



Johnston - Urbandale
Soccer Club
U8

Coaching Curriculum

JUSC U8 Theme:



Look After the Ball.

U8 Topic Finder

Click topic and jump there.

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U8 Coaches Curriculum Template

U8 Coaching Introduction

Let's keep the soccer experience fun, enjoyable and foster a desire to play! This love of the game keeps people in the game for a lifetime. Six, seven and eight years old are golden learning years for our young soccer players, the perfect time to develop their ability to **"look after the ball!"**

U8 Coaching Overview

Six, 7 and 8 year olds are starting to understand what it means to play a game. They are beginning to cooperate more with their teammates. In fact, they will now recognize that they even have teammates because they will occasionally pass the ball to a teammate purposefully. Some U-8 players will have played for more than a season; however, this does not mean these players are ready for the mental demands of tactical team soccer. True, they do have an idea of the game with regard to scoring or preventing goals, but the emphasis still needs to be placed on the individual's ability to **"look after the ball"**. They are still there to have fun, and because some of the players may be new to soccer, it is imperative that activities are geared toward individual success and participation. The coach must set up numerous activities where the players are together, but still involved in both individual and partner play.

Why these are the goals for U8 coaches

There can be differences now in the motor, cognitive and social development capabilities of the players in this age group. Individual and small group play, especially pairs, is essential for both touches on the ball and learning at their own pace.

Qualities of a good U8 coach

Sensitive teacher, facilitator, patient, enthusiastic, imaginative, able to demonstrate, understand technique and FUN!

U8 Coaches and their players

Goals coaches should have for their U8 players (4 pillars of the game)

Technique: Ball dribbling and manipulation using all surfaces of the foot, receiving ground balls with the inside of the foot, shooting with the inside/ instep of the foot, show that passing is another option to dribbling and shooting with the instep and the inside of the foot.

Fitness: Agility, eye-foot and eye-hand coordination, balance, leaping, bounding, tumbling, catching, throwing, pulling, pushing, warm-up activities and movement education.

Psychology: Encourage working in pairs, sportsmanship, positive parental involvement, how to play, emotional management, creativity, dynamic activities, participation of all players and a safe and fun environment. There is still a short attention span unless the player has peaked (keep interest high). Like to show what they can do – encourage trying new things. Developing self-esteem – activities should foster positive feedback and attainable positive success.

Tactics: Promote decision making and problem solving. Show that passing is another option to dribbling.

Qualities of U8 players

Like to show skills – need approval

- Beginning to develop some physical confidence (most can ride a bicycle)
- Lack sense of pace – go flat out, chasing the ball until they drop
- Still in motion – twitching, jerking, scratching and blinking are all second nature physical movements
- Still into running, jumping, climbing and rolling
- Boys and girls are still quite similar in physical and psychological development
- Attention span is a bit longer than the U-6 age group
- Developing playmates
- More into imitation of the big guys (sports heroes becoming important)
- Still very sensitive – Dislikes personal failure in front of peers, making ridicule from the coach in front of the group very destructive
- Still do not believe in the intensity of the team at all costs

Practice Overview

Practice structure and ideas

- Practice Time should be anywhere between 45 min - 1 hour. Depending on your coaching style/organization players will benefit from a filled 45 minute session or a relaxed hour.
- Balance your practices with activities that are competitive and those that are not. Some players enjoy the thrill and pressure of competing against others, while some players will enjoy activities that allow them to go at their own pace. Be understanding of different personalities and be sure to praise all players for working hard.
- Repeating Activities - Do not be afraid of repeating activities that the kids like or that work well for your group. Often times after the kids have played a number of games, you can ask them what they like the best.

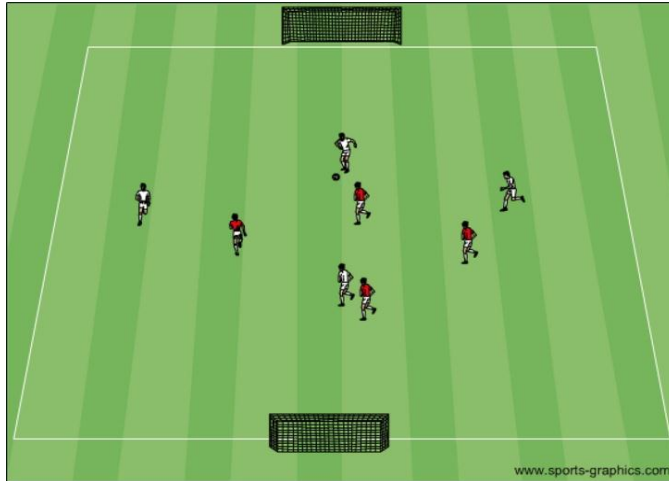
Why practice is structured this way:

Six, 7 and 8 year olds are starting to understand what it means to play a game. They are beginning to cooperate more with their teammates. In fact, they will now recognize that they even have teammates because they will occasionally pass the ball to a teammate purposefully. Some U-8 players will have played for more than a season; however, this does not mean these players are ready for the mental demands of tactical team soccer. True, they do have an idea of the game with regard to scoring or preventing goals, but the emphasis still needs to be placed on the individual's ability to "look after the ball". They are still there to have fun, and because some of the players may be new to soccer, it is imperative that activities are geared toward individual success and participation. The coach must set up numerous activities where the players are together, but still involved in both individual and partner play.

