

SKILL GAMES FOR COACHES TO USE WITH YOUNG PLAYERS

Eyes/Knees/Toes/Ball (Concentration/Competition)

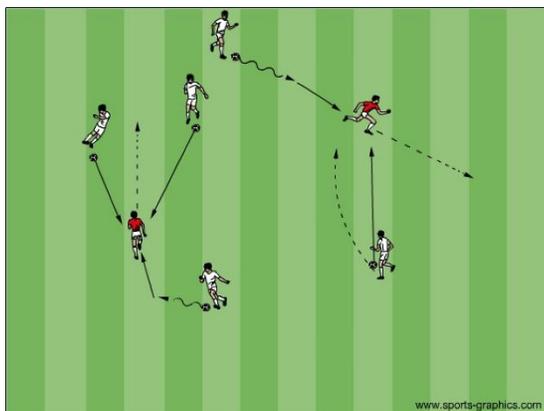
Players have a ball each between their legs. Coach stands in front of the players calling out body parts and at the same time touching that body part with their hands and player copy. Very similar to “Simon Says”. When the coach says ball the players quickly grab their ball and lift it over their head as quickly as they can. They can be trying to be quicker than you. Have fun with this one, sometimes saying “Back” instead of “Ball” to catch them anticipating and to emphasize careful listening.

Ball Pass – Over/Under, Inside/Outside (Concentration/Social)

Players pair up one ball between two. The players stand back to back and pass the ball under (through their legs) and over their head or hand the ball to their partner passing it off to the right and twist to the other side to get the ball from the left side. If the players move a little apart one player twists left the other right and make a figure eight passing the ball off to each other. Have them switch the direction they are going.

Ouch (Dribbling)

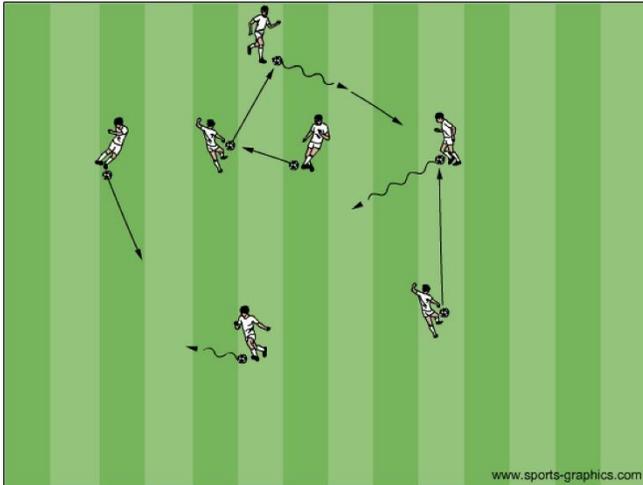
Players have a ball each trying to hit the coach/parents below the knees by passing their ball. When an adult gets hit by a ball yell “Ouch” and players count a point each time. Adults increase the challenge by walking around, changing direction, making it harder to get hit. Good to slow down or stop for less capable players to give them a taste of success and then ramp up the challenge.



Can you try this? (Intro Activity) Coach shows players something then asks them to copy. This can be challenges with or without the ball. Start with very easy activities such as running, skipping, hopping, walking backwards, skipping backwards then move to challenges with the ball such as bouncing and catching, rolling, kicking, dribbling etc. The coach can then ask the players to show everyone something they can do then everyone tries to copy. This basic introduction to a session encourages players to leave their parents’ side and come play with the group.

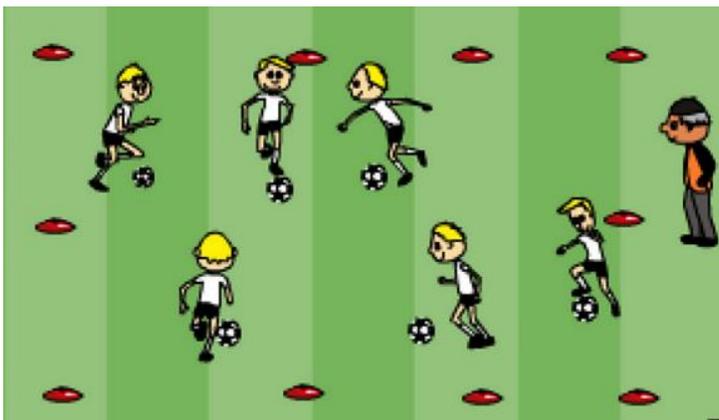
Ball Tag (Dribbling/Passing)

Each player with a ball uses their ball to tag another player's ball without letting their ball get tagged. Can score a point for every ball you can tag with your ball. Players get lots of touches on the ball using different surfaces of their foot. A chase and be chased activity.



