

Super Mod Soccer Coach's Handbook

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Coaching U-5, 6, 7 & 8 Year Old Players

Dribbling Activities

Body Parts*

Players dribble in free space and the coach shouts a part of the body that each player has to use to stop the ball - -e.g. sole of the foot, knee, belly etc. Allow players to choose the body part.

Ball Exchange*

Players dribble in a confined space and the coach gives the command “switch,” each player steps on their ball to stop it and then quickly races off to dribble a different ball. Coach can take off one or two balls to add quickness and decision making.

Red Light / Green Light*

Players dribble in free space and the coach gives the command “Red Light” to stop and Green Light to go. Vary the time of commands and encourage players to dribble at different pace and direction. Can be played going in one direction across a grid as well.

Where Am I going?*

Players dribble in a confined space. Coach numbers corners of grid one, two, three, and four. Coach shouts a number and all players race to that corner. Vary corners to encourage change of direction, change of pace.

Traffic Exchange*

Players start in two outlined areas facing each other. The coach shouts “green light” and players from area one dribble to area two and players from area two dribble to area one. Encourage players to dribble with the head up, dribble with speed and control. Variation: groups make round trip back to starting position.

Traffic Exchange II*

Same game as above except now players are allowed to kick opponent’s ball away while maintaining possession of their own ball.

Monster Walk*

All players have a ball and try to dribble from one end of the field to the other. Once they reach the end, they wait until the signal is given to cross the field again. The monster, or the player who is “it,” can only walk to chase the dribblers and try to kick their ball off the field. When dispossessed, the players become Monsters and walk after the remaining players. The monsters soon figure out how to work together to capture the remaining players.

Dribbling Relays

Players are grouped in 2’s or 3’s along the side line of a small sided field. One player in each group dribbles their ball across the space to a cone (as do other groups) and returns “tagging” the next player in their group. Players are asked to run with the ball with a certain body part (right foot only, left-foot, right-foot etc). Have 10 races, mix up the groups 2-3 times.

Follow the Leader

The team is organized into two groups lead by the coach who runs around the field. As with other activities like this, the leader should execute a variety of movements (tossing ball above head, bouncing the ball and catching, rolling the ball, running with the ball at the feet etc) with the group following the leader. The leader should be replaced by the 2nd player in line etc.

Obstacle Course

Cones, flags, marking disks can be laid around the field in a pattern or course. Players start out running “through the course” and then running with the ball (tossing ball above head, bouncing the ball and catching, rolling the ball, running with the ball at the feet etc)

*Items above taken from “1999 Youth Module Training Course, Level One.” Federal Way: WSYSA.

Dribbling Games

Note: in the games below, play should be confined to the space found in the 20 X 30 yard 3 V 3 field.

Game 1: SHARK

All players dribble in the designated area except 1-2 players (who are “sharks”). Players are “minnows” who dribble the ball in the square while trying to keep the ball from the “sharks.” Anytime a Shark touches a Minnow’s ball, the minnow is out and goes to “shark heaven” (a designated area) and waits for the next game.

Game 2: BLOB

Dribbler in square, coach starts out as “blob” moving around square. Whenever a dribbler has ball touched or stolen by the blob, or exits the square, that player joins hands with the blob and pursues other dribblers.

Game 3: TOP DOG OR KING/QUEEN OF SQUARE

Players dribble in square. On command from the coach, each dribbler tries to keep his/her ball while kicking other players’ ball outside the grid. The last dribbler in the square is “Top Dog,” or “King/Queen of the square.”

Game 4: PAC MAN

Set up a small box in middle of grid. Have coach and 2-3 players in box without a ball. Players dribble in square. On command, ghosts come out of the box and try to take ball away from dribbler. Players are frozen when ghosts catch them. Dribblers are “Pac-people.” Last 3-4 Pac-people get to be ghosts in the next game.

Game 5: ESCAPE FROM MONTESANO

Players line up on one edge of the practice grid. Their task is to escape to the other side of “Montesano” without being caught by the “Sheriffs” who are racing to get them. Make sure dribblers stop once they get to the other side of grid. Game ends when all players have been caught. Players go to jail (spot where they were caught) and wait for end of game.

