



HTRSA

Hamilton Twp Recreation Soccer Association

**Training Session
Activities for
the
HTRSA
Division 7 (U6)
Players**

Updated: Spring 2018



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U6: Under 6

(as published by US Youth Soccer)

Some general characteristics of the U-6 player include:

- Constantly in motion
- Short attention span (easily distracted)
- Most are individually oriented (egocentric: I, Me, My, Mine)
- Very sensitive (dislike personal failure in front of peers)
- Love to run and jump
- Eye-foot and eye-hand coordination not developed
- Catching skills not developed
- Little or NO concern for team activities
- Can balance on the dominant foot
- No sense of pace; they will often run until they drop

Implications for training the U-6 player include:

- Give brief directions; repeat when necessary.
- Many activities of short duration.
- Lots of water breaks.
- Limit training sessions to 45 - 60 minutes
- Emphasize familiarity and confidence with the ball (every child must have access to a ball throughout every training session)

INTRODUCTION

Organization of player development by age and stage



Children do not learn in the same way as adults, especially when the learning process involves both intellectual *and* physical activity.

Age conditions the way a person perceives and interacts with the world and with others.

In any learning process, age is the key component in selecting appropriate content and methodology. Soccer is no different. For this reason we must not train 6 year old players the same way as 13 years old players. Training sessions must be adapted to the age of the players. Taking into consideration the characteristics of human and player development, we have structured the curriculum into four age groups. The first two age groups are:

1. INITIAL STAGE – 5 TO 8 YEARS OLD

At this age children do not have the same capacity as adults to analyze the environment. They explore and have an egocentric conception of the world. Children are still gathering the experience necessary to interact with their surroundings and with others. Also, empathy and the capacity to consider the thoughts and feelings of others is very low. In order to help children build their own experience, many exercises will be individual (e.g. each player will have a ball). The tactical component of the game will be reduced to small-sided games with basic explanations about space distribution. Training sessions will be treated more as physical education than specifically as soccer training.

2. BASIC STAGE – 9 TO 12 YEARS OLD

At this stage, the structure (but not the content) of the training sessions will be similar to that of older players. The main component of the training session will be technical. It is sensible at this age to develop technique and basic tactical understanding. Children's capacity to solve problems increases significantly. Therefore players will begin working on basic and dynamic tactical scenarios. At this stage, players are pre-pubescent and have important physical limitations in terms of strength and endurance.

3. INTERMEDIATE STAGE – 13 AND 14 YEARS OLD

Players at this age develop a good understanding of the game. However, these players are limited by their physical size and the significant changes, which arise with puberty. Safety should be the number one priority for the coach. The coach must be cautious to avoid overtraining should focus more on tactical and technical elements of the game and less on the physical aspects. Tactical training plays an important role at this age.

4. ADVANCED STAGE – 15 TO 18 YEARS OLD

Players at this age have completed most of their physical and mental development. All components of training can be combined and organized with the purpose of developing the highest potential of the player. The strength of the muscles helps to develop technique at high speed and this speed helps the player to react faster to tactical situations. This stage is crucial for combining all the components of soccer in order to increase the players' soccer knowledge.

These are some of the facts in terms of human development adapted to soccer. In this document these facts are used to develop the most appropriate training methodology for each age group.

PRINCIPLES OF AGE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

Training characteristics based on human development

STAGES	AGE GROUPS	CHARACTERISTICS
INITIAL	U6	Very young players from 5 to 8 years of age love to play. Therefore, all practices should be based on fun games.
	U7	Players must spend the maximum time possible in contact with the ball and experiment by themselves. For the first time the player has to build a relationship with other players. Give different responsibilities to the players in order to develop a sense of team.
	U8	Basic motor skills like walking, running or jumping have to be combined with ball handling and ball control.
BASIC	U9	The pubescent players from age 9 to 12 years have a special ability to learn. Therefore, this is the right age to work on specific soccer techniques and skills. Developing good technique is essential at this age.
	U10	1v1 and 2v1 attacking and defending situations are important to develop individual skills as well as the passing techniques to develop the necessary team game.
	U11	Use small-sided games to develop basic attacking and defensive principles. Other important aspects of tactical training are possession, combination play, transition and finishing in the final third, as well as zonal defending. Players will rotate in two or three different positions to avoid early specialization.
	U12	Speed, coordination, balance and agility are the main physical aspects to improve at this stage.
INTERMEDIATE	U13	At this stage, training sessions are orientated more toward tactics and the player will practice in bigger spaces. Players must practice all different types of techniques at this stage.
	U14	Strength and endurance should be part of the fitness training. Coaching methods have to consider and preserve players' health since they will be experiencing many changes due to puberty at this stage. Warm-ups and cool downs are essential as is dynamic flexibility. Players must develop discipline at this stage by following the instructions of the coach both during and outside training sessions.



COACH'S CHECKLIST!

The following is a list of what is recommended for good soccer practices:

- A Ball for Every Player.** This is a MUST. Ask each player to bring a ball to practice with their name on it. Make it a team rule! Also, buy a hand pump to keep the balls inflated!

 - Cones or Small Soccer "Disk" Cones.** Disk cones are ideal for marking areas for small sided games. You need roughly 25 disk cones for your team. Disk cones look like an upside down bowl and come in fluorescent yellow and orange. They are about \$18 for a set of 25 at www.usyouthsoccershop.com but are available elsewhere. Consider buying a strap to keep your disk cones on. It's worth it!

