



SSA Under 8 Practice Activities

DRIBBLING

Ball Master:

Set-Up: Players are paired up and have one ball. They give the ball to the coach. He kicks or throws the balls in all directions, sending the pairs approximately 10-20 yards away. The pairs should chase their ball and bring it back before it stops using various methods (jumping, skipping, backwards, one hand, fingers, feet etc.) the coach and players agree on. Pairs must stay connected with each other and both must touch the ball. Allow the players to use their imagination.

Progressions: Coach can move positions after he throws/kicks the ball. How many passes does it take to get back to the coach's feet?

Show Me!:

Set-Up: Players form a circle around coach. Coach says, "Look what I can do!", and then demonstrates an exercise without the ball (such as balance on one leg, hopping, side bends). After coach demonstrates, all players should try the same exercise. Ask each player to take a turn showing you something that he or she can do, let the other players try the new activity, and continue until every player has done at least one demonstration.

Progressions: Demonstrate exercises with a soccer ball

Simon Says!:

Set-Up: Coach says "Simon says ___" and the players must do it. However, if coach doesn't say, "Simon says" then players shouldn't do it. If a player does something they are not supposed to, issue them a "Gotcha". See who gets the least number of "Gotcha's".

Progressions: Include the soccer ball

Hospital Tag:

Set-Up: All players are taggers. Taggers run around the grid trying to tag each other. Whenever a player is tagged, he must hold that part of his body with one of his hands and continue running around the grid. If a player is tagged a second time, he must hold where he was hit with his other hand and continue running. If a player is tagged three times, he must go to the "hospital" (outside the grid), receive some form of "treatment" from the coach (for example, doing 5 hops), and then return to the grid to continue playing

Push Me/Pull You:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs facing each other, feet flat on the ground and palms of both hands touching. The goal of the activity is to unbalance your partner so that he/she moves his/her feet or falls over. The players can lean in and push with one or both hands or they can lean back, but neither player can move their feet, otherwise their partner gets a point. Keep score and can switch partners after a couple of rounds.

Progressions: Put a ball between them. Both players hold on to the ball to begin with and then when you say, "GO", they try to steal the ball from each other. One partner wins when he/she gets the ball or the other partner's feet move place.

Partner Tag:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs. One partner chases the other until he/she is tagged. Once he/she is tagged, the tagged player immediately becomes the chaser and chases his/her partner. Play for 45 seconds.

Progressions: Give each player a ball



Grid Game:

Set-Up: Players jog in a limited area without the ball. Periodically, coach gives an instruction that players must execute -- any players failing to comply must perform a 'forfeit' of some kind.

Examples include...

- a) "Groups of n" where n is any number from 1 to the number of players present.
- b) "Simple Simon" where players must imitate what the coach does without any verbal instruction (e.g. if the coach goes down on one knee, so must the players -- last one or two to comply do a forfeit).
- c) "Link": players must link up another player or players depending on the number of players you request.
- d) "Shorts/shirts/socks" all players wearing same color must stand together, e.g. if coach says "shorts" all players wearing same color shorts have to locate each other.

You can think of more variations. Follow each pause with more jogging, but vary the rhythm so that sometimes there is a long wait between instructions while other times several instructions come quickly one after the other.

Progressions – Now add a ball and have the player's dribble while following instruction.

Dribbling Moves:

Set-Up: Coach demonstrates a simple move that the players practice while dribbling freely inside the grid. After performing the move, the players should accelerate to the outside of the grid by touching the ball a few yards in front of them and sprinting. After gaining control of the ball, the players dribble back into the grid until coach signals to perform the move again.

Progressions: On coach's signal, players dribble at someone in the grid and perform the move to go around the player. When coach shouts, "switch" players must leave their ball and go find another ball as quickly as possible. Players may not steal a ball from a player who already has one.

Dribbling Moves 2:

Set-Up: Place cones randomly inside a small grid. Players dribble around and must not touch any of the cones with their soccer ball otherwise they do a coaches forfeit.

Progressions: Players learn moves to help avoid the cones and perform them on the coach's signal. When coach shouts "up", players throw the ball up in air about head height and players try to take the bounce out of the ball with their thigh, or foot, before continuing to dribble.

Dribbling Sequence:

Set-Up: Players dribble in and out of each other in a confined space

Progressions: Coach picks two people who must chase everyone else and tag them. Tagged players can't move until coach allows them to (e.g. 2 toe taps etc.) The chasers don't have a ball; all others do. Coach has all players' balls in a pile. Coach kicks or throws the balls in different directions up to 15 yards away. Players should chase any ball and dribble it back to the pile at the coach's feet. Never letting the pile get down to 0 is the player's objective. Vary the pace at which players dribble in and out of each other, fast, slow motion, and medium speeds. Place cones randomly in area. Players dribble until coach commands them to dribble to a cone. Players should dribble to an open cone and place foot on top of soccer ball. (Only one player per cone)

Red Light, Green Light 1:

Set-Up: Coach is "it" and stands at one end of the field with his/her back to the others and calls out red light, green light one, two, three and then turns around. The players meanwhile have been dribbling toward him/her and must stop, with their foot on top of the ball, when the player turns around. Anyone moving must go back to the beginning to try again.



Red Light, Green Light 2:

Set-Up: Players each have a ball and dribble anywhere in the grid. Coach shouts out red, yellow, or green light. On red, players stop with their foot on the ball. On yellow, players move the ball side to side with the inside of their feet. On green, players dribble around.

Progressions: When coach shouts “race car”, players dribble around as fast as they can go. Coach can hold up the colored cones instead of shouting the color to encourage players to play with their head up. When coach shouts, “pump gas”, players do toe taps. When coach shouts “switch lanes”, players roll the ball across their body. When coach shouts, “reverse”, players pull the ball backwards. When coach shouts, “rev your engines”, players perform heel toe roll.

Last Man Out:

Set-Up: Play in a large grid. All the players stand at a cone about 20 feet from a group of balls. There is one less ball than the number of players. On the coach's command, the players run to the balls, get one and begin dribbling. The player who didn't get a ball tries to steal one from the others. The coach keeps time and after a preset period has passed, the coach stops the game. The player who doesn't have a ball has to perform a minor penalty then a new round begins.

Progressions: Begin with 2 less balls or 3 less balls.