Game 6: INVADE THE MOON

The Grid is the moon. Nominate 2-3 “Moonies” who try to take (touch) dribblers (called astronauts) ball. Players dribble and shield ball from moonies. To keep from getting caught, astronauts can go to one of two space stations (small areas marked out- -coach should only allow two astronauts in any one space station at a time.

Game 7: BUFFALO STAMPEDE

Divide team into two groups. Place buffaloes (players with ball) at one end of the playing grid. Place 2-3 players at opposite end of grid without soccer ball—these players are the buffalo hunters, who try to dispossess each buffalo as they move across the grid. The game starts when the coach yells “buffalo roam.” Buffalo then move towards the hunters. The coach then yells “buffalo stampede,” in which case each player sprints to the end of the grid or “buffalo turn,” in which case each player turns and dribbles back to their starting end of the playing grid. Buffaloes caught become buffalo “doo-doo” and attempt to capture other free buffalo that come by.

Game 8: DROP IN THE BUCKET

In a small grid, all but 2 players dribble. The assigned 2 players (Pail Carriers, as in pail of water), try to drop their ball onto the ball of each dribbler. The Pail Carriers must throw their ball from head height towards each dribbler’s ball. Take caution to demonstrate this dropping technique so that the aim of the Pail Carrier is only on the ball of the dribbler and not the dribbler him / herself. When a dribbler has had their ball “dropped” by the Pail Carriers, they become stationary PC’s and help the PC’s get the remaining dribblers by dropping their ball onto dribbler’s ball from a seated or kneeling position.

Passing Exercises & Practices

PASSING STAPLES—THAT ARE SURE TO SCORE

Players Pass in move with a partner around the 3-a-side Field.

- 1) Pairs alternate a pass with the right foot, pass with the left as they pass and move around the field.
- 2) Receiving partner lets ball run through legs and dribbles away with ball, then passes ball to partner who repeats movement.
- 3) Receiving partner receives pass then dribbles at partner—players simply change places, receiving player then passes ball back to partner and the pair change position as before.
- 4) One player plays every passes in two touches, while one player must play the ball back in one touch—softly, not blasted. Coach switches roles after one minute.

NOTE: Pairs must be encouraged to “pass and move to a new place on every pass.” Passes should be coached for: accuracy, and pacing. Passes should be on the ground—players will hit each other if balls are played in the air.

Marbles

Each player dribbles a ball in a designated space. On coach’s command, “Marbles,” Players try to pass their ball into someone else’s. Have each player count “how many” touches they could make in a given time period (60 seconds). Set a team goal and play several rounds.

Pass ‘n’ Move to a New Place

Group players in pairs. Have them pass and move in the 3 v 3 field. The key is to say to the passer, “after you have passed the ball, where can you go to help your partner?” Show the passer how to play the ball into the space where his / her partner is running. Begin this exercise with right footed passes only and then encourage passing with either foot. Set a time period (60 seconds): how many passes can each group get in that time period.

PASSING GAMES

Game 1: Cave Man

All but 2-3 players dribble in the square. The dribblers are the “cave men/women.” The defenders are “dinosaurs.” Dinosaurs try to take the dribblers ball. When a dribbler is caught, he/she spreads legs apart and holds ball in hand. Other Cavepeople try to pass their ball through the legs of the frozen caveperson. After several games like this, play this game with partners passing to each other. Encourage passing quality and movement to support.

