

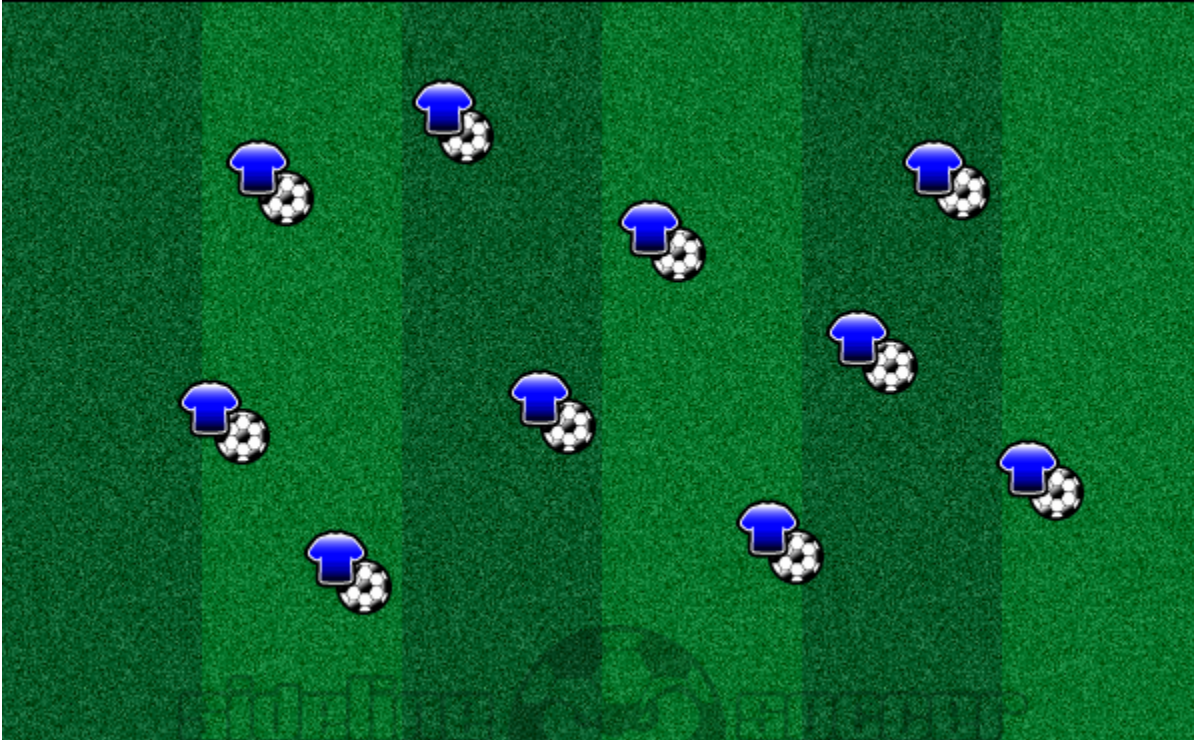
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Free Dribble

DRILL: Free Dribbling

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Setup (Picture Above)

Mark a small area with cones and have each player begin with a ball at their feet inside the area.

Instructions

Have players dribble the ball within the designated area. Speed is not important.

Advise players to make sure to keep possession of their own ball and not bump into other players.

While the players are dribbling, shout out some instructions such as:

Dribble with only the left or right foot

Dribble with only the inside or outside of the foot

Dribble with only the sole of the foot

Touch a body part to the ball (knee, elbow)

Coaching Tips

Advise players to keep their heads up while dribbling and be aware of what is around them.

Soft touches should be made to keep the ball close and in control.

Variations

The possibilities are endless with what you can come up for variations. Have fun with it!

Red Light-Green Light

Objective:

For the players to start to learn how to dribble with their head up, keeping the ball under control and close to their body.

Coaching tips:

Players should dribble with their laces, inside of their foot or outside of their foot, but not their toe
The ball should be kept close to the player, but not stuck in their feet. The ball should stay in front of them and close enough that nobody else can get the ball away
Player should keep their heads up

Organization:

Each player with a ball starting on the end line or touchline. Coach stands on the finish line

How to play:

Game begins on coach's signal
Yellow light: dribble slow
Green light: dribble fast
Red light: stop the ball by putting the foot on top of the ball. Foot should remain on top of the ball until coach gives next command
Game ends when they reach finish line

Variations

Can add other colors with silly commands, such as spin around, put a body part on the ball, etc.

Red Light-Green Light Progressive

Objective:

For the players to start to learn how to dribble with their head up, keeping the ball under control and close to their body.