Minefield:

Set-Up: Randomly place cones throughout a defined area; Cones should be rather close together, 3 yards apart on average and no set pattern, but make sure that there are no clearly defined lanes, end to end. Players start on one side and attempt to run all away across to the other side without touching the cones. (mines). If hit one then start again or lose a point!

Progressions: How many times can you make it from one side to the other in 90 seconds? Now add a soccer ball so players have to dribble.

Fun Circuit:

Set-Up: Players throw the ball up as high as possible then catch it. Players then dribble to a box, which they must stop the ball in. They then immediately attempt to pass the ball through a gate, then chase the ball and shoot on goal. Upon scoring, players skip back to the start, holding the soccer ball.

Catch Up:

Set-Up: Players form a circle and are given numbers. Coach calls out two numbers. Both numbers have to run clockwise around the circle and get back to their start position before the other number.

Progressions: second number called attempts to tag first number called. If successful they jog back to their start position. Add a ball and include dribbling.

Nutmeg:

Set-Up: Half players with ball, half players without. All players moving within the grid. Upon coach's command, players without the ball stand still with legs open. Players with ball dribble and nutmeg (pass ball between a standing player's legs) as many players as possible in 30 seconds. Switch roles.

Foot Surface Dribble:

Set-Up: Players dribble around the area. Players stop and coach asks, “What surface/part of the foot can you use to dribble?” A player responds and demonstrates. Then all players attempt to dribble the ball with that surface. (Inside, outside, laces, bottom, heel)



Progressions: Use all 5 surfaces to dribble the ball. When coach shouts, “turn”, players turn and dribble the ball in a new direction.

Fetch:

Set-Up: Players alternate between bouncing and catching and throwing ball up and catching. When coach shouts, “go” players throw ball away, run after it and dribble it back to coach as quickly as possible.

Cone Signals:

Set-Up: Players have a ball each and dribble around the playing area keeping control of the ball and their heads up. Coach holds up a colored cone and the players have to perform the skill/instruction that matches that cone. The coach will have to introduce these one at a time and allow the players time to practice. A few suggestions for skills/instructions are as follows: *Green* - players dribble around area *Red* - players stop and put foot on the ball *Orange* - players touch ball between insteps of both feet without moving *White* - players sit on the ball *Blue* - players pick up the ball and hold it above their head *Yellow* - players use left foot only. The possibilities are endless. If you don't have many different colored cones then use signals or hold up a ball for one skill, a cone for another, wave a pinnie for another and so on.

Blind Mice:

Set-Up: Everyone has a ball and in pairs. Pairs hold hands and one partner has to close his/her eyes and the other partner keeps their eyes open. Both players dribble and person with eyes open has to direct the partner with their eyes closed. Keep holding hands. Switch roles.

Progressions: Both have ball and eyes open. Keep holding hands, now both have to dribble backwards, or forwards, left, or right. Pairs should work together.

Bees:

Set-Up: One they really seem to like is to dribble in an area (tell them they are bees and to buzz), then after awhile, have the coaches (or a few parents) walk around inside the area. It is the job of the "bees" to "sting" the big people with the ball (a pass or kick).

Stop and Go:

Set-Up: Each player has a ball and dribbles in grid. On coach's command, players stop the ball then do with speed. Coach demonstrates stop and go and players try to copy.

Progressions: Players invent their own stop, coach picks one and the others try and copy

Close the Gate:

Set-Up: Players are inside of a large grid and several gates are created on the outside of the grid. Red players have a ball each and must try and keep possession of their ball and attempt to escape the grid by dribbling through a gate. Once successful they attempt to reenter the grid through a different gate. Blue players pressure the red players and kick their ball out of the playing area. Blue players cannot leave the playing area. Start with 2 blue players.

Progressions: Add more blue players.



Freeze Tag:

Set-Up: To begin, players do not have a ball. One player (or coach) is “it”. Players run around in the grid and try to avoid getting tagged. If a player gets tagged, then they are frozen. To resume play, they must be tagged by a teammate

Progressions: Each player has a ball, except the player (or coach) who is “it”. The “it” player tries to touch the other player’s soccer ball with his/her feet. If “it” player touches a player’s soccer ball then that player is frozen and has to stand with the legs wide and hold the soccer ball above his/her head. The frozen player can be freed by a teammate touching the ball through the frozen player’s legs.

Cats and Dogs:

Set-Up: Players are split into 2 teams (cats or dogs). One team starts with a pinnie as a tail, which the other team is trying to get. When a player loses their tail, they are frozen and wait to be freed by a teammate. When all tails are lost, the teams switch.

Progressions: Teams are timed to see how long it takes to get all the tails. Each player has a soccer ball

Chain Tag:

Set-Up: 2 players start together attached and must run around trying to tag the other players. Once tagged, they must join the rest of the chain. Players can split into smaller chains (minimum of two players)

Progressions: Players now dribble with a ball at their feet (not the taggers) and taggers have to try to knock the player’s ball out of the grid. When a player’s ball is knocked out, they join the chain.

Tag:

Set-Up: Players move in a restricted area. Two players are 'it' (give them each a pinnie to hold) -- they are not allowed to tag any player who has a ball. Give the remaining players a number of balls smaller than the number of players (how much smaller will depend on players' skill, but you will need at least two balls in play). A player who is tagged or who plays a ball out of bounds becomes 'it'.

Dribble Relay:

Set-Up: Split players into 2 or three teams who race against each other through a series of gates. If a player loses control and misses a gate they have to regain control and go through the gate.

Progressions: Add a square in which the player has to stop the ball before the next player can go.

Running Bases:

Set-Up: Start out with two or three ‘taggers’ who hold a pinnie, and the rest have a ball and are ‘dribblers’. Players try to dribble their ball without being tagged. If they get tagged, they exchange places with the ‘tagger’. The “tagger” hands the pinnie to the dribbler and takes their ball. Dribblers are safe in one of the designated bases. Only one player is allowed in a base at a time. If a new player enters a base, the old player must leave the base.

Catcher:

Set-Up: Everybody inside a grid with a ball. Create 4 smaller grids (4 by 4) 4 yards away from each of the 4 sides of the large grid. One player without a ball is the Catcher. Everybody starts dribbling around. The Catcher player tries to steal a ball from any player and pass it into one of the smaller grids. If successful, the two players are Catchers and go after the others.

