

2014 COACH'S CLINIC

THAMES CENTRE
MINOR SOCCER
U4/U6/U8
COACHING MANUAL

2014 SOCCER SEASON U4/U6/U8

- U6/U8 - 5 vs 5 Including the goalie
 - ◆ Less players on the field means more touches on the ball for all players, raising everyone's skill level
- Smaller fields 80' by 115' (old fields 90' by 150')
 - ◆ Less players means the need for the appropriate size field to encourage team play as well as individual skills
- 10 max/9 min Player roster size
 - ◆ Two full lines to make substituting easier and giving players plenty of playing time
- Appropriate sized goals for the age group 5' by 8'
 - ◆ Everyone wants to play goal and would like to have a chance to make the big save
- The defending team must retreat to the center line (half) for all goal-kicks and after goalie saves (CLEAR CALL)
 - ◆ Goalies now get a chance to play the ball out, this will allow players to learn how to start an offensive attack from the back end (initially with no pressure)
- Kick-Ins On All Out Of Bounds
 - ◆ Kick-ins are an easier skill to execute, it will help the flow of the game and add to the soccer skill touches we want to increase
- *U8(Juniors) Only - Boys vs Boys and Girls vs Girls
 - ◆ Strength and speed start to become noticeably different, leveling the playing field improves the skill level of both genders
- *U4(Tykes) Only – 3 vs 3 using Pop-up nets
 - ◆ Now the “pack” has become smaller and will give all players on the field a chance to kick the ball

Long Term Player Development (LTPD)

- ✓ Changes made are in accordance with the Canadian Soccer Associations Long Term Player Development (LTPD) model.
- ✓ To give our young soccer players the opportunity of increased touches on the ball helping raise their skill level.
- ✓ The end result will be improving our player's confidence on the ball which in turn makes the game more fun for them to participate in.
- ✓ The more fun and success they have at a young age means longer playing careers. Soccer Canada has seen a large drop off (players quitting) in soccer participation across the country at the tender age of 12. This has been found in all levels of recreation and competitive soccer.



Teaching Soccer Skills

How? By using “child friendly language” to help bridge the communication gap from coach to young player. This makes teaching the appropriate techniques for dribbling, passing, and shooting a lot easier on you the coach.

- ✓ Big Toe: Promotes dribbling the ball with the inside of the foot
- ✓ Little Toe: Promotes dribbling the ball with the outside of the foot
- ✓ Stomp the Bug: Stopping the ball with the bottom of our foot
- ✓ Wipe the Bug: Using the bottom of the foot to rake the ball back to change direction
- ✓ Keep Your Puppy Close: Dribbling with control
- ✓ Catch The Egg: Providing a soft landing for the ball
- ✓ “FREEZE”: Players stop instantly, leaving uncontrolled balls to roll away

We can use this language to re-enforce proper technique for dribbling (using both feet), dribbling with control, stopping and turning. I will explain how we can expand on these terms to teach other skills needed to play the game later in this manual.

“Sports can do so much. It’s given me confidence, self-esteem, discipline and motivation.”

Mia Hamm

Introduction to Dribbling

We want to encourage dribbling with control, no more kick and chase.

- ✓ Ask players to show you where their Big Toe is. Show them how we use the Big Toe (inside of the foot) to dribble the ball. Have the players dribble around using their Big Toe alternating using both feet.
- ✓ Ask players to show you where their Little Toe is. Show them how we use the Little Toe (outside foot) to dribble the ball. Have the players dribble around using their Little Toe alternating using both feet.

Coaching Points: Explain how we do not use our Toes to dribble but we use our Big Toe or Little Toe, remind them to use both feet.

Dribbling with Speed and Control

The natural instinct of kids with the ball is to kick and chase after the ball. The problem is when we don't have control of the ball the opposing team can easily steal the ball. As players get comfortable dribbling with the Big Toe and Little Toe technique we need to teach them to dribble fast while keeping the ball close.

