effective rear support, the goalkeeper must do so without venturing so far he puts his team at risk. He has to always keep in mind that he is the only one who can handle the ball.

But there is no reason why he cannot move in support outside the handling zone, and move backwards to the goal when the opposition wins possession.

The goalkeeper should be made aware of the fact he can use his feet outside the handling zone.

The Supporting Attacker

With one attacker in possession of the ball and the goalkeeper giving *rear support*, the other player becomes the *supporting attacker* — with emphasis on *attack*. This player should be encouraged to make adventuresome runs into space to receive the ball in advanced attacking positions.



Supporting attacker going forward

Or . . .

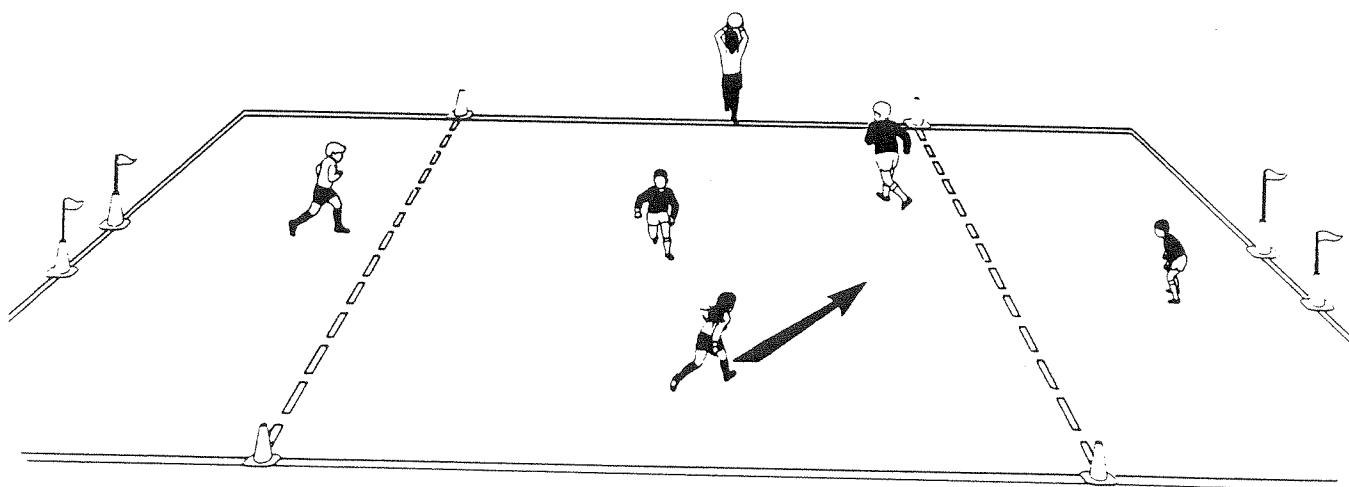
The supporting attacker can look to move towards the player with the ball to work a passing movement to create a scoring chance.

This is termed *attacking support* or *forward support*.

ON THROW-INS:

Normally on throw-ins, the goalkeeper gives the rear or defensive support.

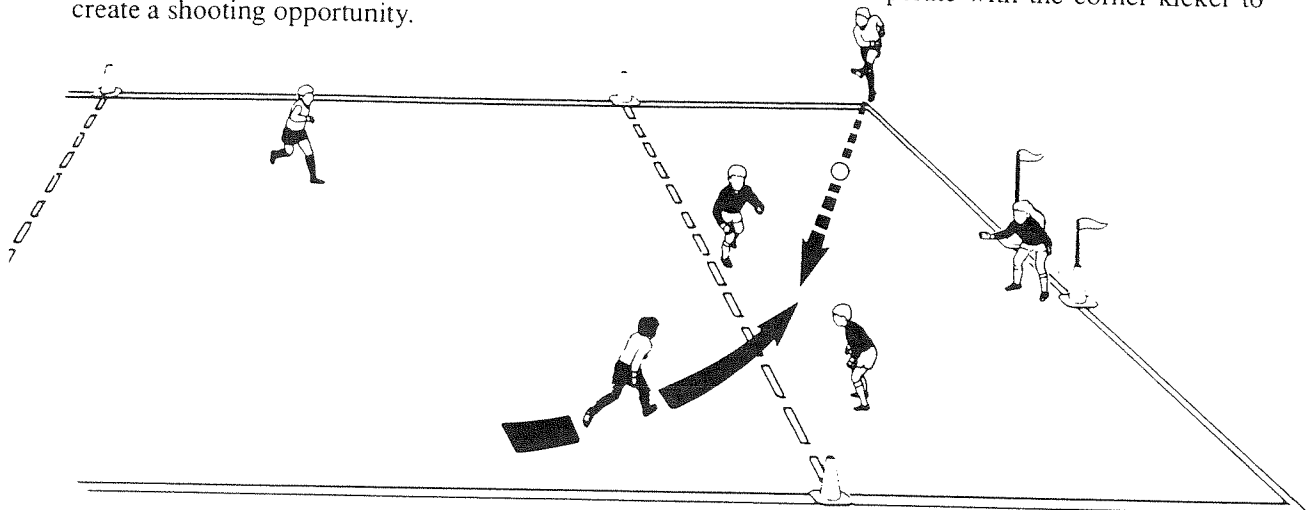
The supporting attacker should think in positive terms — how to receive the ball in an advanced and a potential scoring position (see “re-starts”).



Supporting attacker's role on throw-ins

ON CORNER KICKS:

The supporting attacker can make an adventuresome run to co-operate with the corner kicker to create a shooting opportunity.

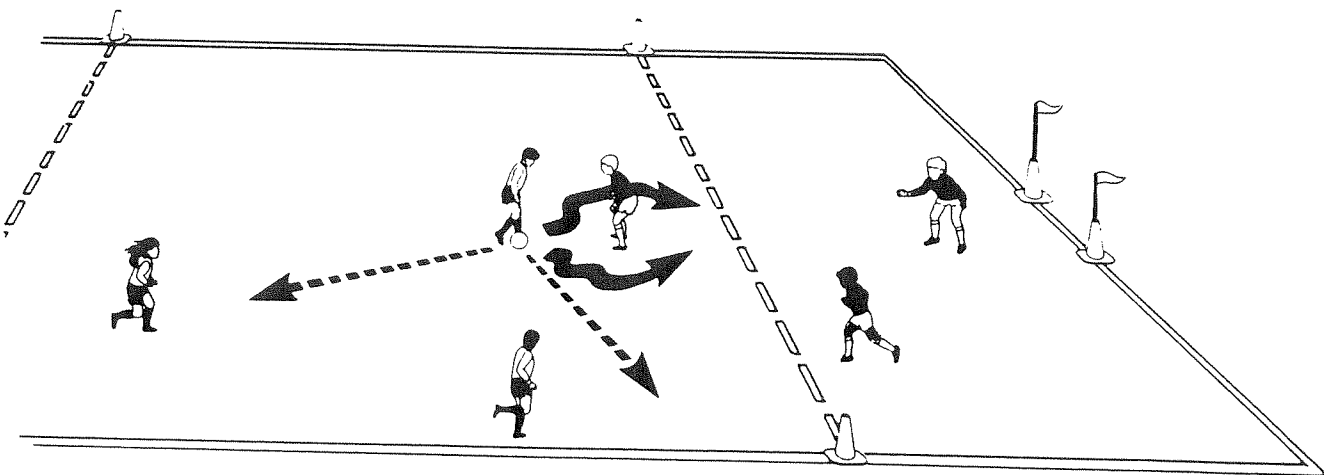


Supporting attacker's role on corner kicks

Player with the Ball

Assuming the player in possession of the ball is not the goalkeeper and that the goalkeeper is giving rear support, the player should be encouraged to make decisions from the options normally presented:

1. "Go for Goal" — the player looks to score by dribbling and running past opponents.
2. Shooting, if the opportunity is there.
3. Combining with the supporting attacker on passing moves towards the goal.

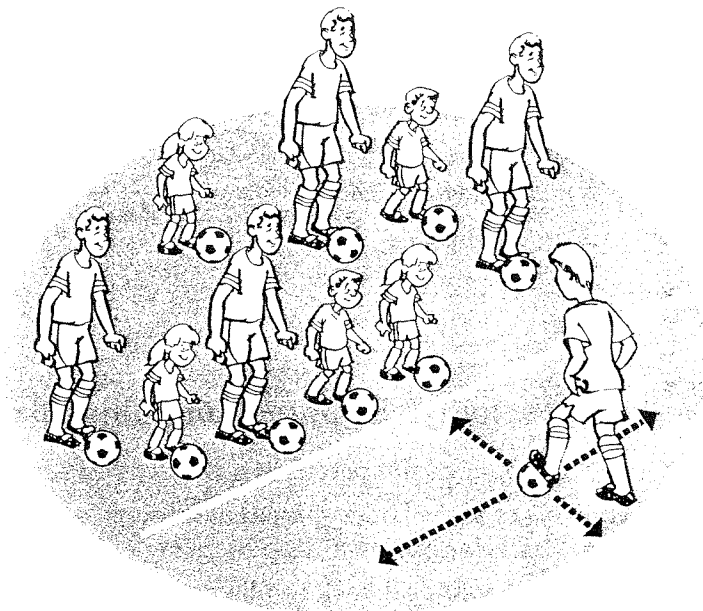


Exciting options for player with ball

Stopping/Controlling the Ball

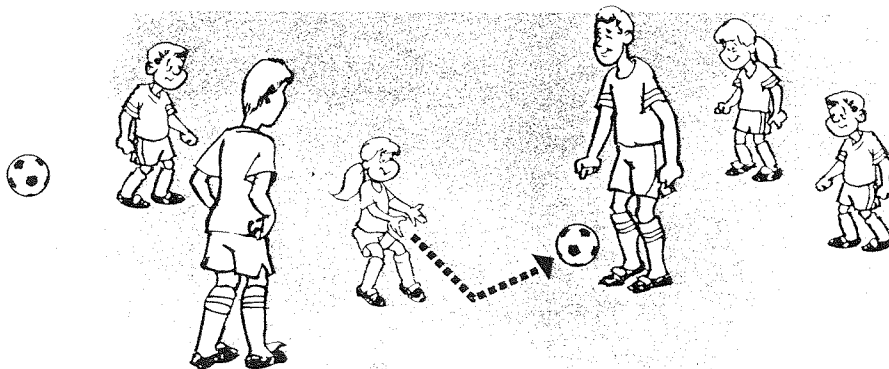
Preliminary Activity (5 minutes)

- Players and parents each have a ball. With everyone facing coach, they begin to play "Mirror Man".
- "Mirror Man" - As the coach moves, so must players/parents move, as if looking in a mirror.
- Remember to use both right and left foot for each of the following movements:
 - 1) roll ball from side to side using sole of foot
 - 2) move ball back and forth using sole of foot
 - 3) dribble ball to left using inside of right foot (change direction)
 - 4) dribble ball to left using outside of left foot (change direction)
 - 5) drag ball backwards using sole of foot
 - 6) dribble ball forward using inside of foot
- Always have players stop the ball before changing direction/instruction using a specific method (ie: sole of foot, inside of foot, outside of foot).