Progressions: Catcher has to dribble the ball and stop it in one of the smaller squares. Start with more Catchers.



Bomber:

Set-Up: Everybody inside a grid with a ball. One player is the Bomber and has to try to roll/throw their ball at the other player's and knock their ball out of the circle.

Progressions: Start with more Bombers.

Storm the Castle:

Set-Up: Players line up on one side of the grid with balls. Coach is in the middle. Players attempt to dribble past coach to the other side of the castle. If coach (or defender) kicks a player's ball out of the grid then they become an additional defender.

Repeat process by dribbling back across the grid upon coach's signal until there is one player with a ball left.

3 Points:

Set-Up: All players have a ball and dribble within area. Players begin with 3 points and lose a point if walking, go outside of area, or bump into anyone.

Progressions: If ball is still rolling when coach shouts "stop" then lose a point. When stopped, player puts arms out like an airplane and if touches anyone else then both lose a point.

Dribbling Circle:

Set-Up: Players stand in a circle with 2 or 3 players having soccer balls at their feet. Players dribble across the circle to another player without a ball and exchange places.

Progressions: Encourage a change of direction move. Players dribble half way and pass to player on opposite side without a soccer ball.

King of the Ring:

Set-Up: Provide a 20 yd. x 20 yd. Grid. Each player has a ball except one player (or coach) who is "it". Players start to dribble inside the grid while trying to avoid having their ball kicked out of the grid by the player who is "it". Players may re-enter grid after retrieving their ball.

Stealer:

Set-Up: Players dribble around. When players see coach hold up some fingers, they must sit and hold up the same number of fingers. The first one that does this correctly becomes "coach"

Progressions: Introduce a "stealer" (a player moving around the area without a ball, holding his two socks). He may steal a ball by touching it with his feet. This player then becomes the "stealer".

Name Game:

Set-Up: Players are in 2 groups, 15 yards away and opposite each other. Coach calls a player's name from each team and the players run to win the ball and dribble it back to their side. The other player tries to prevent this from occurring and attempts to dribble back to the other line.

Progressions: Place 8 to 10 balls in the middle and on coach's signal, all players from both teams attempt to dribble a ball back to their side. Coach calls out a name again but this time a goal is added at either end to score in.



Alligator Cross:

Set-Up: Half of players lying on bellies, while others must go from an imaginary boat to shore. Crossing players must dribble a ball and the gators may only reach out with their arms to tag those crossing. Alligators score a point every time a crossing player is tagged. Play 3 or 4 rounds then switch. Make the crossing space smaller as players improve at dribbling.

Color Tag:

Set-Up: Players move about in the area. When a coach calls a color, whoever is wearing that color is "it" and chases for 10 seconds. All tagged players must stand frozen for a count to be taken.

Progressions: All players have a ball. Chaser picks theirs up before chasing and must keep ball in hand for tag to count.

Finding Nemo:

Set-Up: Create a small center circle. Place several tall cones randomly in this area and hide 'Nemo' (car keys) under one of these cones. Create another larger circle around the center circle. Blue players are the sharks protecting the tall cones and stay in the larger circle area. Red players are Nemo's friends trying to rescue him and begin outside of the larger circle area. On a signal from the coach, red players can try to run into the center without being tagged. If tagged, the player must return to outside and wait until next turn. If a red player gets to the middle they are safe and can lift up 1 cone to try and find Nemo. If Nemo is not found the players have to try and run back to the outside of the circle (with the cone) without being tagged. If they make it there is one less cone to search under but if they get tagged the cone is replaced back in the center. If one of the players find Nemo then must get back to the outside of the circle, without being tagged, in order to rescue him. If tagged, the Coach hides Nemo back under a cone for the game to continue on the next signal from the Coach. Teams swap when Nemo is rescued

Progressions: Red players start with a ball and must dribble to the coned area in the center of the circle - must stop the ball within the safe area to lift a cone. Sharks try to kick their ball out of the circle to make them go back to the start.

Knockout:

Set-Up: Every player has a ball dribbling in the grid. When the coach says "Knockout!" players attempt to knock the other players' balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own ball. Being "in possession" means being no more than one step away from their ball. If a player's ball stops rolling or is kicked out, then they must do a coach's challenge (e.g. 2 juggles) before returning to the game.

Sharks and Minnows 1:

Set-Up: One player, the shark, starts outside the square without a ball. All other players, the minnows, start inside the square with a ball. When the coach yells, "Shark's getting hungry!" the shark starts running around the outside of the square and the fish start dribbling around inside the square. When the coach yells, "Shark attack!" the shark enters the square and has 30 seconds to send as many balls as possible outside the square. When a ball leaves the square for any reason, the corresponding fish must leave the square and stay out until the coach gives the "Stop!" command at the end of the 30 seconds. A fish has done well if still alive. The shark has done well if few fish survived.

Sharks and Minnows 2:

Set-Up: One player (or coach) is the defender (shark). The other players all have a soccer ball each and dribble around the grid trying to keep their ball away from the defender. The defender tries to steal the soccer ball, by gaining possession and putting their foot on top of the soccer ball. Every time the defender does this they score 1 pt. The player retrieves their soccer ball and is back in the game.

Progressions: Start with 2 or 3 defenders



Sharks and Minnows 3:

Set-Up: Play in a large grid. Half the players have balls and are the Minnows. The rest don't have a ball and are the Sharks. The Minnows start at one end of the grid. The Sharks stand on the opposite line. The Minnows must try to cross the Shark's line without losing possession of their ball. The Sharks defend their line, trying to kick the Minnows' balls out of the defined area. Minnows who successfully dribble across the Shark's line go back for round two. Each Minnow who loses their ball join the Sharks. The last Minnow left in is the winner.

Body Parts:

Set-Up: Each player has a ball and dribbles around in the grid. The coach calls out a part of the body, which the player must place on the ball as quick as he/she can

Progressions: As soon as the first player gets the correct body part on the ball, all of the players continue dribbling

Shadow Dribbling:

Set-Up: Players pair up, each player with a ball. Leader dribbles while second player follows, also dribbling.