 - A Way To Identify "Teams".** You can buy practice vests (also called "bibs", "vests" or "pinneys") for about \$5 each at www.usyouthsoccershop.com. Another cheap way is to cut the sleeves & bottoms off old t-shirts & use the tops as practice vests; you can dye them in different colors to make enough for several teams. Another way is to buy a 3-pack of men's "Athletic T-shirts" (about \$6.00) in the XLarge size. Cut off the top about 3 inches below the bottom of the sleeve. If you need different colors, dye them.

 - Shin guards & Water.** Every player should wear shin guards & bring a plastic water bottle with their name on it. Consider taking extra water because some players/parents always forget.

 - A Whistle.** A cheap one will do. This will be hugely helpful in getting attention.

 - A Stopwatch/Timer.** You can get by without this, but it makes it a lot easier to run timed games.

 - An Equipment Bag.** To keep your gear in. If you coach in the Fall, Dick's usually supplies each HTRSA rec team with one. You should put some Band-Aids or a small medical kit (about \$5) in it. One of the instant ice packs is good to have as well.

 - Assistants.** The more the better. Ask parents to help, even if it is just to pick up balls.
- Do You Need a Goal or a Lined Field?** Nope! If you have cones you can create your own area. However, a goal or a net backstop is handy if you are practicing shooting.
- A Great Attitude!** If the players see the coach having a good attitude, that will rub off. Remember to keep it FUN!



Tips for Good Soccer Practices

1. Kids love playing games and keeping score. **In practice, try to use more Practice Games and less drills.** If it's not fun, it's not a good Practice Game. Everyone should stay active and participate. **AVOID LINES!** Run games by keeping time (e.g., so they last 1, 3, or 5 minutes) or by keeping score (e.g., first to 3, 12, etc.) This is especially true for the younger age groups.
2. **You MUST have at least one ball per player.** This is absolutely critical. Players should bring a ball with their name on it to every practice. Ask players to bring extra balls or buy some.
3. Take the time to plan your practice so when you get to the field you are prepared. Figure out what skill you are teaching, what games you will be playing and how you want to set up your cones. You should only need 15 minutes to plan your practice.
4. **Maximize "touches" on the ball.** At least 100 touches on the ball per practice for each player. Do this by doing dribbling and ball juggling games.
5. Teach proper technique and use games that practice skills or simulate play or "match conditions". Practice Games are much better than drills because they involve competition and pressure (which drills don't) and better prepare players to perform under pressure in "match" conditions and at "game speed". It is one thing to perform an activity without pressure, but it is very different to perform the same activity at "game speed" and under pressure. Players improve more quickly and become better players when they practice at game speed in match-related conditions.
6. Praise hustle, improvement and a good attitude. Measure each player's performance by his or her personal improvement and effort, and not by comparing them to someone else. Try to motivate in a positive way that builds self-esteem.
7. A good Practice Game must be easy and quick to set up by **one coach** and should be simple to explain and manage. If you are spending too much time on set up or instruction, simplify it. You should be able to play the game in a small area and without special equipment, except for cones or "disk cones". This is important so you can achieve more in your practices and not waste time. Think about the benefit of being able to achieve 20% or 30% more in each practice.
8. Limit or don't use practice games that eliminate or "knock-out" players. For Recreational players, we believe in positive motivation and we don't believe in punishing a child who has tried their best but lost a practice game. Practice Games shouldn't make the losers leave the game or run laps. Don't use knock-out or elimination games that leave the players who need the most practice on the sideline. From a practical perspective, punishing players slows down practice and elimination games don't produce as many touches on the ball.
9. Avoid general scrimmaging for more than 10 minutes per hour. In general scrimmages players don't get enough touches on the ball, the weaker players tend to get the fewest touches and bad habits can be reinforced because players tend to do the same things they have always done. If you scrimmage, do so without a goalkeeper and encourage players to work the ball close to the goal before shooting.
10. Remember to **AVOID** the 3 "L"s (**Lines, Laps, & Lectures**) & **STRESS** the two "F"s: (**Fun and Fundamentals**) and adopt this philosophy: **"Keep it simple, keep them active, keep it fun & at least 100 touches per player per practice"!**



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Body Part Dribble

SETUP:

Set up an "island" area with cones. It should be big enough so all players can dribble comfortably in it without smacking into each other such as a 20x20 yard area!

All players have a ball at their feet.

THE GAME:

On "GO" players with the ball dribble around the area and avoid touching/bumping into other players.

While they dribble the coach will randomly call out a body part such as: "KNEE!" ... "FOREHEAD!" ... "ARM!" ... "SHIN" ... "ELBOW" ... "TUMMY" ... "NOSE!" ... "FOOT" ... anything!

The players should touch the ball with that body part and then immediately continue to dribble.

For example: Coach calls out "ELBOW!" – players must place their elbow on it and then the players begin dribbling again!

If necessary (I mean they are NOT anatomy specialists yet!) point to the body part to use.

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Improves their motor skills and coordination! This activity promotes listening skills and reinforces the knowledge of body parts. Very young players do not understand left or right direction. If you say "left elbow", don't expect compliance from the player.



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Catch That Fish!

SETUP:

Play the length of short sided Field! Players in 2 teams (use practice vests). One is Attacking and one is Defending.

All players on one End Line. Coach has all the soccer balls.