- ✓ Explain the ball is your puppy and we need to take the puppy out for a run. Puppies will run away if we don't keep them close. So since we don't want to lose our puppy we must "Keep The Puppy Close"
- ✓ In every drill you do this can be reminded to not kick and chase but to "Keep the Puppy Close"

Coaching Points: Use the Coaching Command "Freeze" often (where all players must stop instantly). Players can see for themselves that good control means you can control your puppy, bad control will allow your puppy to run away.

Pick one Dribbling Drill from the list provided to re-enforce the technique in a competitive environment.

Simple Soccer Skills

Stomp The Bug

Explain that the ball is the ugliest, nastiest, hairiest bug you've ever seen. We are going to stomp the bug with the bottom of our shoe. This is an introduction to stopping the ball with the sole of your foot. *Mistakes made are players will try to stomp the ball in the air. We explain that we must wait until the bug is going to land, then we stomp. This allows players to time the ball to stomp the bug during the bounce.

Learning Goal> Stopping the ball, controlling a bouncing ball

Wipe (The Guts Off)

After the stomp we need to wipe the guts off our shoe. We wipe backwards, this is the introduction to stopping and changing direction.

Over time we can explain to players to not stomp so hard but to just stop the ball. The wipe can be tagged along with the stomp. Command: "Stomp and wipe" The player should stop the ball wipe the ball backwards and turn and dribble away with it.

Learning Goal> Change of direction

Catch The Egg

Explain that the ball is now an egg, what happens if we drop an egg? Splat!!! We will try to prevent the egg from breaking by catching the egg with the top of our foot (laces). Have the player's pick-up the ball and from waist height they drop the ball and try to catch it before it hits the ground. Repeat with both feet.

Learning Goal> Controlling the ball out of the air, improving 1st touch

The Big Toe Cut

The simplest but most effective “move” you can teach a young player is the Big Toe Cut. It is easy to explain as we continue to build on the simple terminology of the Big Toe for ball control.

Technique: Keep the ball (puppy) close while dribbling, reach past the ball with the right foot and cut it back with the Big Toe to the left. Now do this again with the left foot cutting the ball back to the right.

Learning Goal> A quick change of direction to beat the defender

Simple Touches on the Ball

Our goal is to get our players to touch the ball as many times as possible. As players get a little better with each Touch challenge them to increase their speed. The following “touches” can be used as warm-up or if you use knock out drills then have your players do these while their waiting to get back in the drill.

- Speed Touches – Quickly touching the ball between inside foot to inside foot
- Sole Touches – Rolling the ball forward with the bottom of your foot, rolling the ball backwards with the sole of the foot and rolling across the body left and right
- Toe Taps – Trying to keep the ball as still as possible the players should just tap the ball with the bottom of their toes alternating feet
- Catch The Egg – Dropping the from waist height trying to catch the ball with the laces, cushioning the landing
- Soft knees – Lobbing the ball in the air (less than head height) and using a “soft” knee to gently let the ball hit the ground

Dribbling Drills

Sharks and Minnows

10 by 10 Grid - 9 Players dribbling balls inside the grid while one Shark tries to kick their balls out of the box. Change sharks and even add more. Players that have had their ball kicked away should retrieve it and do an action from the Simple Touches list for 10 reps or as many as possible until the new game starts.

Learning Goal> Dribbling and Shielding (protecting the ball from defender), learning to attack the ball defensively

Pirates

5 by 10 Grid – 1 or 2 Pirates (no balls) must stay in the Grid

The team starts 5 yards away from grid; they dribble their “Gold” through the grid trying to keep it away from the Pirates trying to steal their “Gold” . If your “Gold” has been stolen do an action from the Simple Touches list (10 reps) and join back in. Switch up the Pirates, add one more if needed.

Learning Goal> Dribbling around defenders, looking for open space, dribbling with speed, defending the attacker in limited space

Octopus

Using the Width of Field – All players with a ball – Coach in the middle

Calling out Octopus, players must dribble across the field avoiding the Octopus trying to steal their balls. Caught players can become another Octopus.