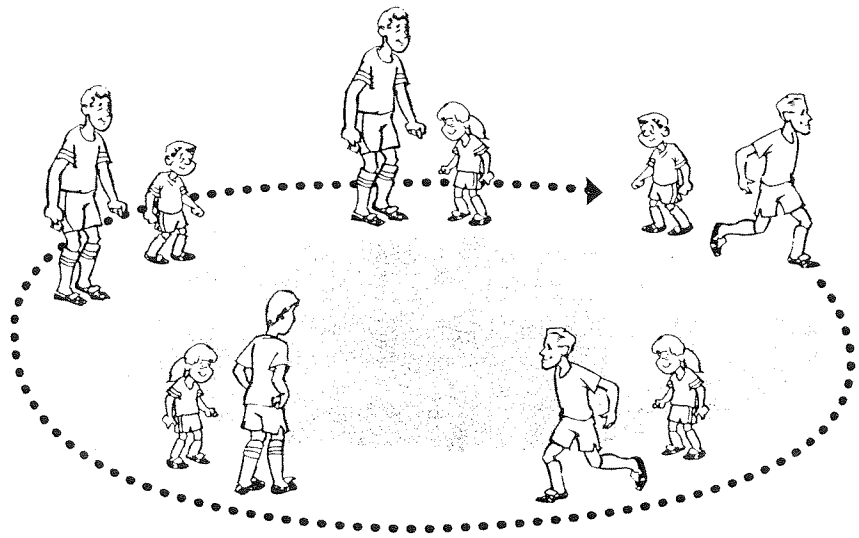
Games Activity: Flexibility (10 minutes)

- **Ball Tag:** Players and parents within a 20 m x 20 m grid. A parent, hold a soccer ball, tries to tag other players and parents in grid. Player/parent who is tagged takes the soccer ball and tries to tag others. Player tagged cannot tag player who has just tagged him/her. Extra ball can be introduced.



Game Activity: Competition/Races (10 minutes)

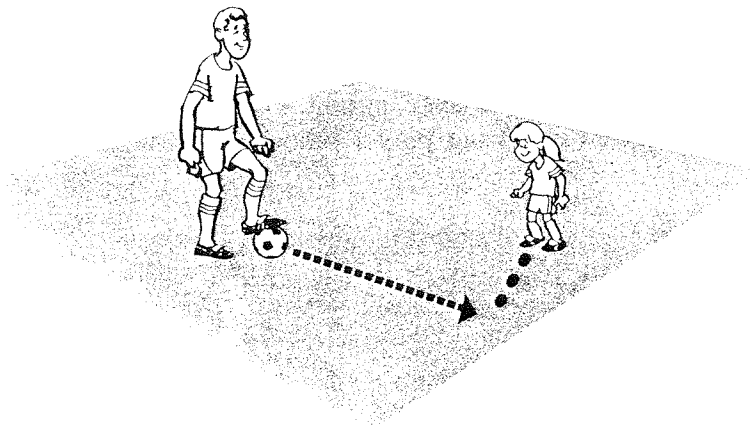
- Player stands beside parent, as partners, around 12-metre diameter (centre) circle.
- On whistle, parent leaves player and runs clockwise and back to his/her place.
- First back to place and sitting down is winner.
- Examples of alternatives; add some of your own:
 - 1) player goes through parent's legs before running
 - 2) player goes through parent's legs both ways
 - 3) parent runs around player, then around circle
 - 4) player jumps from parent's back, then runs.



Technique Activity: Stopping/Controlling Ball (5 minutes)

- Player stands opposite parent in a 10m x 10 m square.
- Player rolls or kicks ball to parent, who stops ball with foot. Parent then rolls ball back for player to stop by using either foot or hands.
- When parent rolls ball back to player, he/she should roll ball slightly to one side, forcing player to move to stop/control ball.

Coaching Points: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Get behind the ball.2) Turn foot sideways and raise it off ground slightly.3) Relax foot as contact is made.



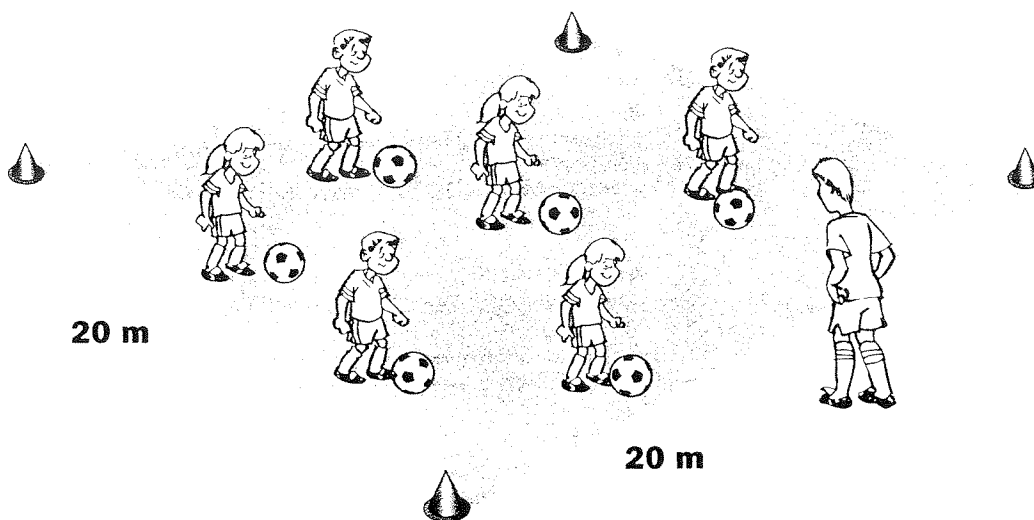
Soccer Game (15 minutes)

- Mini-Soccer rules apply. All players included.

Passing

Preliminary Activity (5 minutes)

- Each player has a ball and is within 20 m x 20 m grid.
- Players dribble with ball and coach gives instructions to do exercises using 'Simon Says' routine (i.e. Simon Says - stop, turn, sprint, etc).

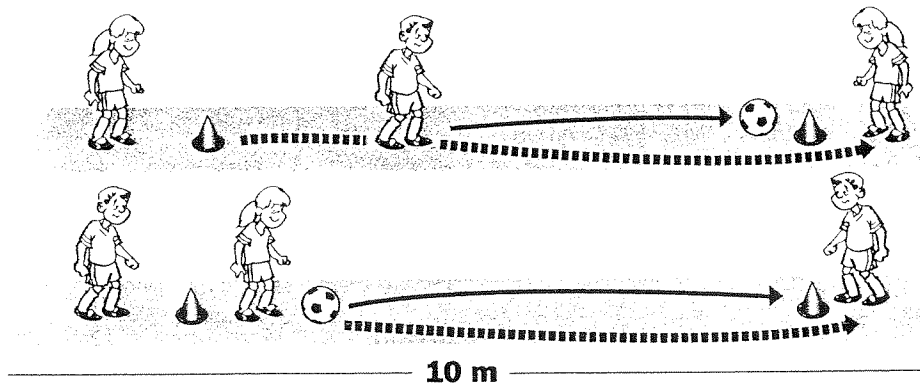


Line drill: Passing (10 minutes)

- Two lines of players approximately 5 metres apart. Player with the ball dribbles to centre then passes ball to opposite player and then runs to end of opposite line.
- Player receiving ball repeats.
- Alternatives:
 - 1) Dribble - Pass
 - 2) Control - Pass

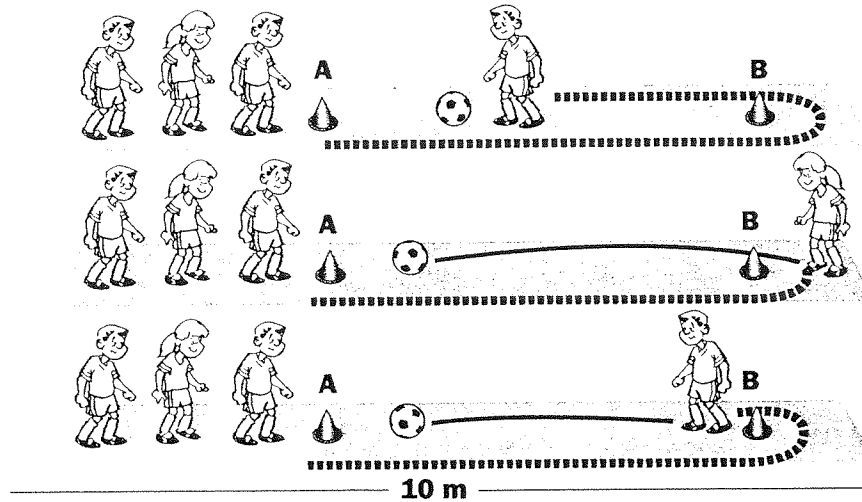
Coaching Points:

- 1) Watch the ball.
- 2) Non-kicking foot next to ball.
- 3) Turn toe out and tighten ankle.
- 4) Kick through the middle of the ball.