Coaching tips:

Players should dribble with their laces, inside of their foot or outside of their foot, but not their toe
The ball should be kept close to the player, but not stuck in their feet. The ball should stay in front of them and close enough that nobody else can get the ball away
Player should keep their heads up

Organization:

Set up a large circle that the players have to dribble within

How to play

Game begins on coach's signal
Yellow light: dribble slow
Green light: dribble fast
Red light: stop the ball by putting the foot on top of the ball. Foot should remain on top of the ball until coach gives next command
Game ends when they reach finish line

Variations

Can add other colors with silly commands, such as spin around, put a body part on the ball, etc.

Simon Says

Setup

Set up a grid of 10-20 yards depending upon how many players and the skill of the players.

Instructions

Have players dribble in the grid while you call out instructions starting with the phrase “Simon Says...”

The instructions can be as simple as turn right or left, stop the ball, dribble fast, or dribble slow.

You can also call out moves such as a step over or having them do their own move.

Have fun with it and come up with some other funny instructions!

Coaching Tips

Instruct players to keep the ball close to them and stay in control when dribbling and stopping the ball.

Keeping their head up will help them from running into one another, which is like avoiding pressure in a game.

Advise players to listen carefully to what is being said. This relates to listening to your teammates when they call out things such as man on or support.

Variations

Having real game instructions and fun ones will keep the kids interested in the game and having a good time.

Instead of you calling out instructions, you can have players take turns calling them out.

Shark Attack



Setup (Picture Above)

Designate a playing area with cones. The size of the playing area will depend on the number of players. Every player will need a ball, except for two players (this could be more or less depending on the number of players). These players will be the sharks.

Instructions

Players will start on one side of the playing area, except for the sharks. Players designated as sharks will start in the middle. Players must dribble across to the other side with the ball in control at all times. The players designated as sharks try to kick the ball out of the playing area from the players crossing to the other side. Once a player's ball is kicked out of the area, they are out of the game. If any player dribbles outside of the playing area, meaning they lose control of their ball, they are also considered out of the game. Continue playing the game by making the remaining players cross from one side to the other until only two players remain. These players are the winners and will be the sharks in the next round.

Coaching Tips

Instruct players to keep their heads up and be aware of their surroundings. They must also keep the ball close to their feet using soft touches.

Variations

Make players dribble with certain parts of their feet. Players tend to favor a specific foot for dribbling, make them dribble with the opposite foot. This game can also be considered a variation of Knock Out.

The Cone Game



The Cone Game - Dribbling in Tight Spaces Soccer Dribbling Drill

Drill Setup (Picture Above)

Create a grid that is approximately 10X25 yards.

Randomly scatter cones within the grid.

To begin the drill, add two fewer cones than the number of players you have.

Each player should begin inside the grid with a ball.

Drill Instructions

Instruct the players to dribble around freely inside the grid avoiding other players and cones.

The congestion of the players and flags will cause the player to look up to check their surroundings continually.

When the coach yells "STOP," each of the players must race to a free cone as quickly as possible.

The first player to reach the cone five consecutive times wins the game.

Drill Variations

Reduce the number of cones.

Instead of keeping score, make the players do some *minor* form of punishment like push-ups, star-jumps, sit-ups. Make sure the action is age appropriate.

Restrict the players to only use a certain part of the foot or dribbling technique.

Drill Coaching Points

Make sure the player is regularly lifting their head and checking their surroundings; this will help players find space and avoid other players.

Make sure players keep the ball close to them while in congested areas; this will help them move the ball more quickly to avoid other players and obstructions.

Encourage players to use all parts of their feet while dribbling (inside, outside, top, bottom).

Mirror Image

This kids' soccer drill is really simple but lots of fun. It is very good as a warmup game at the beginning of the session.

Preparation (Picture Below)

It is really easy, you just need the players to get into pairs without a soccer ball to begin with and line up opposite each other with cones to their left and right.



Explanation

This kids' soccer drill is all about movement. The players stand opposite each other and decide who will take the lead first. On coach's command, the player taking the lead will run toward one of the cones.

The other player must try and beat them there. After they are both at the cone, they should both return to the middle again.

In a game situation, the player making the move would be trying to lose an opponent off of the ball and the other player would be trying to mark as a defender.

After a few goes, switch which player takes the lead. There are plenty of progressions to this drill as shown below and all ages can benefit from this soccer drill.

Progression

The first obvious progression to this drill is to involve a soccer ball for each player. Exactly the same drill but this time they must dribble to one cone whilst maintaining close control.

The next progression is for the player chasing to run or dribble with ball to the opposite cone. This will get them thinking and exercising their mind as well as their bodies.

