



U8 MANUAL

Introduction

Dear Coach,

On behalf of Midwest Soccer Academy (MSA), we are excited to have you utilizing our manual. Our goal is to ensure we all have a great season. To make this happen, you as a facilitator are one of the most important factors. Your goal must be that all players have a great experience and that they have become better players and have FUN.

Philosophy

Our emphasis is placed on the *technical* development of the player using small-sided training games.

U8 Characteristics

By this age the children are more team oriented. Physically, their motor skills will be more refined and there may be noticeable differences between individuals with stronger motor skills. They will still be active like their younger counterparts, but not as busy, and will stay in place long enough for a short explanation of drills and instructions. Increased spatial awareness means they have a better understanding of when a ball is out; and they will show a lengthened attention span and can sequence thoughts and actions. At this age they are intrinsically motivated and will only do what they think is fun. More inclined towards wanting to play rather than being told to play. Peer pressure will begin to be a factor and they will be hesitant to demonstrate drills due to a fear of failure in front of others. Demonstrate increased self-responsibility and are able to initiate play on their own. Posses limited knowledge of self-evaluation. Will rate how well they performed on how hard they tried, regardless of the team result.

Training Recommendations

- Continual variety in drills.
- Repetition of technique/skills.
- No 'Fitness' time.
- Make exercises fun.
- Teach one new skill per session.
- Maximize ball touches.

Coaching Approach

- Explanations must still be brief, concise and indicate purpose.
- Focus on them enjoying practice.
- Repetition of techniques/skills and game conditions very important, must be dynamic not static.
- Competitive and co-operative practices.
- Continued positive reinforcement needed.
- Always encourage kids.



Guidelines for training sessions

- Avoid long-winded explanations be short and to the point!!!
- Prepare what you going to say about: organization, drills, movements and/or conduct.
- Avoid braking up the flow of your explanation with ums, ahs, etc.
- Speak clearly, so that everyone can hear you.
- Look regularly at the group and the individual players as you speak. Does everyone seem to understand you?
- Vary the tone of your speech change the tempo and pitch.
- Inject some enthusiasm.
- Use gestures and mimes to underline what you say.
- Give the players a chance to ask questions.
- Repeat the essentials of what you have been saying.
- Illustrate your instructions with simple examples. Start by demonstrating, then underline this with your explanation.
- Make sure the players are all relaxed before you start instructing them.
- Check whether your message is coming over by asking players to repeat what you have said.
- Restrict the amount of information as far as possible.
- Do not simply tell players what to do but also why.
- Monitor whether your instruction are followed, and take corrective steps if this is not the case.
- Be creative and use initiative: If the drill or game is too advanced, modify to increase the chances of success.
- Don't start instruction when players still playing
- Make sure every player is concentrated on your explanation
- Explain things a couple times, after 1 time is still difficult
- The accent of training must be a wide range of movement games
- Vary in games and exercises
- Try to get in their " world"
- Let them ask questions
- Most important is learning through playing
- Let them think and let them come up with solutions
- Use small side games 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3, 4 v 4 in training sessions
- Strive for quality: In all demonstrations make the desired objectives clear. If a player shows mastery of a skill, use him/her to demonstrate.



Checklist for training sessions:

Match-oriented

- Score goals and try to avoid conceding goals
- Build –up play with the objective of creating scoring chances.
- Collective play (win or lose you are all in together)
- Direct play/playing to win
- Rapid transition when possession changes

Lots of repetition

- Exercise should be repeated frequently
- No long waiting times
- Good planning and organization
- Sufficient balls and equipment
- No long lines

Adjustment to the group

- Take account of the players age group
- Take account of their skills
- Take account of their enjoyment

Proper coaching

- Explain what the team is trying to achieve
- Let the players learn from their selves
- Demonstrate what you want
- Give instructions
- Suggest solutions



Fundamentals of Dribbling

Dribbling, without question, is one of the vital skills of the game.

The three basic elements of dribbling are movement, acceleration, speed, and the ability to unbalance an opponent. Feints and speed are the dribbler's key weapons.

Technique:

- Toes up
- Knees bend
- Moving on the balls of your feet
- Balance is a must
- Keep ball close
- Soft touches
- Look up so much as possible, so you can see what your opponent does and what your teammate do
- Look for space to attack

Surfaces

- Inside / Outside / Laces

Speed

- Slow / Fast / Acceleration

Directions

- Forwards / Sideways (left – right) / Backwards

Coaching points technical:

- Keep the ball close to your feet when you dribble.
- Learn to dribble in a varied tempo (slow-fast)
Slower pace when the player can not control the ball.
- Keeping your head up (so you can see what you're opponent does and what your teammates do.
- Use your left and right foot
- Use your inside and outside foot
- “ pass not from your right to your left foot “



Fundamentals of Passing

Developing players who can perform crisp, accurate passes to teammates is essential to improving overall play. Inside foot passing is for passing on short distances about 10 – 30 yards, combinations and finishing on short distance to goal.

There are many different ways to pass the ball in soccer. Some of them are basic and some more advanced. You can pass with the inside of the foot; the outside, the toe and even the heel (back pass). You can lay the ball out flat, make it curve in or out, chip it, loft it etc.

What we'll be concerned with here initially are the fundamentals of basic passing, what you would teach to a 6 year old (and up) to build a foundation for more advanced techniques.

The basic coaching points for basic inside of the foot passing are:

1. Head down – eye on the ball
2. Plant non-kicking foot along side the ball
3. Pick a spot near the center of the ball, strike ball at this spot.
4. Follow through.

Have the players begin passing to their partner. Watch for proper striking technique, proper foot placement, eye-foot coordination (head down) and follow through.

But now in addition to these coaching points you must look for:

- 1) Proper “weight” on the ball. Weight is the speed, spin and/or pace of the ball. Too little weight and the ball doesn't reach the target....too much and it is difficult to trap.
- 2) Accuracy. The plant foot is a big determiner of where the pass will go. Generally the pass will go where the plant foot toes point. You'll see a lot of toes turning outward at the beginning. This should be corrected.
- 3) Stress that the player should not step back to kick the ball. A common error at the young ages is for the player to stop the ball, take one or two steps back and then pass it.

Again work both the right and left foot.