Progressions: All players follow coach

Pair Relay Races:

Set-Up: Players in pairs at one end and coach at the end line 20 yards away. Each pair has a ball and races the other pairs to the end line. Pairs must work in a co-operative way to balance the ball in various ways as commanded by the coach.

Progressions: Partners must hold ball using two knees, one elbow, and one hand. Partners must hold ball using two backs. Partners must hold the ball using one foot and one hand. Partners must use two touch/one touch passing while running from start to end line. Partners must dribble the ball with each dribbling half way etc.

Math Dribble:

Set-Up: Players dribble around in area. When coach calls out a number, players get in groups of that number on the dribble. E.g. on "2", players dribble to form groups of 2.

Progressions: Coach alternates with one number and math problems, such as 2 plus 1.

Snake Dribble:

Set-Up: Players are divided into groups of three, Middle player (B) starts off with the ball. Player B must try to follow the head of snake Player A. Player C follows player B. On command, B steps on ball and becomes new head of snake, Player A goes to the end and Player C now has ball in middle.

Numbers Game:

Set-Up: Players run around the grid and when the coach shouts out a number they have to get into groups of that number. Once in the group they all give each other a high five.

Progressions: Coach can include simple math (e.g. groups of 4-2). Introduce soccer balls, which must touch when players are in groups. Players have to run around a cone first before getting into groups



Dribbling in Pairs:

Set-Up: Players dribble around in pairs and must remain attached

Progressions: Coach is a “bandit” and attempts to tag pairs. If tagged the pairs have to perform a coach’s challenge (e.g. 1 hop) before continuing in the game.

Musical Balls:

Set-Up: Each player, except one, has a ball within grid. Player without ball attempts to steal ball from other players. Once a player loses his ball, he attempts to steal ball from another player. A player cannot steal ball from person who has just stolen his ball.

Gate Game:

Set-Up: Place a number of “gates” around the grid. All players have ball. Players try to dribble the ball through as many gates as possible in one minute.

Progressions: Can players beat their score? Players only use right foot. Players only use left foot. Add a couple of players as “Gate Closers”. These players move around the gates and if they stand in the gates then the gate is blocked and players cannot dribble through that gate.

Egg Hunt:

Set-Up: Players are split into 4 teams and each begins in a corner of the grid. All balls are in the middle. The first player from each team runs out and grabs a ball and places it in their corner and “high 5’s” the next player. The second player does the same and so on until the ball in the middle have gone. Now players have 60 seconds and can steal a ball from another team (teams have to allow this to happen and still one player at a time). When time is up winning team is the team with the most balls.

Progressions: Dribble ball back to corner.

Corners:

Set-Up: Coach lays out a different colored cone (or pinnie) in each corner of the grid. Coach shouts out a color and players dribble into the corner and around the correct colored cone and back to the coach

Progressions: Coach can move positions to make it more difficult for players to dribble to. Players only allowed to use inside of foot to turn around the cone. Players only allowed to use outside of foot to turn around the cone. Give a number to each corner (e.g. 1,2,3, and 4) and the players have to respond to either the color or the number

1v1 Keepaway:

Set-Up: Players are paired up, and each pair has a ball. On the coach's signal, the player with the ball in each pair attempts to keep the ball from the defender for at least 10 seconds. Repeat many times, alternating roles at each repetition

1v1 Cone Soccer:

Set-Up: Play 1v1 with one player against one player, each has a cone as a goal. Every player plays at the same time. Nobody is standing. The object is to hit the cone; there are no boundary lines, etc. After about two minutes, everybody switches to somebody they haven't played yet.



Striker!:

Set-Up: Divide players into two teams. Place each team behind the goal line on opposite sides of the goal, facing the field. Place a keeper in goal facing the field. Coach/assistant stands behind the center of the goal with a supply of balls. Coach tosses a ball over the crossbar to about the penalty spot. A player from each team both sprint to the ball and attempt to control it, turn, and get a shot off. The second to the ball defends (if he then wins the ball, then he tries to shoot). When there is a score, save, or ball goes out of play, restart the same way with a different pair of players.

Progressions: Limit the amount of time each pair has to attempt to score (also stops players getting bored and waiting). Can also limit the playing area by making a grid that players have to remain in.

Possession:

Set-Up: Create a grid (about 20 by 20 yards). Coach is at one corner. Two teams are at each of two corners to immediate right and left of coach. Coach serves balls between the two teams and first players in line from each team attempt to receive ball, turn and pass to their own team. Second player to the ball attempts to defend, gain possession and turn and pass to his team. Score one point for turning and passing and successful reception. Second player in line is the receiver and should pay attention. Receivers cannot enter field but can adjust position along a line to receive pass. If ball goes out then next players are up.

Progressions: Coach can vary the service, controls the time players have to score a point, and space for.

1v1 Immediate Chase:

Set-Up: Players are in two groups with the second group 5 yards behind the first group. The second group has all the balls. The first player from the second group passes the ball into space and the first player in the first group tries to dribble the ball over the end line under control while being chased by the first player from the second group (passer).

Progressions: If the passer wins the ball then he/she tries to return it to the start. Add a goal. Add a goalkeeper.

1v1 Free Play:

Set-Up: Players play against each other, trying to score through a 'two sided' goal by passing or dribbling through the goal. There is no out-of-bounds. The player in possession of the ball is the attacker, the other player is the defender. Play one minute games then switch players.

Progressions: If defender wins possession then players immediately switch roles. 1 pt for dribbling through a goal.

1v2:

Set-Up: In groups of 3, play 1v2. The one who has the ball must dribble and keep it. Those who don't have a ball try to get one.



PASSING

Keep Ball Moving:

Set-Up: With one ball, two players must keep the ball moving using various body parts. Each player must take it in turns to touch the ball once. Coach calls out the body part to be used.

Pairs Cooperate:

Set-Up: In pairs, players play catch with two balls at the same time. They can bounce the ball, arc it high or throw it to the side of the other ball.

Progressions: Pairs pass with their feet using two balls at the same time

Soccer Marbles:

Set-Up: Players in pairs and take it in turns to hit their soccer ball into their partners. Players score a point each time they hit their partners ball. Players must let the ball come to a complete stop before they touch it. Switch partners and try and beat their own score.

Team Marbles:

Set-Up: Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble. Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts, don't require them to use their own ball, they are free to use any other ball they can find. At first the players may get really excited and kick the marble. If this happens, call time- out and put it back.