Game Thoughts

The 4 v 4 game

1. How do I set up my team ?



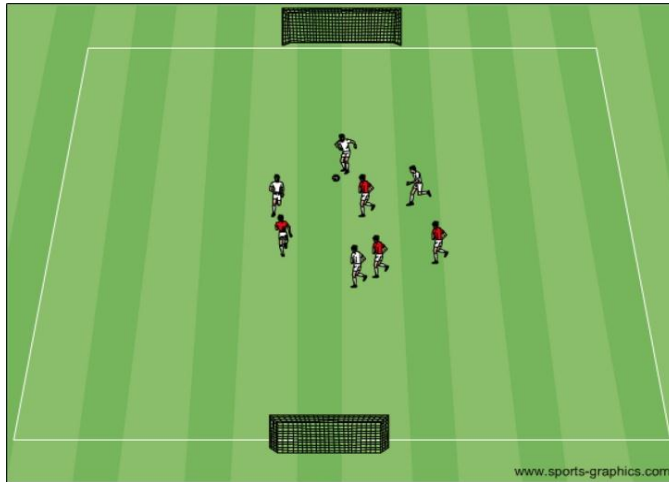
Please understand that this is just a guide for your players and it is unrealistic to expect them to fully understand the team concept. Young players want to dribble and shoot and should be encouraged to do so. Do not tell players to “play their position”, but rather encourage them to spread out when their team has the ball. Below are two teams lined up at a kick-off. You will notice that they are set up in a diamond shape. **Please understand that they will not look like this very often during the game as I will outline in the following pages.**

2. Why should the players spread out?



In the following example the white team has possession. The white team has spread out wide and long in a diamond shape which leaves 1 v 1 situations all over the field and encourages players to dribble.

3. What happens when the team does not spread out?



The team in possession has not spread out and the player in possession has very limited space to play in and few options in possession. You will find that players particularly those new to the game will move towards to ball. It is important that you are very patient in this area of the player's development.

4. Can I keep a defender back?



The short answer is No. If coaches do this we are putting the result of the game ahead of the player's individual development and enjoyment. **Ask yourself how many touches these players will have during a game if they stay in this position.**

5. Where do I play my back player?



It is important that we encourage the back player to get forward into attacking situations when they have the opportunity. I would also encourage you to continue to rotate players in different positions

U8 Training Session 1

Dribbling to Keep Possession

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage 25 x 20. { 15 minutes }

Why scrimmage at the start of practice:

- Players will be focused from the start of your session.
- Players love to play the game.



Teams play 2 v 2 with **the players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players dribbling the ball into play. Set up two games as the players arrive.

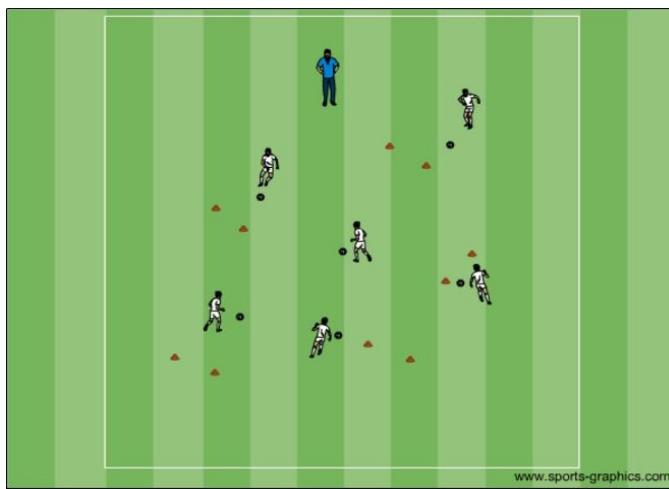
Phase #2 Technical Practice Field 25 x 20 { 5 minutes }

Technique: Stop turn

Why practice the Stop turn:

- It encourages players to keep possession.
- It will help players get away from opponents.

The players dribble around the field. The players stop the ball with the sole of the foot, turn and dribble through one of the small goals before moving onto another goal.



Phase #3 Dribble Defend Relay Field 25 x 20 { 10–15 minutes }

Why play Dribble Defend Relay:

- Players are encouraged to keep close control of the ball
- Players need to keep their heads up
- They need to shield the ball and turn away from pressure



The players are in two teams. The players on one team have a ball each with the other team lined up on the outside of the field. As the game starts the defending team in teams of two run onto the field and aim to kick three balls out of play. If a player's ball is kicked out of play they bring it back on to the field and continue dribbling. The defending players when they have finished, tag the next two players in line. The coach times the game and stops the watch when the last group have finished. The teams switch roles with the team dribbling the ball the longest winning the game.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 30 minutes }



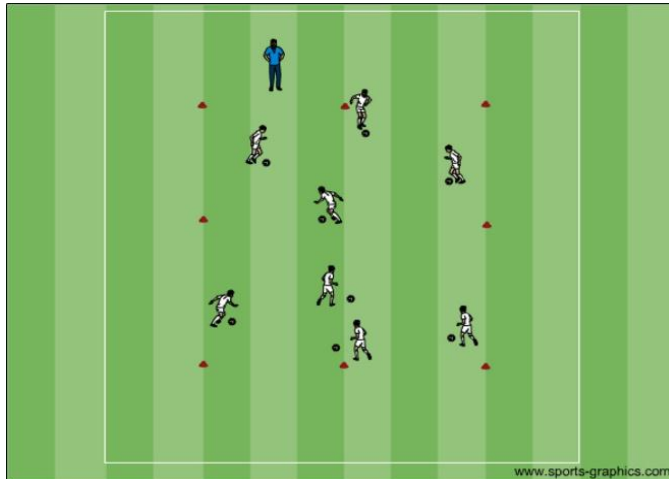
Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by dribbling the ball back into play.**

U8 Training Session 2

Dribbling to Keep Possession

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 King of the Jungle. Field 20 x 20 { 10–15 minutes }



The players all have a ball and dribble the ball around the field. When the coach shouts “Go”, the players continue to dribble while aiming to kick the other players balls out of play. If a player’s ball goes out of play they must retrieve it as quickly as possible. Each time a player’s ball goes out of play they lose a life. Play for a minute with the player losing the least number of lives winning the game. Repeat a number of times.

Phase #2 Technical Practice. Field 25 x 20 { 5 minutes }

Technique: Stop turn

Why practice the Stop turn:

- It encourages players to keep possession.
- It will help players get away from opponents.



The players dribble around the field. The players stop the ball with the sole of the foot, turn and dribble through one of the small goals before moving onto another goal.