Learning Goals> Dribbling with speed, attacking open space, defenders attack when player losses control

Shadows

In partners, one has the ball and the other follows (chases). Ball carrier tries to lose their “shadow” with change of direction, change of pace. Have players do this drill 30secs at a time and rotate often.

Learning Goals> Dribbling under control, using moves to lose defender, tracking offensive players

The Big Race

Two rows of 4 cones (1 yard apart) – Split team into two teams; line up 5 yards behind each row of cones. Players race to dribble through all cones with Big Toe only, after completing the row they should sprint back to line and sit. Next player goes – 1st line to sit with balls are the winners. Repeat: Little Toe only, Right foot only, Left foot only

Learning Goals> Dribbling with control

What Time Is It Mr. Wolf

Coach is Mr. Wolf on 1 sideline, players with balls on opposite sideline. Players shout what time is it Mr. Wolf – Wolf answers with a number the players must dribble to. Lunch time has Coach turning and chasing players back to the sideline. Players learn to dribble with speed and control. Coach can kick ball away from players that lose control. Kicked away balls should retrieve them and do an action from the Simple Touches list.

Learning Goals> Turn quickly, dribble with speed and control, shielding ball

Freeze Tag

Use cones to create a large 20 by 20 grid. All players have a ball except one who is “It”. The “It” player tries to touch a ball (not kicking it away), that player now is frozen. The frozen player must spread their legs and hold their ball above their head. Other players can unfreeze the frozen player by passing their ball between the frozen player’s legs.

Learning Goals> Shielding the ball, dribbling under pressure, passing with accuracy, tracking the ball to pounce defensively

Red Light, Green Light

Using the width of the field, all players should have a ball. Coach calls out commands.....

Red light = Stomp the Bug Yellow Light = Dribble slowly

Green Light = Dribble with Speed U-Turn = Stomp and Wipe

Progress to.... Turn = Use Big Toe Cut for left or right turns

Learning Goals> Dribbling control, practicing moves

Introduction to Passing

The goal is to teach proper technique and where we make passes to.

- ✓ The plant foot (balance foot) should be beside the ball pointed at target. The Passing foot opens 90 degrees, the player swings through the ball hitting the middle area of the ball.
- ✓ Always aim ball into the feet of your teammate, this makes it easier to control. When passing to a moving target we pass far enough ahead that when the ball gets to the player it will be at their feet (not an easy skill for any young player to learn)
- ✓ Receiving the pass is the same technique as passing the ball, the plant foot pointed at the oncoming ball; the receiving foot open 90 degrees and cushions the middle of the ball upon contact.
- ✓ The technique does not change when on the move, look to practice both still passes and moving passes

Coaching Point: After multiple practices enforcing the dribbling technique of Big Toe/Little Toe it will be easier for players to understand no toe(s) when teaching the passing/receiving technique.

Pick one passing drill to re-enforce passing/receiving technique in a competitive environment.



Passing Drills

Partner passing

Five yards apart, partners pass back and forth using proper technique; encourage the use of both feet.

Learning Goal> Proper technique, accuracy, touch

Pass and Move

Groups of four or five (2 and 2 or 2 and 3), 7 yards apart, one ball. Player with ball passes to other line and follows pass racing to back of line. The player receiving the pass now passes back to the original line and follows pass racing to the back of that line.

Learning Goals> Pass and move, introduction to moving to create space and to receive a pass back.

Battle Ship

Half team is outside 10 by 20 yard grid (the bombers); half the team has a ball (the battle ships) and tries to dribble end to end of grid. When the battleships go; the outside players try to sink the ships by (using proper passing technique) passing their ball trying to hit the legs of the “ships”. A sunken ship can do an action from the Simple Touches list until the new game. Teams should switch places.

Learning Goals> Dribble with speed and head up looking around, passing and hitting a moving target

Soccer Tag

All players with balls in a 15 by 15 grid, players dribble around and try to hit (by passing) other players balls. If your ball has been hit you go outside of the grid and dribble with speed to the sideline and back to re-join the drill. Or choose an action from the Simple Touches list and finish 10 reps and re-join the drill.