Attacking Fish (Player A) is trying to score in far goal...and Defending Fish (Player B) is trying to prevent that.

THE GAME:

As coach's signal Attacker (Player A) begins dribbling down the field toward the goal. At coach's command of "Catch That Fish!" (in 2 seconds?, 5 seconds?) Defender (Player B) runs to catch them and prevent the goal being scored. Defender may kick the ball out of bounds or try to steal the ball and dribble it back.

WHAT THIS TEACHES/COACHING POINTS:

For the ATTACKER: Dribbling under pressure is TOUGH but part of the game! Dribble fast to the goal, keep the defender from stealing the ball and try to shoot from a distance.

For the DEFENSE: Don't run by the attacker and into the GOAL! Run to the BALL and try to steal it!



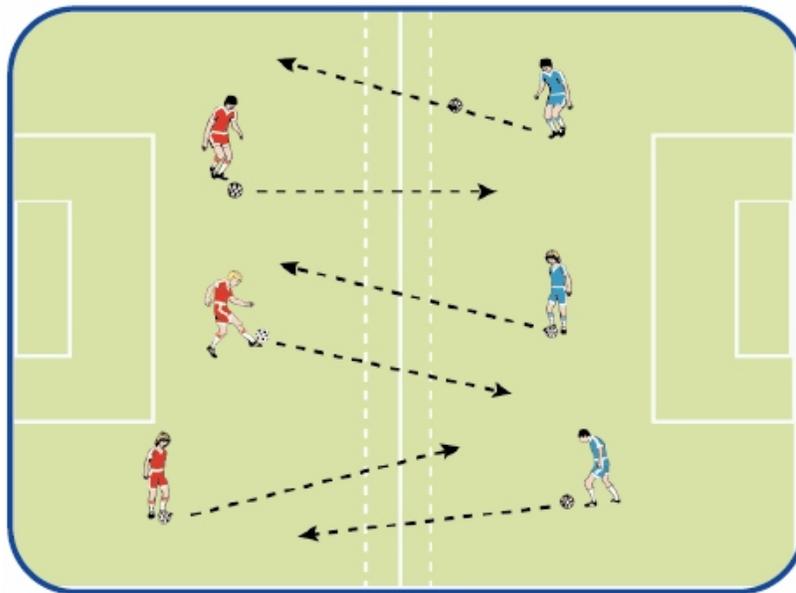
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Clean Up Your Yard

SETUP: A small field area marked by cones. All soccer balls are spread out evenly throughout the areas. *If coaching U8 players, create a middle zone with cones.

2 teams, all players line up on their end line.



THE GAME: When coach says "AND...BEGIN!" teams come off their endline and DRIBBLE/PASS/KICK the balls that are in their "yard" over to the other team's "yard". Players CANNOT go into the other team's yard.

Key: Players should try to kick the ball to where the other team's players aren't!

Game goes for 2 to 3 minutes. The team with the least number of soccer balls in their "yard" wins!

Rule for U8 teams: Players cannot go into the middle zone!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Dribbling and kicking the ball to a spot. Retrieving the ball, working as a team!



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Color Tag

SETUP:

Quite a big island area marked by cones. All players have a ball. Make sure players notice what color shirt they are wearing.

THE GAME:

Players dribble their ball in the big island area. Trying to stay away from each other as much as possible. Keep those heads Up!

Coach calls a color (i.e. "RED! All Red Shirts are IT!")

Whoever has that color shirt is a tagger. Players wearing that color shirt leave their ball and try to tag all the other players. All other players pick up their ball and try to avoid the taggers while staying on the island for 20-30 seconds. Frozen players must freeze when tagged.

Be sure to stress to the kids to KEEP THEIR HEADS UP!

VERSION#2: Have players line-up across the side-line and have them dribble across the field. When most players get to the middle of the area, call out your color.

VERSION#3: Do this without soccer balls. A great warm-up!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Develops coordination, activates the players mind and vision.



Cone Goal Pass

SETUP:

Group the players in pairs and each pair has one soccer ball.

Two cones about **1 to 3 yards apart** between **each pair** of players. The younger the age, the more space you should have between the cones!

THE GAME:

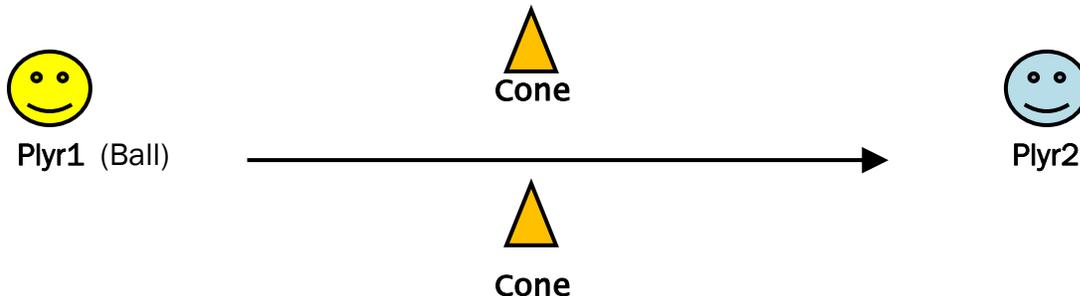
Go over the correct Inside of the Foot PASSING technique.

Players strike and pass their ball back and forth to each other between their cone goal ...**OR**...