Phase #3 Game Protectors { 15 – 20 minutes }

Why play Protectors:

- Players are encouraged to keep close control of the ball.
- Players need to keep their heads up.
- They need to shield the ball and turn away from pressure.
- Players need to work hard to win the ball back if they lose it.



The players are in two teams and pair up with an opposition player with one ball between them. On the coaches instruction the players compete for the ball and aim to maintain possession. If the ball goes out of play the player who kicked the ball out must collect and return it to their opponent. The player in possession at the end of the game is the winner and wins a point for their team. The team with the most points is the winner. Play each game for 10 – 20 seconds and repeat a number of times.

Phase #4 Decision Making Game. Field 35 x 25 { 20 - 25 minutes }

Why play the Decision making game:

- Players have an opportunity for success by playing numbers up.
- The player in possession has to make a decision, when to dribble and when to pass.
- The game encourages players to take a touch and be patient in possession.
- The players will have success as a team if they spread out wide so they can score in either goal.



Set up a field 35 x 30, split the players into two teams and play 3 v 1. The attacking team plays with three players and can score in either one of the two goals although they must be in the opposition half to do this. The defending player can score in the goal opposite if they win the ball back. Switch the defenders on each possession and change the attacking and defending teams every 5 minutes. If the players are having a lot of success, play 4 v 2 with the same conditions.

U8 Training Session 3

Dribbling to Keep Possession

Coaching theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage. Field 25 x 20. { 15 minutes }



Teams play 2 v 2 with **the players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players dribbling the ball into play. Set up two games as the players arrive.

Phase #2 Technical Practice Field 25 x 20 { 5 minutes }

Technique: Dragback turn

Why practice the Dragback turn:

- It encourages players to keep possession.
- It will help players get away from opponents.



The players dribble around the field. The players drag the ball back with the sole of the foot, turn and dribble through one of the small goals before moving onto another goal.

Phase #3 1 v 1 Turn and Dribble through the Goal { 15 – 20 minutes }

Why play Turn and Dribble:

- Players are encouraged to keep close control of the ball.
- Players need to keep their heads up.
- They are encouraged to change direction and speed.



Setup a field with the goals 20 yards apart. The coach plays the ball in and the players play one v one. The player who wins possession aims to score by dribbling through either one of the two goals. Encourage the players to turn and change direction to lose the defending player. Play for 15-20 seconds or until a goal is scored and then repeat with the next two players in line.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 30 minutes }



Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by dribbling the ball into play.**

U8 Training Session 4

Shooting with the Inside of the Foot

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage. Field 25 x 20 { 15 minutes }



Teams play 2 v 2 with **the players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players passing the ball into play with the inside of the foot. Set up two games as the players arrive.

Phase #2 Battleships. Field 25 x 20 { 10-15 minutes }



The players have a ball each with the field set up with 10-15 cones that represent battleships. The players play for 45 - 60 seconds and get a point each time they pass the ball with the inside of the foot and knock over a battleship. The player with the most points wins the game. For variation the coach or a selected player can dribble after the players and if a player ball is hit their score goes back to zero.

Phase #3 Passing Gate Race. Field 35 x 25 { 10 – 15 minutes }

Why play the Passing Gate Race:

- Players are encouraged to strike the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Players need to keep the ankle locked as they make contact with the ball.
- The non kicking foot needs to be pointed where you want the ball to go.



Set up 5-6 small cone goals { 2-3 yards wide } on the field. The players are in teams of two and start opposite a goal. The players must pass the ball to their partner through the goal without knocking over the cones. If a player knocks over the cone they must pass the ball through the goal again before they continue. The first team to complete 10 passes wins the game. As a variation you might want to start with the players passing the ball through more than one goal.

Phase #4 Decision Making Game. Field 35 x 25 { 20 - 25 minutes }

Why play the Decision making game:

- Players have an opportunity for success by playing numbers up.
- The player in possession has to make a decision, when to dribble and when to pass.
- The game encourages players to take a touch and be patient in possession.
- The players will have success as a team if they spread out wide so they can score in either goal.



Set up a field 35 x 30, split the players into two teams and play 3 v 1. The attacking team plays with three players and can score in either one of the two goals although they must be in the opposition half to do this. The defending player can score in the goal opposite if they win the ball back. Switch the defenders on each possession and change the attacking and defending teams every 5 minutes. If the players are having a lot of success play 4 v 2 with the same conditions.

U8 Training Session 5

Shooting with the Inside of the Foot

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage. Field 25 x 20 { 15 minutes }



Teams play 2 v 2 with **the players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players passing the ball into play with the inside of the foot. Set up two games as the players arrive.

Phase #2 Passing at Goal. Field 20 x 30 { 10-15 minutes }

Why play the Passing at goal:

- Players are encouraged to strike the ball with the inside of the foot.
- Players need to keep the ankle locked as they make contact with the ball.
- The non kicking foot needs to be pointed where you want the ball to go.



The players are in groups of three with one player at each end of the field 20 yards apart. The goalkeeper stands in the center in a small goal { 5-6 yards wide }. The players take it in turns to shoot at goal using the inside of the foot. Change the goalkeepers every 2-3 minutes. Encourage the players to use both feet. Also look for the better players to hit a moving ball when they are shooting.

Phase #3 Passing Gate Race. Field 35 x 25 { 10 – 15 minutes }



Set up 5-6 small cone goals { 2-3 yards wide } on the field. The players are in teams of two and start opposite a goal. The players must pass the ball to their partner through the goal without knocking over the cones. If a player knocks over the cone they must pass the ball through the goal again before they continue. The first team to complete 10 passes wins the game. As a variation you might want to start with the players passing the ball through more than one goal.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25 { 30 minutes }



Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by passing the ball into play with the inside of the foot.**

U8 Training Session 6

Receiving with the Inside of the Foot

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Gate Passing. Field 40 x 30 { 10-15 minutes }

The players work in pairs and pass the ball back and forth between the gates (each pair works at a gate). They should receive the ball with the inside of their foot and pass with the inside of their foot. Progress to a competition, the first pair to complete ten passes through the gate is the winner- repeat numerous times.



