



Texas Heatwave Recreational Soccer Coaches Training Companion



You as a coach should define success by how well your team and players play, their courage and daring, their work-rate and confidence and not by the number of wins.

1. Winning the game must be a low priority
2. The effort given, doing their best and playing for fun and excitement must be paramount.
3. Try to always end a correction with a positive comment.
4. Your training session should emulate the game. Be realistic to the game.

The game of soccer is the teacher

Players must meet the demands of the game, not the demands of the coach.

Players learn from playing the game not simply doing drills.

Movement is necessary to acquire skill, not just standing in lines.

Teach team shape and balance, not positions in the younger ages.

Set achievable goals in training, keep score in training games, and develop competition.

FUN!!!

All players must have fun, especially the youngest players.

Children should enjoy playing the game of soccer. Their experience should be positive.

Players must be allowed to make mistakes without retribution. Players do not learn if they cannot make mistakes. Players will try to learn if they are allowed to take chances and make mistakes without being admonished. **HAVE PATIENCE and be POSITIVE.**

Success must be achieved

As players achieve success, raise the degree of difficulty. Always challenge your players.

Maximal touches on the ball

Acquisition of skill comes with dealing with the ball in a dynamic/moving setting, not standing in lines waiting.

Training Sessions - Training is what we do with the team. Practice is what we do at home.

All sessions should include:

A warm-up introducing the topic of the day in a low-pressure environment. Repetition and success should be achieved.

For the U10 and younger player stretching won't hurt, but it's not really necessary.

The main activity of your session should reinforce the topic(s) of the day. Add pressure to make the game or exercise more challenging. Pressure can be defenders, movement, space or time. Add a goal in the activity.

The main activity should be playing the game of soccer. Two teams, goals and a ball.

The Coach (That's you)

The attitude of the coach must be upbeat, positive and enthusiastic. Get down on their level, at times get goofy, and be silly.

Players must be excited to play, eager to come back to training and games. Eager to practice at home. Have many activities for a short duration of activity.

To build a session, select several of the exercises and games. Remember, close to half your session should be devoted to playing soccer. For the youngest age groups, you may want to have more activities because their interest will fade quickly with just one or two games.

On the next page there is a sample session for dribbling for the U8-U10 age group.

Have Fun and Best of Luck in your Season!

ACTIVITY #1

Set up: 2x2 yard grids

Instructions: Game 1: Tag with no ball

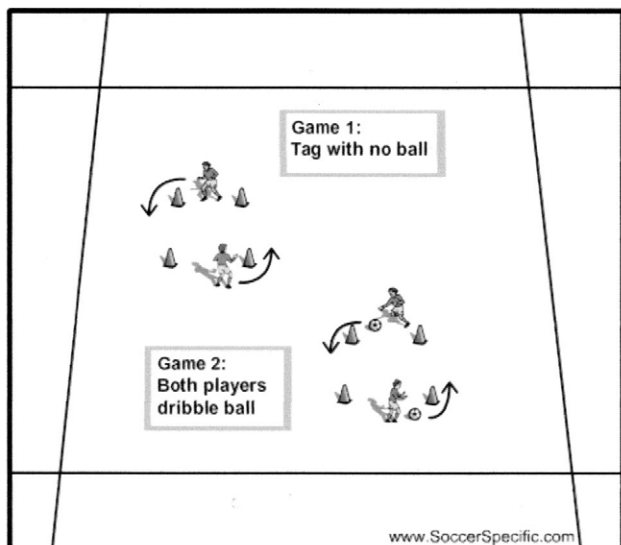
Players are in pairs. One player is designated as the cat (chaser) and the other is the mouse (runner).

On the coaches mark, the cat has 20 seconds to catch the mouse (tag). Both players must stay outside of the grid. After 20 seconds, switch roles.

Game 2: Tag with both players dribbling balls

The game is the same, except now each player has to dribble a ball.

Coaching Points: As the cat, try to get the mouse running and quickly change direction. Both players must be on the balls of their feet and ready to move in either direction.



ACTIVITY #2

Set up: 25x20 yard grid

Set-up 1 yard gates spaced out within grid

Instructions: Divide players into two teams with each team starting on the outside on one half of the grid.

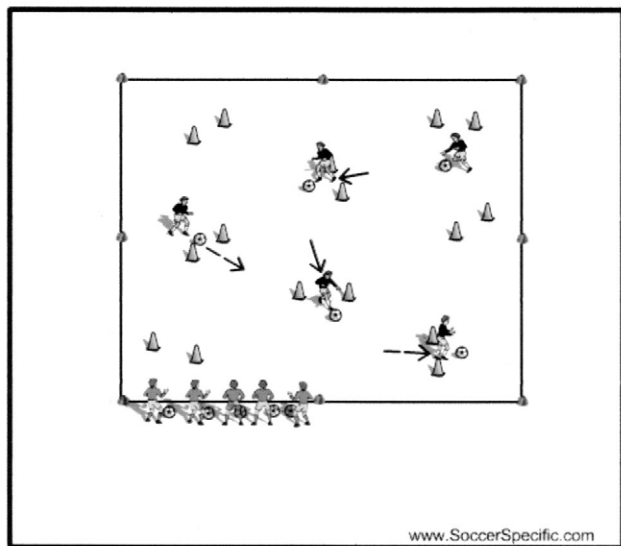
- On the coach's mark, one team goes in the grid and dribbles through as many gates as possible. Once they go through one gate, they must dribble through another gate before returning to the first gate.

- How many goals can they dribble through in 30-45 seconds?

- After time is up, the other team goes in and scores as many goals as possible.

- You can compete with most individual points or add them up as a team.

Coaching Points: - Push the ball further away from the body to dribble from gate to gate. Decelerate and have closer control dribbling through the gate.



ACTIVITY #3

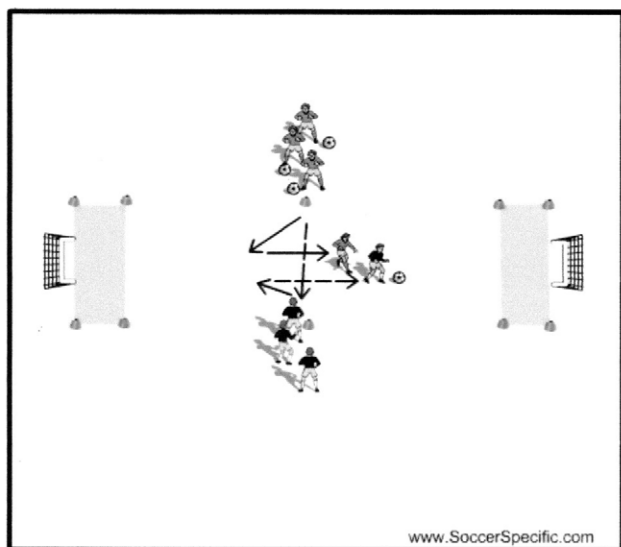
Set up: 25x10 yard grid with two discs 4 yards from each endline to form a "scoring zone". Two small goals (2-3 yards wide) one each endline.