Another progression to include is adding a third cone behind both players. The player who makes the first move can then decide to run backwards pushing off on their toes until they reach the cone.

Coaching Points

Make sure the kids use little touches on the ball and demonstrate at every new coaching point.

Explain how this drill could be used in a game situation.

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

King of the Ring

The English Soccer league is renowned for its fast-paced, challenging games where everyone wants the ball. This drill is perfect for coaching the players several different skills and techniques which are vital in a match environment.

Preparation (Picture Below)

It is an easy set-up, you just need the players to get a soccer ball each and find space within the marked-out area.



Explanation

'King of the Ring' is a game to find out who will be the last person in the area and be called the 'King of the Ring' champion.

Each player has a soccer ball, and the idea of the game is to dribble around the area keeping the soccer ball under close control. Should the soccer ball leave the marked-out area at any point, that player is out and is not allowed to come back into the area.

Each player must also try and kick the other players soccer balls out of the area whilst keeping close control of their own. Not easy! Make sure the players do not leave their ball in the corner and run around crazily kicking other balls out.

It is important to coach this game correctly. Demonstrate how the player should 'shield' the ball by turning their backs to the oncoming player so they cannot kick the ball.

The two main ways of losing the ball therefore is by a player kicking a player's ball out or by the player losing control of the ball and it is going out of the area.

In order to keep the players who have been knocked out active, you can create a second game in which they can participate.

Progression

This game can have various progressions to tailor at to the age group you have with you and can be played by mature players for a fun warm up game.

For older, more skillful players make sure they use their weaker foot only. A coach could reward points for skills and tricks used during the game.

Cones could be introduced as an additional hazard, or you could make gates out of the cones and points awarded for dribbling through them.

Coaching Points

Make sure the kids use little touches on the ball and demonstrate the shielding of the ball.

Explain how this drill could be used in a game situation.

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Battleship Destroyers

Preparation (Picture Below)

You will need each player to have a soccer ball (two each makes the game last longer each round). You will also need some tall cones (like the orange ones in the picture) and some smaller cones that the players will stand behind (like the red ones).



Explanation

This is a fun game that involves two teams standing opposite each other with a soccer ball. You will explain that the players are 'fighter pilots' and the soccer balls are their missiles. The idea of the game is to knock over the cones in the middle (enemy planes) by kicking the soccer ball at them.

Start off by playing the game with no adaptations ensuring the players are kicking (passing) the ball correctly at the cones. After all the players have taken a kick at the cones you will tell them to collect them again. Give a team one point for each cone they knocked over. This drill is about improving passing accuracy.

Progression

Try adding the below commands to change the game slightly.

"Destroy the battleships" - this is the coaches command to begin knocking over the cones with the soccer balls.

"Reload the missiles" - players go and retrieve the soccer balls.

"Repair the battleships" - players must run in to the middle and put the tall orange cones upright.

"Enemy planes are coming" - The players must shield their ball from the coach who will attempt to take it from them.

"Destroy the enemy planes" - players must kick their soccer ball at the coach who will run around the middle of the area.

"Change firing positions" - the players dribble their soccer ball across to the other side of the soccer field.

"Steal the missiles" - the players must leave their soccer ball in their own half and run in to the middle and opponents' area to dribble as many soccer balls as possible back to their area.

Coaching Points

Use the inside of the foot when kicking the soccer ball for accuracy.

When dribbling, the player should take little touches using the inside and outside of both feet.

When shielding the ball, the player should keep their back to the coach and keep the ball close to them.

Truck and Trailer

Preparation (Picture Below)

Take a look at the diagram below for Truck & Trailer. It is really easy, you just need the players to get into pairs and for each player to have a soccer ball each.



Explanation

This soccer drill is called truck and trailer because throughout the game, one player will have to follow another player's movement just like a trailer does attached to a truck.

The game begins by getting the players into pairs and numbering the players 1 and 2. Number 1 will begin by dribbling the ball around the area upon coach's command and two will follow closely behind them wherever they go. Player 2 should not bump into the player in front or lose their ball at any time.

Once the players have gotten this going, the coach can start to introduce the below commands.

Change - Both players should do a 180 degree turn to face the other way allowing the other player to now lead the way. Favored turns for this age group include the drag back and hook turns.

Stop - Both players stop quickly and put their foot on top of the ball.

Leap Frog - The player at the front will crouch down low and allow the other player to jump over them and take the lead once the balls have been regained. This is purely for fun!

Outside - Both players rush to the outside of the area as quickly as possible. Last one to the outside or who loses control of their ball does star jumps?

Skill Time - A great way to teach the kids a skill or trick. Once the coach calls this command the players should do a trick of their choice.

