

1. Sharks and Minnows

Set up a grid 20x20, 30x30, or larger depending on the number of kids. Have players stand in between a set of cones shoulder to shoulder and 2-5 yards apart; the coach stands in the middle of the grid with a penny on. On the coach's cue, each player must dribble a ball across the grid to the other side. The coach's job is to kick out each ball that isn't control before reaching the other set of cones...you can also tag each player, which is a cue for them that they are done. Each player that is tagged or ball is knocked out, joins the coach in the middle as a shark to tag or knock out balls.

Coaching Points:

Explain to the players that have their ball knocked out or tagged that they must keep ball close to their body, and controlling the ball is more important than just kick and run, because you have a greater chance of losing the ball.

2. Freeze Game

Set up a grid 20x20 or larger depending on the numbers. Each player must spread out and dribble the ball while the coach tries to tag each player. The coach stands in the grid and runs around tryin g to tag a player; if the coach tags a player, they must stop and hold the ball above their head and not move(frozen, has to stand still in the area they were tagged) and have their legs spread apart at least shoulder length...a player who hasn't been tagged must play a their ball in between the frozen player's legs to be unfrozen and able to dribble again.

Coaching Points:

This is a good game to explain speeding up the ball while being chase, controlling the ball, and accuracy when passing the ball through the legs. You can even teach how to change direction to avoid the defender.

3. Shooting Game

Place three to five cones in a straight line 2 yards apart. Have each player start on one side of the cones and back pedal around the cones(if you are starting on th left side, back pedal around to the right side forward). As they are going forward on the other side, roll the ball to the player and have them kick the ball toward a target(goal or cone). Repeat on each side.

Coaching Points:

This helps the young player to understand want is "follow through" and forces them to land back on their kicking foot. It helps them understand attacking the ball.

You can also work on the following:

1. Trapping, then Shooting

A. Chest

B. Thighs

C. Volleys

D. Headers

4. Same as above now have them dribble through cones after trapping the ball

5. Find A Ball

Set up a grid 20x20 yards apart, with every player spread out inside the grid. All of the players dribble inside of the grid until the coach's cue to:

1. Stop their ball and find someone else's ball.

2. Dribble to a center point-a tree, bench, or split them into areas to dribble to a certain corner cone and back to the coach, then try switching a ball with another player.

3. On the coach's cue, stop, run away for five second without seeing their ball, then they have to find their ball again and dribble away.

6. Keeping The Ball Up

Each player bounces the ball on the round, and while the ball is in the air, they must attempt to keep the ball bouncing without using their hands. You can progress this exercise by having each person keep their hands behind their back after initial toss.

Coaching Points: Keep their feet moving

7. Find The Ball

Set up a grid 20x20 or larger depending on the numbers, then set up 4 five yard grids around the outside of the perimeter ; split up the soccer balls evenly in each of the 4 five yard grids. Each player begins in the middle, on the coach's cue, everyone must sprint to one of the small grids, find their ball, then sprint back to the coach as fast as they can with the ball. Another way is to perform the same exercise, but add tall cones in the middle...each player must find their ball then attempt to pass the ball and hit one of the cones inside the large grid. You can also:

1. Do a move after finding the ball, then sprint back or pass a cone

2. Try to pass the ball to another small grid after retrieving it, trying not to let the ball roll outside of the small grid.

8. Improving Skills

Mark out a big circle with tall cones.

Each player has a ball and dribbles around the edge of the circle. From the coach's cue, each player drags the ball behind his standing leg, controls the ball with one or two touches, and passes to a cone on the opposite side of the cone. If the ball hits the cone, the player scores a point. When the balls have passed the cones, each player starts with another ball.

Areas of Concentration:

Time the amount of dribbling...each player dribble 30 second to 1 minute, and then the player tries to pass it to a cone.

Challenge each player by passing the ball in the air, trying to hit the ball with a certain number of bounces before hitting a cone.

Be creative with the moves, attempt as many as you can.

9. Knockout

Make a large grid 30x30 to 50x50, depending on the numbers. Every player has a ball and is spread out inside the grid, at least five yards apart. Each player must dribble inside the area and attempt to knock away the other player's soccer ball. When the ball is knocked out of the grid, that player is finished.

Progression: After being knocked out, that player returns to the grid without a ball, and tries to knockout other soccer balls...try to limit the number of players coming back in without a ball, a limit of 3-5 is ideal.

Areas of Concentration:

Coach how to shield (protect) the ball...avoid! Dribble away at pressure and introduce change of direction.

Encourage being creative, performing moves in tight areas at a young age, will give them confidence.

10. The Tag Game

Depending on the numbers, make multiple 15x15 grids. Split up each athlete into teams (use pennies) Team 1 against Team 2...with everyone dribbling inside the grid, each team member must try and tag a player on the other team, if they are tagged, his entire team has to sprint around the outside of the grid with their ball, before entering grid again. Each person is allowed

2 tag outs, then is eliminated from the game.