NOTE! – You *MAY* want to play by having Player 1 on their knees rolling the ball to Player 2 to traps it and then passes back. This will give the player a more concentrated time with the ball and means less soccer balls flying everywhere! Switch after 90 seconds.

Feel free to practice both inside of the foot and instep (“LACES”) kicks.

Variation#1: After (if!) players get the hang of it, add some competition by seeing who can ‘score’ the most “goals” in 1 minute!



WHAT THIS TEACHES:

This teaches the Inside of the Foot pass and Instep Kick which is critical for players to learn and aiming through a target (goal).

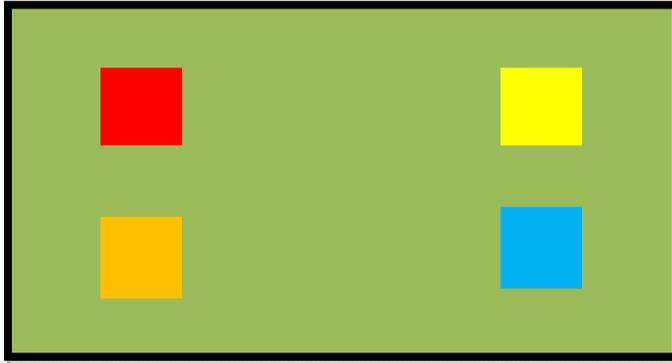
****Warning!** BE PATIENT WITH THE PLAYERS AS THIS WILL LOOK VERY UGLY with soccer balls going everywhere! But it is necessary to spend time on this for their development! Gently correct any improper technique.



Crazy Drivers

SETUP: All players have a ball.

Have different items and / or different colored cones, objects (Ball Bag, Goals, Parents! etc.) around the area/field. (The best: *If you have different color cones, make 6x6 yard square/triangle areas of like color cones).



THE GAME:

Tell the players they are taking their soccer ball for a "drive" and you the coach are going to tell them how to drive! *Have players say "beep-beep" if they get too close to another player (Car).* Work for 3 minutes then rest.

Players start dribbling. Coach commands driving speed: "FAST!", "SLOW", "CRUISE", "STOP!" as well as "INSIDE FOOT", "OUTSIDE FOOT", "LACES!".

If coach yells "SWITCH!" players must leave their ball and go to another. If coach yells "U TURN!" players must do a U Turn. (Really, you can pick ANY sort of skill here!)

When Coach yells "Dribble to the Red cone/square," all players dribble to the Red cone/square.

When Coach yells "Dribble to Coach Jim", all players dribble to the coach, etc. Coach can also split it up for example "girls dribble to red cone, boys dribble to the yellow cone!"

VARIATION#1: Divide players into 2 teams...then you can call out: "Team1, dribble to red cone/square... Team2, dribble to yellow cone/square" etc.

VARIATION#2: Call out shapes for example: "dribble outside the small squares"... "inside the small red square"...and "Team1 dribble outside the small squares, Team2 dribble inside the red square..."

WHAT THIS TEACHES: How to dribble in traffic and dribbling to a specific point!



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Dribble Across the Field Race

SETUP:

Use your assistant coach or recruit a parent!

Use a small side field (30x20 yard area).

The players are divided into 2 teams. One team is spread out on one end-line and the other group is spread out on the opposite end-line. Every player has a ball. One coach stands with one group and the other coach (or parent) stands with the other group.

THE GAME:

When the coach says "GO!" players must dribble their ball across the field (Keep those heads up as players will be dribbling toward each other!), keeping the ball close and dribble to the coach/parent on that side and slap them on the hand.

The first team that completes this wins!

Coach may move across the end-line so the players cannot just look at the ball they are dribbling but must look up to find where the coach is!

Variation#1: Have the players dribble using ONLY the SOLE* (turned like an "L") of their foot to move the ball, or others techniques (Outside foot, Laces, Inside-Outside combo, etc.)

Variation#2: If you have pop-up goals, have them shoot the ball into the net and then run to the coach!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Players work on their dribbling skills BUT also get used to dribbling in traffic and keeping their heads up.

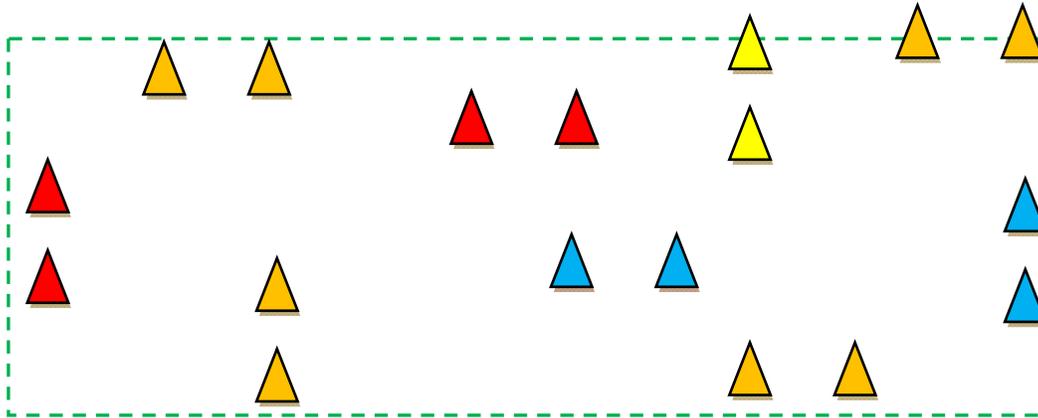
*Why use the SOLE of their foot (turned like an "L") to move the ball?
Because it simulates them turning their foot to make that all-important inside of the foot pass!