Games activity: Relay Races (10 minutes)

- Players in teams of four with one ball behind cone (A). On whistle, players commence race with the first team to finish and sit down being the winners.
 - 1) Dribble around cone (B) and return.
 - 2) Dribble to cone (B) and pass back.
 - 3) Dribble to cone (B), circle cone and pass back.

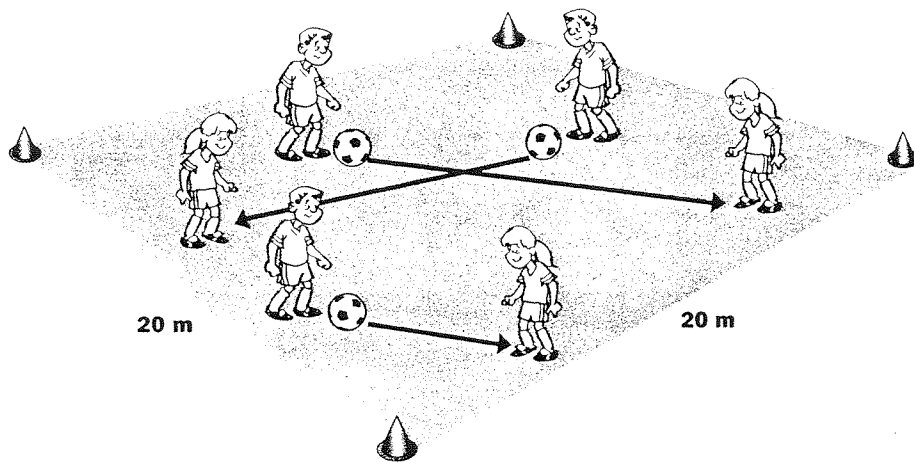


Technique Activity: Passing (10 minutes)

- Players in two's within 20 m x 20 m squares.
 - 1) Pass using inside of foot. Use left, then right foot.
 - 2) Pass into space for partner to move onto and control.
 - 3) Pass anywhere within square.
 - 4) Pairs move and pass throughout entire grid.

Coaching Points:

- 1) Watch the ball.
- 2) Non-kicking foot next to ball.
- 3) Turn toe out and tighten ankle.
- 4) Kick through the middle of the ball.



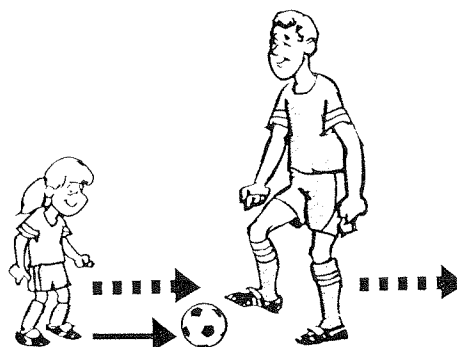
Soccer Game (10 minutes)

- Mini-Soccer rules apply. All players included.

Kicking/Shooting

Preliminary Activity (5 minutes)

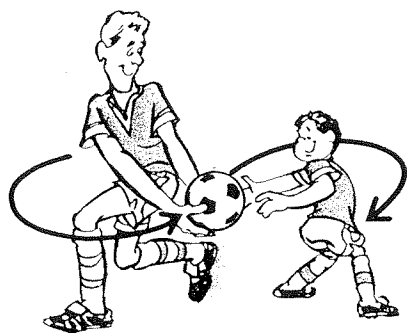
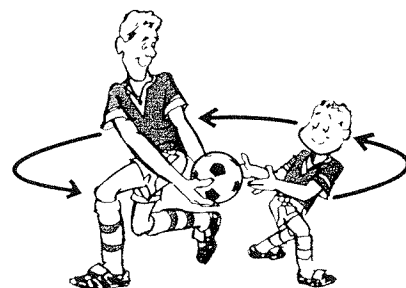
- Parent and player with one ball between them, move freely around field.
- Parent is moving backward and player is moving forward with ball at feet.
- When parent calls, player kicks ball toward parent.
- Parent stops ball with foot, then continues moving back-ward, away from ball and player.
- Process is repeated as required.



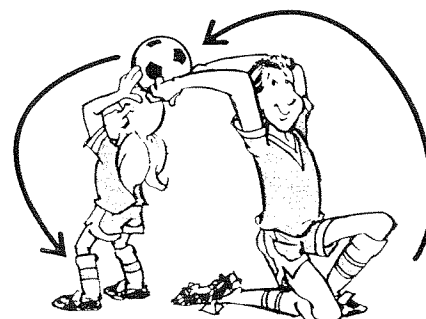
Games Activity: Flexibility (5 minutes)

- Parent and player together with one ball between them. Backs to each other. Parent may have to kneel.
- Repeat each exercise ten times and the first pair to finish and sit down is the winner.

- 1) On whistle, the ball is passed by hand around the bodies ten times.



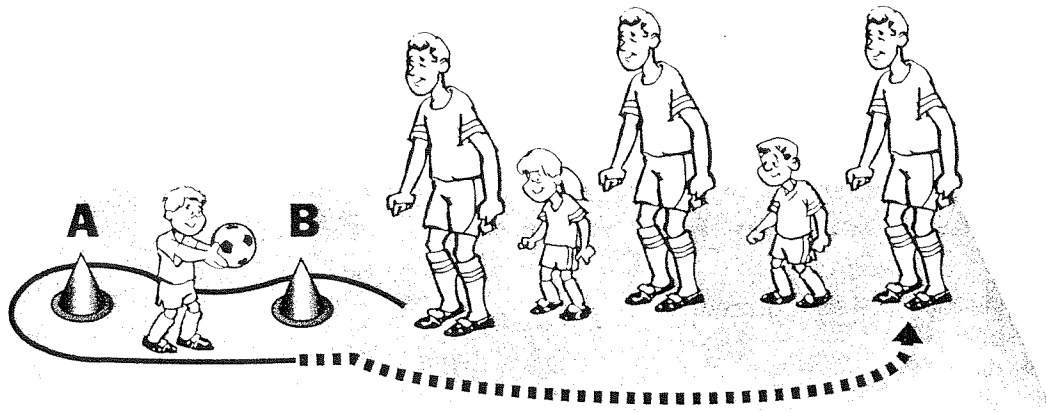
- 2) The ball is passed from partner to partner in figure-eight around their bodies.



- 3) The ball is passed from partner to partner in a circling motion by reaching back over their heads and then bending forward and reaching through their legs.

Game Activity: Competition/Races (10 minutes)

- 3 parents and 3 players standing in line at cone (B) make a team.
- Race begins with player at cone (B) with ball in hands. On whistle, he/she carries ball around cone (A) and passes it to parent at the front of the line, then runs to the back of the line. Parent repeats the exercise as do all the other players and parents.
- First team to finish and sit down is the winner.
- Vary the requirements of each race (ie: add a forward roll, dribbling, dribble out and pass back, etc).

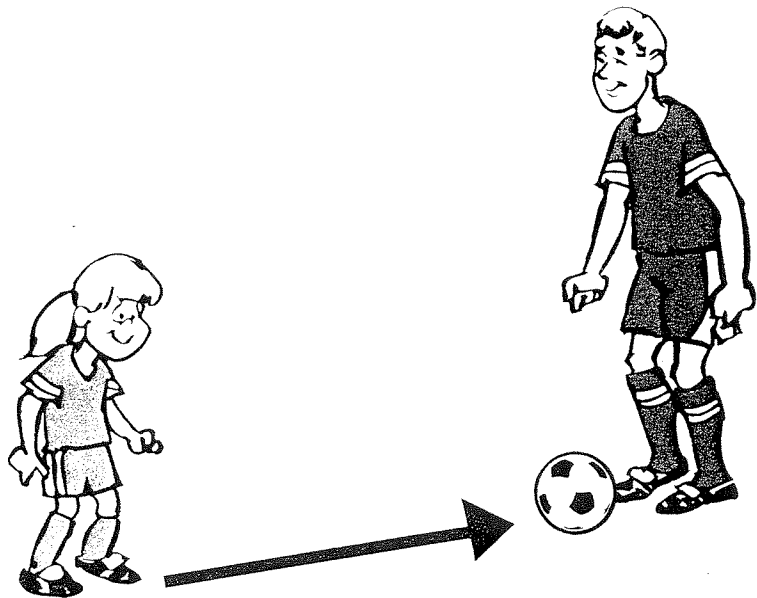


Technique Activity: Kicking/Shooting (10 minutes)

- Parent stands in goal, between two cones 5 metres apart. Player stands opposite the parent approximately 8 metres away.
- The player kicks/shoots the ball at the goal and the parent must make a save using feet only. The parent kicks the ball back to player using the same technique and the process is repeated.

Coaching Points:

- 1) Watch the ball.
- 2) Place non-kicking foot next to ball.
- 3) Stretch toe down and tighten ankle.
- 4) Kick through the middle of the ball using the laces.



Soccer Game (15 minutes)

- Mini-Soccer rules apply. All players included

Goalkeeping

(This practice is for all player)

Preliminary Activity (5 minutes)

- Player and parent with one ball between them move around field, throwing ball to each other.
- When player catches ball easily, parent should alter throw by throwing higher, wider, or bouncing ball in front of player.

Dia. 19

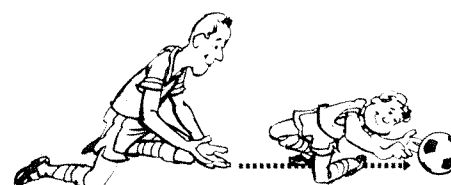
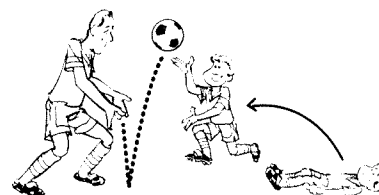
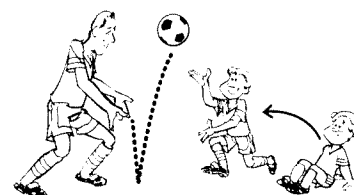
Coaching Points:

- 1) Hands slightly behind ball with fingers spread when catching.
- 2) Scoop ball into chest for safety.