Progression

A great progression to this soccer drill is to include cones around the area and when the players dribble past them, they should knock them over by kicking (passing) their ball at the cone from distance. Either this or they could dribble through gates that have been made by the cones. Once again, the inclusion of more advanced skills, tricks and flicks could be useful.

The best ones to use are the scissors (step-over).

You can also use this drill to practice turns. The drag back turn, Inside and Outside hook work really well here!

Coaching Points

Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate at every new coaching point.

Demonstrate the correct technique for passing the ball. ABC of passing.

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Make sure the kids change direction frequently and keep their heads up to see where they are going and ensure they do not bump into anyone.

Pirate Ship Game

Preparation (Picture Below)

You will need to mark out an area big enough so that the young players can comfortably dribble their soccer balls around without constantly bumping into others. The kids (and yourself) will need a soccer ball each. This game requires a lot of enthusiasm and the more you remember the commands, which I will go through in a moment, the more enjoyable the game becomes and the more soccer skills you can bring into the game. Take a look at the diagram below.



Explanation

The game starts with each child having a ball at their feet and being told that the game is called the pirate ship and that the marked-out area is the 'ship' they must stay on.

Begin simple by getting the kids to dribble around the ship and throw in a couple of coaching points such as inside/outside of the feet to dribble and changing directions. Nice little soccer skills to begin with. Then one-by-one tell the kids to 'freeze' or 'stand-still' and introduce a new command for them to do. This is where the fun starts and the soccer skills are implemented.

The different commands are as follows:

"The captain's coming" = the kids stop, place one foot on the ball and salute the captain by saying "ay, ay captain!"

"Climb the rigging" = on the spot the kids do 'toe-taps' on the ball and with their hands climb up an imaginary ladder.

******repeat previous commands - repetition is good in this game******

"Scrub the decks" = on the spot the kids roll the ball backwards and forwards using the bottom of their foot. Use both feet!

"Polish the decks" = on the spot, this time the kids will move the ball from left-to-right using the bottom of their foot.

******Remember to demonstrate each command every time and with lots of energy******

"Starboard turn" = the kids (perhaps without knowing it) will learn a quick turn here known as the drag back/pull-back turn. Get the kids to stop, put one foot on the ball, and roll the ball behind them using the bottom of their foot.

"Man overboard" = the kids dribble quickly to the edge of the ship (area), place their foot on the ball, hand on their forehead as if they're looking for somebody. On your command the kids will continue dribbling.

"Fire the Cannon" = the kids kick their soccer ball using the inside of their foot as far away as possible outside of the ship toward other pirates. Once all balls have been kicked the kids can retrieve their soccer balls and carry on dribbling.

"Seagulls are coming" = You pretend to be a seagull who wants to eat their soccer ball. The kids on hearing this command will drop to the floor quickly and protect their ball with their body and hands. You should run around the ship with your arms out like a bird until you tell them to carry on dribbling.

Pirate Ship Game (Continued)

Progression

This game involves many different soccer skills but adjust certain parts of the game that work for you. I start off with the 'saluting of the captain' and use this one throughout to talk to the kids, give them a rest and introduce a new command because the kids are still on this command.

To finish the game, you could add "stealing the treasure" into the game. This involves you as the coach being a nasty pirate who kicks away the kid's soccer balls outside of the ship.

Once the kids' ball is outside of the ship/area then they are out, and the winner will be the last one remaining.

A coaching point to include here would be getting the kids to change direction and keep their body between you and the soccer ball so not to lose it.

Coaching Points

Rolling the ball from side-to-side with both feet is great for balance. As is 'climbing the riggin'. Doing the starboard turn is getting them prepared for learning other turns. So many different soccer skills in a fun game... ideal!

Just remember however:

Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate what happens if you kick the ball too far in a game.

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Doctor Doctor

Preparation (Picture Below)

Take a look at the diagram below. You will need a marked-out area larger area, with two smaller areas for the 'doctors houses'. The players need to be split into 2 teams and everyone except two players will need a ball each.



Explanation

Two teams battle it out to win this game of doctor doctor. Each team will need a doctor who will start in their smaller area (doctor house) without a ball. All the other players start somewhere inside the larger area with a ball each at their feet.

Youth football drills like this one are fun but it is important to coach the necessary points at all times. The object of the game is to try and kick the other teams' balls outside of the area and retain yours. If a player's ball is kicked out of the area, they must leave it and go to ground shouting 'doctor, doctor help!' This player can only retrieve their ball and stand up and carry on once their team's doctor has tagged them.

