

Grade 1 + 2 Practice Activities

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Free Dribble

Setup

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 soul of the foot

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

EACH WEEK ADD IN A MOVE FOR THEM TO TRY. STEP OVER OR PULL BACK IS A GOOD ONE TO START WITH.

Coaching Tips

Advise players to keep their heads up while dribbling and be aware of what's 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!

ADD A SECOND AREA. AFTER DRIBBLING IN THE FIRST AREA, HAVE THEM TRANSITION TO THE SECOND AREA (ABOUT 20 YARDS AWAY), BY DRIBBLING WITH SPEED TO THE SECOND AREA. THEY NEED TO PUSH THE BALL OUT IN FRONT OF THEM TO DRIBBLE WITH SPEED. CONTINUE TRANSITIONING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN AREAS. IN AREA DRIBBLE UNDER CONTROL BUT WHILE TRANSITIONING, DRIBBLE WITH SPEED.

Dribbling and Passing Thru Gates

Description

"Gates" Sessions - focusing on fundamental dribbling and passing skills

Dribbling Gates is an activity that can be used for players of all ages. It is a basic game that makes it easy to work on important dribbling fundamentals.

Organization:

Set up gates (mini cone goals) around your practice field. Every player has a ball.

How to Play:

Players dribble freely around the field. At each gate, perform a skill. Go from simple to complex.

- Start with dribbling through a gate with either foot. Then designate a foot, left or right.
- Perform skill at each gate - toe taps, tick tocks, turn
- Speed dribble through a gate, under control
- Races through the gates, dribbling, then running races

Passing Gates

Passing Gates is a fun activity that encourages proper techniques and movement.

Organization:

Set up gates (mini cone goals) around your practice field. Every player needs a partner, groups of 2. Each pair has one ball.

How to Play:

The objective is to pass the ball through a gate to your partner.

- Game starts by partner without a ball running to a gate. Player with ball follows and passes to partner through the gate. After completing pass, player without the ball runs to a new gate, partner with ball follows. Game continues...
- Players should be 5-10 feet apart when passing and receiving.

Progressions:

- Designate passing foot
- Designate surface to receive

Coaches Notes

Focus on Fundamentals and Proper Techniques

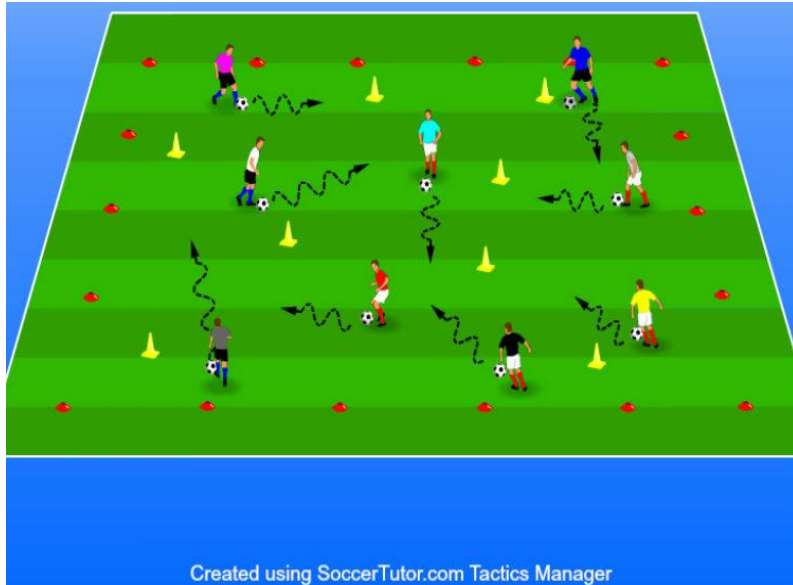
"Gates" are great practice activities to improve dribbling and passing skills. When your players fully understand the game, turning it into a competition is a way to get the best out of your players.

** race to dribble through 5 gates, race to do 2 toe taps at 5 gates, race to run through 5 gates, team race to pass through 5 gates **

Coaching Points:

- When dribbling, keep ball close to feet and head up as much as you can
- When passing, use inside of foot to pass, plant foot (non-kicking foot) next to ball and pointing at target (partner / teammate)
- All players, 100% effort

Musical Cones



How the Drill Works: (Picture Above)

Like musical chairs, players must dribble around inside the grid until the music stops, or the coach gives a signal, and then knock over a cone inside the grid with their soccer ball. The player who does not knock over a cone at the end of each round, is out for the remainder of the game.

Purpose:

Develops dribbling and ball control skills in a fun manner. The activity also encourages players to maintain awareness and find the nearest cone.