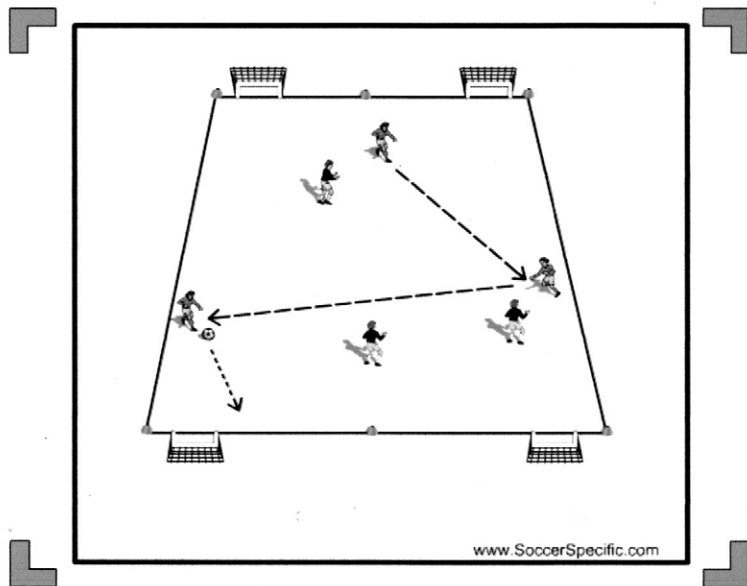
Instructions: Divide players into two groups. Both groups line up across from each other. One group are the defenders and have all the balls and the others will start as the attackers.

Play starts with the first defender passing to the first attacker in line. The attacker can dribble and score in either goal, but must be in the scoring zone for the goal to count. If the defender steals the ball, they can score on either goal. Once a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, the two players go back to their same lines. After 3-5 minutes, both teams switch roles.

Coaching Points: When the defender steps in front of the attacker, change direction!

Prior to the game, the coach can teach different moves to change direction.





ACTIVITY #4

Set up: 25x20 yard field with four small goals one yard from corner on the endline

Instructions: Divide players into two teams of 3.
Play 3v3. One team defends two goals and attacks two goals
When the ball goes out of play, players can dribble or pass the ball in. Defenders must give 3 yards of space.

Coaching Points: Talk about the shape of the team.
When attacking do you want a small or large shape? (Large) What about on defense? ((Small))

Encourage the players to dribble at the correct moments and in the safest areas of the field. (Attacking half and on the outside flanks).
Passing to switch the ball from one side to the other is best way to success.

**Recommended Games for
U7 - U10 Age Groups
Dribbling**

- Body Part Dribble** (10 minutes) Players dribble with a ball in a marked out grid. The coach calls out a body part (forehead, knee, stomach, be creative) and they must stop and touch the ball with that body part.
- Shadow Dribble** (10 minutes) Players in pairs, both with a ball. One player is the leader and dribbles wherever they want while their partner follows and imitates every move the leader makes. On the coach's call, the players switch roles.
- Freeze Tag** (15 minutes) Two teams. Everyone must dribble his or her soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. A teammate must pass their ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze them. If all players are frozen, the game ends and the frozen team become taggers. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have teams reverse roles.
- Variation 2:** (10 minutes) The coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players with players unfreezing each other in same way.
- Hospital Tag** (15 minutes) In a marked grid, every child dribbles a soccer ball while trying to tag other players with their hands. Players cannot leave their own ball. Each time a player is tagged he/she must place their hand on the spot where they were tagged. If they are tagged a third time, players have no more hands to cover those spots, so they must go to the hospital to see the doctor. The coach acts as the doctor and magically heals (pretend) all the soccer player's wounds so they can continue playing the game.
- Kangaroo Jack** (10 minutes) All players except two or three begin with a ball. Players without balls are Kangaroo Jacks and must hop like kangaroos and try to tag players. If a player gets tagged, he/she becomes a kangaroo until one player is remaining.
- Free Dribble** (10-15 minutes) In a marked grid, all players dribble a ball using their insides, outsides and soles of their feet. Have players dribble with speed (outside laces of foot), change direction and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session. As the players get more comfortable dribbling the ball, the coach can put light pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction.

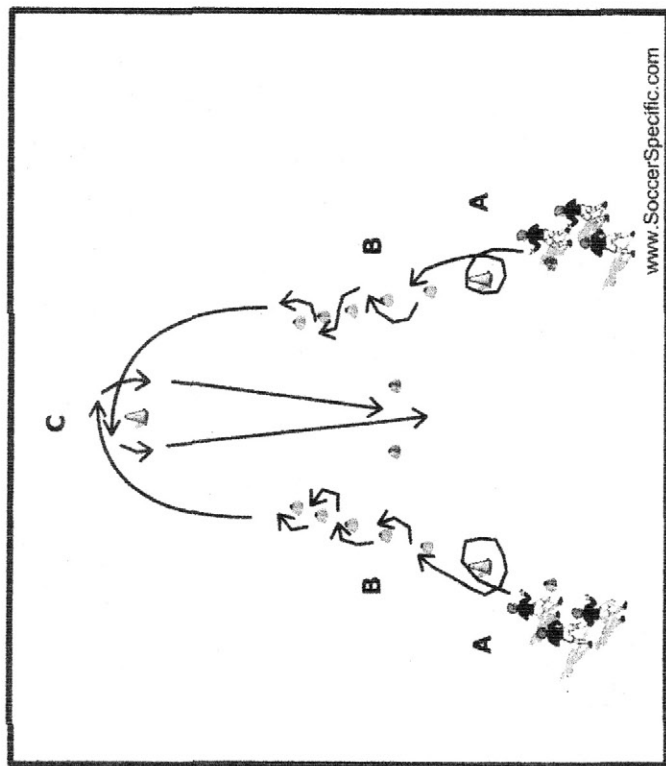
Knock Out
(10-15 minutes)

In a marked grid, have players dribble balls while trying to knock players balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. You can have them perform a skill or task re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling the ball 3 times, etc.

Shield Steal
(10-15 minutes)

In a marked grid, divide players into two teams. One team has balls and the other does not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from an opposing player that has a ball. If the ball goes out of bounds, the player who last touched it does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at the start of the activity. Show shielding technique with body sideways on, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks.

More exercises and diagrams for dribbling on the next pages...



Drill Name: Agility Course

Set up :

Using discs, cones and/or soccer balls create an agility course. Start with one disc where players line-up. 3 yards away set up a standing cone, pole or soccer ball. 3 yards from the cone, place 5 discs one yard apart. 10-15 yards away in the middle of obstacle place a cone, pole or disc. In the middle of the course set up two discs to create a gate.

Instructions:

Players start on the coach's mark.

A) Facing forward move in a full circle around the cone.