To win the game, a team must pass/kick their ball at the other team's doctor once they come out to tag their teammates who have had their ball kicked out. This game may sound complicated, but it really is not. The doctors cannot be shot at if they are in their doctor houses. This will encourage the players with balls to attempt to tackle the other players and kick their balls out of the area.

The players who are kicking the ball at the doctor must aim for a pass to hit below the knee. Youth soccer drills like this one need explaining and demonstrating step-by-step until the players understand what they must do. It is also okay to stop the game halfway through to show a coaching point. There are many coaching points that should be coached in this game.

*** Demonstrate clearly how to shield the ball using your body! ***

Progression

It is important to change the doctor after every game to allow each player to have a go with the ball at their feet. Give a team a point for skillful or clever play such as doing a turn or a trick or changing direction well with the ball at their feet.

Coaching Points

Demonstrate clearly the ABC of passing and get one of the players to show everyone else how the doctor could be hit.

Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate what happens if you kick the ball too far in a game. Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Demonstrate every turn that you use and show the players how this could work in a game situation.

Make sure the kids change direction frequently and keep their heads up to see where they are going and ensure they do not bump into anyone.

Triangle Challenge

Preparation (Picture Below)

Take a look at the diagram below for the triangle challenge. You will see that there are numerous triangles in the grid all made up by three cones each.



Explanation

The basic idea to this drill will be for the kids to dribble into a triangle in the grid between two cones and exit the triangle through a separate two cones (as demonstrated on the diagram).

There are plenty of progression ideas for this drill. I always like to start with everyone starting on the sidelines and then shouting "GO!" with the players dribbling through as many triangles as they can in sixty seconds. This makes it more exciting for the kids.

The next soccer game within the triangle challenge can be to use different parts of the foot. This time, (remember to demonstrate first every time) the players can only use the inside of their foot when exiting the triangle.

For example, the player in the diagram with the arrows can dribble the ball however he likes into the triangle but once inside he or she must use the inside of their foot to change direction and exit the triangle.

Time the players for sixty seconds once more. You can probably guess the progression ideas to come - after using the inside of the foot, next use the outside of the foot.

Next time use the bottom of the foot. The player will dribble into the triangle and use the bottom of the foot to 'roll' the ball to the side before dribbling to a new triangle.

Progression

A great progression in this soccer game which I use for the older kids as well is the use of skills.

Every time a player enters a triangle, they have to do a skill, to exit the triangle without bumping into anyone or knocking over a cone.

The best ones to use are the scissors where the player can pretend that the cone directly in front of them once inside a triangle is a player and they must use the scissors (step-over) to escape.

You can also use this drill to practice turns.

Coaching Points

Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate at every new coaching point.

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Make sure the kids change direction frequently and keep their heads up to see where they are going and ensure they do not bump into anyone.

Stuck in the Mud

Preparation (Picture Below)

Have a look at the straight-forward set-up for this drill below. All you will need is the kids to have a soccer-ball each and a coned off area big enough for the amount of kids you have to dribble around comfortably. One child will not have the ball and will be the mud monster.



Explanation

Stuck in the mud is a simple drill. You will need one child to volunteer as the mud monster and the other kids to have soccer balls at their feet and dribble around the area.

Once you say 'go' the mud monster will try and tag the other kids with soccer balls. Football training drills like this put real emphasis on shielding themselves away from opposing players.

Once a child has been tagged, they pick-up their soccer ball and hold it above their head as shown in the center of the diagram. The kid who has been tagged will then shout 'help, I'm stuck in the mud'.

To rescue the kid who has been tagged, another child must kick (pass) the ball between the players legs to free him.

The game continues until the mud monster has tagged all players and no-one can therefore be rescued.

Progression

There are plenty of little things you could add to make football training drills like this suitable for your own team. You could say that the mud monster has to kick players balls out of the area in order to make them stuck, with the kid collecting their ball and returning.

If the kids are struggling to rescue people because the mud monster is too quick, offer a safe 'no-catch' option. If a child is stuck in the mud, they can hold their ball in one hand and offer their other hand to a kid who has not yet been caught.

Once the two kids are holding hands neither can be caught and the free kid then passes his ball between the legs of the caught player.

Coaching Points

Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate what happens if you kick the ball too far in a game.

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Make sure the kids focus on accurate passing and do not get too flustered once the mud monster comes.

Flintstones

Preparation (Picture Below)

Take a look at the diagram below. The players will be split up equally into the four corners as shown with soccer balls placed in the center.



Explanation

This drill is a competition of speed and accurate dribbling. The four separate teams from each corner will compete to get the most soccer balls back to their homes. Tell them that they are the Flintstones, and they need rocks to build their homes stronger (which will be the balls).