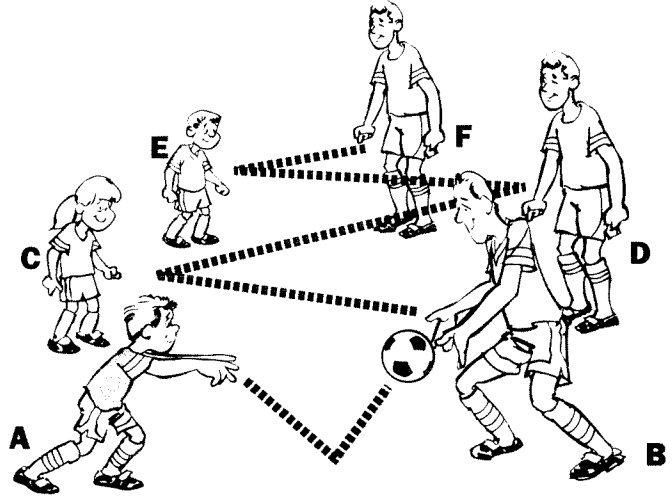
Games Activity: Flexibility (10 minutes)

- Repeat the following exercises as necessary:
 - 1) Player and parent stand 5 metres apart. They throw the ball to each other. The first pair to complete 10 successful catches and sit is the winner
 - 2) Player sits, parent bounces ball high. Player gets up on feet before catching ball. The first player to catch 5 balls wins. Player then bounces ball for parent.
 - 3) Player lies down before getting up to catch ball bounced by parent. First player to 5 catches wins.
 - 4) Player rolls ball between parent's legs. Parent turns and falls on ball. Parent then rolls ball between player's legs; player turns and fall on ball. First pair to five catches each is winner.



Game Activity: Competition/Races (10 minutes)

- 3 parents and 3 players in teams of six. Parent faces player 5 metres away. On whistle, player (A) throws ball to parent (B) Parent (B) throws to player (C) etc. until ball is caught by Parent (F) First team to complete this pattern successfully and sit, wins.
- Alternatives:
 - 1) Ball is rolled;
 - 2) Ball is bounced;
 - 3) Start at (A), finish at (A) with each exercise



Technique Activity: Diving on the Ball (5 minutes)

- Player and parent have two soccer balls. Player stands between 2 balls approximately 4 metres from parent.
- Parent moves to one of the balls. Before parent can get to ball, player saves ball by smothering it with hands.



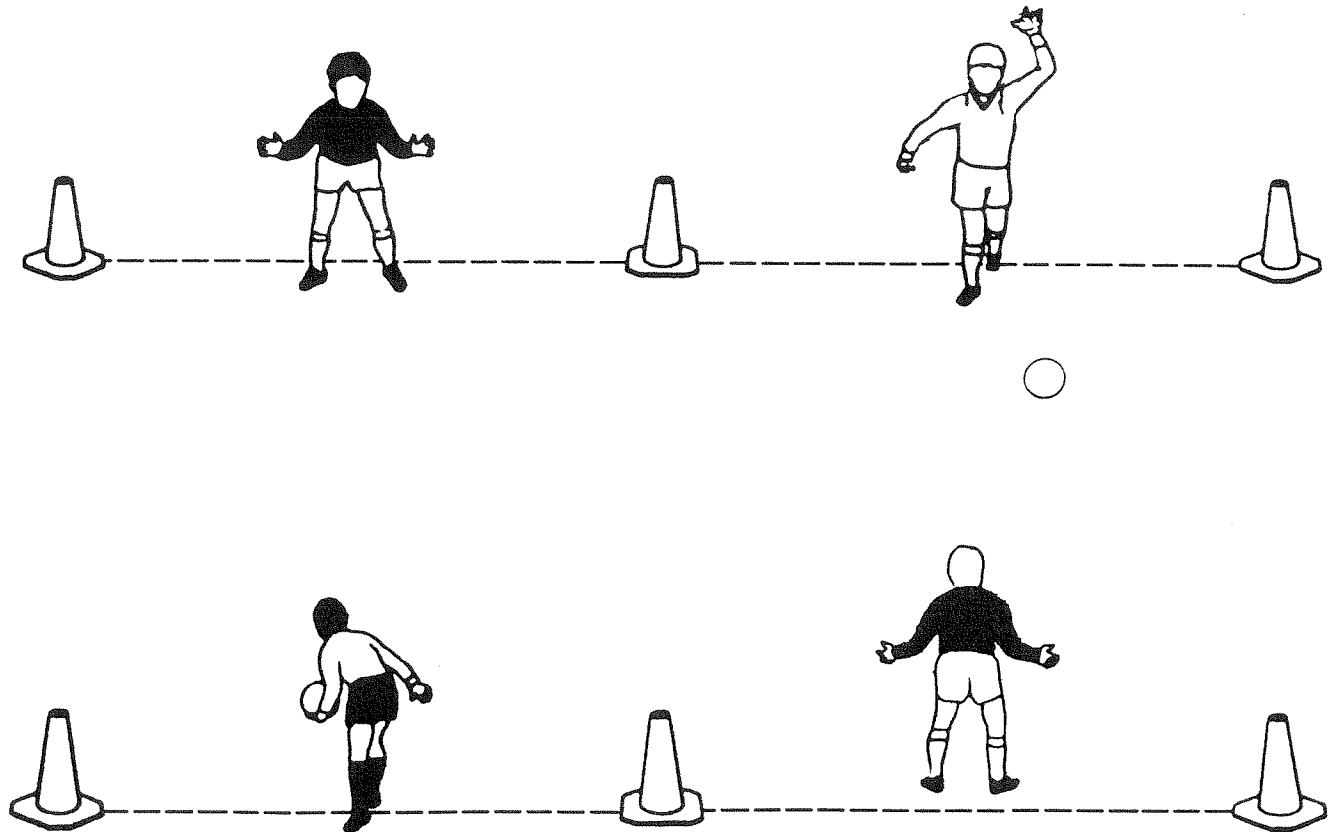
Soccer Game (15 minutes)

- Mini-Soccer rules apply. All players included

Goalie I

Objective

To give all players the opportunity to become comfortable handling a ball by throwing and catching.



Organization

- Players in pairs, five to six yards apart, throwing and lobbing to each other.
- If possible, use cones or markers to improvise goals for each pair.
- Consider using this practice as part of warm-up with the Square Dance.

Teaching points

- Have players reach forward to catch ball with fingers and palms.

- After catching, bring the ball into body to hide it.
- Players should treat the ball as a friend — to be hugged, not pushed away.

Target

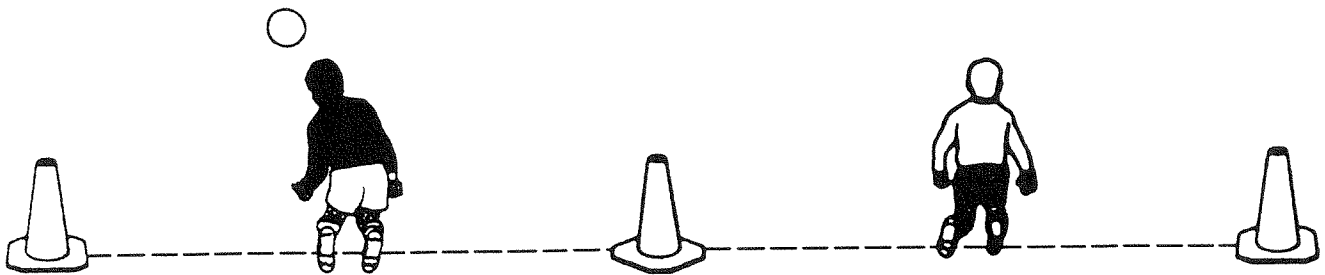
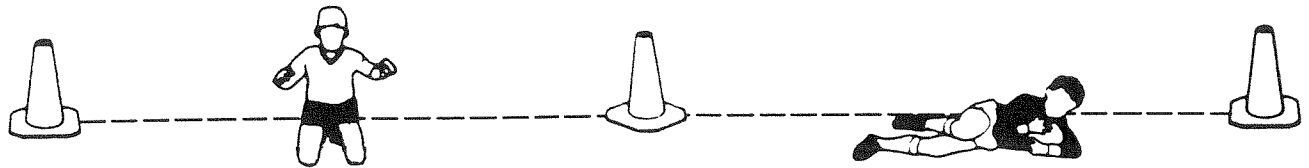
- To test your partners without beating them or forcing them to dive.

Goalie II

The Pendulum Roll

Objective

To introduce players to the all-important technique of diving to either side.



Organization

- Two players kneel in an upright position, facing one another four yards apart.
- Ball is rolled two to four feet to either side.
- Player receiving the ball rolls sideways, collects the ball and rolls back to the kneeling position with the ball.
- Once back in the upright kneeling position, the sequence is repeated for the second player.
- Players should be encouraged to roll the ball to both sides of their partner — but not necessarily systematically.
- Use as part of warm-up.

Teaching points

- Roll on side, not stomach or back.
- Receive the ball with hands and arms in front of body.
- Pull ball into midriff (see Goalie I).
- Roll from side-diving position back to kneeling position.