Setup:

Set up a playing grid (size may vary depending on the number of players in the group). A circle or rectangular shape works well.

Set up tall cones randomly within the grid. There should be one less tall cone than the number of players in the grid.

Each player has a soccer ball.

The coach prepares a music player (a whistle can be used as well).

Instructions:

The coach blows the whistle to start each round. Players begin dribbling inside the grid.

When the whistle is blown again, each player must quickly dribble to the nearest cone and knock it over with their soccer ball.

The player who does not knock over a cone is out for the remainder of the game and continues to dribble, or juggle outside of the playing area.

Before starting the next round, players reset the cones and the coach takes out one random cone so that there are more players than cones inside the grid.

Players must constantly dribble their ball inside the grid. Players are not allowed to stand still otherwise they are warned or disqualified for the remainder of the game.

The game continues in this manner until there is one player left inside the grid and is declared the winner.

Repeat the game as many times as needed.

Variations:

Weak foot – Have the players use only their weaker foot to dribble.

Various dribbling techniques - Specify the way the players must dribble – inside / outside foot, soles, etc.

Take out more than one cone – To increase the speed of each game, take out more than one cone after each round. This means more players will be out after each round. Take 2, 3, or 4 cones out depending on how quickly the game needs to move.

Coaching Points:

Remind the players that they must constantly be dribbling and moving throughout the grid. Players must keep their ball rolling to participate in the game.

Encourage the players to keep their heads up and maintain vision of the field. This will allow players to know where the nearest cone is when the music stops.

Challenge the players to dribble with speed and to change direction quickly to get to cones.

Teach the players to have some fun while playing and to enjoy the music if it is playing.

Cone In the Middle

When coaching soccer drills, they need to be both fun and allow the players to learn. This drill has both aspects and can be changed to suit the needs and abilities of your players. This drill only really works if you have 8 or more players but could be adapted to suit less (for example using three outside cones instead of four).

Preparation (Picture Below)

Take a look at the diagram below. You will need five cones laid out with one cone in the middle - hence the name of the drill. You will need an equal number of players behind each outside cone and a ball each to allow for progressions later (less can be used to begin with).



Explanation

This soccer drill is designed to allow the players to dribble with the ball and change direction. It can also be made into various games. Begin simply by allowing one person from each corner to dribble with the soccer ball at medium pace toward the center cone and once they get there, do a turn to face the opposite direction and dribble back to where they came from.

*Coaching soccer drills like these allow the players to show off their 'soccer turns'

The player should then pass the ball to the next player in line who in turn will dribble to the middle and come back.

Progression

There are a host of progression ideas that come from this drill.

Dribble to the right - when the player gets to the center cone, they will then dribble to the cone to the right of them and pass the ball to the next in line.

Dribble to the left - same as above but this time go to the left. Changing direction is important to allow the use of both feet etc.

Dribble through the middle - this time the players will start at the same time but dribble to the opposite cone avoiding bumping into other players and the central cone.

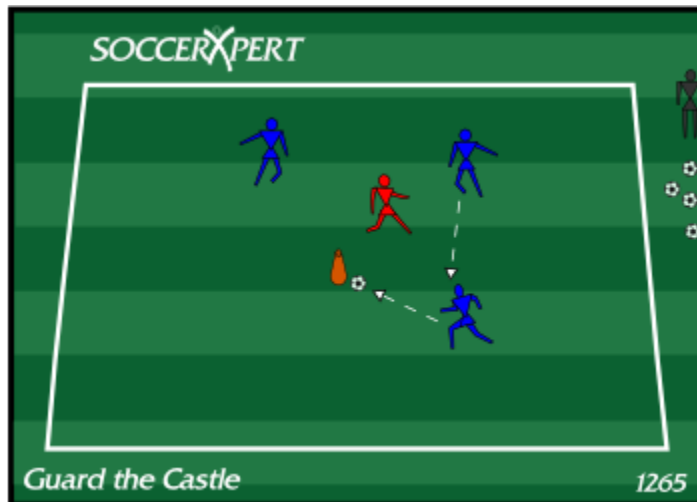
Long pass - the players will dribble to the center cone, do a turn and pass the ball back to the next player from a further away distance than before.

The Race - any number of races can be performed where the players are up against one another. The performance quality will dip considerably so make sure the players are playing fair and dribbling correctly.

Coaching Points

- Make sure that dribbling is done with small touches of the ball, keeping the ball close to them, inside and outside of both feet should be used.
- When passing make sure that the inside of the foot is used, and accuracy is thought about by the players.
- When the players do a turn, make sure it is a recognized turn such as the drag-back turn.