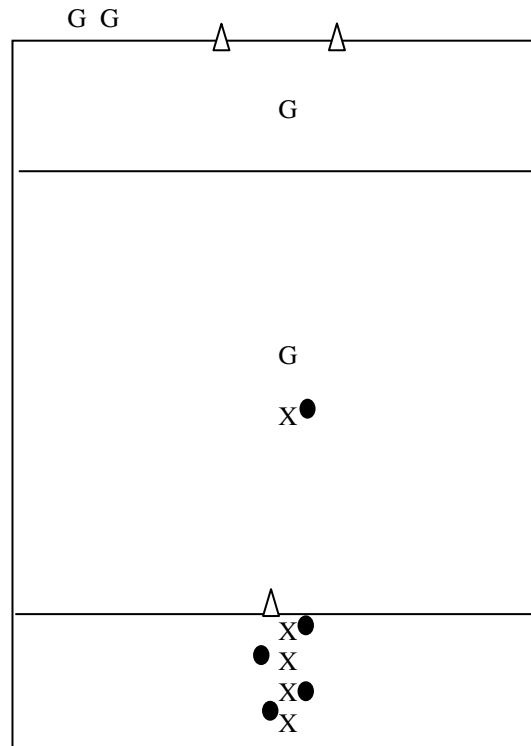
Game 2: STAR FIGHTER

Place four players on each side of the grid. The players are space stations. Their job is to provide support for the Star Fighters (dribblers) who are keeping their ball from 2-3 Space Pirates. Encourage Star Fighters to only pass to an open Space Station. After the Star Fighter pass to a Space Station, they should move to a new space and receive pass from Space Station.

Game 3: TOP GUN

As above, but put star fighters in pairs. Each pair now passes and moves, while in their jet of course! Instead of Space Stations, have two roving coaches who are Aircraft Carriers that support the groups of two as they pass and move. Create 2-3 enemy missiles who try to take the ball from each pair.

Donkey Kong



Organization & Coaching Points

Team is organized into two groups, the “Marios” (X’s in diagram) and “Gorillas” (G in diagram).

- Activity begins with x’s dribbling into space and trying to get ball past Gorilla in first box and then scoring on Gorilla in the 2nd box.
- If the G in the first box disposes X, the X player retrieves ball and gets in the back of the line and tries again.
- The X player gets 1 point every time he / she dribbles past the first Gorilla and scores 5 points if a goal is scored on the Gorilla in the goal.
- If the Gorilla in goal saves the shot from X, the ball is rolled to the side, retrieved by the X player, who returns to line.
- Each game lasts 2 minutes.
- Game is demanding and “G’s” can be changed out half-way through the game.

Options

- Game can be played in pairs (to create a 2 v 1) to go to goal.
- The G in front of goal can be allowed to be the goalkeeper (use hands) or a 2nd defender.

Noah's Lark

Objective:

- To combine the attack and defense in a challenging game.
- To begin to understand the cooperation required in 2 vs.2 play.



Organization:

- Area 30 x 20 yards with goals eight yards wide.
- 6 vs.6 (or whatever numbers), with partners assigned on each team: each partner given a number from 1 to 3.
- Coach shouts number (1-3) and rolls ball into play.
- The two pairs with that number come out of goal to compete against each other.
- Remaining players must stay on goal line and defend goal without using hands.
- Goal can only be scored below knee height.
- When ball goes out of play, coach can immediately serve in another to same pairs - or allow pairs to go back to goal line.
- Ball can be played back to "goalkeepers," who must play ball back with no more than two touches.
- Do not let "goalkeepers" move out off goal line. Penalty kick from six yards out if they do.

Teaching:

- When defending, one player should go to player with ball.
- Supporting player must watch other attacker, mark the dangerous space and cover partner all at the same time.
- Coach should encourage dribbling, passing and shooting to the "team" in possession.
- Encourage "goalkeepers" to defend as a wall together, and to move as a unit to block shooting angle.

Target:

One team vs. the other, also pairs to keep a count of goals scored and conceded.

Numbers Game

Objective:

- To develop good attacking and defending skills in a "fun game" situation.
- To use 1 vs 1 and 2 v 2 (and other combinations) in the learning process.



Organization:

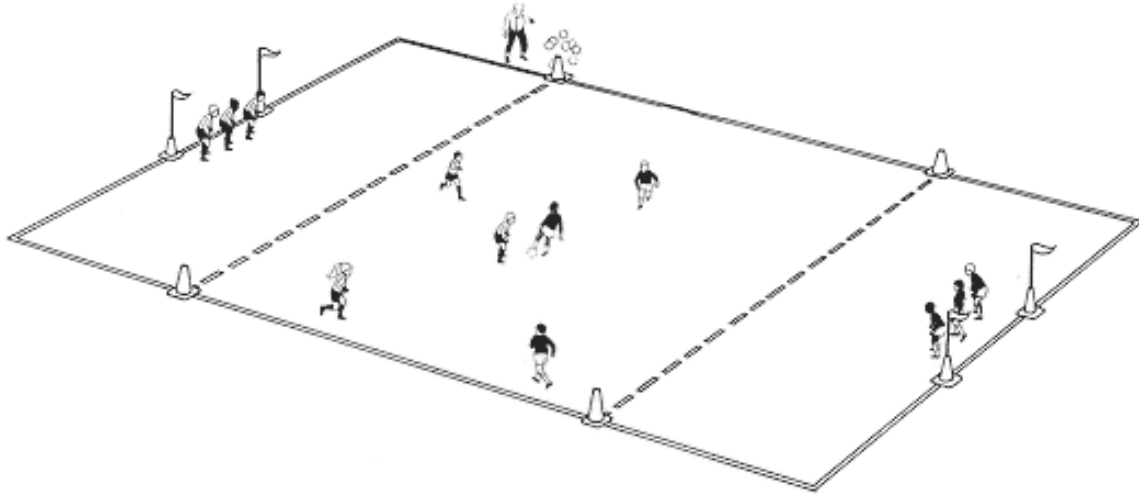
- Use the 3-a-side Micro Soccer® field.
- Widen the goals.
- All players start on goal line.
- Each player on each team is given a number.
- Coach calls out number (e.g., "Three!") and rolls the ball into play.
- The two opposing number "Three" players leave the goal line immediately and compete for possession for a maximum of 20 seconds.
- Coach keeps some balls by him and so can roll another ball into play if one is kicked out.
- Call two numbers - "One!" and "Three!" - to create 2 vs 2.
- Remaining players defend goal without using hands and they must stay within one yard of goal line. Goals only count below knee height.
- If one player fails to respond to the number, a penalty - a free shot at open goal from half-way line - is called to keep players on their toes and make it fun.

Teaching:

- If organization is working, let them play, enjoy the game and learn by trial and error.
- Encourage attackers to take on opponents and Go for the Goal!
- Defenders should stay on their feet as long as possible, rather than slide-tackling.
- Defenders must try to run back and recover even when beaten.

Target:

- To outscore opposing team.



Change Soccer

Objective

To involve every player in a fun 2 vs 2 or 3 vs 3 game that emphasizes co-operation and skill development.

Organization

- Group is split into two; if odd number, coach joins in or plays the strongest squad a player short.
- In the example shown, three players from each team play a normal game.
- Three players on each team are collective goalkeepers; positioned no more than two yards off each goal line, they are not allowed to handle ball.
- Coach shouts "Change!" and on-field teams run back to goal line, without touching the ball again, to become the goalkeepers.
- Goalkeeping teams become the on-field teams and move quickly to win possession.
- Coach shouts "Change!" at any time.
- Make goals wide enough so that it's not too difficult to score.
- Any major infraction means a free shot from the half-way line, with no goalkeepers.

Teaching Points

- Encourage players to pass frequently in order to create scoring chances.
- Encourage goalkeeping team to move sideways together, as a wall.
- Defenders should help each other and stay on their feet as much as possible.

Target

- To outscore the opposition.

Chip n' Dale

Objective

To develop in a 3 vs 3 game attacking cooperation and chipping techniques, as well as good collective defending positions relative to attackers.



Organization

- Area 35 x 25 yards.
- Mark 1/2 circle zone at ends.
- 3 vs 3, with team in possession attempting to chip ball into teammates' hands in zone.
- To score, ball cannot bounce before reaching zone; ball must be caught by player in zone without catcher stepping outside.
- Coach serves balls and changes players from zone to field every three to four minutes.

Coaching Points

- Attackers have to create angle or space to be able to chip successfully.
- Passing/dribbling/faking are methods to create an opening for chipped "shot."
- Defenders must send one man to hustle player with ball to prevent easy chip.
- Other defenders must correctly support hustler to prevent pass, giving clear chance for attacker to chip.

Challenge

- To out hustle and outscore opposition.

