

SFSA Coaching Clinics

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I. WARM-UP

A. QUICK TOUCHES

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball.

Space: Small area (half a micro field for 6-10 kids, larger area for more kids).

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Warm-up, increasing foot speed, ball control.

Activity: Each child has a ball at their feet. Touch the top of the ball with the bottom of their foot as quickly as possible (20 touches, e.g.), with the ball remaining in place.

Variation 1: Quick touches with the bottom of the foot on the top of the ball, pulling the ball back a little bit with each touch

Variation 2: Quick touches between the feet (inside of each foot; essentially moving the ball back and forth on a straight line by using the inside of the foot; foot must be closed (so the feet are parallel, not in an open stance) in order to keep the ball under the player). For a progression, players can open their stance a little bit and move forward with the ball.

Variation 3: Roll the ball under the foot, front to back, then side to side (maximize time the foot is touching the ball).

B. COERVER BALL SKILL DRILLS

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball.

Space: Small area (half a micro field for 6-10 kids, larger area for more kids).

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Warm-up, increasing foot speed, ball control.

Activity: Sole to instep/instep to sole. Each child has a ball at their feet. Ball should be slightly in front of the right foot (can start with left); player places their foot on top of the ball, then rolls the ball back underneath their body using the sole of the foot; after the sole of the foot has lost contact, keep the ball's momentum moving back and continue to keep the foot in contact with the ball stopping the ball with the top of the foot. Essentially the player is rolling the ball back as far as they can without their foot losing contact; start under the foot, then the toes, then finally the top of the foot (by now the ball is so far under the player that it might almost be behind them). Then reverse the course of the ball and the foot and roll it back to the original position. Start slowly until the players get the hang of it, and then increase the speed.

Variation 1: Side to side. Ball is in front of the player; they reach out with one foot, put it on top of the ball. Roll the ball as far to the left as possible (keeping it in contact with the ball as much as possible), then back to the right. So the ball touches the sole, then the outside of the foot, then sole again, then inside of the foot. Repeat a few times, then switch feet.

Variation 2: Sideways under sole (across body) stop using inside of foot (inside out; variation: soul to outside of foot--outside in).

Variation 3: Same as variation above, but stop the ball with the inside of opposite foot.

Variation: do this move while moving sideways.

Variation 4: Cross body. Place ball in front of left foot, reach out and pull back using

sole of right foot, stop with inside of same foot.

Variation 5: Same as above, but instead of stopping w/inside of foot, pivot and use inside of same foot to tap ball away slightly, changing direction 90° [ball makes v pattern]).

Variation 6: Instep to sole to change direction by 90° (using sole) in front of you. Start with ball underneath you with instep of right foot on ball (as if taking a right footed power drive); bring ball forward in contact with instep then sole; as ball moves under the sole of the foot, change the direction of the ball 90° by bringing it across your body in front of you (outside in) and dribble away.

C. CAN YOU DO IT? COORDINATION/BODY MOVEMENT

Participants: 6-20 kids, no balls at first, then each with a ball.

Space: Small area (half a micro field for 6-10 kids, larger area for more kids).

Age Groups: U6

Focus: Warm-up, fun, body coordination.

Activity: Jog around and challenge the children to do what you can do. Can you run backwards? Sideways? Skip? Touch your ankles (while running, bring feet up from behind the body and touch ankles when they are at their highest point). Ask kids if they can think of challenges.

Variation 1: Incorporate the ball. Can you jog and throw the ball up and catch it? Can you, while jogging, throw it up and clap and catch it? Can you kick it up and catch it? Can you dribble the ball and touch stop it with the sole of your foot? Stop it with your knee? Your elbow?

D. SIMON SAYS

Participants: 6-20 kids, no balls at first, then each with a ball.

Space: Small area (half a micro field for 6-10 kids, larger area for more kids).

Age Groups: U6

Focus: Warm-up, fun, body coordination, some ball skills.

Activity: Kids jog around while coach (Simon) gives commands. Things like ³Simon Says run backwards; Simon says hop on one leg; fall down². Allow kids to be Simon. People who are tricked do some quick activity (2 star jumps, e.g.; to do a star jump, child starts in crouch position, stands up and jumps as high as they can while putting their hands and feet at full extension, while saying ³I'm a star!² Could also have them cluck like a chicken, bark like a dog, etc.)

Variation 1: Incorporate the ball. Simon Says stop the ball; Simon says dribble to the corner; Simon says leave your ball and get someone else's ball; stop your ball.

E. GREETINGS GAME

Participants: 6-20 kids, no balls at first, then each with a ball.

Space: Small area (half a micro field for 6-10 kids, larger area for more kids).

Age Groups: U6

Focus: Warm-up, fun, socialization, stopping the ball.

Activity: Kids jog around in confined space, coach yells out a type of greeting (handshake, high fives, touching shoulders, back to back, etc; coach should indicate how many players they should greet (1 other player, 2, everybody; or keep greeting people until coach says to stop).

Variation 1: Incorporate the ball. Players are dribbling the ball, then do the greetings on command.

F. JUGGLING

Participants: Any number, each with a ball.

Space: At least 5 yds between players.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Controlling the ball using different parts of the body; developing a touch.

Activity: Player should pick up the ball, drop it to their foot and try to kick it back to their hands. Once they can do this consistently (or in order to give them variety), try foot to thigh to hands. Or foot, to foot, to hands. Or head to thigh to hands. Etc.