Ships and Subs:

Set-Up: One team is the “ships” that try to dribble around and prevent their balls from being hit by the “subs”. Other team, “subs”, tries to dribble and kick their balls into the “ships” for a point. Switch roles.

Partner Freeze Tag:

Set-Up: Players are grouped in pairs with one ball per pair. Each pair passes the ball while moving in the area. One pair are the “taggers” and do not have a ball. Each one of the “taggers” tries to tag players. Only the player in possession of the ball can get tagged, and once tagged stands frozen with legs apart. Their partner gets the ball and attempts to free them by knocking the soccer ball through their partner’s legs.

Pac-Man:

Set-Up: 2 players have balls and the rest do not. 2 players with balls attempt to dribble and pass the ball into the legs of another player. If “hit” the player gets a ball and joins the 2 Pac-Men.

Bowling:

Set-Up: Half of team spread out and stand still with their legs spread wide. The other half jog around with the ball in hand, rolling it through as many pairs of legs as possible. Switch roles.

Progressions: Players dribble around and attempt to pass the ball through as many pairs of legs as possible



Defending the Cones:

Set-Up: Players are in groups of 2 or 3 and each group has three cones. Groups spread out in the grid and place the cones in a row 3 yards apart. This is their base. To begin, each group has one ball. Groups attempt to knock over opponent's bases (cones) to score a point. Each cone knocked over is a point. Play to 5 points.

Progressions: Reduce the number of balls

Moving Goals:

Set-Up: 4 or 6 parents participate in this exercise. Parents should get in pairs, and hold vests tied together between them. Each pair of two parents will be a "moving goal", and walk around the field holding the "crossbar" of their goal high or low. Players are in pairs and have one ball. Players attempt to pass the ball through the moving goal to their partner on the other side, to score a point

Progressions: Cannot pass through the same goal twice.

Tunnel:

Set-Up: Divide players into two groups. All players in each group except for one make a tunnel (side by side, hands and feet on the ground, butts in the air). On coach's signal, the other player passes a ball through the tunnel, runs to the end of the tunnel and collects the ball, passes it back through the tunnel and joins the end of the tunnel. The player who was at the other end of the tunnel stands up, retrieves the passed ball and repeats the exercise. The tunnel will move slowly down the field - - make it a competition between the groups over a 25-40 m distance.

2 Team Passing Tag:

Set-Up: Players divide into two even teams. Each player on the first team has a ball (this team will be the "Taggers"). The players on the other team (the "Runners") are confined to the penalty area. When the coach yells, "Play!", the Taggers attempt to pass their balls so that they hit the lower legs of the Runners. If a Runner is hit by a ball below the knees or is forced to run out of the penalty area, he is "frozen" in place for 5 seconds and the taggers score a point. The Taggers must chase their own balls after each pass before attempting to hit the next Runner. Play continues for one minute. Switch roles.

2 Player Tag:

Set-Up: Two players are "it" and must remain attached. "It" players do not have a ball and attempt to knock another person's ball out of the grid. Once a player's ball is knocked out, they can help their teammates to keep the ball away from the "it" players by providing a passing option. "It" players have 1 minute to knock out as many balls as they can

Ball Tag:

Set-Up: One player is selected to be "It". He or she has a ball and dribbles inside the designated area and attempts to dribble or pass his/her ball into the balls of other players. Whenever successful, the affected player joins the tagger

Progressions: start with more taggers.

Soccer Pong:

Set-Up: Players are in pair with one ball. They place two cones anywhere from 2-8 yards apart. They choose! Players pass back and forth to each other. The rules are that the ball must never stop, must always stay on the ground and must go through the two cones without touching them. Whenever this is violated the other person receives a point. Play for time.

Progressions: 2 touch only with same foot, with alternate feet. One touch only



Passing Pairs Game:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs facing each other. One starts with the ball while the other player stands with his legs spread apart. The player with the ball attempts to pass it on the ground through his partner's legs to score a goal. Players try to remain the same distance apart forcing both players to move if the ball rolls past the partner with his his/her legs open. The other player then attempts to do the same through the first player's legs.

Progressions: 1 point for ball going through legs. Players remain further apart.

Gate Passing:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs and must dribble/run around passing the ball between each set of cones to their partner. One player should be on one side of the cones, and the other player on the other side. Players have to control the ball before dribbling to another set of cones and passing the ball back to their partner

Progressions: Each successful pass through the cones is a point. Players have 30 seconds to score as many points as they can. Players try to beat their own score. Right foot only. Left foot only. Add parents as gate munchers who periodically stand between the gates, and when this occurs the gate is closed and players cannot pass through that gate. Players must pass through all gates before going through the same gate again. Pairs must complete 3 one touch passes at one gate to score a point before moving to another gate

Paint the Field:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs with one ball and pass and move in the grid. The players pass their ball back and forth to their partners while moving across as much of the field as possible. They have 30 seconds to paint as much of the field as possible.

Progressions: Challenge pairs to paint more of the field than they did the first time

Monkey in the Middle:

Set-Up: All players form a circle and choose someone (the "Monkey") to be in its center. The players forming the circle pass one ball among them while the person in the center tries to gain control of the ball. When this happens, the person in the circle who last touched the ball goes to the center. Some level of competitiveness develops but never on an individual basis and the "losers" quickly gets a chance to redeem them.

Goldmine:

Set-Up: Create a 5 by 5 square in each corner of the playing area. Teams of 3/4 starts inside each grid at the corners of the playing area. Place a large number of balls in the middle of the playing area - each of these is a gold nugget buried deep in a mine. Players work together in each grid passing the ball to each other. When a team has completed five passes one of them has to put on a mining helmet (cone) and run into the mine to get a golden nugget (ball). They then dribble the ball back to their square and start again to complete another five passes. A different player must put on the helmet and go into the mine each time.

Progressions: Players have to complete ten passes.

Partner Passing (hit the cone):

Set-Up: Players are in pairs 5 – 10 yards apart passing the ball using one touch to control and the other to pass.

Progressions: Players try to hit the cone placed in-between them and score 1 point per team every time they knock it over. Use outside of foot to control the ball. One touch



Cops and Robbers:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs, with one player having a ball. One player dribbles after his/her partner and tries to hit him/her in the knee or below with the ball. If they succeed then they score a point. Players have one minute to score points

Progressions: Each time a player is hit, the roles are switched.