Practice Progression

The Four and Five Year Old

<p>The Age: U-4 & 5: The child at this age likes to be active in his / her time. Many children at this age struggle with “the big game, but enjoy kicking, running, throwing catching etc. If the activity is too strenuous or filled with too much anxiety, the player this age generally decompresses on the spot and often needs mom or dad around for some assurance.</p>		
<p>Practice Time and Activities: a 40-45 minute practice period usually maxes the child’s interest (for the moment). It is important that the players all start at the same time to coordinate a series of 5-6 activities during the practice period. The team coach needs to be flexible in adjusting to the number of players involved though as late arrivals or kids who may need a break during the practice will have an influence on moment and on the practice.</p>		
Suggested Practice Routine		
Practice Component	Time	Example
Warm-up	5 min	Players begin practice with a movement activity in the square. A “Simon Say’s” or “Show Me” activity works well (e.g. “Simon says to run forward...Simon say’s stop, Simon say’s run backwards.”) This activity can be with a ball and involve manipulation with the hands, feet and other body parts.
Activity One	5 min	Pick an activity from the coaching manual (i.e. Red-light, green light) Play this activity with and without a ball; combine players into pairs and have them play together.
Break	5 min	Important, especially in warmer weather
Activity Two	5 min	Pick a second activity from the coaching manual (i.e. Ball Exchange) and have the players “show you” how they can run with the soccer ball. Starting and stopping can be difficult, so keep this in mind as the player may try to use his / her hands (show alternatives).
Dribbling Game	8 min	Pick a dribbling game from the glossary (ie “Shark or escape) This is where you have to observe the player(s) closely: some will have trouble keeping the ball in and out of play. Good idea to use parents watching practice as a “human fence” to keep the kids on your field.
Game	10-12 min	Organize your team into two groups and play 3 v 3. Concentrate on direction (which way does each team go), when the ball goes out of play what happens, what happens after a goal etc.

Coaching this age: The Important “B’s’

- Be prepared for high energy
- Be prepared to be flexible
- Be prepared to adjust
- Be prepared to show what you want quickly...words are lost easily in translation: a picture still shows the best picture
- Be prepared to show joy, the more the “child” in you can come out, the better

Practice Progression

The Six & Seven Year Old

The Age: U-6 & 7: The child at this age thrives on wanting to be active and has begun to understand the difference between “free play” and play with a little more structure. The individual player may still struggle to “see” the team concept even though he or she may understand that there is a membership in a team (i.e. “I play for the ‘Blue Tigers.’”) Dribbling is still the dominate soccer skill used. Passing does come, but a much slower rate than playing on the dribble.

Practice Time and Activities: a 55-60 minute practice period usually maxes the child’s interest (for the moment). It is important that the players all start at the same time to coordinate the practice plan effectively. Practices at this age should involve the team beginning practice with a warm-up that has some fun movement with and without the ball and possibly incorporate a dribbling game from the previous week. The practice progression should then use a series of dribbling activities that culminate in a 3 v 3 game to finish the practice.

Suggested Practice Routine

Practice Component	Time	Example
Warm-up	12 min	Players should start the warm-up with some running with and without the ball in different areas of their small field; then the coach should select an activity from the coach’s handbook (i.e. traffic exchange) and incorporate that into the practice. It is a good idea to play one round of a dribbling game from the previous week (“what did we learn” from “Pac Man” last week?)
Game One	10 min	Pick a game from the dribbling or passing game list and play 3-4 times so everyone gets an opportunity to take on the “dribbling / passing / defending role.”
Break	2-3 min	
Game Two	10 min	Pick a 2nd game from the dribbling or passing game list and play 3-4 times so everyone gets an opportunity to take on the “dribbling / passing / defending role.” These games follow a progression and it’s best to do the “easiest first, harder second.” (Play Escape before Buffalo Stampede).
Break	2-3 min	
Game	15-20 min	Organize your team into two groups and play 3 v 3. Be mindful of the amount of time the ball is in play. Changing your players around at the 2-2:30 minute level is helpful.

Coaching the Age--The Important B’s:

- Be prepared to work with a variety of players in your team: they all “love” soccer, but interpret it differently through varied ability and attention spans.
- Be prepared to add or eliminate some details in your plan; there is a fine line between too much information and not enough free play.
- Be prepared to ask players to practice a little on their own in their backyard with a sibling or parent. This extra bit of attention is helpful in aiding players’ development and will make your practice just that little bit better.