Coaching points technical passing:

- turn the hips outside
- Pass the ball with your inside foot
- Lock your ankle
- Follow-through after pass straight to target
- Knee bend
- Hit ball in the middle
- Pass the ball not too slow
- Eye contact
- Receiver ask for “ Ball”
- The inside of the foot is the surface that makes contact with the ball
- Keep your kicking foot flexed, with your toes pointing up.
- Your other foot should be planted beside the ball, about a foot away.
- Stay relaxed. Don't be like a robot
- Look at ball when passing
- Place standing foot alongside ball, not in front or behind. Point to direction
- Technique non-kicking foot
 - Beside the ball (one foot distance)
 - Toes pointing to target
 - Knee is bend slightly

Coaching points tactical passing:

- Pass to other players, not just kick and hope.
- Move afterwards
- Do not telegraph your intentions by constantly looking in your direction in which you intend to play the ball.
- Alternate long and short balls.
- Accuracy - The plant foot is a big determiner of where the pass will go. Generally the pass will go where the plant foot toes point
- Proper weight on the ball. Weight is the speed, spin and/or pace of the ball. Too little weight and the ball won't reach the target...too much and it is difficult to receive.
- The player without the ball determines how you play it (to his feet, to run onto).
Look where hips are turned too:
Hips facing you > ball to feet
Hips facing sideways > ball sideways
Hips facing forward > ball deep
- The Weight of the pass is important :
 - To soft the ball will be intercept, too hard receiver can't receive it.
 - How better the ball being placed how less energy receiver has to do receive it.

Weather and field conditions

- By an strong wind play the ball on the ground
- When you have the wind in the back be sure that you not passing too hard
- When the grass is too long , and you pass the ball on the ground the ball slows down, play it also half-high



Warming-up

There are 2 ways to warm up your players before games, one is jogging around and do static stretching, the other one is dynamic stretching this means players keep moving and do different exercises to get their body warmed up. The dynamic stretching is for soccer players more appropriate because the game is dynamic also. Before training technical exercises is a way to warm-up and work on skills at the same time. To vary a tag game can be another way to start a training.

Players line up in 2 rows on signal of the coach first group start, always 2 players on same time are going. When the first group is on the second cone next 2 players can go.

- | | | |
|--|----------------|----|
| 1. Jogging to second disc | 2x | |
| 2. Kick- bud | 2x | |
| 3. High Knees | 2x | |
| 4. Shuffle sideways | Left and Right | |
| 5. Karaoke | Left and Right | |
| 6. Groin out-in | 2x | |
| 7. Groin in-out | 2x | |
| 8. Jogging on sign coach sprint to disc | | 2x |
| 9. Jogging on sign coach , turn backwards sprint to last disc | | 2x |
| 10. Back pedaling on sign coach, turn, sprint forwards to last disc | | 2x |
| 11. Jogging forwards on sign coach, backpedaling to last disc | | 2x |
| 12. Both feet next to each other on sign coach, sprint to last disc | | 2x |
| 13. Laying on the ground arms and feet from the ground,
on sign coach sprint to last disc | | 2x |





Day 1

5.45 PM	Registration / field set up
6.00 PM	Warm-up game (Shin -Tag)
6.10 PM	Fast Footwork 1
6.20 PM	Dribbling (Dribbling technique1)
6.30 PM	Dribbling Game (Shadow me)
6.40 PM	Small-sided games (4 versus 4)
7.00 PM	Session recap (Question & Answers)

Day 2

5.45 PM	Field set up
6.00 PM	Warm-up game (Coach says-Says coach)
6.10 PM	Fast Footwork 1+2
6.20 PM	Dribbling (Dribbling technique2)
6.30 PM	Dribbling Game (Chase them down)
6.40 PM	Small-sided games (4 versus 4)
7.00 PM	Session recap (Question & Answers)

Day 3

5.45 PM	Field set up
6.00 PM	Warm-up game (Body Parts)
6.10 PM	Fast Footwork 1 + 3
6.20 PM	Dribbling (Dribbling technique 3)
6.30 PM	Dribbling Game (North, East, South, West)
6.40 PM	Small-sided games (4 versus 4)
7.00 PM	Session recap (Question & Answers)

Day 4

5.45 PM	Field set up
6.00 PM	Warm-up game (Keep it in)
6.10 PM	Fast Footwork 1 +3
6.20 PM	Dribbling (Dribbling technique 4)
6.30 PM	Dribbling Game (Break the piggybank)
6.40 PM	Small-sided games (4 versus 4)
7.00 PM	Session recap (Question & Answers)



Day 5

5.45 PM
6.00 PM
6.10 PM
6.20 PM
6.30 PM
6.40 PM
7.00 PM

Field set up
Warm-up game (Ghostbusters)
Fast Footwork 1+3
Passing (Passing technique 1)
Passing Game (Clean up the yard)
Small-sided games (4 versus 4)
Session recap (Question & Answers)

Day 6

5.45 PM
6.00 PM
6.10 PM
6.20 PM
6.30 PM
6.40 PM
7.00 PM

Field set up
Warm-up game (Knock it off)
Fast Footwork 1 +3
Passing (Passing technique 2)
Passing Game (Ring around the ball)
Small-sided games (4 versus 4)
Session recap (Question & Answers)

Day 7

5.45 PM
6.00 PM
6.10 PM
6.20 PM
6.30 PM
6.40 PM
7.00 PM

Field set up
Warm-up game (Rambo)
Fast Footwork 1 +3
Passing (Golf)
Passing game (Passing war)
Small-sided games (4 versus 4)
Session recap (Question & Answers)



Fast Footwork

1. **Foundation:** stand with the soccer ball between your feet, which are about shoulder width apart. Ball is passed between the feet with very soft, light touches. Be sure weight is on balls of feet. With each step you should be coming down on your toes first; then your heels. Knees stay bent at all times. Be sure you are stepping up and down; not sideways. The trick is to keep the ball constantly moving between the feet as the player "hops" from foot to foot to prepare for the next touch.

Variation 1: while doing the foundation turn 90 degrees or 180 degrees.

Variation 2: move forward with each step by tapping the ball slightly forward with each touch.

Variation 3: Tap the ball in stationary position and accelerate quick forwards.

Variation 4: Move now the ball backwards

2. **Toe Touches:** Begin with the ball between your feet and slightly to the front. Lift the right foot and lightly touch the top of the ball with the front (cleat side) of the shoe, underneath the toe. Replace that right foot and do the same with the left foot. Now begin to alternate touches faster until you have to make little hops back and forth with your feet while continuing to touch the top of the ball.
3. **Toe Touches forward:** push the ball forwards a few inches with each touch as you begin to move forward with each step. The trick is to touch the ball forward "just the right distance" and slightly in front of the other foot so you can keep the pattern going without a break. After moving forward about 10 yds. Do a "pullback" turn and return to the starting spot continuing your toe touches.
4. **Walk the dog:** Roll the ball with your sole from one foot to the other and go forwards with rolling the ball slightly, keep the ball between your legs.