Receiving:

Set-Up: Players are in groups of 3. 2 players have a ball and a player in the middle has no ball. The middle player faces one of the players with a ball who serves it on the ground by bowling the ball underarm to the player. The middle player controls the ball and passes it back. The middle player then moves towards the other player with a ball. This player performs a throw-in to the middle player who controls the ball and passes it back. Switch roles.

Siamese Soccer:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs, holding hands. One pair has a soccer ball, and attempt to kick the ball into the other pair's legs. If hit, the hit pair gets a soccer ball and also attempts to hit the remaining pairs.

Goalie Hands:

Set-Up: From a kneeling position, players throw the ball into the air, hop to their feet, and catch the ball. Have them try this from a sitting position.

Progressions: Standing with legs spread apart and the ball held behind them, players must release the ball forward between their legs then sprint to pick it up. Players now lie on stomachs with a ball in their hands. On signal, players roll over on backs, throw the ball into the air with both hands and catch it.

Pace of Pass:

Set-Up: Players stand in a circle facing away from the middle. A cone is placed 10 -15 yards away from each player. On coach's signal, players attempt to "pass" their soccer ball and get it to stop as close to their cone as possible. Player's score a point if their ball is the closest to their cone.

Give and Go:

Set-Up: Players space themselves around the grid or circle. One player starts in the middle with a ball, calls out someone's name and passes to them. They then run to the receiver's position in the circle. The receiver upon hearing their name called steps forward to receive the pass and yells "I got it!" The sequence is then repeated.

Progressions: Stipulate that all players have to have a turn before a player can have a second turn. Start with more than one player in the middle.

Target Passing:

Set-Up: Place a number of pinnies down in the grid. All players have a ball and dribble around grid avoiding the pinnies. When coach shouts, "pass", players stop the ball and try to pass their ball over a pinnie

Progressions: Players use both feet. Remove cones and only half the players have a ball. When coach shouts, "pass" players try to pass to an open player



Dynamic Lines:

Set-Up: Players in groups of two facing another group of two players at the other end of the grid. Players pass the ball across to the other player and follow their pass. If they make a bad pass, the whole group has to move to keep the lines and passes straight.

Progressions: Two touch only. One touch only. Increase or decrease distance of groups

2v1:

Set-Up: 3 groups. Two groups of attacking players line up on one side of grid between the corner cones. A defending group should be lined up on the other side of the grid between the cones facing them. Defender plays the ball to one of the attackers. That person must control it and he and his teammate try to score by stopping the ball on the defender's line. If defender wins the ball then he/she tries to dribble to the attacker's line.

Progressions: Add a goal at each end of the grid to score in. Add another defender to make it a 2v2 with the service alternating ends.

End Zone Game:

Set-Up: Create a 5 yard end zone at each end of the grid. Players are in 2 teams (can have neutral players who only play for attacking team). Coach plays ball into middle grid and teams attempt to dribble the ball into either endzone to score a point.

Progressions: Players have to pass to a teammate in the endzone to score a point

Target Cone:

Set-Up: Three players try to keep possession of the ball against one defender. They can dribble or pass anywhere within the playing area. If the defender wins the ball or kicks it out of the playing area then they swap with the attacking player who made the mistake. The red players score by passing the ball to hit a taller cone in the center of the playing area. If they achieve this then the blue player stays as the defender. If the red players score three times then swap the defender.

Progressions: Set up a small circular exclusion zone around the central cone if the defender insists on standing next to the cone all the time. Can play 3/4/5v2.

Game Scenarios:

Set-Up: Players are in a group on the goal line facing away from the goal.

- a) Cut move: players dribble half way down sideline with coach providing minimal pressure. When coach says 'cut' the player cuts the ball toward the middle and then finishes with a shot.
- b) Reverse move: Coach passes ball ahead of player who has to run and cut the ball to turn and face the goal. Player then dribbles and shoots (or if close then shoots straight away).
- c) Pass to partner: 2 groups: One on goal line facing up the field, and one at middle of field facing the goal. Player dribbles and this time, when coach says pass, the player passes to the wide-open teammate. The teammate must call for the ball and receive it before dribbling and shooting on goal.
- d) Throw-in play: coach (standing on the field 4-5 feet in front of players on the sidelines) has a ball and rolls it out of bounds. He tells the first player in line along the sideline to 'go get it and throw it in.' The coach points to where it went out of bounds and tells the player to throw it in from there, encouraging the player to hurry and watching for proper technique. The throw in goes to the first teammate on the field who should be calling for the ball. After the throw is made, both players run to the goal. The play finishes with a shot.



SHOOTING

Fundamental Shooting:

Set-Up: Place a 2-yard goals between two players. Players strike the ball back and forth to each other and score a point every time the ball goes through the goal. Players should start off close and move back as they score points.

Run and Shoot:

Set-Up: Have the players in two lines by the center circle and facing a goal (two goals needed to keep players moving). Have the first player from each line start moving towards the goal and feed him/her a ball from beside the net (need two servers). They have to dribble toward the goal and shoot. Try to get parents behind the goals to help collect balls and keep kids moving through the lines.

Turn and Shoot:

Set-Up: Players stand with their backs to goal and their feet apart. Each player releases his ball through his feet, and then chases it to shoot on goal

Progressions: Players release the ball over his head and shoots on goal before the third bounce

Camp Town Races:

Set-Up: Line up all the players on one end of the field. They each have a ball. On the whistle, they all dribble to opposite end, shoot ball into goal, get ball out of goal, and run back and finish with a shot on opposite goal. The first one to finish is the winner.

Progressions: Start half of the players at one end and half on the other.

Knock Down:

Set-Up: Place 15-20 tall cones randomly in a large area. Send the players out on a hunting trip to shoot at any cone they see. Players score a point every time they hit a cone. Players must set up any cone they knock over.

Progressions: Can't score on same cone twice. 60 Seconds to score as many points as you can.

Ouch:

Set-Up: Create a grid and have every player with a ball. Coach jogs around in the grid and players try to kick their balls and hit the coach. The players get a point each time they hit the coach. The coach should yell "Ouch" each time they are hit. Make sure the players are striking the ball with the proper part of the foot. If the players are struggling to hit the coach, the coach should stop for a couple seconds to give the players a chance.