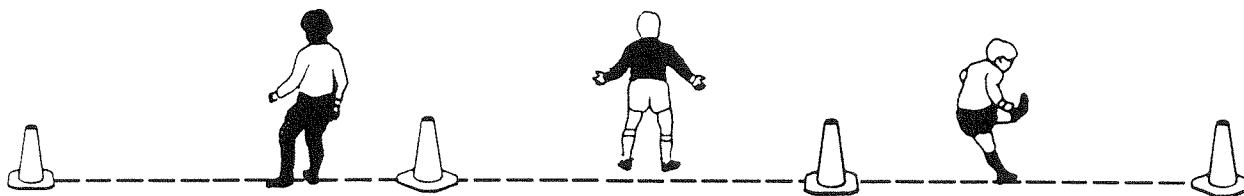
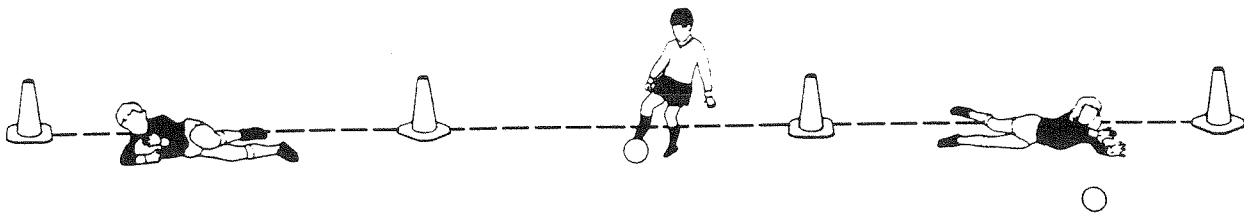
Target

- Ten rolls (five for each player), with continuous pendulum action.

Goalie III

Objective

To make players familiar with the techniques of diving saves from an upright position, and to relieve the fear of tumbling.



Organization

- Two small goals, nine feet wide using cones or markers, approximately eight yards from each other.
- Players kick or throw ball to “test” rather than to beat opponent.
- Ground shots to the side result in practice for diving saves.
- Use as separate practice, not as part of the warm-up.
- Practice in grassy or sandy area.

Teaching points

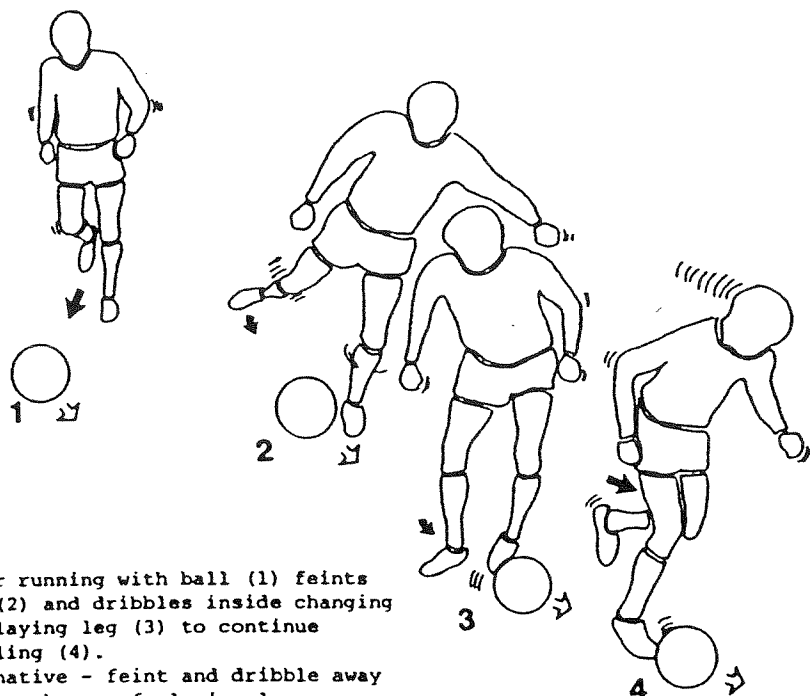
- Goalkeeper must be alert and ‘dancing’ in readiness for a shot.
- For longer dives to the side, a short sideways skip precedes diving.
- Keep as much of the body behind the ball as possible — double cover with hands and some part of the body.
- Ensure ‘shots’ are good, yet varied.
- Review Teaching Points in Goalie I and II, particularly “side-diving”.

Target

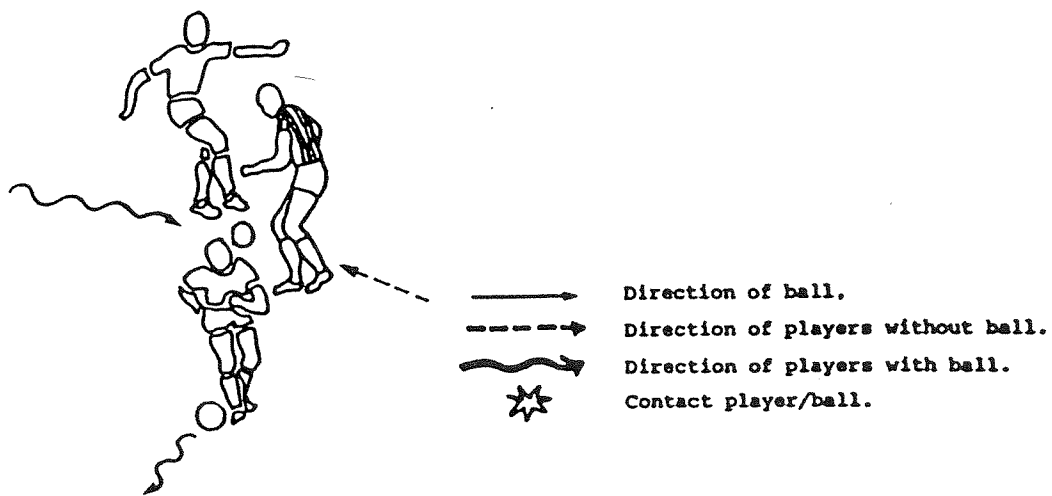
- Ten shots (five each), then rest.

COLLECTION OF DRIBBLING MOVES

The 'Feint-a-Shot' Move:

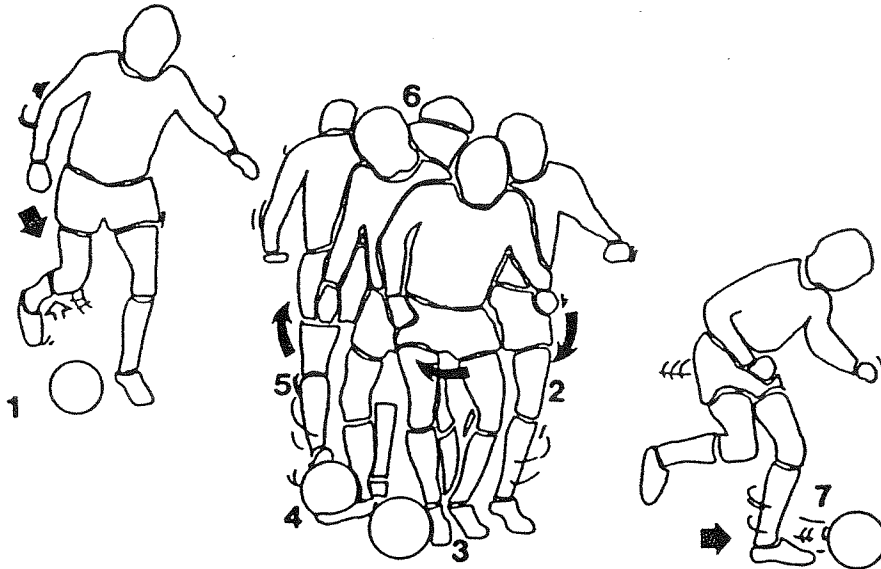


Player running with ball (1) feints shot (2) and dribbles inside changing the playing leg (3) to continue dribbling (4).
Alternative - feint and dribble away without change of playing leg.

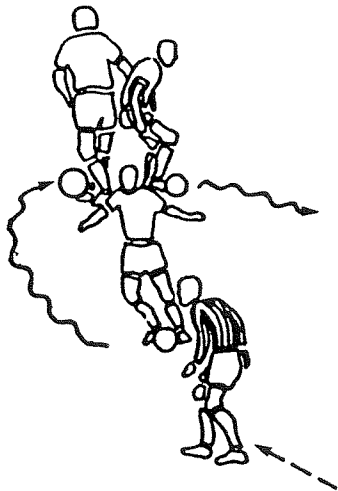


COLLECTION OF DRIBBLING MOVES

The 'Beckebauer' Move:



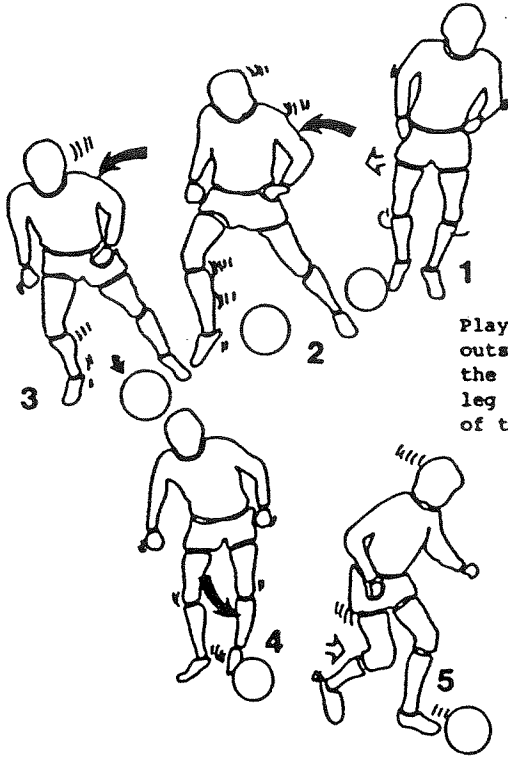
Player uses a feint outside pass (1) and guides ball with the outside of the instep using as few steps as possible for the full turn (2,3,4,5) pass or further dribbling follows turn (7).