- two footed hops around the cone

- one footed hops around the cone

- Jump 2 times side to side over cone

B) One foot between each disc (raising knees)

- Two feet between each disc

- Side shuffle between each disc

- two footed hops between each disc

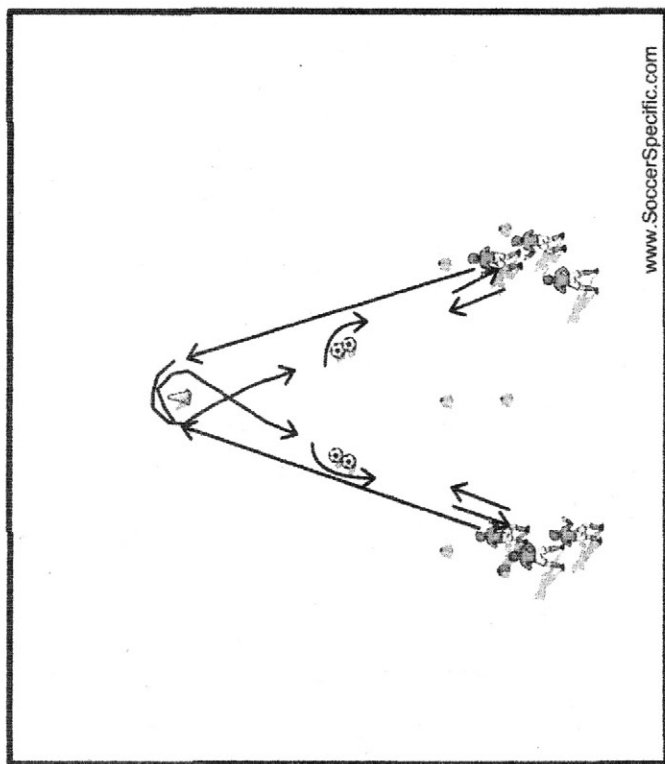
Run around the top cone (C) being aware of the other runner

Race back through the gate and switch lines.

*You can add a ball for a dribbling course

Coaching Points:

- Stay on the balls of the feet
- Low center of gravity (bent knees)



Drill Name: Agility Obstacle Relay

Set up :

10x5 yard grid at bottom with a cone 15-20 yards centered at the top. Use discs or soccer balls as a hurdle or obstacle to work around

Instructions:

The firsts players in line start on the coach's mark. They must sprint to the 5 yard line and back and then run around the top cone (with eyes up to avoid collisions). On the way back to their lines they must jump over the balls and tag the next player in line who runs the course. Each player goes two times. The first team back sits down and is the winner!

For the first 5 yard shuttle change the movement so that they must:

- 1) Sprint to the line and run backwards to the start

- 2) Side shuffle up and back

- 3) Hop on one leg and back on the other

On the soccer ball obstacles:

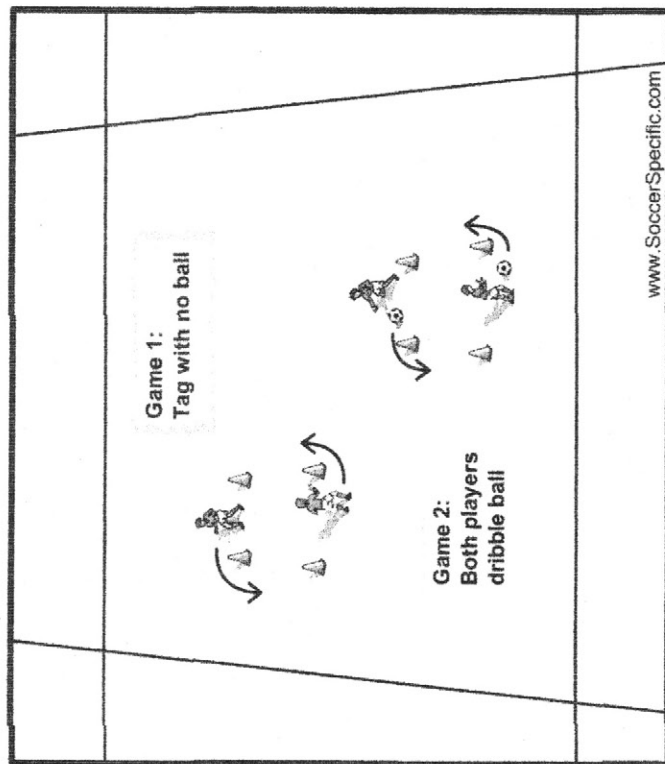
- 1) Facing forward, run a full circle around the balls

- 2) Jump 3 times over side to side

- 3) Place the balls 1 yard apart and have players shuffle in between balls

Coaching Points:

The game of soccer involves all types of movements, so involve a wide variety within the exercise.



Drill Name: Cat and Mouse

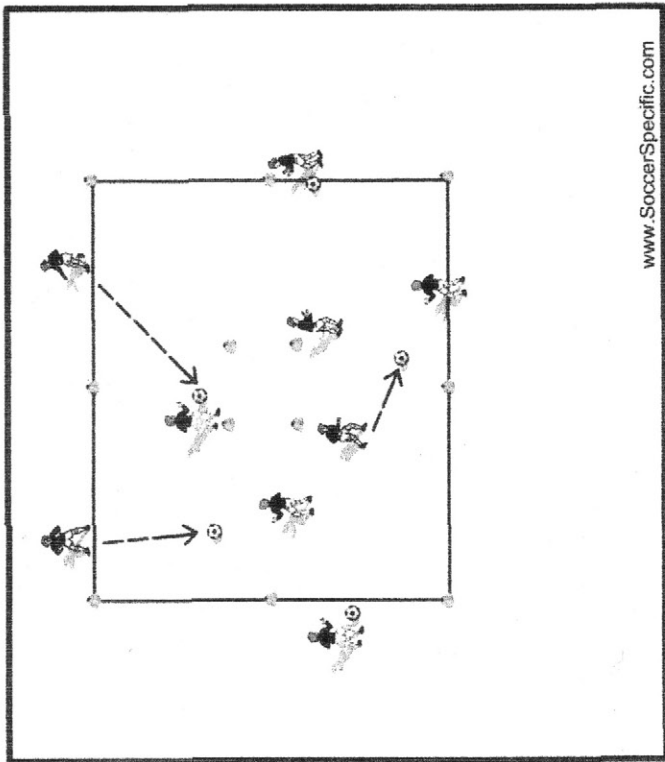
Set up :
2x2 yard grids

Instructions:

Game 1: Tag with no ball
Players are in pairs. One player is designated as the cat (chaser) and the other is the mouse (runner).
On the coaches mark, the cat has 20 seconds to catch the mouse (tag). Both players must stay outside of the grid. After 20 seconds, switch roles.
Game 2: Tag with both players dribbling balls
The game is the same, except now each player has to dribble a ball.

Coaching Points:

As the cat, try to get the mouse running and quickly change direction. Both players must be on the balls of their feet and ready to move in either direction.