Technique exercises:

Technique 1

* **Dribbling**

1. Dribble with inside and outside of the foot.
2. Dribble with right and left foot

Technique 2

* **Dribbling + cutting**

1. Dribble with inside and outside of the foot to the cone.
2. When you get to the cone you cut with the inside of the foot and go left or right around the cone to the cone in front of you. (Left and right foot)

Technique 3

* **Matthews move**

1. Foot next to ball
2. With the inside drag the ball forwards
3. Don't complete the drag, with the outside of the foot touch the ball
4. Pass the ball with outside foot by opponent

Technique 4

* **Step-over**

1. Make sure the ball rolls in front of you
2. Put one foot diagonal over the ball
3. Drop the shoulder of the foot where you step-over the ball with
4. With the outside of the other foot you pass the ball behind opponent



Dribbling Technique 1 – 3 - 4

Emphasis: Dribbling

Set-up: - Players on one line

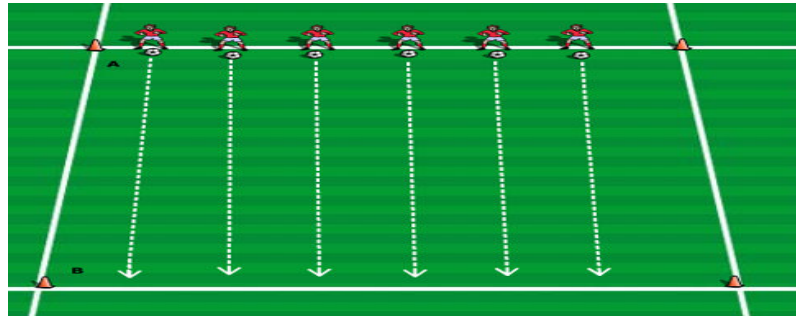
- Players dribble from line A to line B and from B back to A touching the ball every step.
- When they arrive there they need to stop on command before they start again.

Progression:

- Stop the ball with sole of the foot

Coaching Points:

- Heads up
- Look out over the ball
- Keep the ball close to you



Dribbling Technique 2

Emphasis: Dribbling & Cutting

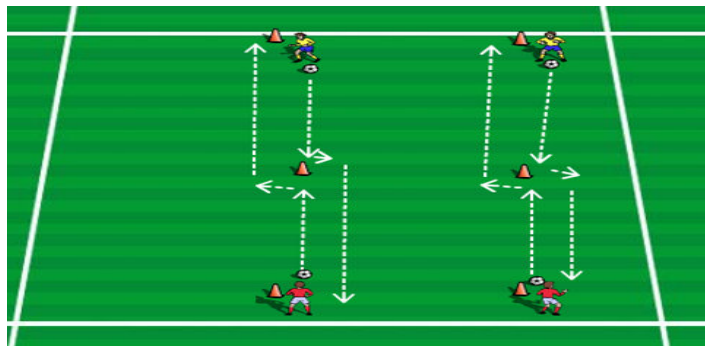
Set-up: - 2 players per cone

- Players dribble toward each other from both sides
- When they meet at the cone they perform a cutting move
- Then they keep dribbling to the end of the cue
- Cut with right, dribble with left foot forward

Progression: cut with left, dribble with right

Coaching Points:

- Sharp cut
- Use other foot to go forward
- Look over the ball and executing the move at the right moment





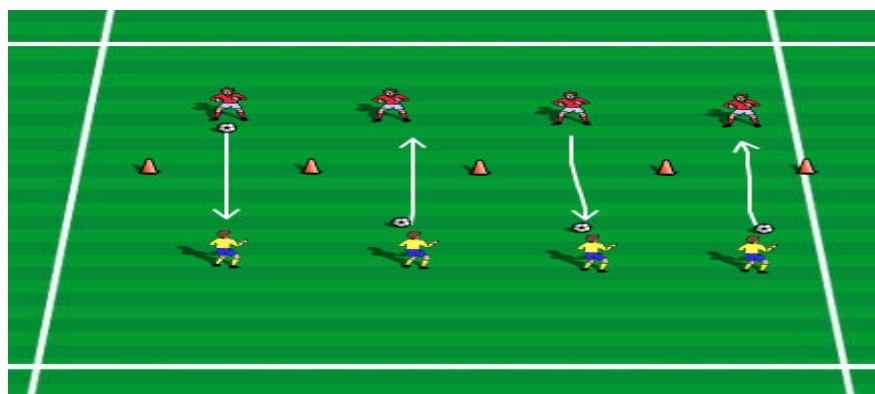
Passing technique 1

Emphasis: Passing

Set-up: - Passing and shooting

Progression: All players stand on the end line with a ball facing the midfield line which is roughly 50 yards away

Coaching Points: Take at least two touches before making the return pass



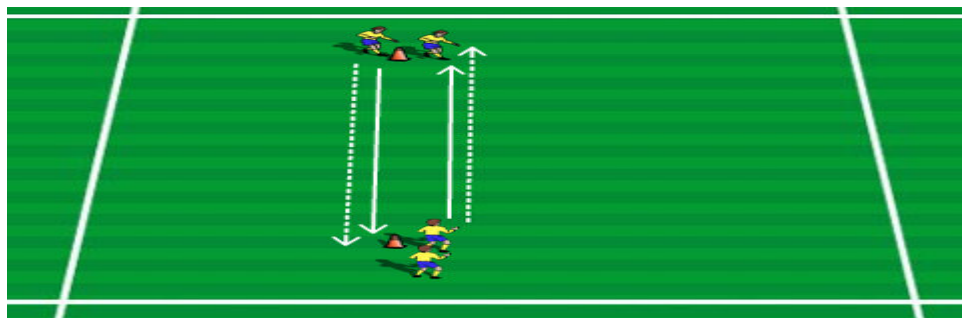
Passing technique 2

Emphasis: Passing

Set-up: - Passing and shooting with positional changes
 - After every pass join the players on the other side
 - Execute from both sides

Progression: All players stand on the end line with a ball facing the midfield line which is roughly 50 yards away

Coaching Points: Control the ball first.





Shin Tag



Emphasis: Changing direction and changing speeds while maintaining control of the ball.

Objective:

Fun! For players to develop a comfort level on the ball while moving and changing directions.

Progression:

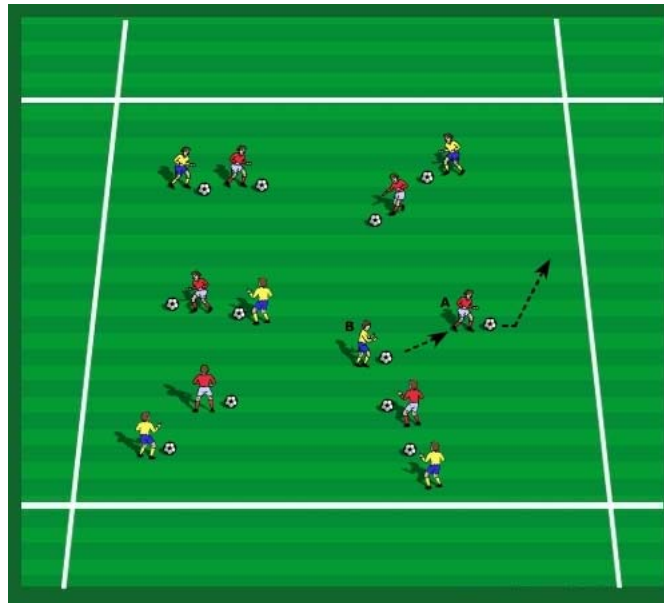
1. Every time a player tags another player on the shin they will receive a point. Every time a player gets tagged they subtract a point.
2. Players need to develop an eye for getting in and landing a tag, while at the same time they must explode away from that area so they won't be tagged.
3. As play continues, change the area that one is tagging to increase the difficulty (Example- Ankle)

Coaching Points:

- Keep close control of the ball
- Eyes up seeing ball and man
- Keep arms out for balance
- Change speeds quickly
- Develop a vision for what's around you



SHADOW ME



Emphasis:

Dribbling under passive pressure.