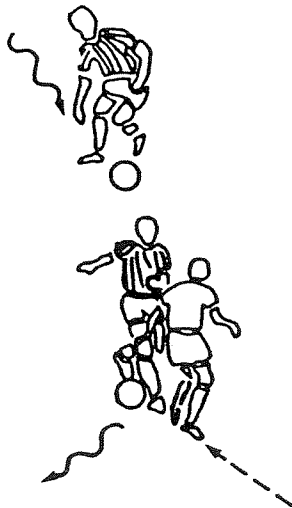
- Direction of ball.
- - - - -→ Direction of players without ball.
- ~~~~~→ Direction of players with ball.
- ★ Contact player/ball.

COLLECTION OF DRIBBLING MOVES

The 'Single Overstep' Move:



Player dribbles with the ball with the outside of the instep (1), he steps over the ball (2) and also lifts over playing leg (3) to dribble away with the outside of the instep (4).

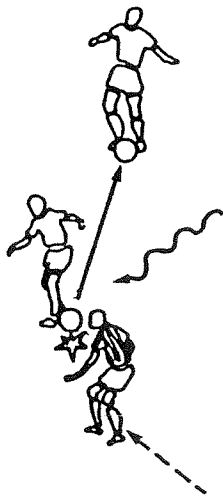
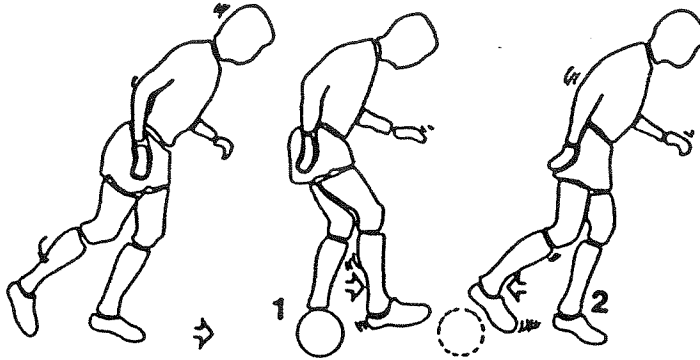


- Direction of ball.
- - - - -→ Direction of players without ball.
- ~~~~~→ Direction of players with ball.
- ★ Contact player/ball.

COLLECTION OF DRIBBLING MOVES

The 'Heel' Pass:

Player catches up with rolling ball (1), overtakes ball with the kicking leg and kicks ball with his heel backwards.

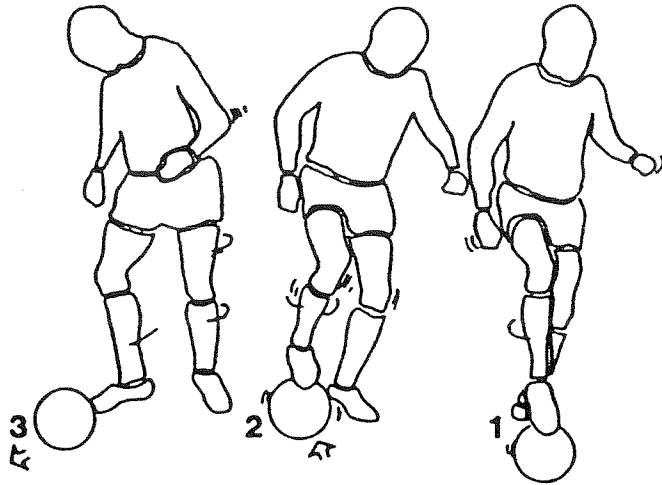


Dribbling moves must serve the team and not the individual. Dribbling is most effective in situation where opponents are anticipating moves and the dribbling uses other moves and creates a moment of surprise.