Key Coaching Points

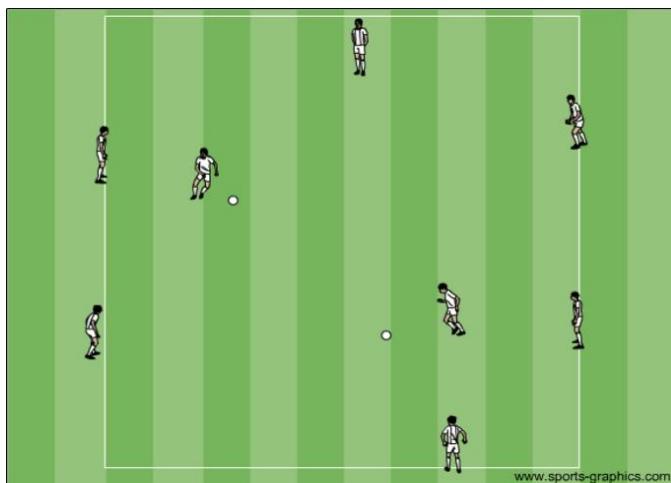
1. Preparation: move into the path of the ball; standing leg planted and the knee slightly bent; raise the receiving foot so that it is level with line A of the ball; knee of the receiving leg opened; toes of the receiving foot pointed out; ankle locked; eyes on the ball
2. Contact: as the ball makes contact with the arch of the foot area withdraw the foot smoothly to absorb the pace of the ball; bring back the entire leg moving from the hip until

the receiving foot is

perpendicular to the heel of the standing foot

3. Follow Through: once the ball is stopped then stand balanced on both feet

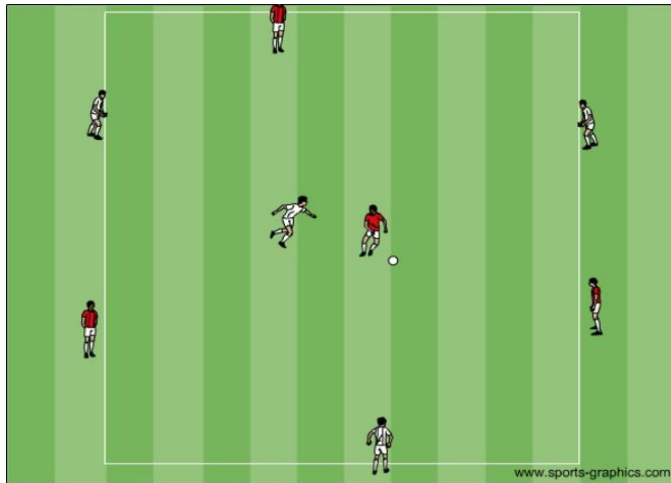
Phase #2 Passing Exercise. Field 40 x 30 { 10-15 minutes }



Create an area approximately 40 x 30 yards. Players dribble through the area and pass to a "target" player on the outside; the passer will then take the place of the target player. Add more balls to keep the players constantly involved. Use this as an opportunity to address the players using the coaching point above.

Phase #3 Target Passing. Field 40 x 30 { 10-15 Minutes }

Players are divided into two teams and play 1 v 1 in the middle of the area with the other players acting as “targets” on the outside. When a pass is successfully passed and received to an outside player the passer takes the place of the receiver and the game continues. A point is scored each time a pass is successfully received by a target player on the outside. The winning team is the first team to score 7 points.



Why play target passing?

- It allows the players to hone their ability to receive the ball in a more game realistic environment.
- Players will be rewarded for successfully receiving the ball.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 30 minutes }



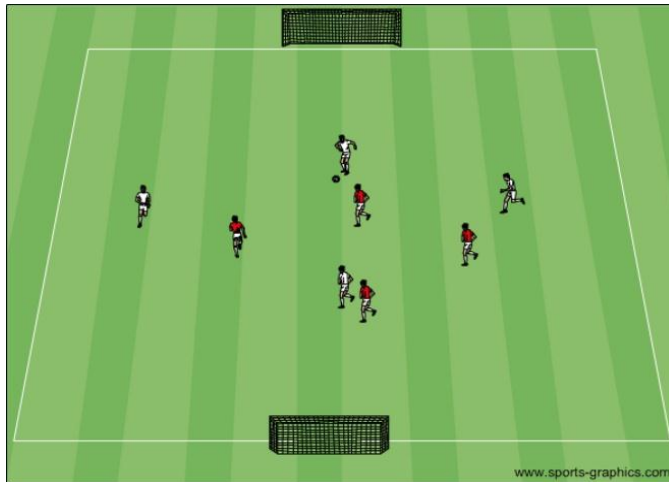
Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by passing the ball into play with the inside of the foot.**

U8 Training Session 7

Receiving with the Inside of the Foot

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage. Field 40 x 30 { 10-15 minutes }

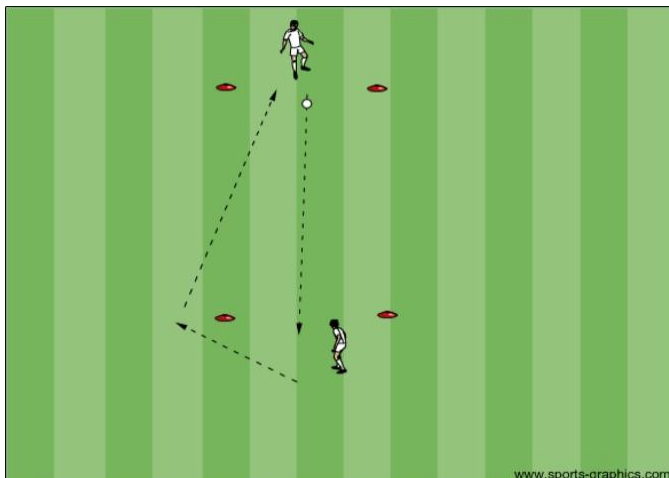


Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by passing the ball into play with the inside of the foot. Introduce the concept of taking the first touch away from the closest opponent.