Set-up:

30 x 30 yard grid.

12-18 players with a ball each.

Two sets of colored bibs.

Players arranged in pairs.

Objective:

Player (A) must try to dribble at speed around the grid to try to lose his shadow (B). Player (B) must dribble at speed to stay close to (A). Alternate roles after approximately 45 seconds. Switch partners after each round.

Progressions:

If player (B) tags player (A), player (A) then becomes the shadow.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage dribbling with the eyes up to scan the field.
- Use as many surfaces of the foot as possible to dribble.



COACH SAYS –SAYS COACH



Emphasis:

Ball control and motor skills

Set-up:

Use the penalty box or the center circle. Grid size depends on the number of players. Each player has a ball.

Objective:

The players must follow the instruction of the coach. For example, if the coach shouts “touch the ball quickly side to side”, then the players must do so. Complete 10 commands successfully and then stretch for a minute. Repeat using different commands.

Progression:

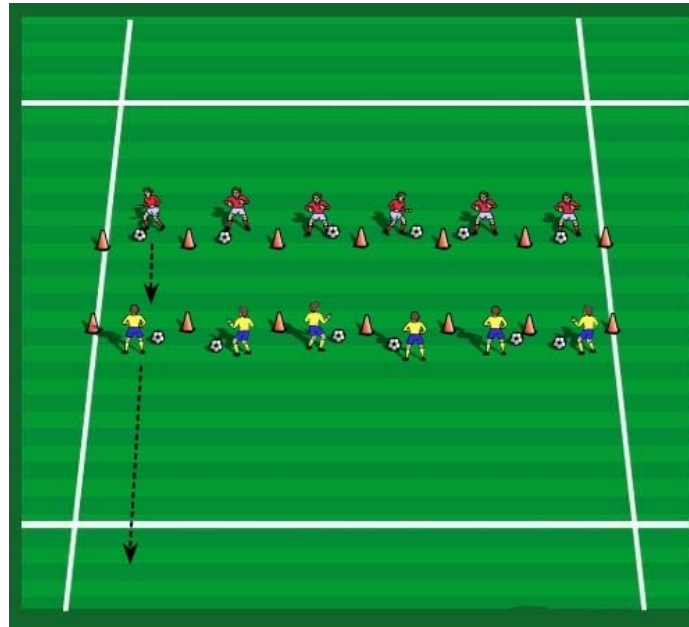
1. Tap the top of the ball with the bottoms of your feet, alternating feet each time.
2. Jump over the ball.
3. Hop around the ball.
4. Skip around the ball.
5. Toss the ball up, hit it with your head, and catch it.
6. Use the bottom of your foot and move it in a circle.
7. Kick the ball in the air, turn, and catch it.

Coaching Points:

- Get the touches right.
- Don't run into anyone.



CHASE THEM DOWN



Emphasis:

Running with the ball at speed, change of speed.

Set-up:

30 x 30 yard grid.

12-18 players with a ball each.

Two sets of colored bibs.

Players arranged in pairs facing each other.

Cones placed to create a 5-yard wide channel between each pair.

All players are performing fast footwork type activities in a stationary space.

Objective:

Coach calls out the color of one of the teams. Example "Reds", at this time the red team must dribble quickly towards their opposite yellow partner. The objective is to tag the yellow player before they can turn and dribble over the end-line.

Progressions:

The team of chasers must try to pass their balls against the legs of their opponents.

Coaching Points:

- Accelerate quickly in the direction you want to go.
- Take longer touches; don't get the ball caught under your feet.



MSA Body Part Dribbling (U/8 Dribbling Game)

Focus: Dribbling Closely

Category: Pressure

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



Description:

- Everybody has a ball and dribbles around the area.
- As they are dribbling coach will shout out a body part that they have to stop it with Arm, Leg, Head etc.
- Every time they stop the ball first time they get a point.
- First to 10 wins.

Author: Peter Langens



MSA North, East, South, West (U/8 Dribbling Game)

Focus: Changing Direction and Cutting.

Category: Dribbling

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



Description:

- Everybody starts with a ball in the middle of the grid.
- Coach shouts "North", "East", "South" or "West" and the players have to go to that side, if he shouts before they get there they have to cut and go to where the coach shouts.
- Players get a point for going in the right direction and doing a cut.

Author: Peter Langens



Keep it in

Emphasis: Speed dribble and cutting the ball

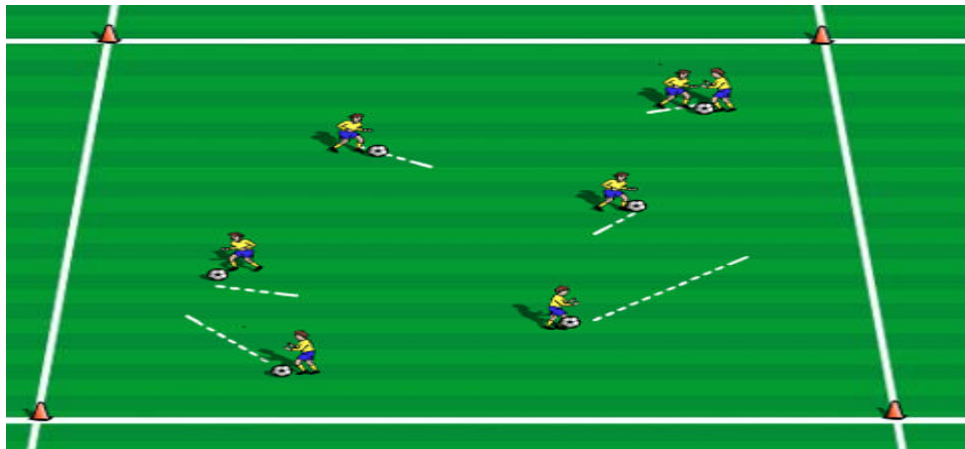
Set-up:

Make a 20x15 yard grid. One defender, without a ball, stands inside that grid. The rest of your team stands on the longer end line with a ball.

Objective:

The attacking players dribble freely inside the gridded area. Start with one defender who applies pressure and tries to win a soccer ball from the attacker, that attacker now becomes defender without a ball.

(process continuously repeated)



Progression:

1. Play 1 minute games, player without a ball after 1 minute, gets a point.
Play to 5 points
2. Must only dribble with the left foot, right foot....