On your command one person from each corner will run toward the center, collect a soccer ball, and dribble it back to their starting point. Once all of the soccer balls have been collected count up the number of balls and award a point to the team with the most.

The next game is the same but this time the players will dribble the ball into the middle, one at a time from each corner, and run back to their starting point until all the balls are back in the center.

Next, the players should do the same as the first game, however, this time when they collect a ball, they must do the drag back turn. Demonstrate this turn with them.

"Foot on top of the ball, roll the ball behind you, turn and follow the ball".

Keep playing this game throughout the season until you have covered many new turns such as the inside hook, outside hook, Cruyff turn and step-over to name a few.

Progression

A nice little way to end this game is by having a free-for-all collect and return game.

All the players run off at once to collect a soccer ball (only one at a time) and take it back to their starting point. They must keep going to others 'houses' to steal a ball and take it back to their own home.

The players are not allowed to take a ball that is being dribbled nor can they protect their own balls from being stolen.

Coaching Points

Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate what happens if you kick the ball too far in a game.

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Demonstrate every turn that you use and show the players how this could work in a game situation.

Behind Enemy Lines

The Rules

The groups go into each of the zones with the two end zones representing allied units, the middle zone play as an enemy unit. The ball is a package that must be delivered behind enemy lines.

One of the units starts with the package, passing amongst themselves.

They must get the package into the opposite end zone with a pass – below head height – through the enemy's line.

If the pass is intercepted, or miss hit out of the area, the unit must switch with the enemy.

Count the number of completed passes through enemy lines in a specified time – 3 minutes, say – if the ball has not been intercepted by then.

Main Objectives

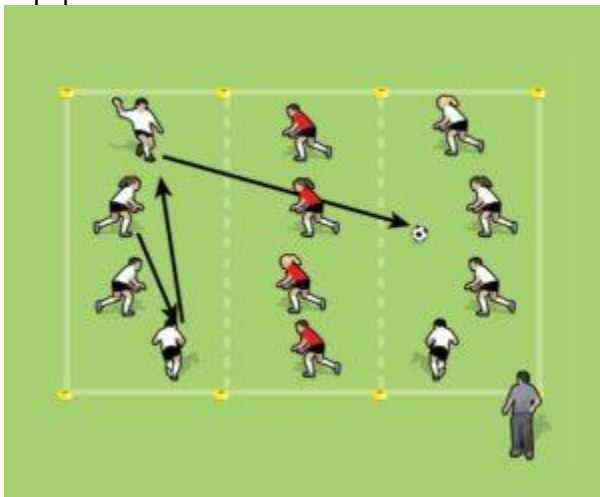
Passing through the opposition, getting behind defenders, defensive shape, anticipation.

Set Up (Pictures Below)

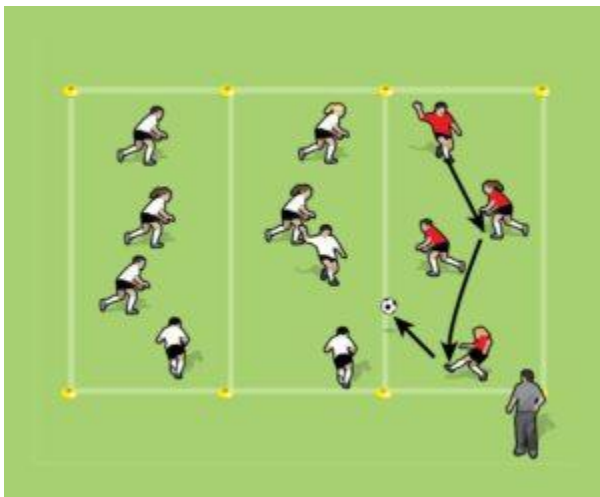
Area: 45×30 yard area divided into 3, 15-yard zones

Players: 12, 3 teams of 4

Equipment: 1 ball

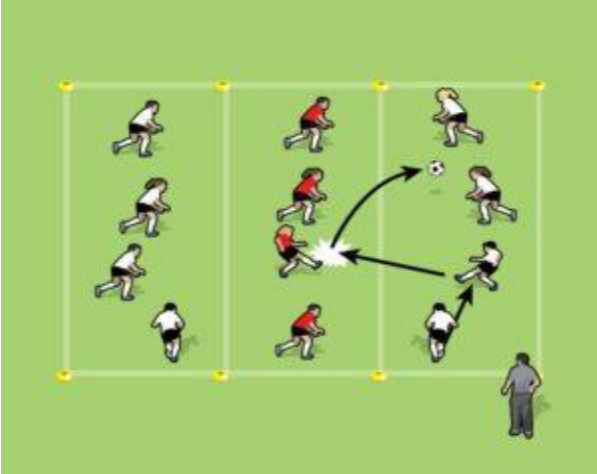


The package is delivered behind enemy lines.