Progressions: Use different parts of the foot: Inside, Instep, Right and Left foot

Hitters and Dodgers:

Set-Up: Create a 15 by 15 grid. Only 3 players start off with balls ("hitters"). The remaining balls should be placed outside the grid. The other players start off scattered throughout the grid they are the "dodgers". The "hitters" dribble inside the grid and attempt to pass the ball to any of the "dodgers" and hit them with the ball. The "dodgers" attempt to avoid being hit by the "hitters". If a "dodger" is hit, he must collect a ball from the extra balls outside the grid and join the "hitters". The last players standing win.



Target Practice:

Set-Up: Players dribble around and attempt to shoot the ball at coach. Players score a point every time their ball hits coach. Coach can move around anywhere in the area at any speed.

Clear the Circle:

Set-Up: 3 or 4 players stand in a large circle designated by cones. Their job is to “shoot” the balls out of the circle. Remaining players stand around the circle and roll balls into the circle and collect them as they come back out.

Goalie Action:

Set-Up: Set up a triangle in the middle of the field. This will act as a 3-sided goal and should be defended by three goalkeepers. All other players play outside the triangle and attempt to score on any of the goals. Players begin in pairs with one ball per pair.

Get Outta Here!:

Set-Up: 2 goals. Coach is boss of the balls. Players split into 2 teams and stand either side of coach on the side line. Coach passes ball onto field of play. To begin, one player from each team plays until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. If out of bounds, coach yells “get outta there,” and one new player from each team goes on with the next ball.

Progressions: Once, players understand game, two players from each team play until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. Scorers could stay on.

Team Knockout:

Set-Up: 6 small goals on the outside of the grid. 2 teams. All players have a ball. Players try to steal their opponent’s ball and kick it into a goal. If they score a goal then that team gets a point. If ball goes out then player retrieves ball and dribbles back in. Players continue to play without a ball if their ball is kicked in a goal until all balls are in the goal.

Progressions: Play with only 4 goals and add goalkeepers

Steal the Bacon:

Set-Up: Players are split into 2 teams and stand on opposite corners of the grid. Coach numbers players on each team. Coach stand outside the grid with a supply of balls, and serve one ball into the middle of the grid as he calls a number. The two players with that number (one from each team) sprints to the ball and attempts to dribble past their opponent over the end line to score.

Progressions: Add goals. 2 numbers are called out. Players must both touch the ball before they can score.

Nose Ears Eyes Ball:

Set-Up: 2 players face each other with a ball on the ground between them. Coach calls out body parts (such as "Nose!", "Eyes!", "Ears!"), and the two players must touch that part of their body with both of their hands. When the coach says "Ball!" players reach out to the ball with one foot and attempt to do a pull-back with the sole of their foot to take the ball. Whoever gets the ball scores 1 point.

Progressions: Whoever gets the ball must shield it from the opponent for three seconds to score a point. Set up two cone goals a short distance behind each player, and have a target player stand between each set of cones. When the coach calls "Ball!" the player who pulls the ball back first must try to beat the opposing player 1v1 and score a goal by completing a pass to the target player in the goal behind the defending player. Play several rounds, then have the inside players switch places with the target players.



2 Sided Finishing in 3's:

Set-Up: Use two cones to make a goal. Put a "keeper" in the middle with a player facing him (with a ball) a fair distance away from the goal and another player the same distance away behind him. The player with the ball takes a shot on goal. If he scores, the keeper comes out to take his place and he goes into the goal. If the keeper makes the save, he should turn and serve the ball to the other player to take a shot.

Find the Open Goal:

Set-Up: Players are split into 2 teams. Several goals are made with cones (must be at least one extra goal to players on a team). Players on one team have a ball each and dribble around trying to shoot between the cones to score a point. The players on the other team move around without a ball and try and stop the shots by becoming a goalkeeper.

Progressions: 1 pt per goal scored. Time for 30 seconds then switch. Players must score in each of the goals before scoring at the same goal. Pair players up with one ball who compete against other pairs to score and get points

Parent Toss to Goal:

Set-Up: Parents each have their child's ball and stand on either side of the field behind a goal. Players start in the center of the field. The parent tosses the ball to their child who tries to control the toss and then dribbles the ball to goal and shoots. Once he or she scores, the player returns to the center of the field. Parents get the ball out of the goal.

Throw-in to Goal:

Set-Up: Players are on the side of the field ready to take a throw in. Player throws the ball in towards one of the goals and then chases the ball and shoots it into the goal. After scoring, the player returns to the sideline.

Progressions: Players are split into groups of 2-3. One child throws the ball in and all the kids try to get it into the goal as quickly as possible. Coach keeps track of the time it takes for teams to score. Ask them how they can do it faster.

Break Out:

Set-Up: All players dribble inside a grid. When their name is called they break out of the grid and race their opponent to the 5 yard line where they attempt to pass the ball into an open goal. They then recover the ball and dribble back around the outside of the grid.

Progressions: Make the goal smaller. Move the line back so players shoot from further away. Make the goal larger and add goalkeepers

Pairs Shooting Against GK:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs. One player passes to his/her partner who controls the ball then shoots at the goal

Progressions: Partner hits shot 1st time. Vary the service into partner (ground or bouncing). Server follows shot for rebound. Server follows up pass to put pressure on shooter

Partner Shooting Against GK:

Set-Up: Players are in pairs with one ball and four cones. Set the cones up as two separate goals, about 10 yards apart. One partner will stand in either goal, and will then take turns shooting and being the goalie, in alternating turns. Initially, have the players shoot a stationary ball.

Progressions: Player stands behind their goal line and dribbles up to their goal before shooting. Partner rolls ball to shooter for a one-touch shot. Switch after each go.



2 Goal Game:

Set-Up: Place a goal in each corner of the grid and play 2v2 or 3v3. Players can score in either goal.

Progressions: Add a goalkeeper who is only allowed to move along the end line.