Drill Name: Scottish Square

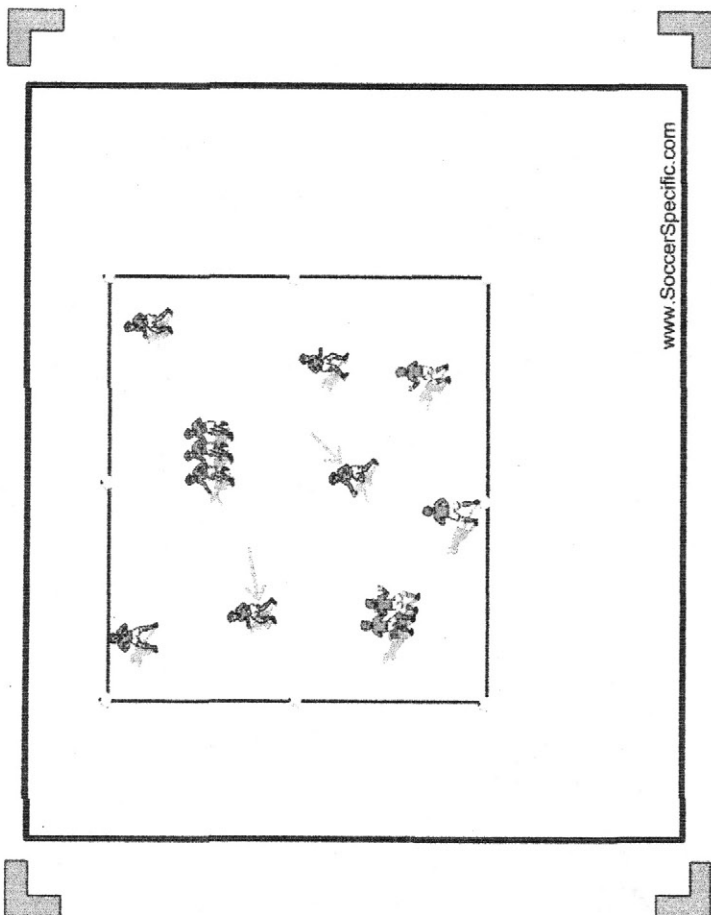
Set up :
20x20 - 25x25 yard grid with a 5x5 yard square in the middle.

Instructions:

Divide the players into two groups. One group starts on the outside of the big grid with a ball and the other group starts in the middle of the smaller square (no ball).
- For one minute, players in the small square move towards a player with a ball on the outside and calls for the ball. The outside player passes them the ball and the inside player controls it and passes it back. After passing the ball back, the inside player must run into the small square and move towards another player with a ball to repeat.
- After one minute, players switch roles.
Change the demands after both groups have gone (there are hundreds of different things you can do with this exercise).
Here are examples of other demands:
- Receive, dribble in the small square and pass to another player who doesn't have a ball
- Pass the ball 4 times between outside and inside player (ideally 1 touch)
- Outside players can serve ball in the air for inside player to receive with laces, inside of foot, thigh, chest.
- Outside players serve ball in the air for headers (older age groups).

Coaching Points:

Type Coaching Points Here...



Drill Name: Chain Tag 1

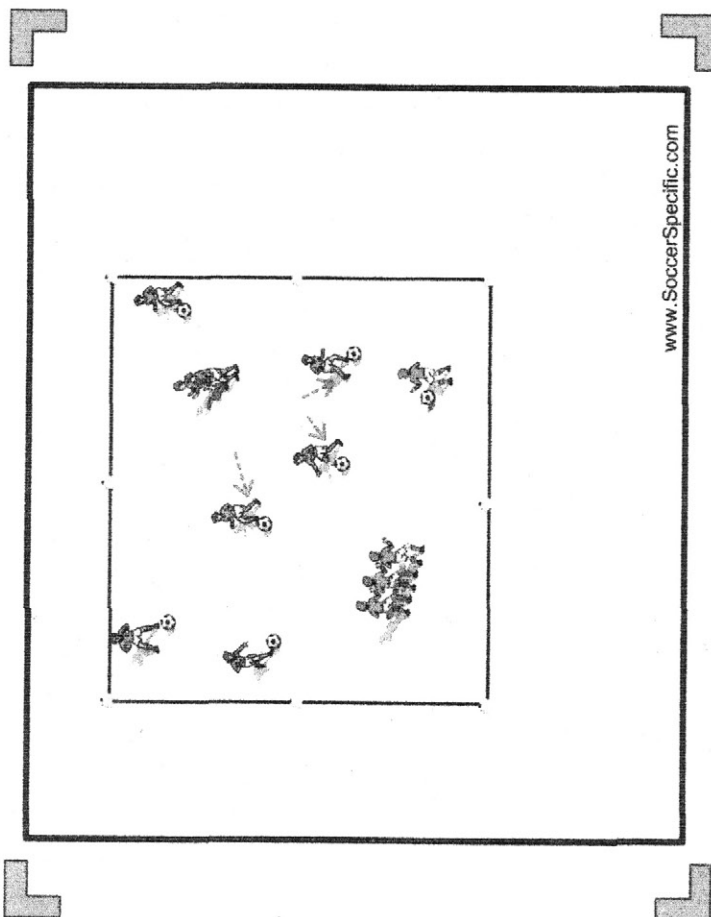
Set up :
20x20 yard grid

Instructions:

One player is "it" (tagger) and they try to tag another player. Once you are tagged you link up by holding hands or locking arms. The two locked taggers must work together to tag another player. If the pair tags a player they link to form a chain of three. If they tag another player, that player must go on their own to start a new chain. The last player remaining untagged is the winner.

Coaching Points:

Runners should look to change direction while looking for open space to run. The taggers or chain players need to work together constantly communicating and moving in sync.



Drill Name: Chain Tag 2

Set up :
20x20 yard grid

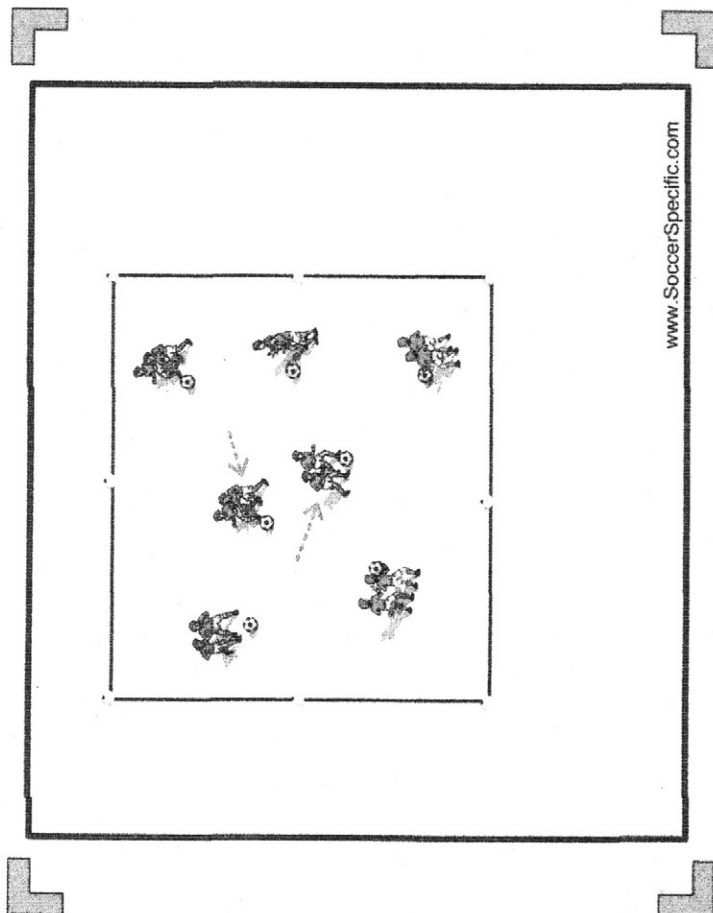
Instructions:

Same rules as before, but now all players must dribble a ball, except the tagger (chain). Players in the chain must kick the player's ball out of the grid instead of tagging. Last player with their ball is the winner.