Dribbling Thru the Gates

SETUP: Pairs of cones no more than 3 yards apart scattered randomly throughout an area ...probably a 20x40 yard area. The island area does NOT need to be marked off.

Every player has a soccer ball at their feet (although for U6 you can play a round WITHOUT soccer balls to give them confidence).



THE GAME:

When coach says, "AND...BEGIN!" players dribble the ball thru as many cone "gates" as they can. Players should NOT go through the same gate without going through another. Game goes for 60 to 90 seconds and the players keep score!

**For Under 6 age players: Parents should help the players count how many times they pass through the gates as the ability to dribble through gates and count is difficult at this age. Each player gets a chance to repeat the exercise to try and beat their own score. It is appropriate for younger players to compete against themselves, not other players.

VARIATION: For a round the Coach orders players to use only the OUTSIDE/INSIDE of their feet ...BOTTOM of their feet (turned like an "L") ...or orders players to SWITCH balls during the game! Play again and see if players can better their score.

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Players will have to keep their head up in traffic! They are learning to dribble to a specific target at a pace that suits them.

Why use the BOTTOM of their foot (turned like an "L") to move the ball? Because it simulates them turning their foot to make that all-important inside of the foot pass...an important skill to learn.



Egg Hunt

SETUP:

- One or two pop-up or cone goal or goals.
- The players line up across one end of the field their backs facing the field.
- All balls (many more than players) are spread out around the field.
- The pop-up or cone goal or goals are the "basket".

THE GAME:

The object is to have all players help and get all the 'eggs' into the 'basket' as quickly as possible.

They are not allowed to take the ball away from another player.

Time them with the stopwatch.

Encourage shooting from a distance instead of dribbling into the goal!

See if they can better their total time when you play it again!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

This teaches the tracking of the ball, dribbling quickly to a target, and shooting/kicking the ball to a target.

This game self-adjusts for skill as a skilled kid may do 3 balls in the net while a slower kid may do 1.



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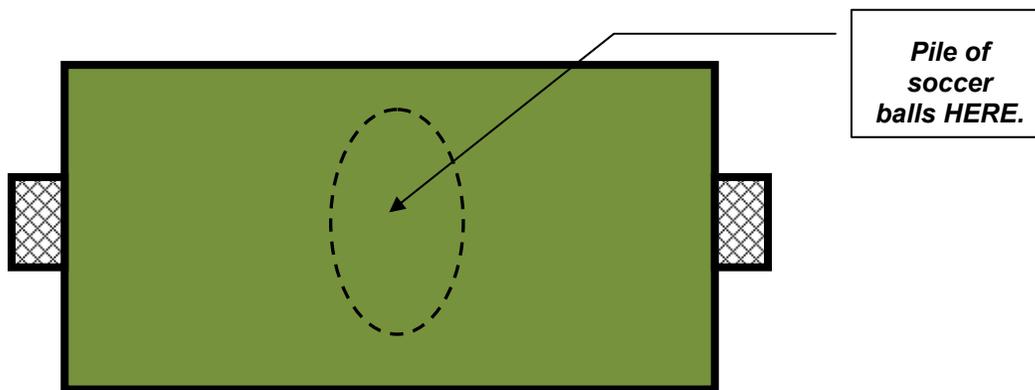
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Feed Your Hungry Monster

SETUP:

A rectangular area **with 2 goals/pop-up goals** on different sides of the area.

All soccer balls (many more than players!) are inside the area in a pile (dotted area below). Players are grouped in teams behind their goal.



THE GAME:

On "GO" players must retrieve the "meatballs" (soccer balls) **one at a time** from the center pile, dribble it back to their goal 'monster' and feed to their monster (kick it in the net!).

Do this until ALL BALLS in the center are gone.

The Team that has fed the most meatballs to their monster (the most soccer balls in their goal) wins!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Hey! Kids love to score goals! Shooting, dribbling under timed pressure.

This game self-adjusts for skill as a skilled kid may do 3 balls in the net while a slower kid may do 1.

See how they run around the ball to get the ball?! Correct them to use a "HOOK/PULL-BACK TURN" instead.



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Fetch the Frogs!

SETUP:

One coach with many soccer balls at his feet. Players are nearby.

THE GAME:

The coach stands in the middle of the training site and collects all of the balls. The coach then explains that players are "Frog Catchers" and must bring the "Frogs" (soccer balls) back to the pond where the coach is.

Frogs are clever and can jump high (coach bounces ball) and move really fast (coach rolls the ball)! Keep your eye on your frog!

The coach puts various conditions on how they retrieve the ball (an example for U6: with one hand; one hand with the ball touching the forehead; both hands and the ball touching their belly button; both hands and the ball touching the top of their head, etc.).

Once the children show comfort with the exercise, they are asked to retrieve the ball with their feet.

The coach kicks and/or throws the balls in different directions 10 to 15 yards away. Each kick/throw is accompanied with a player's name. That player should chase down that frog and quickly retrieve it back to coach.

When they deliver that ball back to you, toss it again! Go for 60-120 seconds.