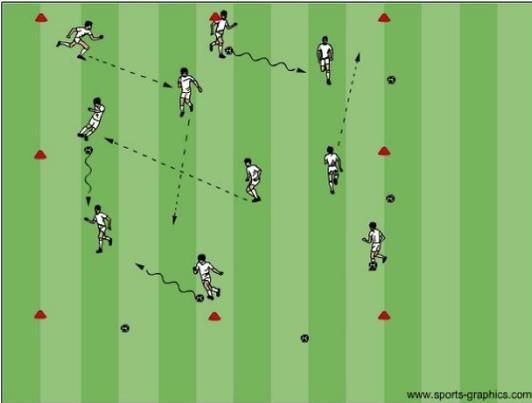
Everybody's It (ABC's/Dribbling)

First time playing this game do it without a ball. Players try to tag each other as many times as they can. The benefit of this activity is the movement of the players. Fast/slow, stopping/starting, changing direction. After 30 seconds ask the players how many people they tagged then play again challenging them to tag more people than they tagged last time. Progression: have them each get a ball holding it in one hand, then progress to dribbling a ball at their feet.



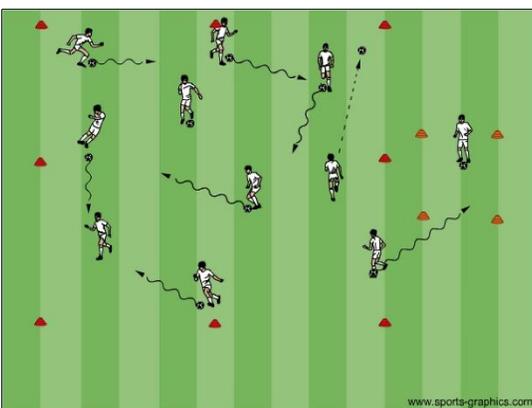
Tail Tag (ABC's/Dribbling)

Each player has a pinnie and tucks it into their shorts making a tail. Players try to steal and hold onto as many tails as they can without losing their own. Keep playing even if you do not have a tail. 30 seconds pause the activity to see how many tails people have. To restart players give back tails to those who do not have one and play again. Without a ball and then with a ball.



Hospital Tag (Dribbling)

This game has big space that everyone moves around in. There is a little space that is used as the hospital. The objective of the game is to send others to the hospital by tagging them. When tagged you need to use a free hand as a band-aid to cover up the area where you were tagged. If tagged a second time use your other hand to cover the other area you were tagged. You can release a hand your using as a band-aid to quickly tag someone. If tagged a third time you need to go to the hospital because you have run out of hands (band-aids). When in the hospital have the players do a skill. Three toe taps, two juggles, etc. Then they are healed and can go back into the game with two free hands.



Math Dribble (Dribbling)

Players are dribbling their ball, when coach calls out a number or a math problem players need to quickly get into groups of that number. A group is formed when soccer balls are touching with each player's foot on top of their own ball. Challenges them to keep eyes up and communicate while dribbling.

Body Part Dribble (Dribbling)

Players are dribbling their ball, when coach calls out a body part the players stop their ball with that body part. For example: knees, toes, nose, ear, elbow, hand, head, back.

Spiders and Flies, or Sharks and Minnows, or Foxes and Rabbits (Dribbling)

Players line up on the end line (Flies) and need to get to the opposite side of the space without and then with a ball trying not to get tagged by the (Spiders) who are on the field.