- Direction of ball.
- - - - -→ Direction of players without ball.
- ~~~~~→ Direction of players with ball.
- ★ Contact player/ball.

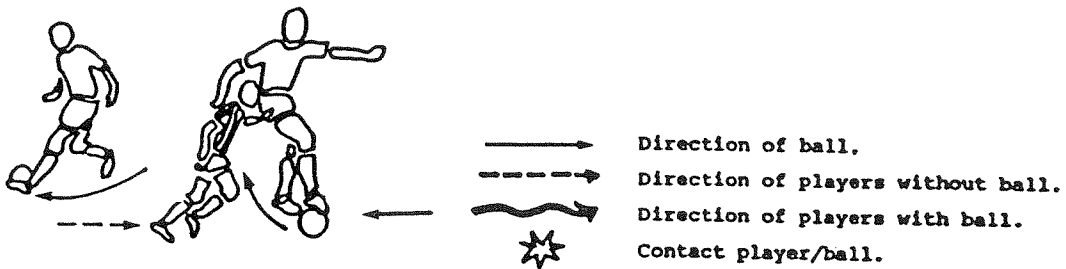
COLLECTION OF DRIBBLING MOVES

The 'Sole' Move:



Player places sole on top of ball (1), rolls ball back (2) and dribbles away by using the inside or outside of the instep.

Example: Player 'shows' ball. Rolls ball back with sole and changes direction to dribble by opponent.



important

important

WHEN DO WE PRACTICE HEADING?

HEADING, like passing and tactics, is a technique that we spend too much time worrying about too early in a player's development. We as adults recognize that heading is an important part of the game. We have seen older players play live or on television, and we have seen that they use their heads in many parts of the field. However, young players within mini soccer do not understand that headers are used for defensive purposes when challenging a defender, nor do they understand that a header is used in attack by the striker/forward to pass the ball back to a supporting midfielder. In fact, many coaches of mini players do not understand this. Why? Because it is not part of the mini game. Rarely do we see the ball kicked high; young players do not have the strength or ability! Rarely do we see a cross from the side line in mini soccer allowing a teammate to score with a header, it just does not happen!

Yet we often see players lined up with the coach or a teammate tossing the ball at their head. Look at the player's body language and you will see a tightened, frightened look on the face, and a neck which has shortened in an attempt to pull itself and the head that will soon be hit with this "tossed boulder".

Let us save the young players from this anxiety. When you are introducing heading before 11 years of age, introduce it in the context of juggling. Here they learn how it can help them instead of how it can hurt them. Before age 11 we are concerned with teaching players the skills required to play the game on the ground. These include dribbling, running with the ball, and the early mechanics of passing with the inside and front of the foot. Another idea for introducing heading is indoors with 'balloons' or 'Nerf' balls. Design a fun game where the players must head the ball or balloon to keep it off the ground/floor. The concept of heading is taught, and players begin to realize through these fun activities or juggling that the head can be used in soccer.

Last comment on heading. **Age appropriate heading training should be a regular, basic part of every training program.** When you do begin to work with players 11 and older, plan heading into every training session for five minutes. This five minute period will allow the players to practice heading without the 45 minute heading exercises that coaches have traditionally planned into their sessions. Five minutes per practice will help players retain the heading technique longer than the single 45 minutes of heading.

The feet are the furthest point away from the brain and will take the longest to develop, train the feet first and the head last.

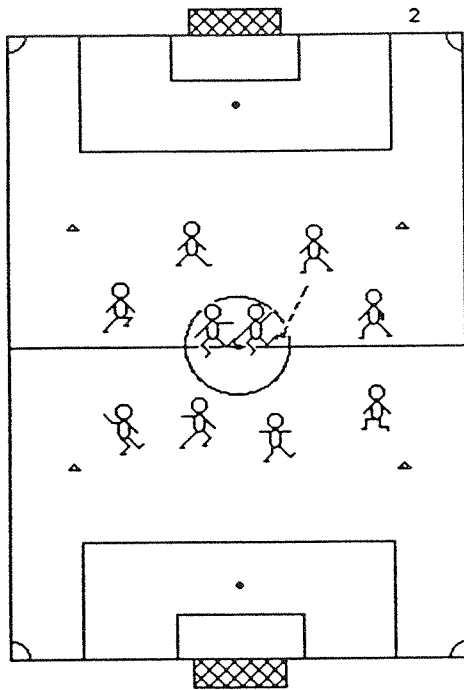
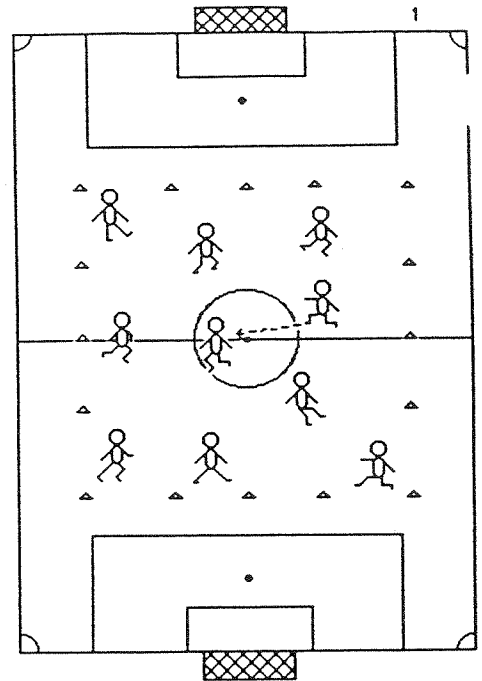
SUGGESTIONS FOR HEADING TRAINING

1. It is important to use the proper type of ball to avoid injuries, especially for younger players. Never use a ball that is too heavy or too hard. For beginners, foam rubber balls or nerf balls are ideal. If you are not sure about the suitability of the ball in question, skip the exercise.
2. Let the very young player learn the proper technique through self-discovery. The young player should start with the ball in their hands and place it on their head; **this can be one 5 minute practice.** When the player gains confidence, they can then move to holding the ball in their hands, directly in front of their forehead and tossing the ball (a few inches – only) onto their forehead; **yet another 5 minute practice.** Finally the player can try to juggle the ball - with the head, **one more 5 minute practice.**
3. With young players, concentrate on the basic elements; *eyes open, mouth closed and contact the ball with the forehead.* Avoid interfering except to remedy basic problems.

PLAY ACTIVITY WITHOUT BALL

SIMPLE TAG

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.)
Tagged player joins tagger.
No elimination method.
Number of games : 1-3.

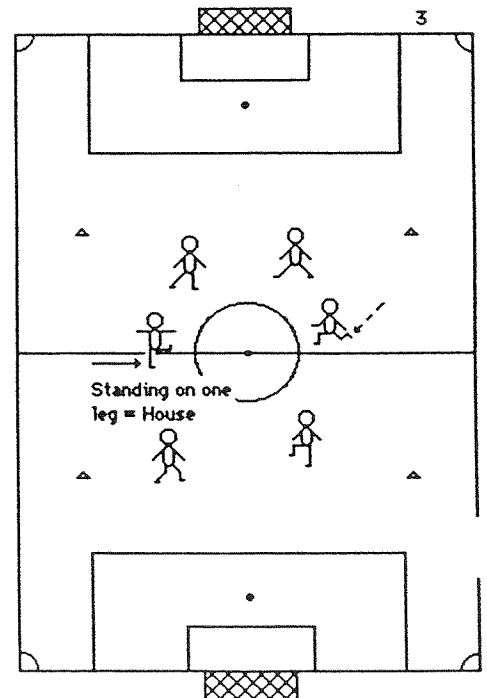


WOUNDED HARE TAG.

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.
Player tagged must also touch the same part of his/her body on which he or she was tagged.
No elimination method.
Number of games : 1-3.

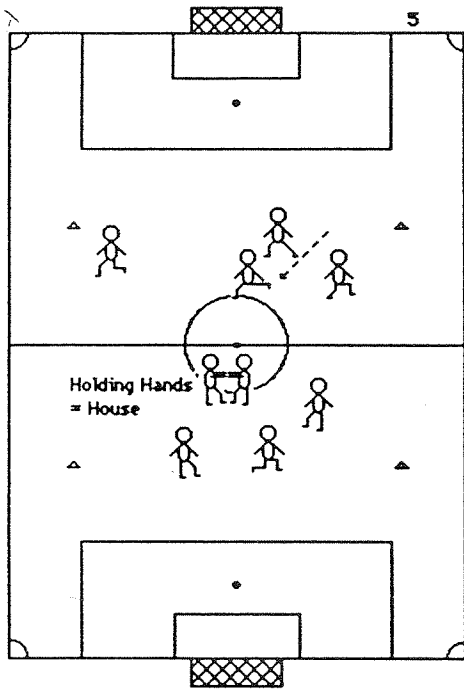
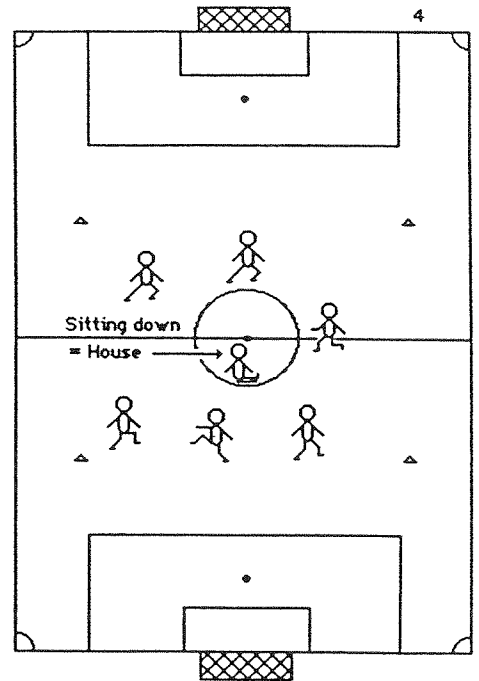
TAG WITH A HOUSE. (1)

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.
Player can avoid tag by building a "house" (standing on one leg).
Tagged player joins tagger.
No elimination method.
Number of games : 1-3.



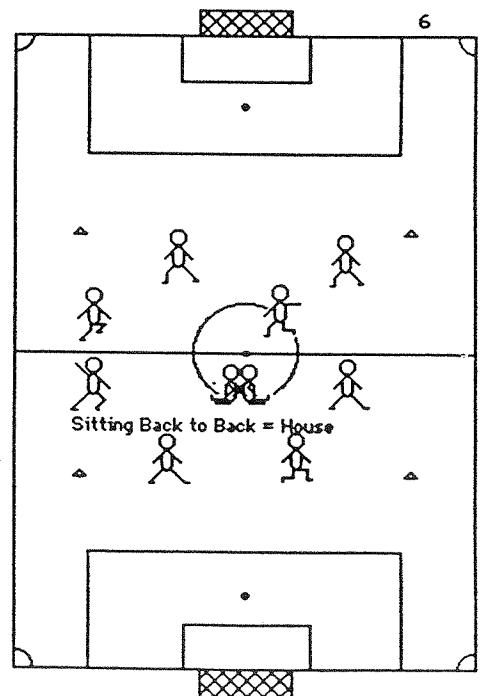
TAG WITH A HOUSE. (2)

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field. Player can avoid tag by building a "house" (sitting down). Tagged player joins tagger.
No elimination method.
Number of games : 1-3.



TAG WITH A HOUSE. (3)

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.
Two (2) players can avoid tag by building a "house" (holding hands). Tagged player joins tagger.
No elimination method.
Number of Games : 1-3.

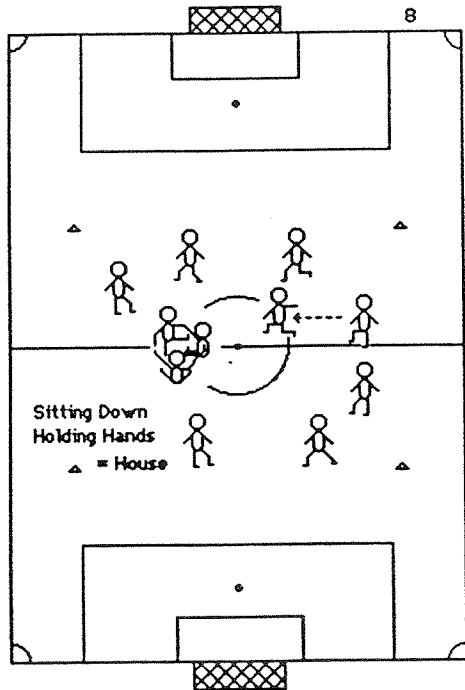
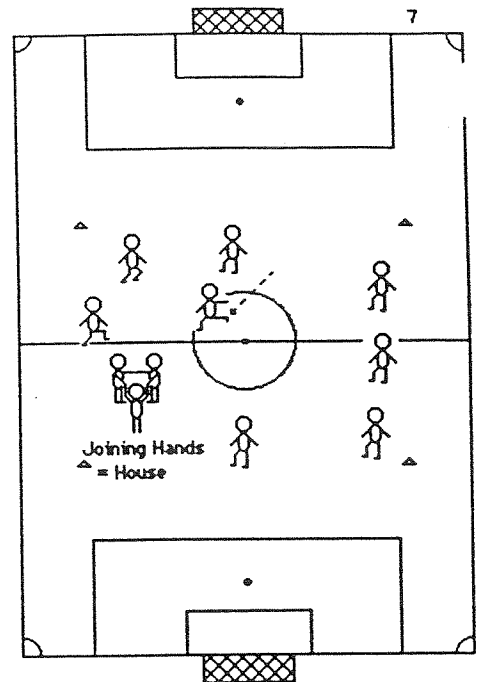


TAG WITH A HOUSE. (4)

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.
Two (2) players can avoid tag by building a "house" (sitting down back to back). Tagged player joins tagger.
No elimination method.
Number of games : 1-3.

TAG WITH A HOUSE. (5)

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.
 Three (3) players can avoid tag by building a "house" (holding hands). Tagged player joins tagger.
 No elimination method.
 Number of games : 1-3.

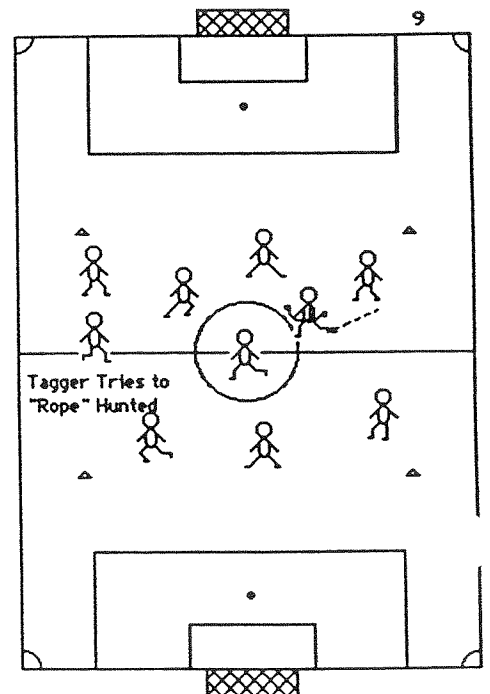


TAG WITH A HOUSE. (6)

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field. Three (3) players can avoid tag by building a "house" (sitting down holding hands). Tagged player joins tagger.
 No elimination method.
 Number of Games : 1-3.

LASSO TAG.

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field. Skipping ropes. The tagger takes the end of the skipping rope in both hands. Tags player by throwing rope over hunted player. Rope must not be used to strike player. Lassoed player joins tagger using another rope.
 No elimination method.
 Number of Games : 1-3.



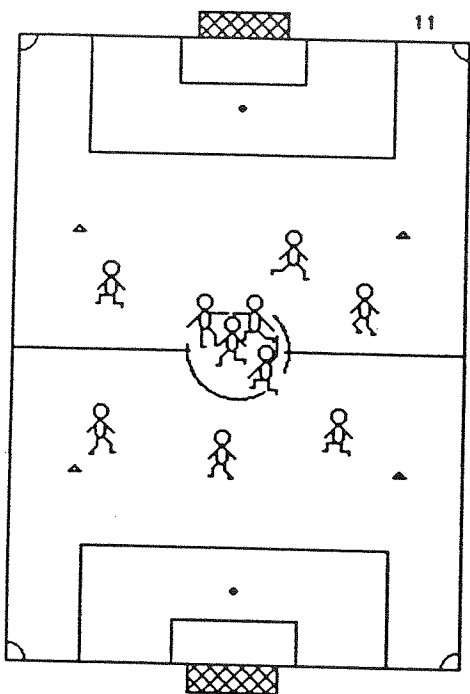
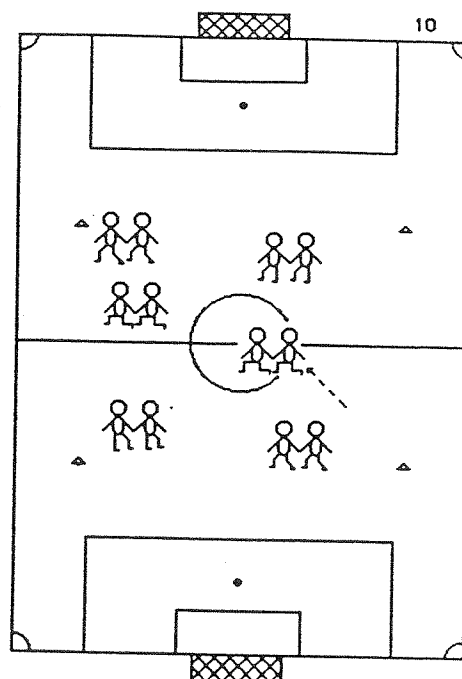
PAIRED TAG.

Organization : Even number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.

All players are paired off and holding hands the taggers (a pair) also chase the other pairs. Tagged pairs join taggers.

No elimination method.

Number of games : 1-3.



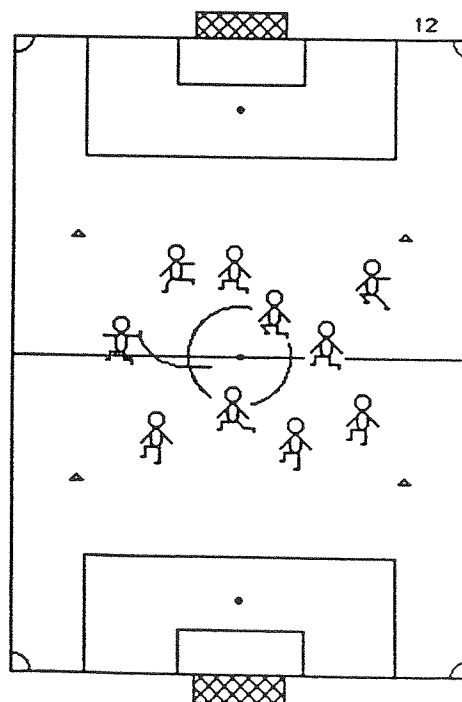
PRISON TAG.

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.

Three (3) players clasp hands and encircle hunted prisoner. Tagged Prisoner joins taggers. Taggers split group after adding the 6th player.

No elimination method.

Number of games : 1-3.



ROB TAG.

Organization : Limited number of players (Team size). Marked out playing field.

One (1) designated player is running - dragging a rope behind him. Taggers try to catch up and step on rope. Successful tagger takes over rope.

No elimination method.

Number of games : 1-3.

THE RULES OF MINI-SOCCER

RULE 1: THE FIELD OF PLAY

1. Whenever possible Mini-Soccer should be played on a field designed for that purpose. In many instances, however, games will be played within or across standard soccer fields.
2. The size of the goals shall be 5 metres wide and 2 metres high.
3. Whenever possible, goal-nets shall be used.

RULE 2: THE BALL

1. The ball shall be spherical and shall be constructed of material that is not dangerous to the players.
2. Ball size for 6- to 8-year-olds: size three.

RULE 3: NUMBER OF PLAYERS

1. The game shall be played by two teams, each consisting of 6 (maximum of 7) players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper (check with your provincial association for local requirements). Teams must dress a minimum of 5 players and may dress a maximum of 12 players. (Some jurisdictions allow more players to be dressed, but this should be discouraged.)
2. Unlimited substitution shall be allowed at any stoppage in the game. Please check with the referee as to how he will allow players to leave and enter the field on substitutions. (A coach should know his/her jurisdiction's rules on substitutions.)

RULE 4: PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

1. Equipment shall consist of shorts, socks, shin-guards, footwear, and a numbered shirt. Goalkeepers must wear colors that are distinguishable from those of other players and those of the referee. Goalkeepers may wear gloves and tracksuit-type pants.