Learning Goals> Passing to hit a moving target in a small space

Soccer Marbles

Set up a small circle of cones with 5 balls in it, split team into two groups. One group has balls 5 yards away while the other group watches. Group with balls try to knock balls out of the circle using the proper passing technique. After the 1st attempt they chase down their balls and continue to try to knock balls out without entering the circle. The 2nd group tries to beat the 1st group's time.

Learning Goals> Proper pace on ball, tracking ball and quick set up

Keep Your Yard Clean

Divide the field in two and place half the team on each side. Players pass balls into other "Yard" and get passed balls out of their "Yard". Play for 1 minute and see which team has the cleanest "Yard"

Learning Goals> Clearing ball by attacking ball in your defensive zone, touch on ball

Scoring Gates

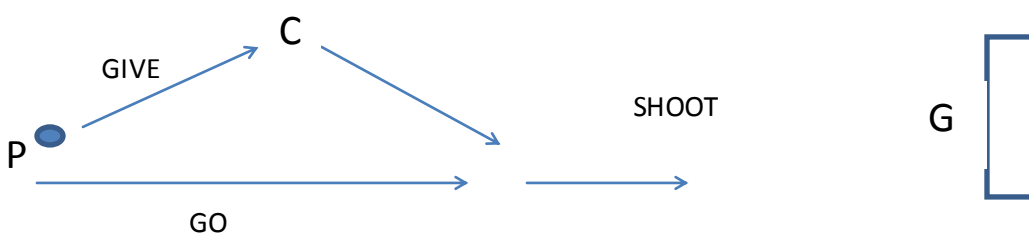
Set up "Gates" of two cones (3 feet apart) around the field. Have players dribble to "Gate" and pass through them. Chase down the ball and attack another set of gates. Time it and challenge players to accomplish 3-5 successful passes through the "Gates". For the second time challenge them to beat their previous number.

Learning Goals> Passing on the move to a target, playing with speed vs the clock

Give and Go To Shoot

Finish Practice portion with players passing a "give and go" pass to the coach and shooting on net.

Learning Goals> To give strong passes, move after pass, receive a pass on the move, shooting on the move



One vs One Skills

1 V 1 drills allow players to use their skills to beat a player for an opportunity to shoot and score. It also teaches players how to defend in those critical moments. It re-enforces dribbling skills and using the cuts to create space to attack.

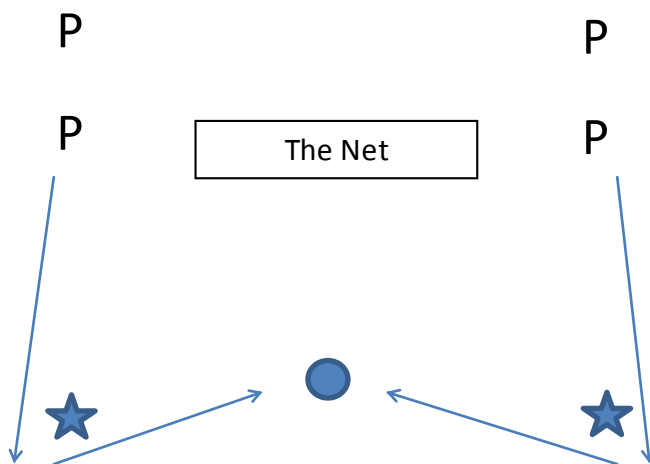
Drill #1 Introduction to 1 V 1

Coach vs player. The Coach defends the net applying limited pressure, set up two nets to get many repetitions. Encourage players to make a “move” and explode past you.



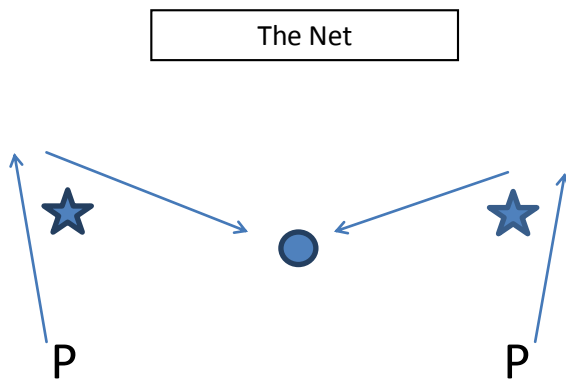
Drill #2

A Race to the ball. Half the team lines up beside each goal post, cones are placed 10 yards in front of each line and the ball is placed in the middle. The Coach says Go and the players race around the cones to the ball.