Lose the package and you must try to win it back.

Behind Enemy Lines (Continued)



The enemy intercepts the package.

What To Call Out

"Deliver the package"

"Quick passing"

"Drive the ball through a gap"

Progression

Allow one member of the enemy unit to apply pressure by entering one of the end zones to try and steal the package.

Similarly, one player can drop into the opposite end zone to try and intercept the package.

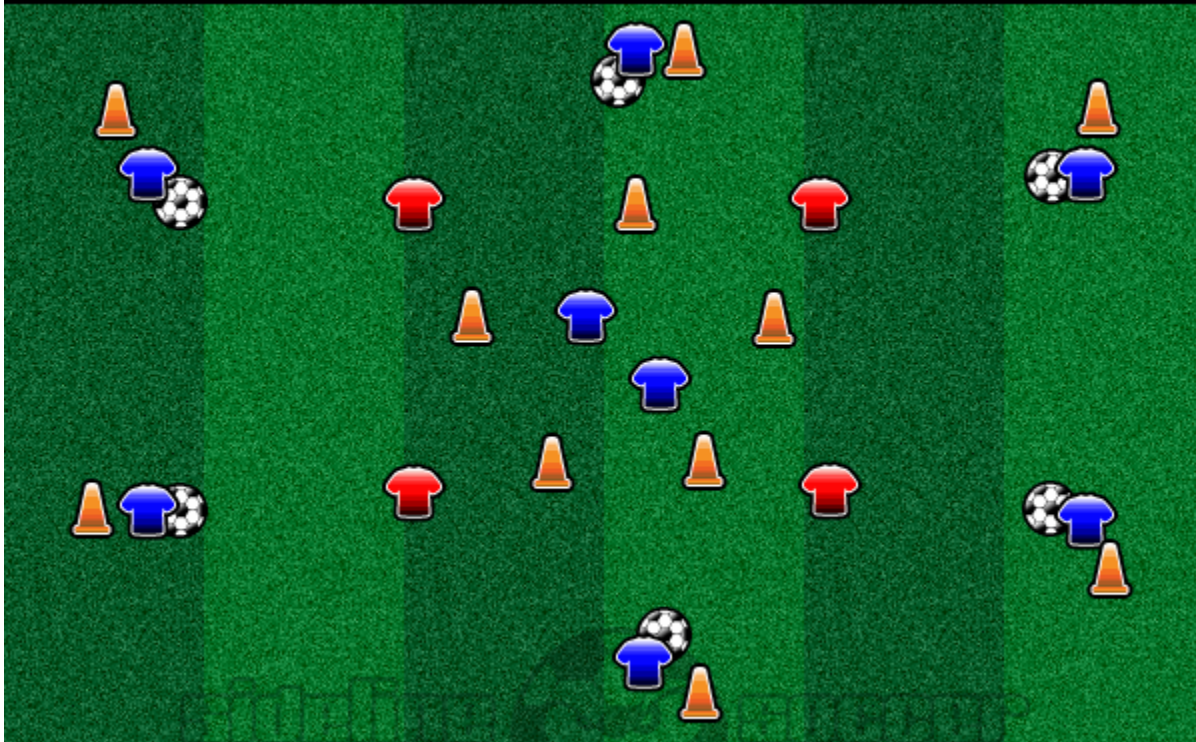
Hint

This is a more advanced game, calling on teamwork, decision making – when to press and when to drop off – and accurate passing.

Don't Feed the Animals

DRILLS: Don't Feed The Animals

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Setup (Picture Above)

Zookeepers, the four players in red, do not want you to feed the animals, the two players in the center circle. The visitors, the players around the outside perimeter of the zoo, each have a ball.

Instructions

The visitors try to feed the animals by successfully passing them the ball.

The animals must successfully trap the ball and pass it back in order for it to count. The animals cannot leave the cage.

The zookeepers are responsible for stopping the visitors from feeding the animals by intercepting their passes. Zookeepers and visitors are not allowed to enter the cage or leave the zoo.

Visitors are allowed to pass the ball to other visitors.

Play for a few minutes. Whoever has the most points win.

Have the players switch roles after each session?

Have the players decide which animals they want to be before the drill begins!

Coaching Tips

Instruct visitors to keep their heads up and communicate with other visitors and animals.

Passing the ball to another visitor can confuse the zookeepers and provide an easy opening to feed the animals.