World Cup:

Set-Up: One goal and players in groups of two. Each group picks a country to represent. Coach is the goalkeeper. If there is an odd number then one player plays alone, or as a group of three. Starting from the goal, pass a ball in any direction away from the goal. The partners (all of them) try to get the ball and score on you. The last player who touches a ball before it goes in the goal is the goal scorer and their team gets a point. Winners are the team with the most points after a certain time

1v1 Back to Goal:

Set-Up: 2 teams line up 10 yards apart on the endline. One team are defenders, one team are attackers. Defenders have all the balls. The 1st defender passes the ball out into the open space and the 1st attacker runs to the ball. The defender closes down the attacker and tries to deny a turn. The attacker tries to turn quickly and beat the defender and dribble over the line.

Progressions: Add a goal between the 2 lines so now attackers have to score. Can add a goalkeeper. Can play 2v2.

2v2:

Set-Up: Set up small fields of 2v2. Place a soccer ball on top of a cone at each end of the grid. Player's score by knocking the ball off of the cone they are attacking.

2v2 Quick Score:

Set-Up: Tall cones are set up randomly and spaced apart in the area. Players are in pairs and play 2v2 against another pair. Points are scored each time a player touches a cone with their soccer ball.

1v1 Multiple Goals:

Set-Up: Create a 30x30 grid. Split your team into pairs with one ball per pair. Randomly set up small goals (approx 2-3 yards wide) with cones/flags within the grid; one goal per pair. Each pair will play 1v1 using their goal only. Goals are scored by dribbling across the goal line. Goals can be scored from either side of the goal. Players play 1 to 2 minute games and rotate players.

Progressions: Open it up where each pair can score on any of the other goals. They are still paired up with only their partner and should not interfere with any other pairs going on. Goals can still be scored from either side of the goals by dribbling through the goal.

Multiple Goals:

Set-Up: 5 or 6 goals are set up randomly in the area. Players are divided into 2 teams. The teams can score in any goal of their choice. To score, players must dribble through the cone goals rather than shoot.

Progressions: When one player scores, he can't score again until somebody else on his team does.

Goals, Goals, Goals:

Set-Up: All players in the area, and 4 goals are set on the outside of the grid (one on each side). Divided into two teams, each team scores as many goals as possible in any of the goals. Coach serves the balls and can vary number of balls served.



Goalie Action 2:

Set-Up: Four goals are created around the outside of the area (one on each side) with each having a goalkeeper. Players each have a ball in the middle and attempt to score as many goals as they can. If goalkeeper saves then ball is thrown to coach. Balls start with coach after a goal is scored.

Score From Inside:

Set-Up: Players split into two teams and attempt to score on any of the four goals. Players cannot go outside of the grid to score.

4 Goal Game:

Set-Up: Create a goal in each corner of the area using parents or 2 sets of colored cones. Players play 2v2 or 3v3 and can score in any of the 4 goals.

Progressions: Coach can signal to one of the goals to kneel or rock side or side. Coach then tells players they can only score through “kneeling” or “rocking” goal (or red/yellow goals). Coach can add an extra parent to stand in one of the goals upon the coach’s signal. Players cannot score in goals that a parent is standing in.

Half-Line Scrimmage:

Set-Up: Play 3v3 or 4v4 and add a half way line. Goal only counts if all of the players from the attacking team are in the attacking half.

Players v Parents:

Set-Up: During the last practice of the season have a scrimmage between the parents and the players (with the coaches helping the players). This serves a couple of purposes. The kids love this game. They get a chance to show their parents what they can do and they enjoy beating their parents. (The parents never win, the coaches make sure of that....) Also, since many of the parents have never played soccer it shows them how difficult the game really is. The hope is that a parent may now think twice before "yelling" at a child for missing and "easy" shot in a game. Everybody seems to enjoy this scrimmage.



JUGGLING

Opposite Game:

Set-Up: Coach has the ball and serves to a player. If coach shouts head, the player has to catch the ball, and vice versa. If player gets it wrong they have to run to the corner of the grid and back.

Progressions: If coach shouts chest, player has to thigh the ball, and vice versa. If coach shouts laces, player has to control ball with inside of foot, and vice versa

Beginner Juggling:

Set-Up: Each player sitting down holds a ball over his or her shoelaces. Strike the ball and catch.

Progressions: Strike twice and catch. Strike three times and catch. Switch feet. Alternate feet.

Aerial Control:

Set-Up: Each player has a ball and throws it up softly. To begin, players attempt to “cushion” the ball with the thigh and take the bounce out of the ball with the feet before dribbling a few yards and repeating the activity.

Progressions: Players attempt to “cushion” the ball with the top part of the foot, bringing the ball down to the ground softly. Players are in pairs and receive an underhand toss from their partner. Players attempt to “cushion” the ball with either the thigh or the feet before passing the ball back to the server.

Popcorn:

Set-Up: Players dribble in- and out- of each other in the confined space. When the coach calls out "Popcorn!" players must pick up their balls with their hands, throw the balls high into the air, and then control and continue to dribble the ball.

Progressions: Players find a different ball to dribble after the ball is thrown in the air

Volley Bounce Game:

Set-Up: Two players with one ball in a small grid. Two players freely passing a ball inside the grid, trying to keep the ball in the air. The ball may not bounce more than twice before it is played. Count the passes inside the grid each pass is a point.

Progressions: Go for thirty seconds. Try to beat your teams score

Juggling Challenge:

Set-Up: Each player has a ball. Player drops the ball, attempts 1 juggle with the thigh and then attempts to catch it. Switch thighs. Players must catch the ball.

Progressions: 2 juggles, both with the thighs. As many juggles with the thighs as they can. Begin sequence with foot.

Parent Toss:

Set-Up: Players get their parents to hold the ball and form a circle. A small area is marked out in the middle of the circle with cones. Players start in this area. On Coach’s call, players run to their parents. The parent gives the ball a small toss. The player tries to control the ball and then pass it back to the parent. Then the child returns to the middle area.

Progressions: Players go to someone who isn’t their parent and repeats the skill. Instead of going back to the center and stopping, the players continue to a different parent on the other side of the circle and get another ball. Play for 45 seconds.



Gaelic Football:

Set-Up: 20 by 20 yard grid with a 5-yard end zone at each end. 5v1 (or 4v2) play volley-catch-volley. Volley ball from the hands so it can be caught by a teammate. If the defender intercepts the ball a point is scored. Attackers try to play into the end zones for a point.