Coaching Points:

Dribblers need to have good control of the ball. Fast change of direction and accelerating away is key to success.

The taggers or chain players need to work together constantly communicating and moving in sync.



Drill Name: Chain Tag 3

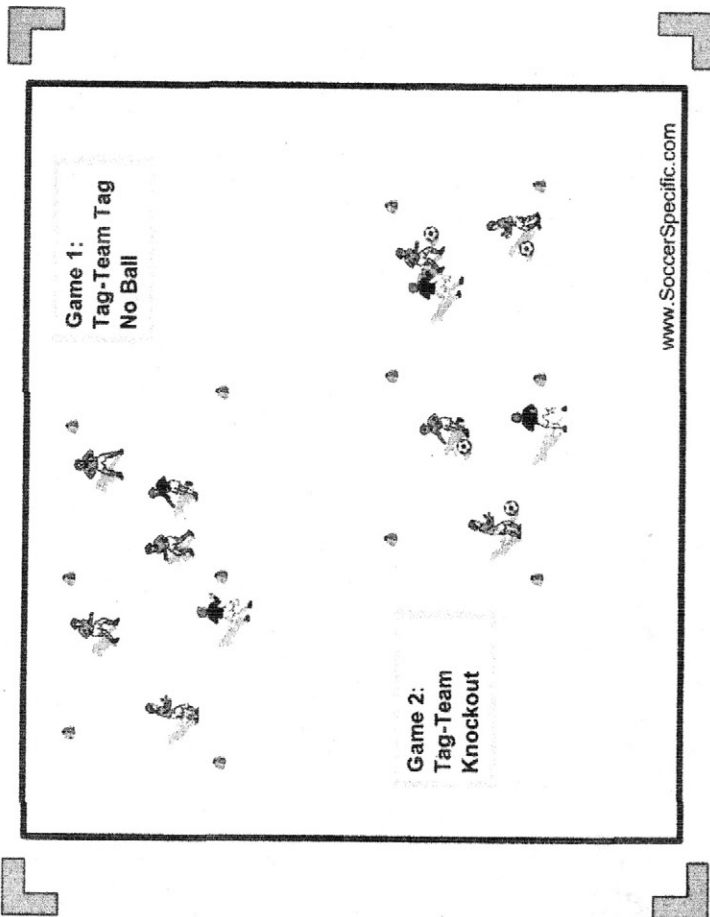
Set up :
20x20 yard grid

Instructions:

Players get in pairs holding hands or locking arms (with one ball per pair or play without a ball). Designate one pair as "it". The tagging pair must wear or tuck pinnies in their shorts to designate they are "it". They try to tag the other pairs while being linked together and in control of their ball. If a pair is tagged, they also become taggers. The last pair untagged wins the game.

Coaching Points:

Teamwork with your partner is a must! Having good close control is key for success.



Drill Name: Tag-Team Tag and Tag-Team Knockout

Set up :
-15x10 yard grid
-6 players

Instructions:

Game 1: Tag-Team Tag

Players get into pairs. Designate one pair of players as the taggers (they wear pinnies) and the other 4 are the runners. On the coach's mark, one tagger enters the grid and tries to tag one player. Once tagger gets a player, he/she runs to their partner and their partner runs into the grid and tries to tag a player. In 45 seconds how many can the two taggers get? After time is up, get a new pair of taggers and see if they can beat the score.

Game 2: Tag-Team Knockout

The game is the same as above, except all runners have a ball and dribble in the grid. The "tag" pair now have to kick a player's ball out before switching with his/her teammate. Once again, players keep track of their score.

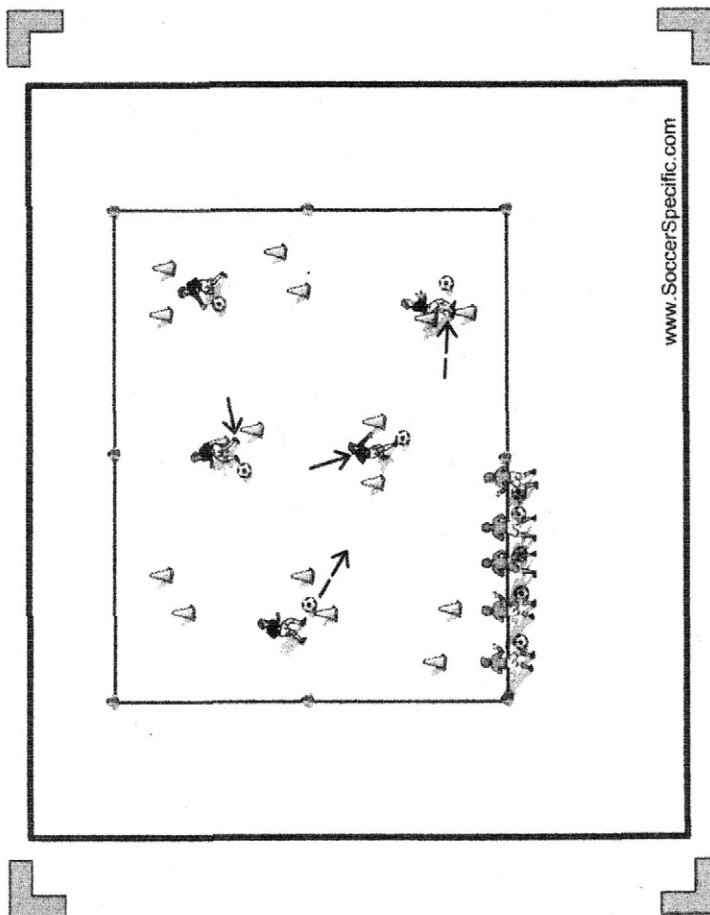
Coaching Points:

Game 1: Tag-Team Tag

This is all about agility and feinting. Runners have to be on the balls of their feet and be deceptive.

Game 2: Tag-Team Knockout

This is a game of change of direction and shielding. Make sure players get sideways on when shielding with the knees bent and arms out.



Drill Name: Gates - Dribbling

Set up :
25x20 yard grid
Set-up 1 yard gates spaced out within grid

Instructions:

Divide players into two teams with each team starting on the outside on one half of the grid.