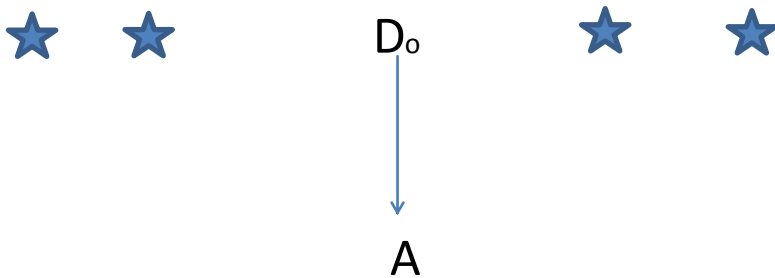
Drill #3

Starts with Defender between nets with ball, passes it out to the attacker and sprints out to defend, switch positions next turn



Drill #4

Using two nets adds a new dynamic to the 1 V 1 drills. The defender starts between the nets with the ball. The defender starts the drill by passing out to the attacker and sprints out to defend. The two nets forces the defender to play honest and the attacker can learn to find the open space to attack and score. Players should switch positions after each turn.



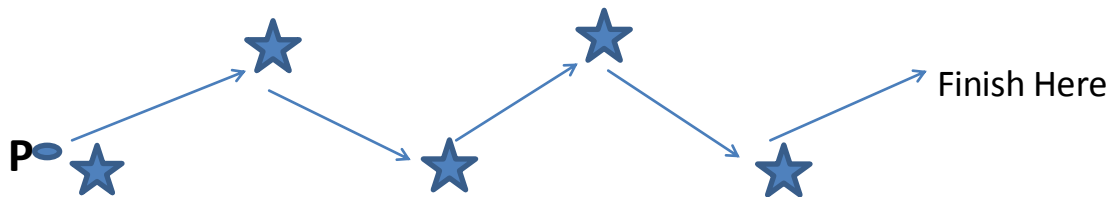
Shooting

I do not believe we need to concentrate on the shooting technique at these age groups. If you would like to improve the players shooting techniques then we can use the same terminology used for dribbling and passing.

- Big Toe Down – Encourages kicking with the laces
- Big Toe – Encourages kicking with the inside of the foot

Tips On Setting Up Your Pre-Game Practices

Zig Zag Cone Work



Players Start Here

This one drill can be used effectively in many different ways to warm up.....

- ✓ Big Toe only -dribble to cone with a stomp before it
- ✓ Little Toe only –dribble to cone with a stomp before it
- ✓ Repeat but this time but no stomp before cones
- ✓ Right Foot Only -Big Toe to 1st cone, Little Toe – Next Left Foot only
- ✓ Big Toe Cut before cone and toward the next cone

Set up two grids and split the team in half, have races to encourage the skill being performed with speed. Pick one or two of these as a warm up each game before you get into a game drill.

Mix your focus (dribbling, passing, 1 v 1 etc...) up from week to week and game to game, shortly you'll find the kids asking to play certain games because their having so much fun.

Encourage all players to use the proper technique during the participation of these drills. Big Toe - Little Toe, keep your puppy close, dribble with speed, use your Big Toe Cuts.

*Try not to stop the drills to much but coach while they play, it will take a long time (repetition) for majority of your players to learn these skills.

Practice Plan Example

- ✓ Simple Skill 1/ As a group – go through all the Simple Touches on the list 10 reps each
- ✓ Fun Game 2/ Pirates Game
- ✓ Attacking 3/ Rolling ball from Half for players to chase down, control and shoot

Thank-you, good luck and most of all have fun,

Andreas Nolte

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