Spiders: "We are the spiders"

Flies: "We are the flies"

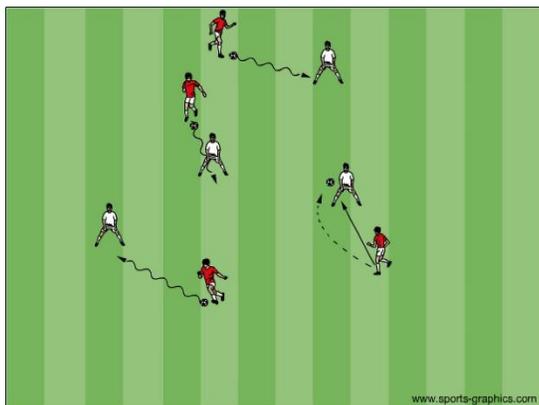
Spiders: "We are going to get you"

Flies: "Let me see you try"

Then the flies run across the field. If caught the flies turn into the spiders. Keep playing until all the flies become spiders, then the last fly caught can start the next round as the spider. Start as a tag game and then add soccer balls to flies and spiders try to "trap" fly by stepping on their ball.

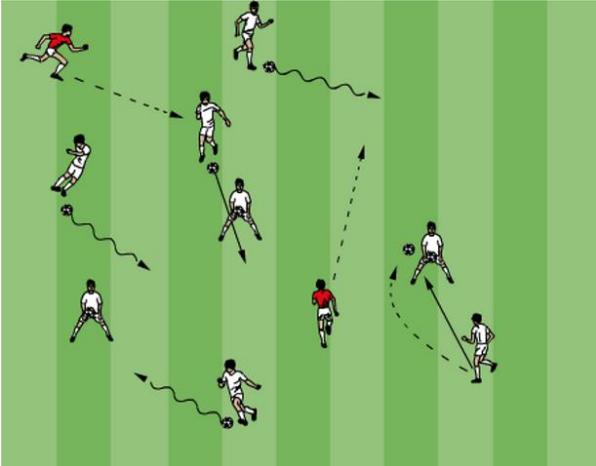
Gophers and Trees (Dribbling)

Players pair up, and decide who is a gopher and who's a tree. Trees stand up with their legs more than shoulder width apart. The gophers run to crawl under as many trees as they can. Progress to having a ball and dribbling and pushing their ball underneath as many trees as they can. 30 seconds and switch. How many can you get through? Can you beat your own score next time?

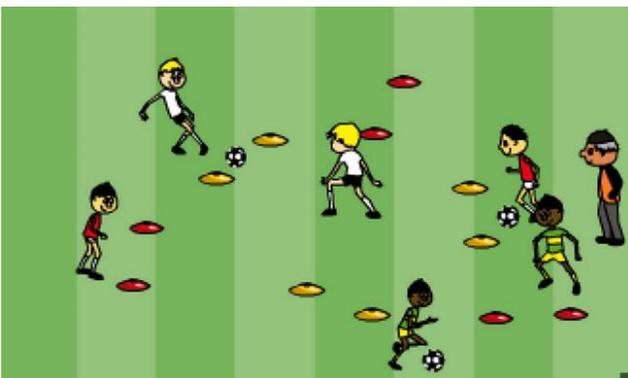


Freeze Tag (Dribbling)

Most players have a ball. One or two players without a ball wearing pinnies are taggers. The objective for the taggers is to “freeze” everyone. When a player gets tagged they pick up their ball and spread their legs apart. They should call for “help.” Players with a ball can defrost a frozen player by pushing their ball through the player’s legs. Play for a minute and switch taggers. The players choose who the next taggers are by handing their pinnie to someone and that person giving them their ball.

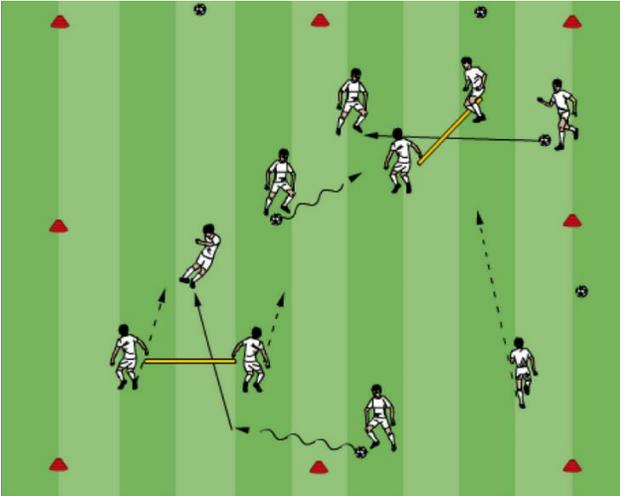


Gates (Dribbling/Passing) Set out a series of ‘gates’ (marked out by cones) throughout the area. Make the ‘gates’ different in size. Set challenges for the players. Such as: dribble through as many gates as possible, dribble through different colored gates, play the ball through the gate in the air etc. Progress to having two players (with one ball between them) moving around the area and passing through the gates. Progression: Add Gate Keepers, this is also a good one to get parents involved. The gates they are standing in are closed and the players need to find the open gates. There are two ways to manage this one. You as the coach and point to a gate to open or close the gate by the parents stepping out or in the gate or the parents can move randomly to different gates to close them just by standing in the gate.