Guard The Castle Passing Game



Drill Setup (Picture Above)

Set up a grid that is 12 X 12 yards and organize the team into groups of four

One of the four players should wear an alternate jersey and be the designated defender (guards castle)

Place a cone with the ball on top of it in the middle of the grid; this will become the "castle".

The attacking players begin with one soccer ball.

Drill Instructions

The three attackers should pass the ball around the defender in the grid in attempt to knock down the castle with a pass.

A point is awarded when the castle is knocked down.

The castle is considered knocked down when the ball is knocked off the cone or the tall cone is knocked down with a pass.

If the castle is knocked down with a foot, reset the castle and continue play. No point is awarded.

Once the attackers score 3 points, switch the defender.

Drill Variations

Depending on the age level and skill of the players, you can remove the 12 x 12 grid limitations, or make the grid smaller for very skilled players.

If players are standing next to the cone, you can build a 3x3 grid and not allow players to step into that small grid.

Require players to complete a certain number of passes before they are allowed to knock down the castle.

Play 1v1 and focus on dribbling skills.

Drill Coaching Points

Instruct players to get their heads up to find the pass.

Make sure the players are passing the ball with proper weight on the ball.

Make sure players are moving about the grid in order to find open space.

Make sure players know it is ok to dribble the ball to space or beat the defender before making the pass.

Make sure players are making the easiest decisions when passing.

Four Cones Dribbling



How the Drill Works: (Picture Above)

Players start at the corners of the grid and dribble to the center cone where they perform a move and then dribble back to their corner.

Purpose:

Develops players' dribbling and cutting abilities. Players work on keeping the ball close and using simple ball cuts to turn with the ball.

Setup:

Use four cones to mark a square grid, 20-30 yards wide, depending on the players' age and skill level.

Place one cone in the center of the grid.

Divide the players into four, even numbered groups, and assign each group to a different corner of the square.

Instruct each group form a line behind their corner cone.

Every player should have a soccer ball. If there are not enough soccer balls for each player, then make sure there is at least one ball per group.

Instructions:

On the coach's signal, the first player in each line starts dribbling towards the middle cone.

The four players dribble, under control, at the same time to the center cone.

When the players dribbling arrive to the center cone, they perform a change of direction move, or turn, and explode back to their corner.

The next player in each line can start their turn as soon as the player in front of them completes their turn at the center cone.

The drill continues in the same manner for a set period of time (5 minutes, for example).

After each round, teach the players a specific move to perform at the center cone.

Variations:

Dribble type – Have the players dribble using different foot surfaces or rules: inside, outside, left, right, bottom, etc.

Dribble moves – Specify the move that the players will perform at the cone.

Rotation – Instead of dribbling back to their corner, have the players change direction at the middle cone and dribble to the back of the line to their right, or left, depending on the instructions given.

Coaching Points:

Remind the players to focus on using the proper surface of the foot when dribbling, and to keep the ball close when dribbling. This will ensure the players can protect the ball and change direction quickly.

Instruct the players to focus on their change of speed and direction. Challenge them to explode after their move so they can create separation between themselves and their defender.

Encourage the players to try to keep their eyes up when dribbling in order to build good habits and vision.

Four Corners Aggressiveness Drill



Drill Setup (Picture Above)

Create a grid that is 30x30 yards.

Create 4 teams and have them stand at each of the four corner cones.

The coach positions himself outside the grid near the middle of 2 side cones with an abundant supply of soccer balls.

Drill Instructions

The coach plays a ball into the center of the grid and shouts out a command (such as “GO”) to begin play.

The first player in each of the 4 lines must sprint after the ball in an attempt to reach the ball first.

Once a player wins the ball cleanly, the player must hold possession from the other players for 5 seconds before passing the ball back to the coach.

If any player steals the ball from the person in possession, that player then attempts to hold possession for 5 seconds.

A team scores a point by successfully holding possession for 5 seconds and making a return pass to the coach.

The first team to reach 5 points wins.

Drill Variations

The coach can play different types of balls such as flighted balls, bouncing balls, rolling balls, balls with large amounts of top or back spin.

Drill Coaching Points

Players should be taught to go after the ball aggressively with speed, determination and vigor.

Diamond Passing Drill



Setup: (Picture Above)

10 – 16 players – working in a 20 x 20 area.

4 Cones.

Supply of balls.

Execution:

The ball is passed round the diamond.

Players follow their own pass.

Variations:

1. A1 passes to B1 and then runs to B1's position.

B1 passes to C1 and follows his pass.