Phase #2 Gate Passing { 10-15 minutes }

Why Play Gate Passing?

- Introduces the concept of moving the ball in a certain direction with the first touch.
- Introduce inside of foot to outside of body receiving movement.
- Introduce inside of foot across the body movement.



The players work in pairs, each player with a gate in front of them. The players are encouraged to first of all pass through each gate, receive the ball and pass back to their partner. Next, the players receive the ball through the gate, then take a touch to the side and move around the gate before passing back to their partner (the movement of the ball is shown by the arrows in the example below). Progress to make it a competition; which pair can complete 10 good passes first?

Phase #3 Four Goal Mayhem. Field 30 x 20 { 10-15 minutes}



Play 4v4 in a 30 x 20 yard grid. Teams defend two goals (one on an end line and the other on a sideline) and attack the opposite two goals – variation: one team defends the two goals on the end lines and attacks the ones on the sidelines. One point is given for each properly received pass and for each goal scored. After a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds the coach plays another ball into the grid.

Phase #4 Scrimmage 4v4. { 15-30 minutes}



Restart the game by passing the ball into play with the inside of the foot. Introduce the concept of taking the first touch away from the closest opponent. Can the players take their first touch away from opponents and into space?

U8 Training Session 8

Dribbling to Keep Possession

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Technical Practice. Field 25 x 20 { 5 minutes }

Technique: Dragback turn

Why practice the Dragback turn:

- It encourages players to keep possession.
- It will help players get away from opponents.



The players dribble around the field. The players drag the ball back with the sole of the foot, turn and dribble through one of the small goals before moving onto another goal.

Phase #2 Game Protectors. { 10-15 minutes }

Why play Protectors:

- Players are encouraged to keep close control of the ball.
- Players need to keep their heads up.
- They need to shield the ball and turn away from pressure.
- Players need to work hard to win the ball back if they lose it.



The players are in three groups with one group defending. On the coaches instruction the players compete for the ball and aim to maintain possession. If the ball goes out of play it is out of the game. Any player in possession at the end of the game wins a point. Switch the defenders each game and play for 10 – 20 seconds.

Phase #3 1 v 1 Turn and Dribble through the Goal. { 15 – 20 minutes }



Setup a field with the goals 20 yards apart. The coach plays the ball in and the players play one v one. The player who wins possession aims to score by dribbling through either one of the two goals. Encourage the players to turn and change direction to lose the defending player. Play for 15-20 seconds or until a goal is scored and then repeat with the next two players in line.

Phase #4 Decision Making Game. Field 35 x 25 { 20 - 25 minutes }

Why play the Decision making game:

- Players have an opportunity for success by playing numbers up.
- The player in possession has to make a decision, when to dribble and when to pass.
- The game encourages players to take a touch and be patient in possession.
- The players will have success as a team if they spread out wide so they can score in either goal.



Set up a field 35 x 30, split the players into two teams and play 3 v 1. The attacking team plays with three players and can score in either one of the two goals although they must be in the opposition half to do this. The defending player can score in the goal opposite if they win the ball back. Switch the defenders on each possession and change the attacking and defending teams every 5 minutes. If the players are having a lot of success play 4 v 2 with the same conditions.

U8 Training Session 9

Dribbling to Keep Possession

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage 25 x 20. { 15 minutes }



Teams play 2 v 2 with **the players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players dribbling the ball into play. Set up two games as the players arrive.

Phase #2 Technical Practice. Field 25 x 20 { 5 minutes }

Technique: Dragback turn

Why practice the Dragback turn:

- It encourages players to keep possession.
- It will help players get away from opponents.



The players dribble around the field. The players drag the ball back with the sole of the foot, turn and dribble through one of the small goals before moving onto another goal.

Phase #3 One v one multi goal { 10-15 minutes }

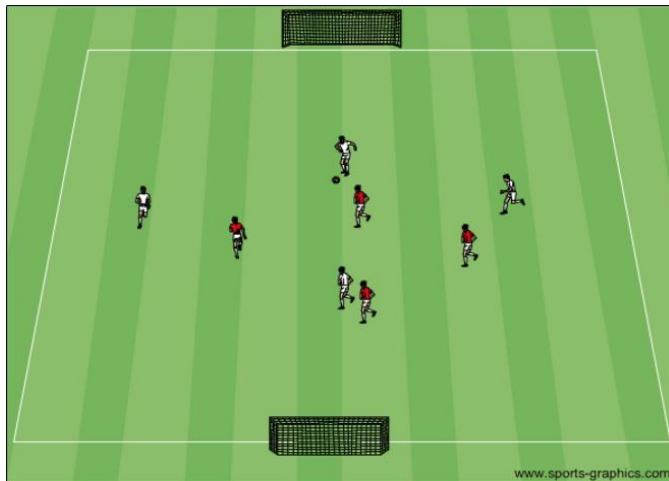
Why play One v one multi goal:

- Players are encouraged to keep close control of the ball.
- Players need to keep their heads up when they go to a goal.
- They need to shield the ball and turn away from pressure.
- Players need change direction and speed.



Setup a field of 30 x 20 and a number of small goals 2-3 yards wide. The players are in two teams and play 1 v 1 for a period of 30 seconds. The player in possession wins a point for their team every time they dribble through one of the small goals. Add the points up and the team with the most points wins the game. Switch partners after each game.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 30 minutes }



Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by dribbling the ball into play.**

U8 Training Session 10

Shooting with the Instep

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball and score a goal

Phase #1 Scrimmage 25 x 20. { 15 minutes }



Teams play 2 v 2 with **the players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players dribbling or passing the ball back into play. Set up two games as the players arrive.

Phase #2 Technical Activity. Field 20 x 30. { 10-15 minutes }

Why practice striking the ball with the instep:

- First touch needs to be played at an angle.
- Players are encouraged to strike the ball with the instep.
- Players need to keep the ankle locked as they make contact with the ball.
- The non kicking foot needs to be pointed where you want the ball to go.