Moving Goals (Dribbling/Passing)

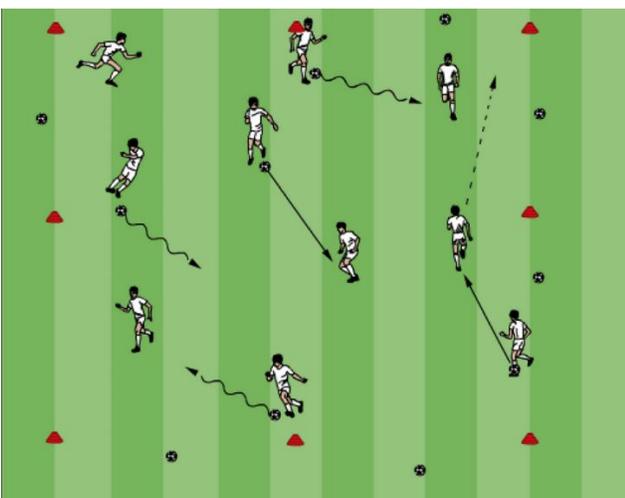
This is a good one to get the parents involved. Two pinnies can be tied together and two parents each holding an end make a goal. The goals should slowly move around the field. Players try to get the ball through as many goals as they can by passing the ball through and running around the other side to get their ball. This can be done individually just dribbling, or in pairs, or groups to include passing.



Body Brakes (Dribbling)

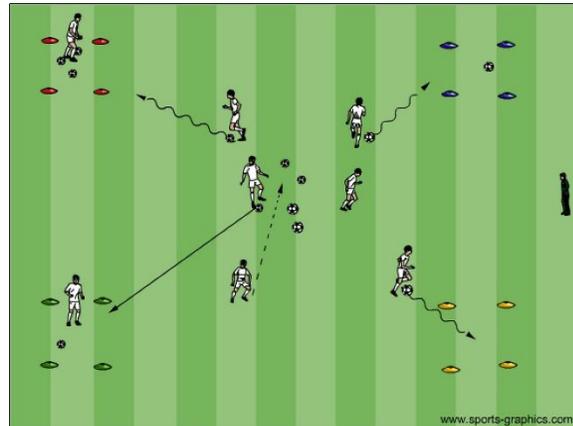
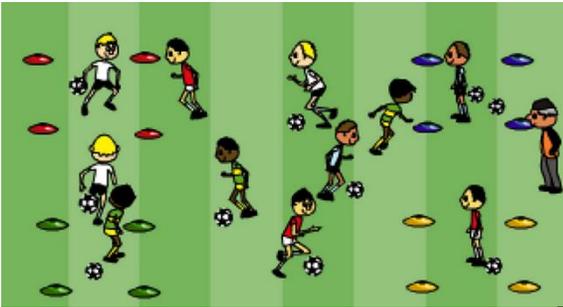
Each player has a ball and dribbles within the 20x20 area. The coach calls out a part of the body. The players try to stop their ball with that part of the body.

Pac Man/Ms. Pac Man (Dribbling/Passing) Three “Ghosts” with soccer balls dribble around a small area and try to pass the ball to hit the Pac Men below the knees. Pac Men move freely around the area to avoid being caught. If hit the Pac Men get their ball and become a ghost until all Pac Men are caught.