Coaching Points:

- Turning away from pressure
- Accelerate away from pressure
- Moves
- Space
- Immediate chase



MSA Break the Piggy Bank (U/8 Dribbling Game)

Focus: Dribbling, Cutting, Moves, Finding space, Acceleration

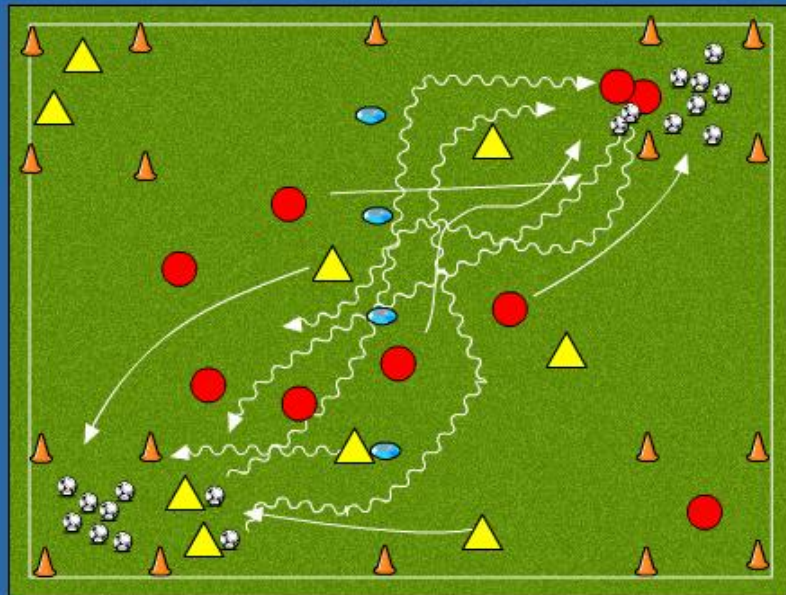
Category: Pressure

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



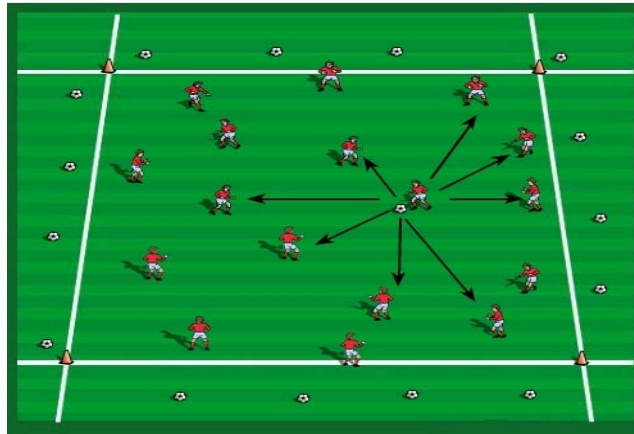
Description:

- Four small squares, with balls placed in opposite corners:
- Divide players into 2 teams.
- Players try to steal the ball from other team, s "Bank". If player gets tagged inside the other team's half, they go to jail.
- To get out of jail, someone from their team must break them out by tagging them without being tagged. Team who gets all the the other team's balls wins.
- Players are safe in own half.
- Start with hands and progress to dribbling.

Author: Peter Langens



GHOST BUSTERS



Emphasis:

Changing direction and changing speeds while maintaining control of the ball.

Set-up:

Grid size should be approximately 20 x 20 yards.

One player starts with a ball.

The rest of the players are randomly spread out within the grid.

All the rest of the balls are placed around the outside of the grid.

Objective:

To have fun while gaining multiple touches on the ball.

Progression:

1. Player with ball (ghost) starts by running with the ball at the rest of the players (Pac-man).
2. After a player has been hit by the ball below the waist they proceed to the outside of the grid and grab a ball. The player must first work on a specific skill before reentering the grid. Example being ball taps or juggling.
3. The last Pac-man left is the winner.

Coaching Points:

- Keep close control of the ball
- Eyes up seeing ball and men
- Be deceptive and utilize the inside and outside of the feet changing direction quickly
- Attack players with the ball



MSA Clean up the Yard (U/6 Passing Game)

Focus: Passing and Ball striking:

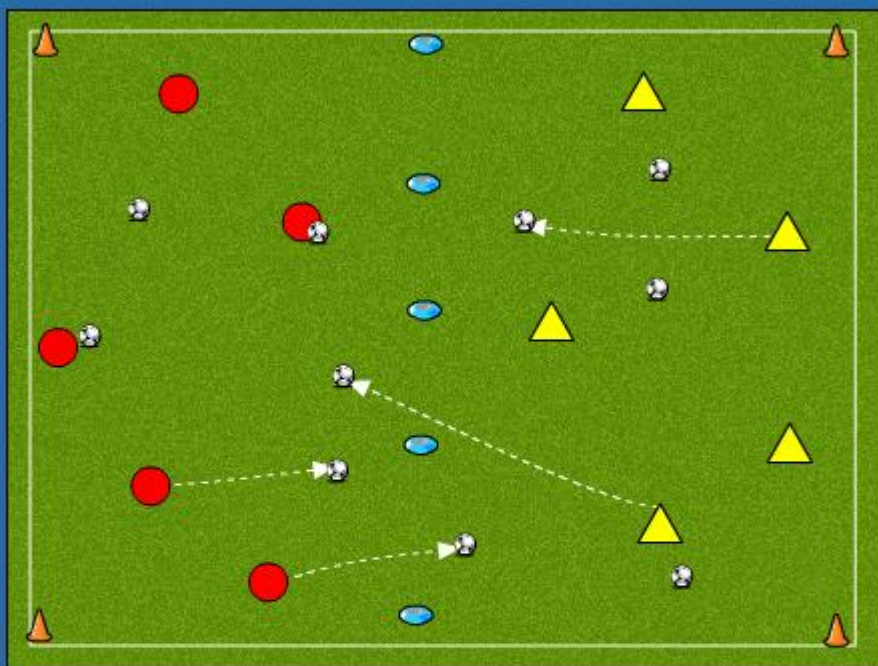
Category: Passing

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



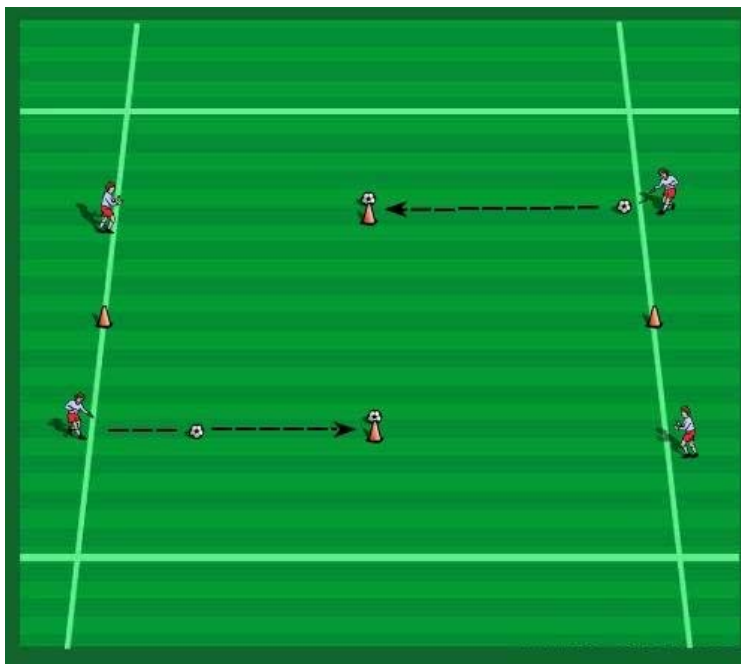
Description:

- Divide into 2 teams:
- Each player with a ball.
- On coach's command, players pass and shoot balls into other team's yard. Stop after 1 minute and count the balls in each yard.
- The team with the cleanest yard is awarded 1 point. Play to 3 points.