- On the coach's mark, one team goes in the grid and dribbles through as many gates as possible. Once they go through one gate, they must dribble through another gate before returning to the first gate.
- How many goals can they dribble through in 30-45 seconds?
- After time is up, the other team goes in and scores as many goals as possible.
- You can keep compete with most individual goals or add them up as a team.

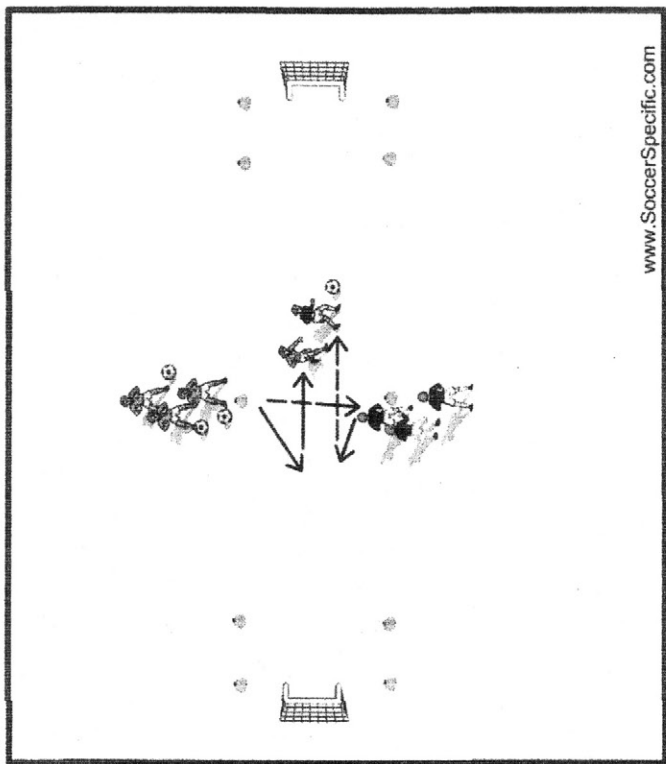
Variation:

Instead of using cones to create gates, use standing players with their legs spread apart. After time is up, have the dribblers take the place of the gates and compete again.

Coaching Points:

Where can players take bigger touches on the ball to go faster?

Where must they slow down for more control?

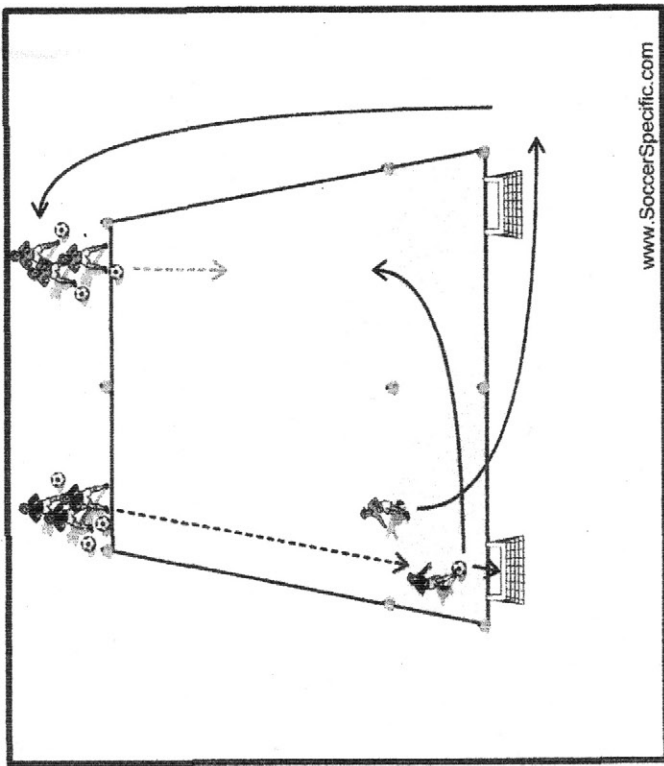


Drill Name: Two Goal - Change of Direction Game

Set up : 25x10 yard grid with two discs 4 yards from each endline to form a "scoring zone". Two small goals (2-3 yards wide) one each endline.

Instructions: Divide players into two groups. Both groups line up across from each other. One group are the defenders and have all the balls and the others will start as the attackers. Play starts with the first defender passing to the first attacker in line. The attacker can dribble and score in either goal, but must be in the scoring zone for the goal to count. If the defender steals the ball, they can score on either goal. Once a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, the two players go back to their same lines. After 3-5 minutes, both teams switch roles.

Coaching Points: When the defender steps in front of the attacker, change direction! Prior to the game, the coach can teach different moves to change direction.



Drill Name: Flying Changes - 1v1

Set up : 27x20 yard grid with three cones 6 yards from the endline to form a "scoring zone". Set up two small goals (3 yards wide) one yard from the corner on the endline.

Instructions: Divide players into two teams lined up in corners at the top of the field. All players should have a ball. Start with a player in the scoring zone (defender) from one of the teams. The first player from the opposing team starts to dribble and can attack either goal. Goals only count when scored within the scoring zone. Once the attacking player scores or the ball goes out of play, they instantly have to defend against a new attacker from the opposing team. The defending player goes to the back of the his/her team's line. First team to 10 goals is the winner.

Coaching Points: Attack with speed (use the outside laces area to run with the ball). Young players will mentally tune out after a goal or the ball goes out of play, so remind them to transition.

**Recommended Games For
U7-U10 Age Groups
Passing and Receiving**

Marbles
(10 minutes)

Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player plays out their ball and the partner passes his/her own ball in an attempt to hit it. Players keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball.

Once players understand the game, make it fast paced by having the players take turns at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to his/her ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his/her own ball after missing player 1's ball).

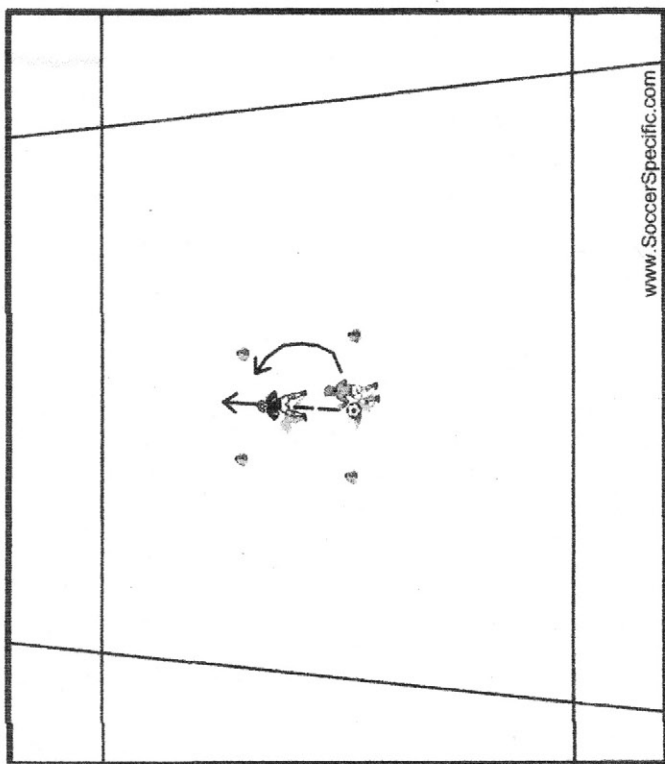
2v1 Keep away
(10 minutes)

In a 10x15 yd grid, three players play 2v1 continuous keep away. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he/she immediately combines with the attacker he/she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled or passed in.