Capture the Flag (Dribbling/Passing)

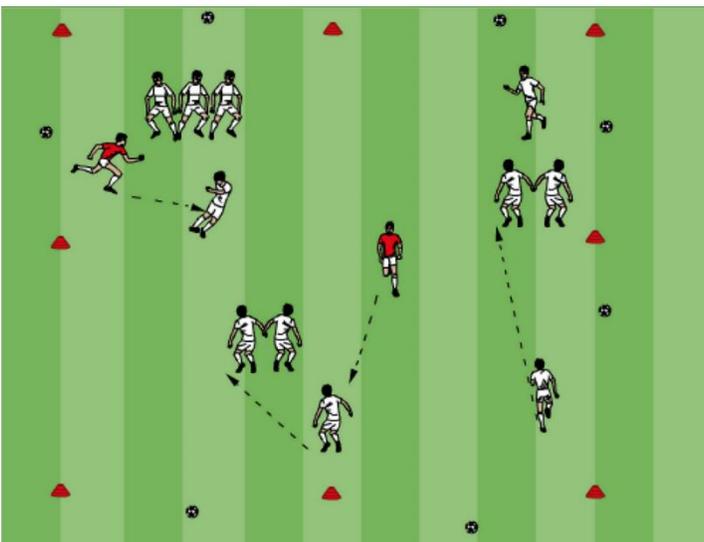
Divide players into four teams. Each team goes to their respective corners of the field in a small 3 x 3 yard home base. All of the balls are placed in the middle of the field. Game begins when Coach says go and ends when you say stop. Until the game ends any ball is free game. Objective of the game is to have as many balls in your home base as you can when the game ends. The trick is the players do not know when the game is going to end. Variations: Players can only dribble the ball back to their corner, or players can dribble or pass the ball back. This is a good one to give the players a chance to talk to each other to come up with a strategy.



Elbow Tag (ABC's)

Players pair up by linking elbows. Two players are chosen to not be linked. One is it and one is getting chased. Players that are linked spread out in the space and do not move.

The player getting chased can be safe when they link elbows with a pair. The player on the opposite ends needs to release and run to another pair without getting tagged. If tagged you become the tagger. The tagger is identified by holding a jersey, cone or ball. Variation: The linked players can lay like logs next to each other on the ground. Players then lay down and get up. Progression: Chaser can have a ball at their feet dribbling and tagging or using the ball or tag by passing and hitting the player not linked below the knees, similar to what was done in Pac Man.



Soccer Marbles (Passing) Two players play against each other (ball each) on the whole field. Player one passes their ball anywhere in the field. Player two has to try to pass their ball to try and hit player one's ball. If he does he gets a point, if he doesn't player one then tries to hit player two's ball and so on.

Tractor Trailer (Dribbling)

Players have a partner. Both players have a ball. One player leads (tractor) the other player follows (trailer). When the Coach shouts 'Tractor Trailer' the front player (tractor) tries to run away from the trailer. When the Coach shouts 'Stop', both players must stop quickly. If the Trailer can take 5 big steps and touch the Tractor they get a point. If not the Tractor gets the point. Switch roles.

Doctor Doctor (Dribbling)

You will need a marked out area with two smaller areas for the 'doctors houses'. Split players into 2 teams and everyone except two players will need a ball each. Each team will need a doctor who will start in their smaller area (doctor house) without a ball. All the other players start somewhere inside the larger area with a ball each. The object is to kick the other team's balls out of the area and retain yours. If a player's ball is kicked out of the area they must go to ground shouting 'doctor, doctor!' This player can only get their ball and carry on once their doctor has tagged (healed) them.

To win the game, a team must pass their ball to hit the other team's doctor below the knee once they come out of their office. The doctors are safe when they are in their office. This encourages players to protect their doctor by kicking opponent's balls out of the area.

It is important to change the doctor after every game to allow each player to have a go with the ball at their feet.

Boss of the Balls (Dribbling/Passing/Shooting)

This is set up in such a way that gives you the coach control of who is in and how long they play. All of the balls start with you. This can also be called "New Ball". This is when you introduce a new ball to the game when it goes out of bounds or into the goal to keep the activity continuous with very little to no down time.

Get Outta Here (Game)

This is a great game to progress into a final scrimmage. You have two teams and one team is in a line shoulder to shoulder on your right and the other on your left. You are in between them with all of the balls like boss of the balls. When you roll a ball out onto the field the first person closest to you for each team runs out to play 1v1 to try and score. They keep playing until a goal, the ball goes out of bounds or you say "Get Outta Here." When players are done they put the ball back in the pile and go to the end of their team line to get ready to go again. Progression: First person in line brings the next person in line with them and play 2v2, which can progress to 3v3. An important component of this is the visual start with rolling the ball with no verbal command. This way they have to pay attention and react to the ball. Each 1v1 or 2v2 should not last longer than 20 seconds so players are only in line to catch their breath and then go again.