Author: Peter Langens



KNOCK IT OFF



Emphasis:

Passing, Receiving

Set-up:

10 x 15 yard grid.

Players work in pairs with 2 balls.

One of the balls is placed on top of a disc cone halfway (7.5 yards) inside the grid.

Objective:

Players pass the ball back and forth trying to knock the ball off the centre disc cone. Players must receive the ball with 1 touch and pass with the second touch.

Progressions:

Increase length of grid.

Coaching Points:

- Lock ankle, strike with inside of foot.
- Receive the ball and take into space with first touch.
- Non-kicking foot must be in line with the target.



MSA Ring around the ball (U/6/8 Passing Game)

Focus: Inside of the foot passing: Head down, toes up-heel down, ankle in locked position.

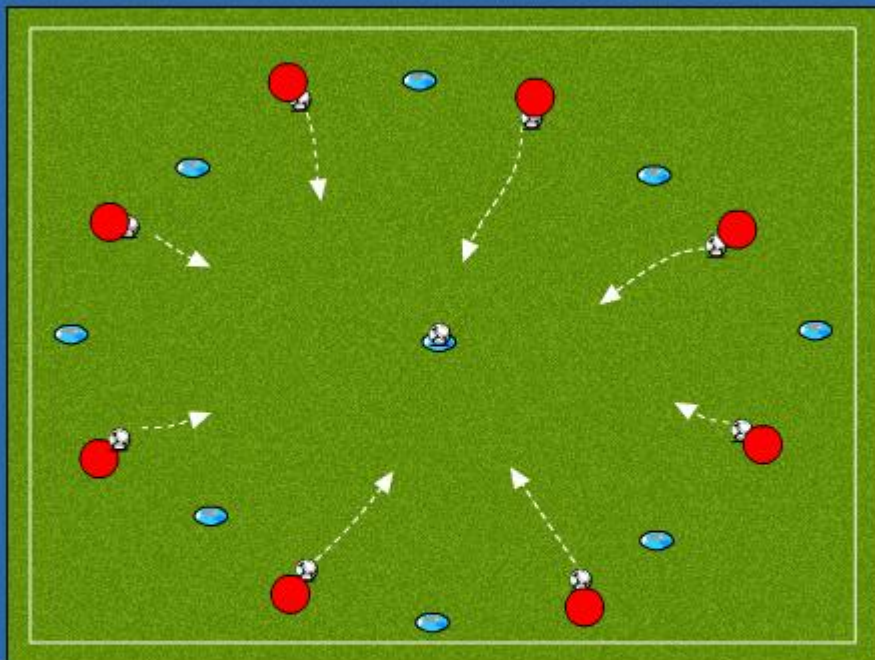
Category: Passing

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



Description:

- Circle of cones 10 yds around ball :
- Each player with a ball
- On coach's command, players attempt to knock ball off center disc. One point is awarded to player who knocks ball off first. Play to 3 points
- Incorporate dribbling, turns and passing.

Author: Peter Langens



MSA Rambo (U/6 Dribbling Game)

Focus: Dribbling and keeping ball close

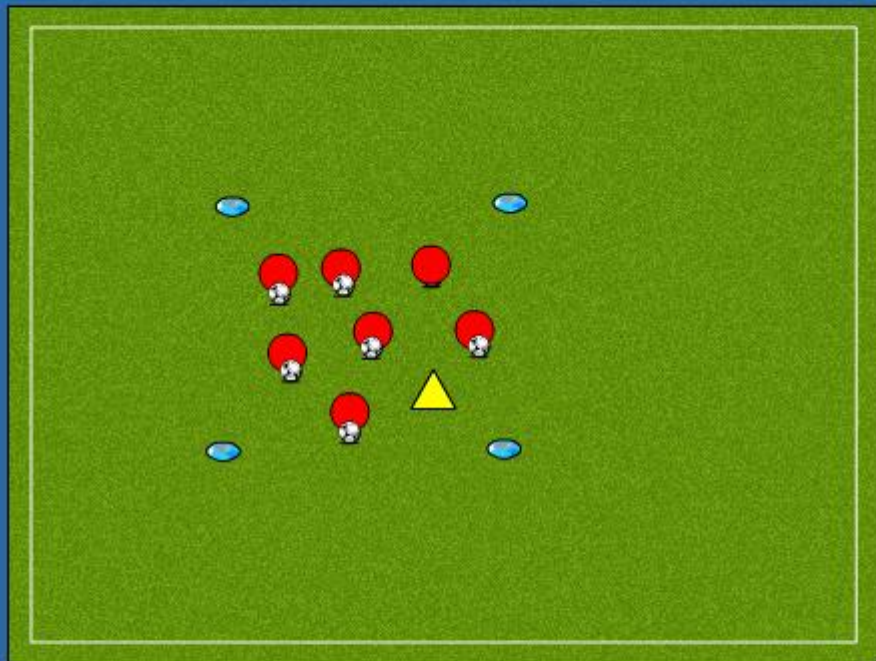
Category: Pressure

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



Description:

- Every player has 1 ball and dribbles in the closed off area
- A player without a ball and with a pinney (= Rambo) has to try to shoot every ball out of the area
- When your balls gets kicked out of the area, you go get them and join the game again
- 'Rambo' cannot hunt on the same player for more than 4 seconds at the time
- Change the 'Rambo' after 1 minute
- How many balls did he manage to kick out of the area? Who did not lose his ball?