RULE 5: DURATION OF THE GAME

1. The game shall be divided into two equal halves or four equal quarters, the length of which shall be determined by competition organizers. The interval between periods of play shall be determined by competition organizers but shall be not less than 5 minutes.

RULE 6: START OF PLAY

1. The beginning of the game, choice of halves and the kick-off shall be decided by the toss of a coin. The team that wins the toss shall have choice of halves and the opposing team gets the kick-off. The order is reversed for the start of the second half.
2. At a kick-off, all players shall be in their own half of the field of play. All players opposing the team taking the kick-off shall be not less than 6 metres from the ball until it is kicked off. The game shall be started by the referee giving a signal. The ball shall be kicked forward into the opponents' half of the field. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. For any infringement of rule, the kick-off shall be retaken.
3. The player taking the kick-off must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.
4. After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted by a kick-off, to be taken by a player of the team against which the goal was scored.
5. After the first half of play, the teams shall change halves and the kick-off shall be taken by a player of the team opposing that started the game.
6. For any stoppage not mentioned elsewhere in these rules, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball at the place where it when play was stopped, unless play was stopped in the goal area. In this case, the ball shall be dropped on that part of the goal area line that runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped. The ball shall be in play as soon as it touches the ground.
7. A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.

RULE 7: BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

1. The ball is out of play
 - When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line, or touch-line, whether on the ground or in the air
 - When the game has been stopped by the referee.
2. The ball is in play at all other times.

RULE 8: METHOD OF SCORING

1. A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has crossed over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided it has not been thrown, carried, or intentionally propelled by hand or arm, by a player of the attacking team, except by a goalkeeper in his/her own goal area.

RULE 9: FREE-KICK - ALL RESTARTS ARE INDIRECT

1. For any infringement of the Rules of the Game when the ball is in play, the referee may award a free kick to the team opposing that of the offending player. The free kick shall be taken from the place where the infringement occurred, unless the free kick is awarded to the attacking team within the opponents' goal area. In this case, the kick shall be taken from that part of the goal area line, which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the offence was committed.
2. At the taking of a free kick, the ball shall be stationary and all opponents shall not be less than 6 metres from the ball until it has been kicked. The ball shall be in play when it is kicked and moves.
3. A player taking a free kick within his/her own goal area shall kick the ball into play beyond the goal area. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves and has passed outside the goal area. All opponents shall be outside the goal area and not less than 6 metres from the ball until it has been kicked. For any infringement of this rule, the free kick shall be retaken.
4. A player taking a free kick shall not play or touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player.
5. A goal may not be scored directly from a free kick.

RULE 10: PENALTY KICK

1. A penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark. All players, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, shall be outside the penalty area but within the field of play, and not less than 6 metres from the ball (and behind the ball) until it has been kicked.
 2. The goalkeeper remains on his/her goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.
 3. The player taking the penalty kick must not play or touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player.
 4. The time of play shall be extended at quarter-time, half-time, or at full-time to allow a penalty kick to be taken. In the event that time is extended, play shall end when a goal is not scored.
- * * Note: In some jurisdictions there are no penalty kicks at all in mini-soccer, just an indirect free kick. In others, there are no penalty shots at the U-8 and below levels. Please check the pertinent rule for your area.

RULE 11: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

1. A player who, in the opinion of the referee, intentionally commits any of the following offences shall be penalized by the awarding a free kick to the opposing team:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- trips an opponent
- jumps at an opponent
- charges an opponent in any manner
- strikes, attempts to strike, or spits at an opponent
- holds an opponent
- pushes an opponent
- Handles the ball, i.e. strikes, carries or propels the ball with hand or arm, excepting a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area.

Should a player commit one of the above offences within his/her own goal area while the ball is in play, irrespective of the position of the ball, a penalty kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

RULE 12: THROW-IN

1. When the whole of the ball has crossed the touch-line, either on the ground or in the air, the ball shall be thrown in, from the point where it left the field of play, by a member of the team opposing that of the player who last played or touched it.

2. The player taking the throw-in shall face the field of play and part of both feet shall be on the ground, and on or behind the touch-line. The thrower shall use both hands to deliver the ball from behind and over his head. The ball shall be in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

3. The player taking the throw-in must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

Please note, that in mini-soccer, repeatedly stopping the flow of the game to re-take incorrectly taken throw-ins, should be avoided.

RULE 13: GOAL KICK

1. When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goalposts having last been played or touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick shall be awarded to the defending team. The ball shall be kicked into play from a point within that half of the penalty area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line.

2. At the taking of a goal kick, all opponents shall be outside the goal area and not less than 6 metres from the ball until it has been kicked into play. The ball shall be in play when it has traveled the distance of its own circumference and has left the penalty area.

3. The player taking the goal kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

4. A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

RULE 14: CORNER-KICK

1. When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goal-posts, having last been played or touched by a member of the defending team, a corner-kick shall be awarded to the attacking team.
2. The corner-kick shall be taken from within the corner-arc nearest to where the ball crossed the goal-line. All opponents shall be less than 6 metres from the ball until it has been kicked. The ball must travel the distance of its own circumference to be in play.
3. The player taking the corner-kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.
4. A goal may be scored directly from a corner-kick.

****Offside**

A Special Note on the offside Law:

In some jurisdictions there is no offside at all in mini-soccer. In others, it is enforced after a certain age. Each coach should ascertain the rule for his/her league. If offside is a rule for you to follow, please note the following:

Offside Position

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

A player is in an offside position if:

- He is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.

A player is not in an offside position if:

- He is in his own half of the field of play, or
- He is level with the second last opponent, or
- He is level with the last two opponents

Offence

A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play, or
- Interfering with an opponent, or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position

No Offence

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- A goal kick, or
- A throw-in, or
- A corner kick

Infringements/Sanctions

For any offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

Note: Advice to all referees: please do not over penalize, do coach.