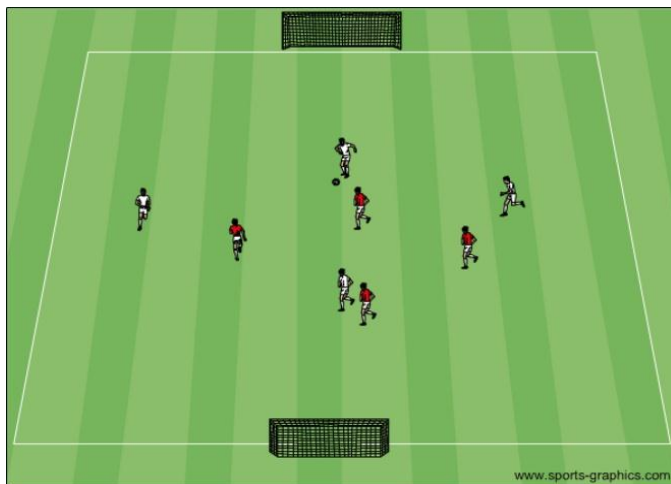
The players are in groups of three with one player at each end of the field 20 yards apart. The goalkeeper stands in the center in a small goal { 5-6 yards wide }. The players take it in turns to shoot at goal. Change the goalkeepers every 2-3 minutes. Encourage the players to use both feet and the laces or the inside of the foot to strike the ball. Also look for the better players to hit a moving ball when they are shooting.

Phase #3 Goals Galore. Field 20 x 30. { 15 - 20 minutes }



The field is divided in half with two goals { 5-6 yards wide } at each end. The players are in two teams and must remain in their own half. They have a ball each and can score in any of the opposition's goals. All the players can be goalkeepers and can strike any of the balls in their own half or behind the goals. Encourage the players to hit a moving ball. The first team to score 7 goals wins the game. Repeat several times.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 30 minutes }



Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by passing the ball into play with the inside of the foot.**

U8 Training Session 11

Shooting with the Instep

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball and score a goal

Phase #1 Technical Activity. Field 20 x 30. { 10-15 minutes }



The players are in groups of three with one player at each end of the field 20 yards apart. The goalkeeper stands in the center in a small goal { 5-6 yards wide }. The players take it in turns to shoot at goal. Change the goalkeepers every 2-3 minutes. Encourage the players to use both feet and the laces or the inside of the foot to strike the ball. Also look for the better players to hit a moving ball when they are shooting.

Phase #2 Goals Galore. Field 20 x 30. { 15 - 20 minutes }

Why play Goals Galore.

- There are lots of opportunities to shoot at goal.
- Players learn to hit a moving ball and the importance of hitting the target.

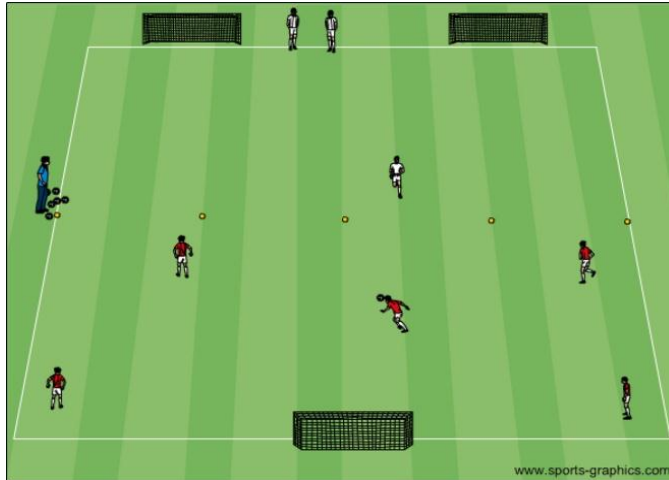


The field is divided in half with two goals { 5-6 yards wide } at each end. The players are in two teams and must remain in their own half. They have a ball each and can score in any of the opposition's goals. All the players can be goalkeepers and can strike any of the balls in their own half or behind the goals. Encourage the players to hit a moving ball. The first team to score 7 goals wins the game. Repeat several times.

Phase #3 Decision Making Game. Field 35 x 25 { 20 - 25 minutes }

Why play the Decision making game:

- Players have an opportunity for success by playing numbers up.
- The player in possession has to make a decision, when to dribble and when to pass.
- The game encourages players to take a touch and be patient in possession.
- The players will have success as a team if they spread out wide so they can score in either goal.



Set up a field 35 x 30, split the players into two teams and play 3 v 1. The attacking team plays with three players and can score in either one of the two goals although they must be in the opposition half to do this. The defending player can score in the goal opposite if they win the ball back. Switch the defenders on each possession and change the attacking and defending teams every 5 minutes. If the players are having a lot of success play 4 v 2 with the same conditions.

U8 Training Session 12

Dribbling - Running with the Ball

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage 25 x 20. { 15 minutes }



Teams play 2 v 2 with the **players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players dribbling the ball back into play. Set up two games as the players arrive.

Phase #2 Dribbling Race. Field 35 x 25 { 10 minutes }

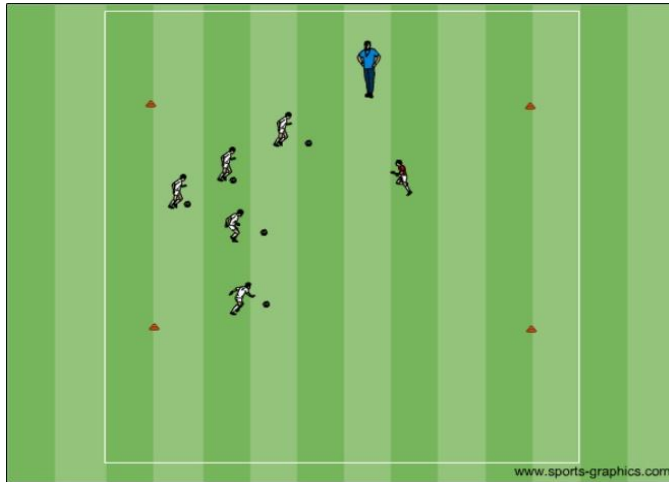
Why play the Dribbling Race.