Sequence Passing
(10-15 minutes)

In a 25x25 yard grid. Divide a team into two groups (not less than 4 per group). Number the players 1 through however many you have in the group. Player #1 starts with the ball and passes to #2 who passes to #3 and so on. The last player passes to #1 and the passing sequence continues. Make it a competition between the two teams by seeing which group can pass the ball 3 rounds through the sequence. Make the exercise more difficult by adding another ball (player #1 and a middle # player will start with the ball).

More exercises and diagrams for passing on the next pages...



Drill Name: The Tunnel

Set up :
2x2 yard grid

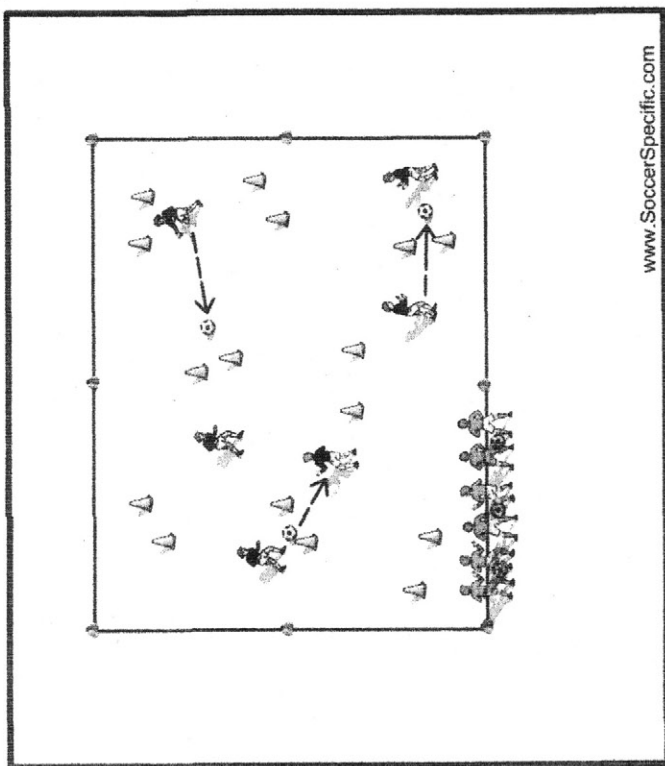
Instructions:

Players work in pairs. One player stands in the middle of the square with their legs open. The other player has the ball and on the coach's mark, passes back and forth through the legs of his/her partner for 20-30 seconds. Count each time they make it through the legs of their partner. After the designated time switch roles. Who can get more passes?

To progress the exercise, the pass only counts if passed outside of the 2 yard box (they can run through the box to get the ball on the other side of partner). To make it more challenging, make the grid larger for longer passes.

Coaching Points:

- When passing:
- Toe up and heel down
 - Knees bent
 - Plant foot beside ball and toe pointed to target
 - Swing through the hip (not the knee)
 - Use the middle of the inside of the foot



Drill Name: Gates - Passing

Set up :
25x20 yard grid
Set-up 1 yard gates spaced out within grid

Instructions:

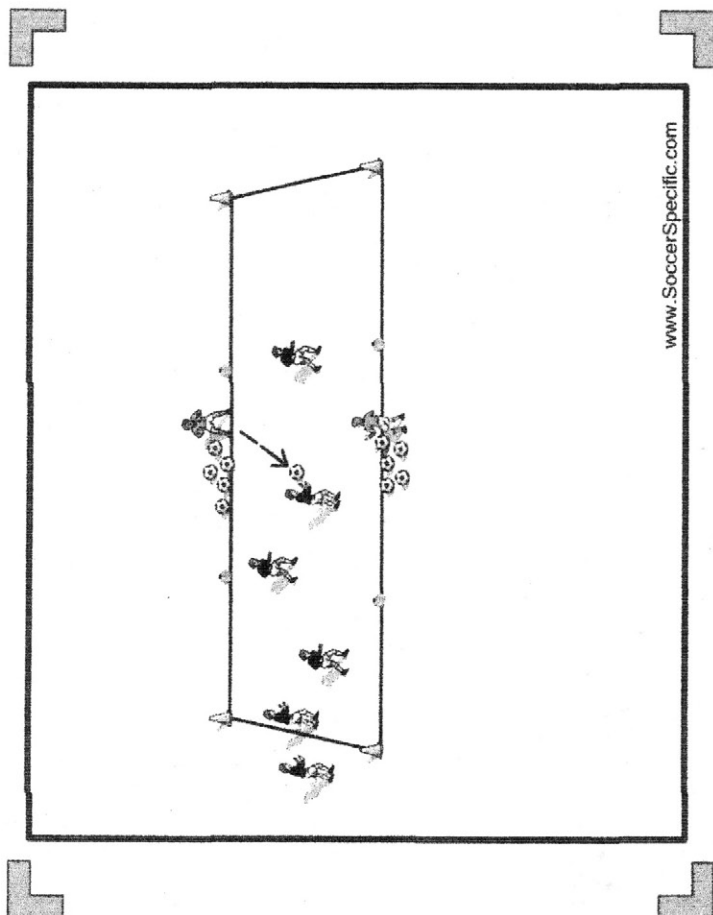
Divide players into two teams with each team starting on the outside on one half of the grid. Within each team players will pair-up.

- On the coach's mark, one team goes in the grid and each of the pairs try to get as many passes through the gates as possible. Once they pass through one gate, they must score through another gate before returning to the first gate.

- How many goals can they pass through in 30-45 seconds?
- After time is up, the other team goes in and scores as many points as possible.
- You can keep compete with most pair points or add them up as a team.

Coaching Points:

- Don't let the ball stand still when passing (keep it moving).
- Toe up and heel down when using the insides to pass and receive.
- Don't be flat footed when receiving the ball.
- Communication is key! Talk, point where you want your teammate to go!



Drill Name: Run the Gauntlet

Set up :

25-30 x 15-25 yard rectangle (depending on the age of the team). This game is best suited for 8-10 year olds.