C1 passes to A1 and follows his pass.

A1 receives, passes to D1 and then follows his pass.

D1 repeats the sequence on the other side by passing to B2.

Players at B and C should be replaced at regular intervals.

2. A1 passes to B1 and then runs towards B1's position.

B1 lays off the ball to A1 and goes to B2.

A1 receives then passes to D1 and follows his pass to A2.

D1 repeats the sequence on the other side by passing to C1.

Players at B and C should be replaced at regular intervals.

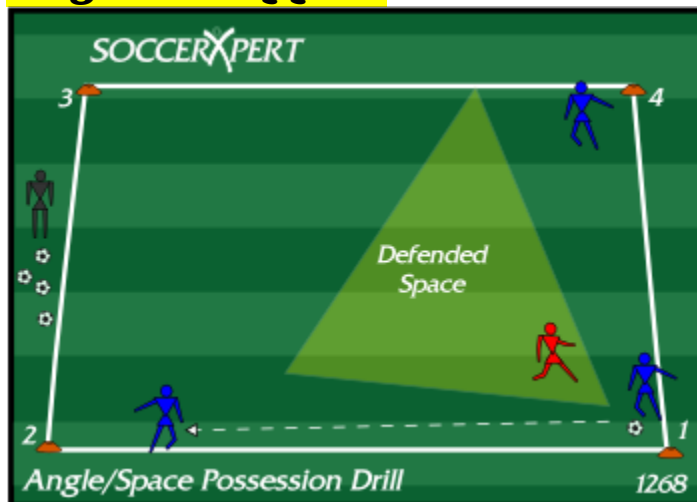
3. Repeat the sequences with two balls, one starting at A and the other starting at D simultaneously.

4. Repeat the sequences with a maximum of two touches each.

5. Repeat the sequences one touch.

6. Repeat the sequences with the ball kept in the air.

Angle Of Support



Drill Setup (Picture Above)

Create a grid that is 10 X 10 yards.

Organize the team into groups of three players per grid.

Each of the three players should position themselves near three different corners of the grid with one ball.

Drill Instructions

The instructions are merely to never leave an empty cone adjacent to the player with the ball.

For example, if the drill begins with a player at position 1 in possession of the ball, then players should be at position 2 and 4 (cones adjacent to the player in possession of the ball).

The player at position 1 can pass to either of the players at positions 2 and 4.

If the player at position 1 passes to the player at position 2, the player at position 4 must quickly move to position 3 to support the player in "un-defended space."

The play continues with no defensive pressure and players are allowed to pass to either supporting player.

This soccer drill is simple, but players will have to pay attention to the ball movement and anticipate the next move to move to space quicker.

Drill Variations

Play in 1 or 2 touches.

Add a passive defender (this could be a coach or parent).

Add an active defender to simulate real pressure in the game.

Drill Coaching Points

Make sure players are thinking and moving quickly to the next supporting position.

Explain Defended Space (see diagram)

Help players with good angle of support

1,2 Passing Drill

This passing soccer drill is simple but effective and great for the U8 age group and above. At one time or another anyone that plays soccer will have taken part in a drill the same or similar to this one.

Preparation

Take a look at the diagram below. You will notice a coned off square with half the players in the middle and the others on the outside spread-out. To begin with, only the players in the middle require soccer balls.



Explanation (Picture Above)

This passing soccer drill begins with the players in the middle dribbling their soccer ball in the middle of the area and passing the ball to a player on the outside when they wish. The players on the outside will take a touch and then pass the ball back to them. This type of pass is called a 1,2 pass. After a few minutes, swap the players over on the outside and inside.

Progression

Take a look below at the different progression ideas for this drill.

- 1) The players on the outside should pass the ball back first time without controlling the ball first.
- 2) The players in the middle can practice using both feet to pass as well as the outside of the foot.
- 3) You could allow the players on the outside to have a ball each and dribble up and down the line. Once a player in the middle needs to pass, they leave their ball and carry on with the 1,2 pass and then carry on dribbling their own ball on the outside.
- 4) The players in the middle have to perform a skill, turn or trick before passing the ball to the outside player.
- 5) You could make the square larger and make the players pass long-balls or shorten the square, so they require close control.
- 6) After the player in the middle has passed their ball, they go and find another player on the outside who passes them someone else's ball.

Coaching Points

- Ensure that the inside of the foot is used for passing, not the toe.
- >When dribbling the ball, make sure that close control is used.
- When passing the ball, it shouldn't be too soft/slow, there needs to be some pace and conviction as they start to get older.