- Players are encouraged to take a big touch where there is space to play in.
- Players should be encouraged to use the laces and keep the toe pointed down.



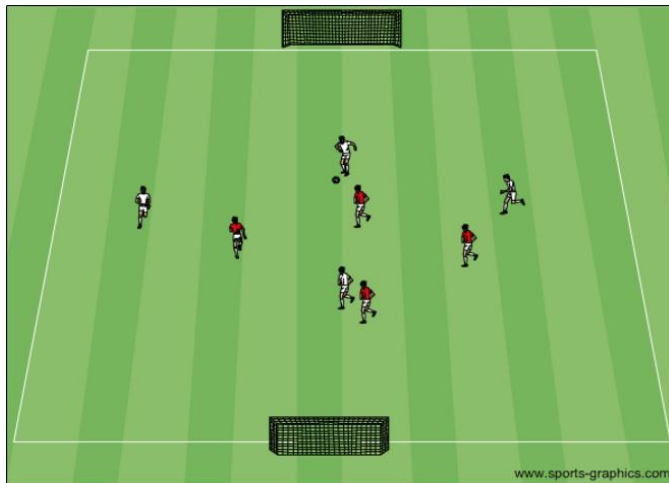
The players are in three teams with each player lined up at one end of the field with a ball. The first player in line has to dribble the ball up to and around a cone 25 yards away before returning to the line. The players must take a minimum of 3 touches towards the cone and back again. Repeat with the next group of players.

Phase #3 Bulldog Field 35 x 25 { 15-20 minutes }



The players line up on one side of the field with a ball each. The coach or a selected player stands in the middle of the field. The players aim to dribble the ball past them and across the line opposite where they put their foot on the ball. If the player in the middle kicks a player's ball out of play that player joins them in the center. The last player to be eliminated wins the game.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 30 minutes }



Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by dribbling the ball into play.**

U8 Training Session 13

Dribbling – Running with the Ball

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Dribbling Relay. Field 30 x 20 { 10-15 minutes }



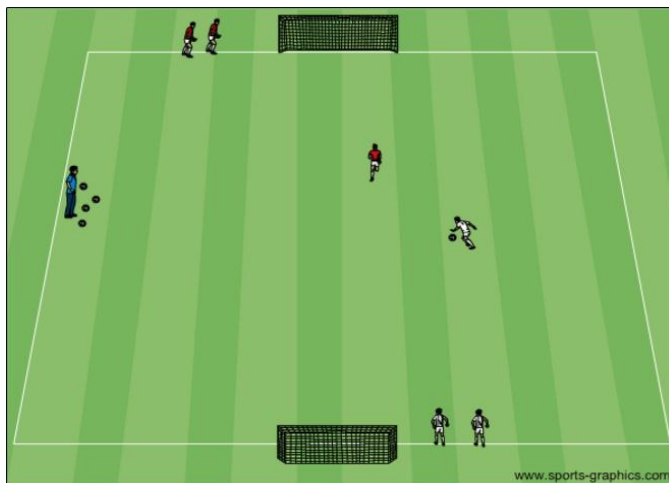
The players are in two teams with each team lined up at one end of the field with a ball each. The first player in line has to dribble the ball up to and around a cone 20 yards away before returning to the line. Once the player has completed the run the next player in line can go. The first team to complete the course wins the game. Repeat a number of times.

Phase #2. 1 2 3 Go. Field 30 x 20. { 15-20 minutes }

Why play 1-2-3 Go.

Why play the Dribbling Race.

- Play with the head up so you have a good view of the field.
- Players are encouraged to take a big touch where there is space to play in.
- Players should be encouraged to use the laces and keep the toe pointed down.



The players are in two teams with each player given the same number as a player on the opposite team. The coach calls out a number and the respective players come out and play one on one until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. After 5 minutes start calling out numbers at intervals so you have games going on at the same time.

Phase #3 Decision Making Game. Field 35 x 25 { 20 - 25 minutes }

Why play the Decision making game:

- Players have an opportunity for success by playing numbers up.
- The player in possession has to make a decision, when to dribble and when to pass.
- The game encourages players to take a touch and be patient in possession.
- The players will have success as a team if they spread out wide so they can score in either goal.



Set up a field 35 x 30, split the players into two teams and play 3 v 1. The attacking team plays with three players and can score in either one of the two goals although they must be in the opposition half to do this. The defending player can score in the goal opposite if they win the ball back. Switch the defenders on each possession and change the attacking and defending teams every 5 minutes. If the players are having a lot of success play 4 v 2 with the same conditions.

U8 Training Session 14

Dribbling to Beat a Player

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Scrimmage 25 x 20. { 15 minutes }



Teams play 2 v 2 with **the players conditioned to play 2 touches or more**. They are not allowed to take one touch unless they are shooting at goal or trying to win the ball from an opponent. Restart the game by the players dribbling the ball back into play. Set up two games as the players arrive.

Phase #2 Technical practice. Field 35 x 25. { 5 minutes }

Technique: Inside cut

Why practice the Inside cut:

- It encourages players to change direction with the ball.
- It will help players get away from and beat players in one v one situations.

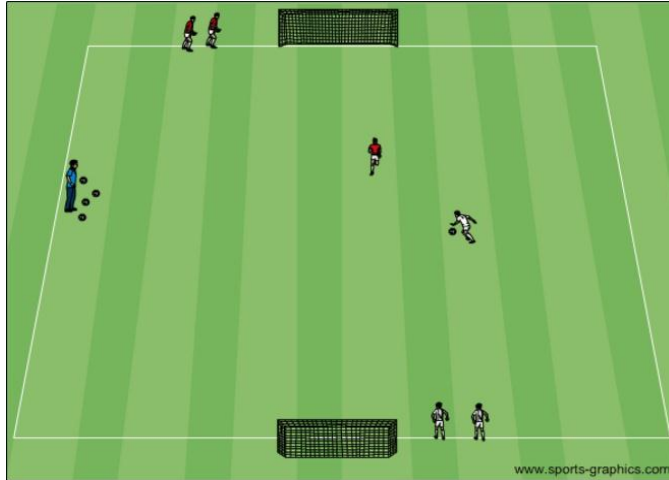


The players have a ball each with the cones representing defenders. They dribble forward and play/cut the ball with the inside of the foot past the cone at an angle to beat a defender. Encourage the players to dribble at a steady pace and accelerate out of the move.