The weight of the pass is very important in this drill. Too weak, and the zookeepers will easily intercept it. Too strong, and the ball will leave the zoo.

Both the visitors and animals need to control the ball well or they may lose it to the zookeepers. Instruct players on their first touch.

Variations

If the visitors are not feeding the animals enough, remove a zookeeper.

If the visitors are feeding the animals too much, add more zookeepers.

Clean Your Room



Preparation (Picture Above)

You will need a marked-out area wide and long enough for the number of players you have available. You will also need a line marked out with cones to separate the players. The same amount of soccer balls to player ratio will work out fine for this game.

Explanation

The kids will be split into two teams. Each team stands either side of the marked-out line. Tell the kids that they have to clean their room quicker than the other team and after one-minute whichever team has the tidiest room wins.

When you shout GO! the kids have to pass a soccer ball into the other team's bedroom to make it messier.

Once a ball comes back into their area they should once again kick it back.

Make sure the kids use the correct passing technique. If the ball is kicked past the player, they should chase after it and do a drag-back turn to face the other direction. After one minute stop the kids and see who has the least balls in their area and therefore the tidiest room!

Progression

This is called a backyard soccer drill because it can be played just about anywhere with little set-up required.

You could progress from this original version by splitting the teams up into three or four sections and having the kids kick their soccer balls in different directions.

Coaching points

Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate what happens if you kick the ball too far in a game.

See if the kids can change direction by placing the bottom of their foot on the ball and rolling it behind them.

This will eventually turn into the drag-back turn. Do this step by step with them!

Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Make sure the inside of the foot is used when making a pass.

Dog Pound

Main Theme - Dribbling

Organization:

1. 20 x 20 yard area set up as shown
2. 10 players
3. 1 ball per player

Story/Description:

1. Somebody has let all the dogs (players) out
2. It is the Dog Catcher's (coach) task to catch (tag) all the dogs
3. If the Dog Catcher catches you, you become a Dog Catcher too
4. Dogs must dribble their soccer balls from one safe zone (end line) to the other
5. The game starts each time by the Dog Catcher asking, "Who let the dogs out?"

Coaching Points:

1. Keep the ball close. You do not want your dog to run away.
2. Head up to observe where the Dog Catcher is
3. Encourage your dog to "sit" when you want to stop by placing your foot on top of the ball
4. Your dog can do tricks like roll over by rolling the ball under your foot. It can also chase its tale by stepping over the ball.

Developments:

1. P – Start with multiple Dog Catchers
2. R - The Dog Catcher can only catch you by tagging your ball

The Gauntlet

DRILL: The Gauntlet

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Setup (Picture Above)

Setup three grids, approximately 10×10 yards, one after the other.

Have a defender stand in each of the grids.

Attacking players line up at the beginning of the first grid.

Instructions

An attacker will attempt to go past each defender without going outside of the grid.

The defenders can only defend their 10×10 grid.

If the attacker gets by the defender, they then take on the next defender.

If an attacker makes it past all three defenders, then the attacker takes the place of the last defender, and all defenders move up a grid and the first defender becomes the attacker.

If the attacker fails, and one of the defenders steals the ball, the players then switch. The original attacker becomes the defender of the grid, and the new attacker then tries to go through the gauntlet.

Coaching Tips

Attackers should keep the ball close to them and stay in control when dribbling.

Attackers should also keep their head up and dribble to space to avoid pressure from defenders.

Advise players to use a quick move and then burst into speed past the defender.

Variations

The Gauntlet can be played in many variations. The grid sizes can be made smaller or larger depending upon the age and skill of the players. The number of grids and/or defenders in each grid can be increased as well. Have some players line up on the sides of the grid. These players can be used for wall passes, quick give and goes with the attacking players.

A goal can be set up at the end of the gauntlet, so that if attackers get through the defenders, they need to take a shot on net.

Instead of having one attacker go through the gauntlet at a time, send all the attackers through, trying to avoid the defender. If the defender wins the ball and kicks the ball out of the grid, that attacker becomes an additional defender (without a ball) on the next series. The last player to make it through the gauntlet wins the game.

This is a great drill to follow up with after the "Fill the Bucket" drill because no additional setup is required. Players are divided up into teams of three players and each team will need 6 soccer balls. Now that all the soccer balls are in the bucket you can run the same race, but the objective of this race is to empty the bucket instead of filling the bucket. The players will run into the bucket to retrieve a ball and bring it to the end line. Once they tag a teammate then they will also run to the bucket, retrieve a ball, and dribble it to the end line. The first team to empty the bucket and get all of the soccer balls back to the end line wins the race. Fill The