*Stress that Dribbling is NOT KICK & CHASE! It is controlled movement of the ball!
Touch the ball with every step!*

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

It develops dribbling skills and tracking the ball taking it from point A to point B.

The Game also self-adjusts to a player's skill as a skilled kid may return 5 during the exercise and a novice may return 2.



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Glob!

SETUP:

Use cones to outline the sidelines and the finish line. A 20x20 or 30x20 yard space should be adequate.

THE GAME:

Begin without a ball.

The Coach stands in the middle of the area and talks and acts like a Glob. The coach challenges the players to TRY to run (without the ball) across the space to the other side without being caught (tagged) by the nasty Glob.

Ham it up a bit to have more fun! Then, have the players try to get across Glob Country by dribbling their ball while the coach tries to touch their ball out of bounds.

Their re-entry back into the game can be done in many ways, (i.e. 5 jumping jacks, three foot taps on the ball, throw the ball in the air clap twice and catch it, etc). ***This is not an elimination game.***

This game is as good a time as ever to introduce the concept of 'keeping the ball close' and that dribbling is NOT kick and chase. The ball should be treated as a "puppy on a leash". If the puppy gets too far away you're going to lose him. In soccer if the ball gets too far away the other team is going to steal it.

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

This game develops dribbling skills, quick thinking, and running to open space to avoid an opponent...AND keeping the ball close.



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Hit the Coach!**

SETUP:

All players are on one side of an enclosed 'island' area marked by cones. Coach CANNOT leave the island area!

Each player has a ball. Coach stands in the area 5 steps away.

The stopwatch is set at two minutes!

THE GAME:

- On "Go", the Coach runs slowly away while players dribble to chase him & try to hit him with the ball (below the knees!) by shooting/passing at him.
- They (the group) gets 1 point each time they hit him
- If you have more than 10 kids recruit parents to help & split into 2 games, so it is less crowded
- Stay in a small area & have fun with this game and play for about 2 minutes. How many times can they hit the coach?!

GO CRAZY! Before starting, tell the players that if they as a group hit you 3 or 5 times (total) you will make the sound of their favorite animal, like a dog or a cow, etc. but if they don't...THEY must imitate an animal! When you are hit X amount of times, stop & let them choose a sound. Then start all over!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Dribbling in traffic and shooting/passing at a moving target! Just like during the game! Plus, it shows that the coach can have fun too! 😊



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Hot Potato!

SETUP:

Every player has a soccer ball and starts with the ball in front of their feet.

The coach is in the middle with a stopwatch.

THE GAME:

Explain to the players that the ball is a HOT POTATO and the only way to cool it down is by touching/tapping it on top with their foot! Coach demonstrates the skill.

Coach blows the whistle and the players touch the top of the ball with the bottom of their foot/toes alternating their feet if possible.

Start stationary and then see if they can tap alternating feet while going around the ball.

How many touches can each player get in 30 seconds?!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

We are helping develop the player's fine motor skills!

This teaches and reinforces control of the ball. Keep knees bent & tap ball with the front of the foot (this gives better control than the back of the foot).



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'Outta Here!

SETUP:

Create a small 2v2 field approximately 15X20 yards with two small goals on each endline. Split the group into two even teams and line them up on the same sideline with the coach in the middle with a pile of soccer balls. It would help if one group wore alternate jerseys.

THE GAME:

The coach will play a ball into the area and call out a player(s) names. Those players must then sprint onto the field and play. The game should continue until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds.

If a goal is scored the scoring team/player stays on while the defending team comes off.

If ball goes out of bounds coach shouts "Get Outta-Here!" and all players must leave the field and sprint back to their team's line!

Variation#1: *If doing 1v1, have more than one 1v1 going at the same time (yes, the same field!)*

Variation#2: *Call out more players to create a 3v2 or 3v3.*

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

- Encourages players to take on their opponent.
- Encourages players to shoot when they have a chance of a goal.
- That yes...there is a SIDELINE/Out of BOUNDS!
- It's a game...just like Saturday!



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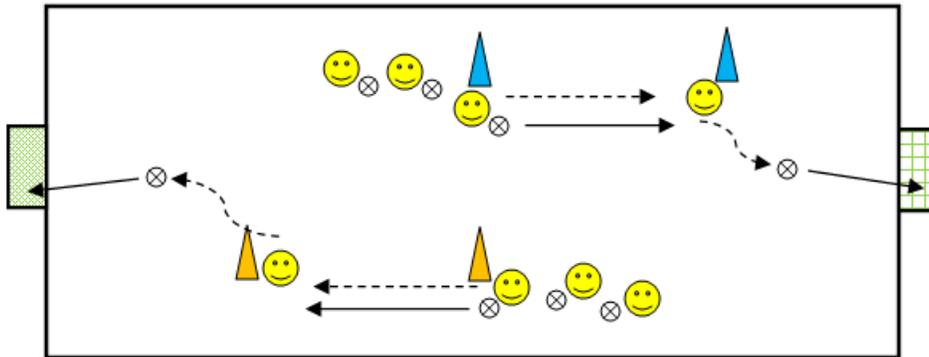
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Pass, Turn, and SHOOT Lines!

SETUP:

Two lines each with 2 cones facing GOAL. Cone A in each line is just above penalty box area with second Cone B about 12-15 yards behind.

Cone A has one player (Player 1) without ball and Cone B has many players with soccer balls.



THE GAME:

Player 1 has his back to goal and receives a pass from Player 2 at Cone B.