Author: Peter Langens



MSA Golf (U/8 Passing Game)

Focus: Passing

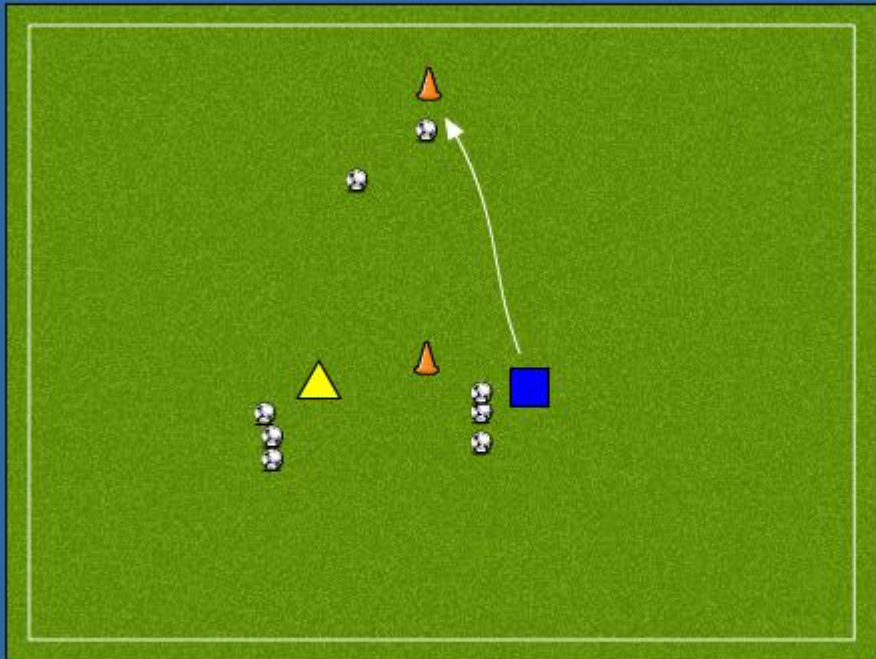
Category: Passing

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



Description:

- Make pairs.
- Both players will have 3 balls. They will shoot the ball and will try to get it as close as possible to the cone.
- The player whose balls is closest to the cone wins

Author: Peter Langens



MSA Passing War (U/8/10 Passing and Receiving Game)

Focus: Passing and Receiving

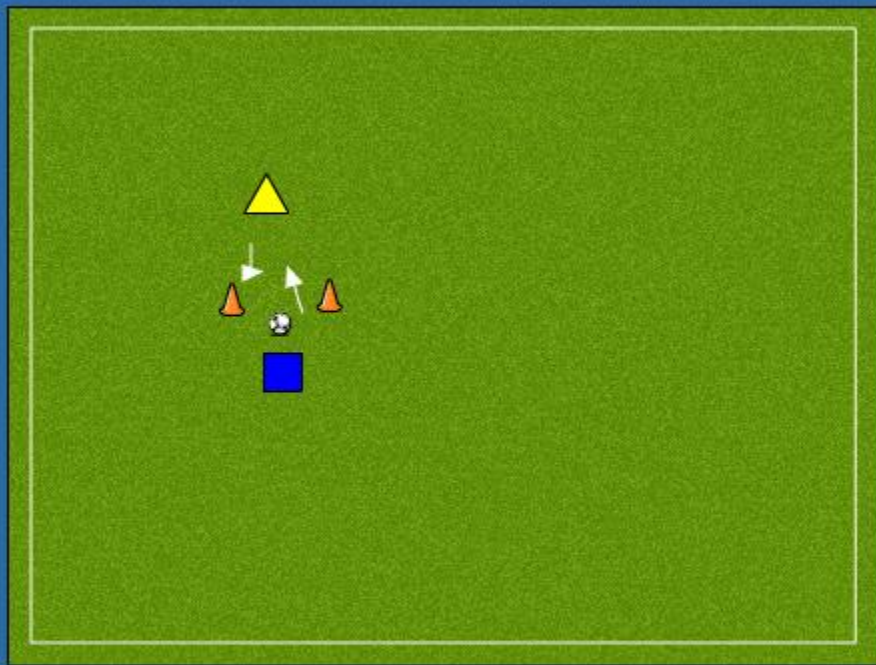
Category: Passing

Phase:

Age:

Theme: Possession

Number of players: 12



Description:

- Player "A" vs Player "B".
- Pass through the cones by only having 2 touches.
- If ball does not go through the cones then other player gets point.
- First player to 10 wins.

Author: Peter Langens



Four versus Four

The 4 versus 4 small-sided game is a product of the Dutch Soccer School. The 4 vs. 4 was implemented after the former National coach Rinus Michels and his staff observed that the youth were no longer spending their free time in the street playing soccer, so they began thinking of how youth coaches could spend their time coaching the players more efficiently. To implement all the advantages of street soccer they introduced the 4v4 format. The basic idea is that players learn by discovering the purpose, and aim of the game.

Contents:

1. Why 4v4
2. The role of the coach
3. The basic form 4v4
4. Variations on the basic form:

Why is 4v4 an excellent training tool and for the youngest a great game?

In real match children have the option of passing the ball forwards, square or backwards, 4v4 provides the minimum numbers needed for all of the principles of play.

One player is up top for penetration, two are needed for width and one holds back to supply depth. Three cannot do this; one of the key factors will be left out. While 3v3 is a valuable tool for young children in learning technique, it is limited in its use as a tool for the positional game. If you have 10 players the extra one can become the goalkeeper. If you have 11 players the 11th player can be a neutral player.

Four vs. four is the optimum number for teaching in small-sided games. It has all of the necessary elements without any duplication.

In 4v 4 the responsibilities are very clear. All tasks are covered and none are shared which keeps things simple. As a warm-up, most children come to a practice from school. They may have just spent 7 hours in a structured and controlled environment under adult supervision. A little time to let loose and play might be just what they want. The small scale encourages short runs and passes and serves as a dynamic warm-up. 4v4 offers an excellent bridge between where they have been and where they are.

Small-sided games allow the players more touches on the ball. That means, not only does the player have to deal physically with the ball more often but has to be involved more mentally. The player's concentration must be greater because the action will be quicker; there is nowhere to hide. This is an important element in developing the playing mentality.

4 v4 is the smallest way of playing the game without losing any of the ingredients that makes soccer what it is:

- The ball
- Opponents
- Team-mates
- Space
- Pressure
- Rules
- Time
- Direction
- Scoring goals



Because of the number of players, there are always possibilities to play deep, wide or backwards. You are always confronted with match situations. Children recognize the different situations that are constantly repeated. Recognizing these situations is important to be able to make the right decisions.

Don't over coach. Experience teaches the coach when to step in. Over coaching kills the game and ruins the fun. Avoid language that the children don't understand or don't need. Slogans and mottos work well. Over coaching hinders the development of concentration. Constant stoppages relieve the pressure that is necessary for developing the proper mentality.

Coach those that need coaching. Mass explanations generally waste time and fall on deaf ears. Addressing comments to the parties involved is much more effective and efficient. After all it's their problem.

Don't argue against success. If a team has just scored a goal don't try to tell them how to do it better. In objective based training it's the result that counts. Wait for the opportunity when the problem presents itself, then it is real.

Ask questions avoid statements. If I say it they tend to doubt it, if they say it, it's true. Get them to tell you what is wrong and how to fix it. They can't argue against themselves. Also, by asking them questions they have to think for the answer as opposed to waiting for it to be given to them. They are an active part of the problem solving.

Bring the game to life. The color of the coach, enthusiasm, humor, emotion and timing all play a part in making the practice enjoyable.