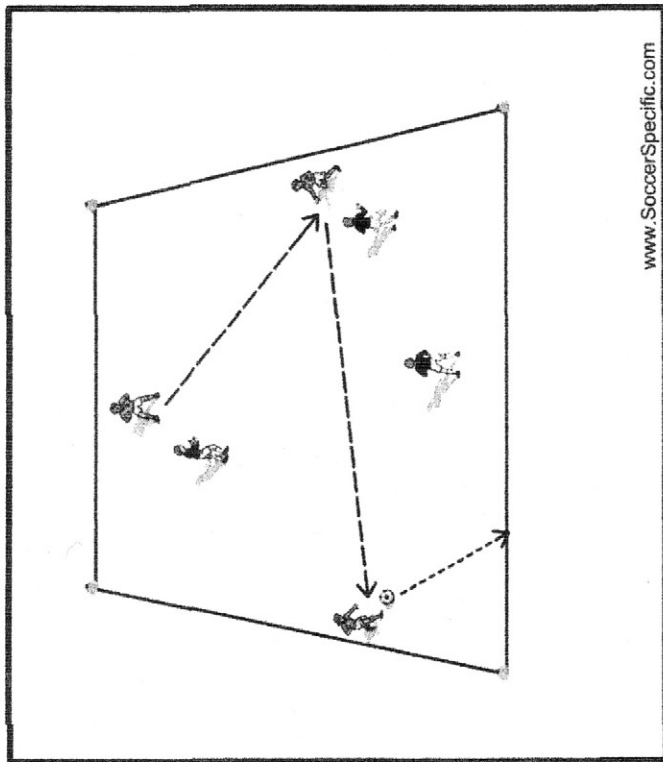
Instructions:

Two players on each side of the grid (long side) with a large supply of balls. All other players start at one end of the grid. On the coaches signal, the players try to run across the gauntlet without being hit by the two players on the outside. Players on the outside must use the inside of the foot and pass the ball at the feet of the runners. Anyone who is hit joins the players on the side. Play until one player is remaining.

Coaching Points:

When passing:

- Toe up, heel down
- Knees bent
- Plant foot beside ball with toe pointed at the target
- Hit through middle of the ball to keep it on the ground
- Swing through the hip



Drill Name: 3v3 - Playing to Lines

Set up :

25x20 yard field.

Instructions:

Divide players into two teams of three.

Play 3v3.

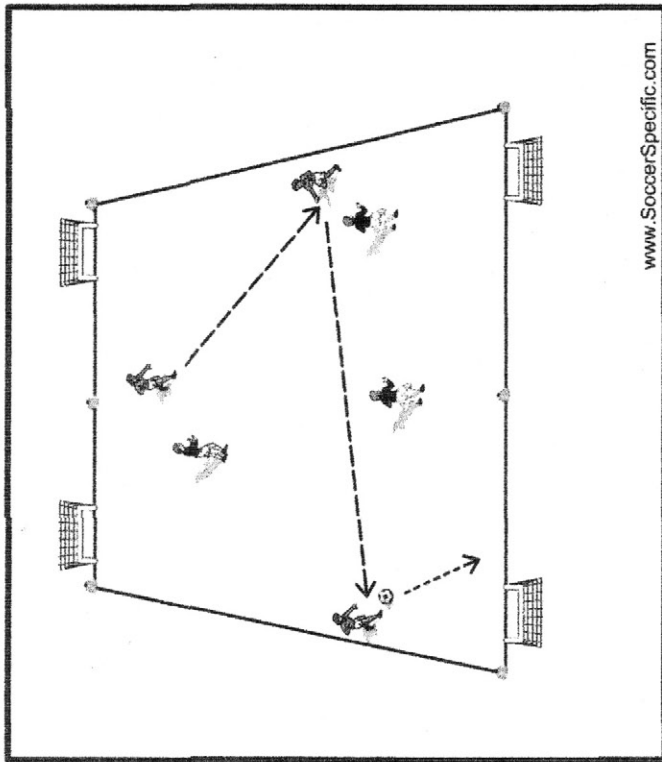
Team scores a point by stopping the ball on the opposing team's endline.

When the ball goes out of play, players can dribble or pass the ball in. Defenders must give 3 yards of space.

Coaching Points:

Talk about the shape of the team.

When attacking do you want a small or large shape? (Large) What about on defense? ((Small)) Encourage the players to dribble at the correct moments and in the safest areas of the field. (Attacking half and on the outside flanks)



Drill Name: 3v3 - 4 Goal Game

Set up :

25x20 yard field with four small goals one yard from corner on the endline

Instructions:

Divide players into two teams of 3.

Play 3v3. One team defends two goals and attacks two goals

When the ball goes out of play, players can dribble or pass the ball in. Defenders must give 3 yards of space.

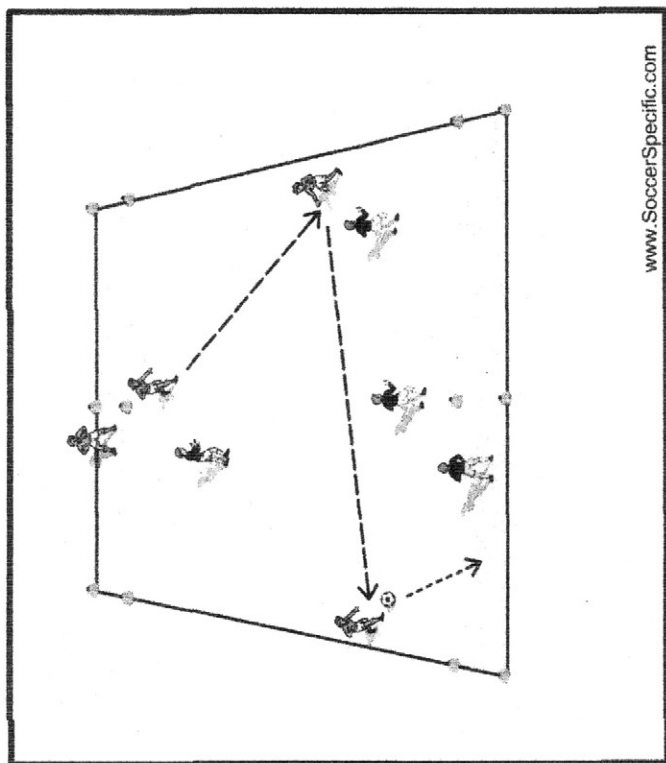
Coaching Points:

Talk about the shape of the team.

When attacking do you want a small or large shape? (Large) What about on defense? ((Small))

Encourage the players to dribble at the correct moments and in the safest areas of the field. (Attacking half and on the outside flanks)

Passing to switch the ball from one side to the other is best way to success.



Drill Name: 4v4 with endzone defenders.

Set up :

25x20 yard field with three discs 3 yards from each endline to form a scoring zone.

Instructions:

Divide players into two teams of four.

Play 4v4 with a player from each team in their team's endzone. The defensive player cannot leave the endzone, but teams can pass back to them when attacking.

Team scores a point by stopping the ball in the opposing team's endzone. The endzone defender needs to cover the space and not allow attackers to stop the ball.

When the ball goes out of play, players can dribble or pass the ball in. Defenders must give 3 yards of space.

Coaching Points:

Talk about the shape of the team.

When attacking do you want a small or large shape? (Large) What about on defense? ((Small)

Encourage the players to dribble at the correct moments and in the safest areas of the field. (Attacking half and on the outside flanks).

Passing to switch the ball from one side to the other is best way to success.