Player 1 traps the ball and turns/pullbacks the ball past/around his cone.

Player 1 after turning SHOOTS on goal then gets in line at Cone B. DO NOT dribble ball into goal!

Meanwhile Player 2 runs to Cone A and takes the place where Player 1 was.

And so it goes. Have this running at BOTH goals OR have two lines at the same goal.

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Passing...turning the ball under control and shooting! Players should look up before getting off a shot.



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Red Light! Green Light!

SETUP:

Every player has a soccer ball!

Use big AREA or CIRCLE as the driving area! – Place blue/yellow vests and tell them that they are LAKES and we cannot drive into the LAKES!

THE GAME:

EXPLAIN: The players are taking their soccer ball out for a “drive”. To do this we dribble the soccer ball. Dribbling the soccer ball is a touch of the ball with every step with the foot. Inside Foot... Outside foot...Bottom...etc. Demonstrate this to the players.

GREEN is a quick dribble,

YELLOW is dribble slowly,

RED is STOP with bottom of foot.

PURPLE is REVERSE DIRECTION (Pull Back/U Turn:)

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

We are helping develop the player’s fine motor skills!

This teaches and reinforces control of the ball. Reinforce the dribbling is NOT kick and chase...it is controlled movement of the ball.

This also gets them listening to commands.



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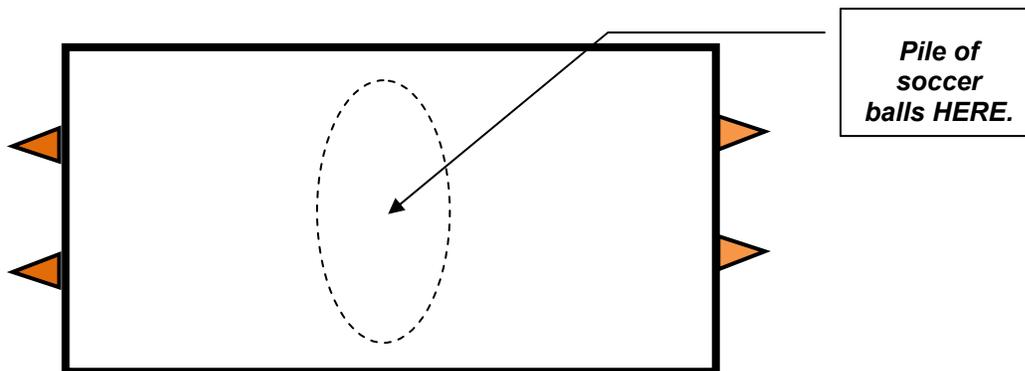
Rock Collectors

SETUP:

A rectangular area (20x30 yard area) **with 2 Cone Goals** on opposite sides of the area.

All soccer balls, many more than players, are scattered about in the mid-field area (dotted area below).

Players are grouped in teams behind their 'goal'.



THE GAME: Tell the players they are rock collectors. All the soccer balls are rocks!

On "GO" teams must COLLECT balls (one at a time) from the center pile, **dribble it back THRU their CONE GOALS and leave it there and go back and get more.** Do this until ALL BALLS in the center are gone. The team with the most rocks (soccer balls) collected wins!

Players should keep the ball close! Dribbling is NOT KICK AND CHASE!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Dribbling to a target under timed pressure.

This game self-adjusts for skill as a skilled kid may collect 3 balls for his team while a slower kid may do 1.



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Taps

SETUP:

Every player has a soccer ball and starts with the ball between their feet with their knees bent.

THE GAME:

To start with, on coach's command each player bends down & touches the ball **between their hands** as many times as they can in 10 seconds. Do the same activity for **elbows**!

Use hands and elbows as the confidence builder. It's the FOOT touches that require balance and is harder!

Then, the next time, each player taps the ball **between their feet**. This is tricky as it requires balance and more coordination!

How many touches can each player get? Repeat 2 times

.

VARIATION#1:

Do '**Tap on Tops**' where the players touch the top of the ball with the bottom of their foot/toes. Start stationary and then see if they can tap alternating feet while going around the ball.

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

We are helping develop the player's fine motor skills! This teaches and reinforces control of the ball. Keep knees bent & tap ball with the front of the foot (this gives better control than the back of the foot).



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The Turn Around Game

SETUP: You need 2 coaches for this!

Playing area is the length of a small-sided field or bigger.

First, demonstrate how to "Turn the ball". Dribble and have your assistant say "Coach Jim, turn around!" When he does, step past the ball, cut the ball back with the inside of your primary foot as you shift my body, then push the ball the other way and start dribbling back from where you came. It is an inside of the foot turn! You could also demonstrate the "Hook" or "Pullback" turn.

Place all kids with their own ball, at the far end with you and place your Assistant Coach at the opposite end.

THE GAME:

On "DRIBBLE!" all players dribble the ball towards your Assistant Coach (everyone at the same time).

When a kid approaches him, he specifically calls that kid's name, steps in front of them, makes a big sweeping arm motion, and says: "Scott, Turn Around". **It's important to note that each kid ONLY turns when the coach calls that player's name!** The player makes that turn and is now dribbling to you, the Head Coach.

When he approaches **you**, tell **him** to turn around. Now he is heading back towards your assistant. Do this for all players as they come near you and your assistant. Go for 2-3 minutes!