Think of three stages. First, get the games going. Give just enough direction and instruction to start play, boundaries, goals, any rules specific to the game. They can learn the game by playing the game. This introduction might take a whole practice. Next, what are the main mistakes? Do they understand the soccer problem? Can their present TIC solve it? If it can't, introduce new answers. Finally, by fine tuning you can introduce new demands that require new solutions.

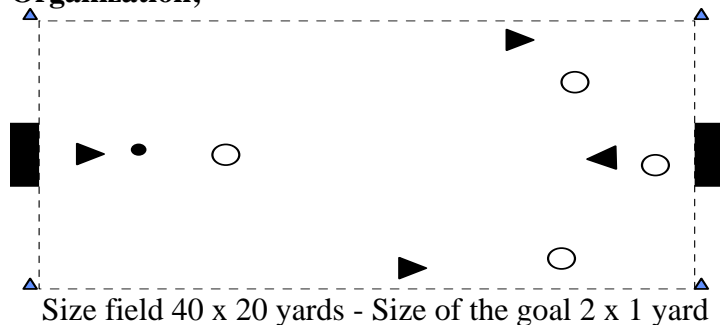


Basic form 4v4

Description: 4 v4 with 2 small goals without a goalkeeper.

The teams try and score through combination play. Players have to check in and out in order to receive the ball. Always play in a diamond formation where the defender stays for the pass back and supports the 2 midfielders. Midfielders give support to the striker and are trying to get open by making runs. Striker is the target player for the defender and has to be open to receive the long ball.

Organization;



Remarks: Ball Possession; Build up, create chances and score!

- Make as much space as possible → wide and deep
- Think deep and play deep as soon as possible
- Otherwise use the wide player and then deep
- Ask for the ball at the right moment; eye contact
- Keep the organization intact
- Wait for the right moment to play / ask for the long pass
- Adjust your position when you have played the ball
- Take initiative, anticipate and think ahead
- Take on defenders and try to score as quickly as possible

Ball Possession Opponent; harass opponent in build up, regain possession of the ball, prevent opponent from scoring!!

- Mark closely to the ball and attack the ball at the right moment
- Give cover to your teammates further away from the ball and constantly choose the right position
- Keep opponent in front of you and block shots at goal
- Make space as small as possible; pressure, drop back and close in
 - Pressure opponents position play and force them to play / dribble wide
 - Prevent the long pass and pressure the ball

Losing the ball

- Prevent long pass
- Pressure the ball
- Keep possession

Transition, changing possession; Quickness!!

Winning the ball

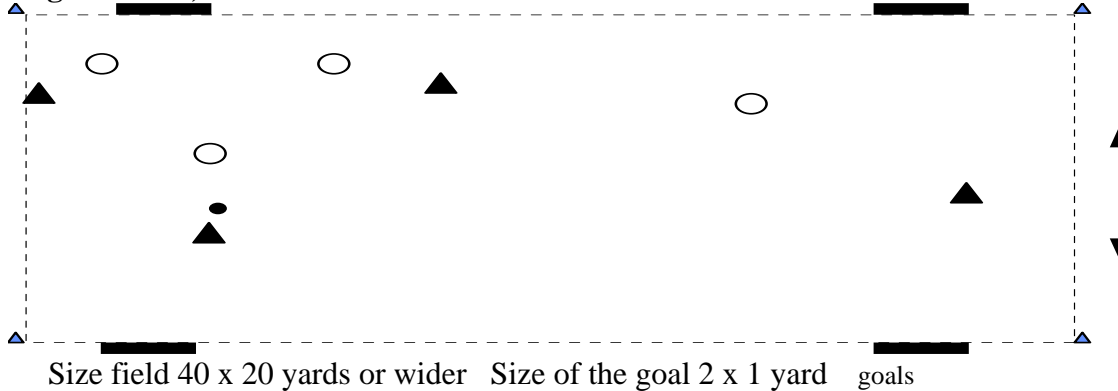
- Play deep as soon as possible
- Support



4v4; Passing game

Description: The teams try and score by passing through one of the small goals. Create scoring chances by quickly switching the play from one side of the field to the other. Emphasis on passing, communication and quick transition

Organization;



Size field 40 x 20 yards or wider Size of the goal 2 x 1 yard goals

Remarks BP, BPO, T

Ball Possession;

- You must play the ball quickly; think ahead and do not use more than 2 touches on the ball.
- Wing players have to be alert to receive the ball and go to goal as quick as possible.
- The deepest player has to get open to receive the long pass or a pass from players on the sides.
- Communication is most important next to passing; eye contact, selling a “dummy”.

Ball Possession Opponent;

- Mark closely and attack the ball at the right moment (this is an important coaching moment).
- Pressure opponent into making mistakes.
- Prevent scoring by good defending and no fouls.

Transition, changing possession; Quickness!

Losing the ball

- All players behind the ball.
- Prevent direct shooting on goal.

Winning the ball

- Communication between player that runs deep and player on the ball.

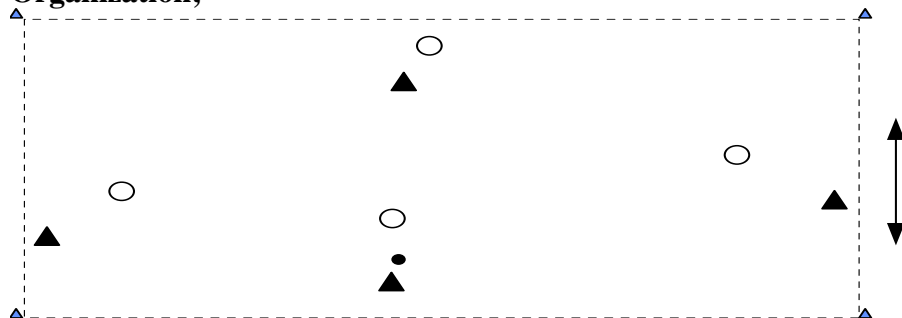


4v4; dribbling game

Description: 4 v 4 line soccer

The teams try and score by dribbling the ball over the goal line. With good position play you can create more scoring chances or 1v1 situations. The defenders must choose the right position between their opponents and the goal line. As a team you have to force opponent to play wide. Most important skills during this form are; Technique, Dribble, Passing inside foot, Trapping and controlling the ball, sliding and tackle.

Organization;



Size field 40 x 20 yards - Use cones to mark the goal line

Remarks BP, BPO, T

Ball Possession;

- You must play the ball quickly by positional play.
- Playing the ball directly is important to create scoring chances.
- Take initiative; dribble and take your opponent on.
- Change direction of play to create space.
- Vision and good ball skills are important elements.

Ball Possession Opponent;

- Mark closely and attack the ball at the right moment.
- Prevent scoring by good defending and no fouls.
- Give cover to your teammates further away from the ball and constantly choose the right position.
- Keep opponent in front of you always keep your eye on the ball.
- Pressure opponent and force them to play / dribble wide.

Transition, changing possession; Quickness!!

Losing the ball

- Quick transition
- Defend on the ball

Winning the ball

- Take advantage of lacking defenders.