Phase #3 Game 1 – 2 – 3 Go. Field 30 x 20 with a small goals { 15–20 minutes }

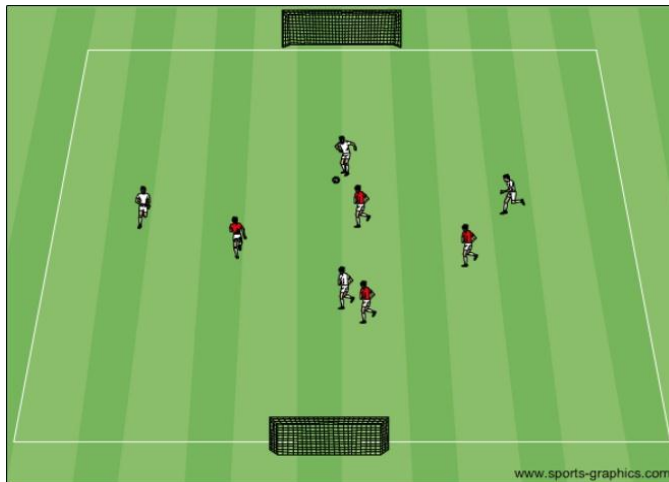
Why play 1 – 2 – 3 Go:

- Players are encouraged to maintain close control of the ball.
- Players need to keep their heads up.
- They need to change direction and speed to beat their opponent.



Divide the players into two teams who line up on opposite corners of the field. Each player is given a number with a player on the opposite team having a corresponding number. The coach calls out a number and the respective players come out and play one on one until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. After 5 minutes start calling out numbers at intervals so you have two or three games going on at the same time. The first team to score 5 goals wins the game.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 20 minutes }



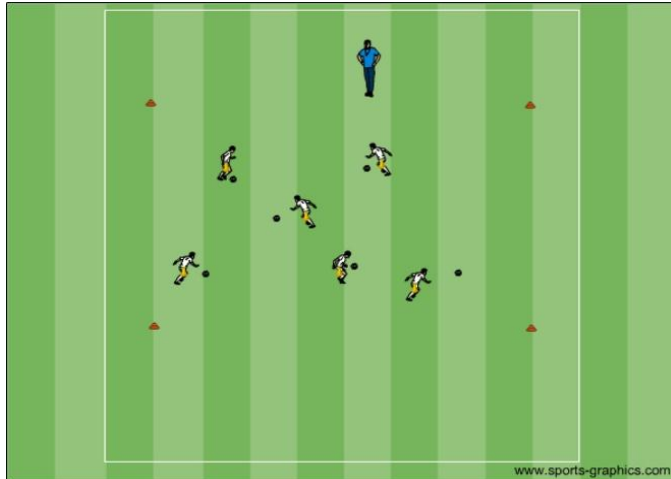
Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by dribbling the ball into play.**

U8 Training Session 15

Dribbling to Beat a Player

Coaching Theme: Look after the ball

Phase #1 Flag Soccer. Field 20 x 15. { 10 – 15 minutes }



The players have a flag attached “football style” and a ball each. The players dribble their ball and try and pull out the opponents flag. If a player loses a flag or their ball goes out of play they lose a life. The player losing the fewest lives wins the game. Play each game for 1-2 minutes.

Phase #2 Technical Practice. Field 35 x 25. { 5 minutes }

Technique: Inside cut

Why practice the Inside cut:

- It encourages players to change direction with the ball.
- It will help players get away from and beat players in one v one situations.

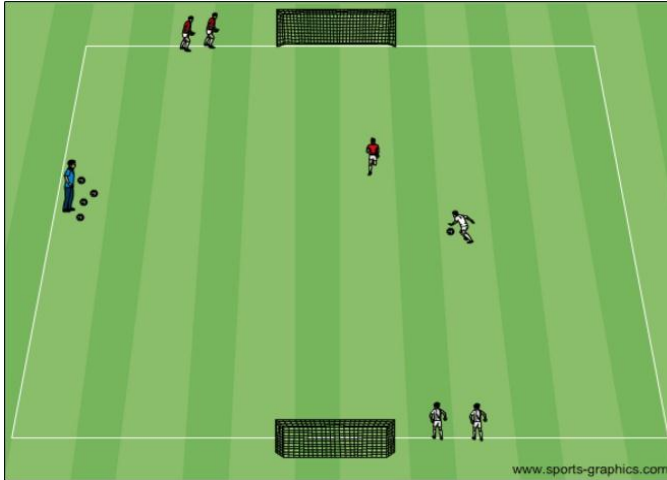


The players have a ball each and practice the inside cut. They dribble forward and play/cut the ball with the inside of the foot at an angle to beat a defender. Encourage the players to dribble at a steady pace and accelerate out of the move.

Phase #3 Game 1 – 2 – 3 Go. Field 30 x 20 with a small goals { 15–20 minutes }

Why play 1 – 2 – 3 Go:

- Players are encouraged to maintain close control of the ball.
- Players need to keep their heads up.
- They need to change direction and speed to beat their opponent.



Divide the players into two teams who line up on opposite corners of the field. Each player is given a number with a player on the opposite team having a corresponding number. The coach calls out a number and the respective players come out and play one on one until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. After 5 minutes start calling out numbers at intervals so you have two or three games going on at the same time. The first team to score 5 goals wins the game.

Phase #4 Scrimmage. Field 35 x 25. { 20 minutes }



Teams play 4v4 with a floating goalkeeper. **The players are conditioned to play 2 touches or more. Restart the game by dribbling the ball into play.**