Players should be reminded that dribbling is NOT kick & chase...keep the ball close!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

It forces players to keep their heads up, and it creates pressure and traffic! Naturally, some players are faster than others, so while all players start all going the same direction, you end up with kids going back and forth into each other and two way traffic! But the most important thing it teaches is the actually physical skill of turning.

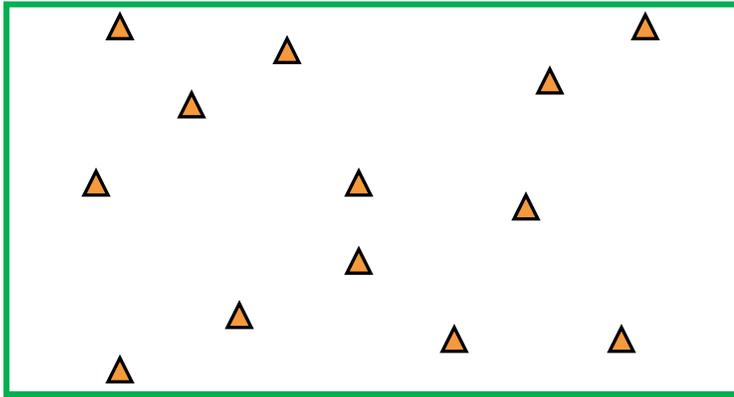
This corrects the problem of scoring in the wrong goal during your games! 😊



Zap the Space Invaders

SETUP:

Set down a dozen or so cones over a wide area (20x30 yards) and every player has a soccer ball.



THE GAME:

Explain to the players that "space invaders" have come and are trying to take over the soccer field!

Ask them to "ZAP" as many invaders as possible by dribbling to a cone and kicking the ball at the space invader. If they touch the Space Invader with their ball that counts as a point!

Ask them to reset any cone they knock over and keep track of how many space aliens they shoot! (Parents can help in this regard!)

**For Under 6 age players: Parents should help the players count how many times they pass through the gates as the ability to dribble through gates and count is difficult at this age. Each player gets a chance to repeat the exercise to try and beat their own score. It is appropriate for younger players to compete against themselves, not other players.

The Game goes for 60 - 90 seconds and Players/Coaches keep score.

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Players will have to keep their head up in traffic! They are learning to dribble to a specific target and pass/shoot to that target.



Zen Master Warm-Up

SETUP: Spread out many cones (make sure you have at least one per player) throughout the small field, the small field perimeter works well.

Each Player stands near a cone, one cone per player! – cone serves as point of reference...this is good for keeping younger kids spread out from one another and focused! (i.e. "Jay – stay at your cone please!")

Coach is where all players can see him...probably in the center of the area.

THE GAME/ACTIVITY:

Coach is the Zen Master! Coach demonstrates a skill and on command players perform skill repeatedly (20-30 sec.) You can introduce a new skill by asking the players: "I can do THIS...can YOU?"

- ***Activities Without Ball (developing motor skills!):***
1 foot balance... Up on toes...Back on heels...1 foot hop... 2 foot hop...bear crawl...crab crawl...jumping jacks...run forwards around cone...run backwards around cone...hop over cone...rub tummy while patting your head...touch your toes...etc.
- ***Introduce ball (developing motor skills with the ball!):***
Move ball with hands around legs together....move ball with hands in figure 8's between & around legs...Dribble around the cone(inside foot/outside foot)...Throw ball up, let it bounce, & catch the ball...Throw-Clap-Catch...Ball Taps with foot...Ball Tap on Forehead...Balance the ball on top of your head...Bring Thigh up to meet ball...Thigh & Catch...Ask Player to pick, ...really anything you want to work on!

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

This works to improve the player's motor skills and specific soccer ball control skills. Remember! US Soccer Federation states that for kids 4 to 8 years old "...*training sessions should be treated more as physical education than specifically soccer training*".

We coaches (& parents frankly) need to understand & acknowledge how limited the kids at this age are in what they're capable of doing on the field mentally & physically. Helping develop these motor skills is the critical first step.



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Zombie Soccer!

SETUP:

A big island area marked by cones (say 20x20 yards). Put all players with their ball in the area. The Coach (the Zombie/monster) stands just outside the area.

THE GAME:

On "GO" players dribble their ball to stay away from the zombie (the coach) BUT MUST STAY ON THE ISLAND!!

The zombie (you the COACH!) moves slowly around the area (perhaps dragging a leg, etc.. I like to put in my fake costume teeth and grunt for my U8 teams but that might be too scary for Under 6 kids!!)

If a player gets tagged by the zombie or goes off the island, they are either:

VARIATION#1: FROZEN until another player DRIBBLES the ball near them and touches them to un-freeze them.

...OR...

VARIATION#2: They must dribble to a "Hospital area" and do an activity to get back into the game (i.e. 5 jumping jacks, 5 toe taps on the ball or throw ball up and catch 3 times, etc)

Game goes for 2 minutes. Dribblers should be reminded to keep the ball close and keep their heads up!

This game is as good a time as ever to introduce the concept of 'keeping the ball close' and that dribbling is NOT kick and chase. The ball should be treated as a "puppy on a leash". If the puppy gets too far away you're going to lose him. In soccer if the ball gets too far away the other team is going to steal it.

WHAT THIS TEACHES:

Dribbling in traffic and dribbling to a specific target (i.e. away from the zombie, toward the frozen teammate).