Variation 1-Let the Ball Bounce: Instead of catching the ball between juggles, let the ball bounce and then kick it again. Although this makes it easier by slowing down the need to get one's foot on the ball, it must be done on an even surface (since uneven surfaces have unpredictable bounces). Works well in a gym.

II. BALL DRIBBLING

A. RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball.

Space: Micro field (minimum, half full field for 20 kids).

Age Groups: U6

Focus: Dribbling control, dribbling while being aware of visual and verbal cues.

Activity: Players dribble in an enclosed space (trying to avoid each other), stop the ball (sole of the foot on top of the ball) when coach says red light/green light

Variation 1-Visual Cues: Players dribble, stop the ball when coach raises arm. Or have the players stop when a player chosen by the coach stops dribbling. Any other visual cue that will get them to dribble with their heads up.

Variation 2-Around the World: Coach names each corner of the field (North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, e.g.); on coaches command, players dribble around designated corner of field. Could also use cones randomly spaced (but not too many or kids will not remember which is which).

Variation 2 (alternate)-Instead of naming geographical entities, coach points out specific markers (e.g., each corner of the field could have a different color flag or practice vest, but could also use different objects like cones or balls); on coach's command, all players dribble as fast as they can to the indicated marker (on the Red command, the players go to the corner with the red shirt in it). Alternatively, they could leave their ball, run to the object as fast as they can, then return and start dribbling.

Variation 3-Body Stretch : Players dribble in confined space, and when coach calls out a particular body part (elbow, e.g.) the players must touch the ball with that part of their body (could also have them stop the ball with that part of their body).

Variation 4-Tunnel Soccer: Players dribble in confined space; Coaches walk around, stop and spread their legs so players can dribble balls through legs. Coach might need to say ³Tunnels Open² or some such command so kid's don't just follow. In fact, coach could try to knock balls away when the tunnel is not open.

B. DRIBBLING IN A CONFINED SPACE

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball.

Space: Micro field (minimum, half full field for 20 kids).

Age Groups: U6+

Focus: Dribbling control, practicing dribbling moves, changing speed and direction.

Activity: Players dribble in an enclosed space (trying to avoid each other), stop the ball (sole of the foot on top of the ball) on coaches' command. Can also have players execute a specific move, e. g., pulling the ball back when they meet another player, or the Cruyff, etc. Can also have the players accelerate on command (changing speed and/or direction).

Variation 1-Musical Balls: Players dribble in an enclosed space while coach (or someone else) sings a song; when coach stops singing (or doing some other activity that players can see or hear), players leave their ball and go to another. Coach can pick-up one ball (leaving one player to end up without a ball). That player must do something to get back in game (2 star jumps, e.g.). This is for the U6 group.

C. SHIELDING

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball.

Space: Micro field (minimum, half full field for 20 kids).

Age Groups: U8-U10

Focus: Maintaining possession of ball under pressure.

Activity: Players are spread out over area, each player with a ball (stationary). Coaches attempt to challenge for the ball, player shields it without moving it (so they cannot just dribble away). Emphasis on shielding using the shoulder away from the ball to defend the challenge; opposite foot should be on top of the ball.

Variation 1: After shielding off the initial pressure, player dribbles away from pressure to a cone 15-20 yards away, then returns to square and stops ball to indicate he's ready for another challenge (4 cone must be placed a few yards outside the area to give the dribblers a choice of options).

Variation 2: Players in pairs, one ball per pair. Each player takes turns shielding against a challenge from their partner; once the partner gets the ball, then they reverse roles (have to be careful with one player dominating the other; must be paired equally, or make sure they switch every 30 seconds or so if the switch is not occurring naturally). This is very demanding.

D. CONE RACES

Participants: Players in pairs, one ball per pair.

Space: Across a Micro field for U6/8, longer distance U10. Players line up on one touchline of a micro field, with about 5-7 yds between pairs. One cone for each pair of players is placed on the other sideline from the players.

Age Groups: U6-U10

Focus: Dribbling with control and speed, turning, passing, fun.

Activity: On coaches' command, first player dribbles as fast as they can across the field to the other cone, around the cone and then back to the original touchline, stopping the ball on the touchline. Once the ball is stopped on the touchline, partner takes the ball and does the same drill. Keep going until coach stops drill (can count number of times each player has gone to have competition between pairs if need be).

Variation 1: Dribble down to other cone, go around cone, then pass ball back to first player, who then dribbles down to cone (while first player runs back to original position), turns, and passes back to first player, etc.

Variation 2: Can do coordination exercises (without ball). Run to cones, the run back backwards. Run sideways, skip, hop, etc. Improve athleticism and coordination of players while having fun (can also do crab races, wheel barrows, etc.).

Variation 3: Dribble down normally, pull the ball back using only the sole of the foot.

Dribble down with right foot, back with left. Dribble down using only the sole of the left foot, back using only the sole of the right. Use imagination to come up with alternate means of dribbling.

Variation 4: Players (pairs) balance a ball between them using their foreheads (they each must apply proper pressure to keep it their); race down and back (if they drop the ball, must start over, or do a penalty or perhaps just start again from where they dropped it).

Think of other fun races using the ball.

E. SHARKS AND MINNOWS

Participants: 6-20 kids, most with a ball (5:2 ratios of kid's w/balls: those without).

Space: Half Micro field for 6-10 kids.

Age Groups: U6-U12

Focus: Maintaining possession of ball under pressure. Using dribbling moves to beat multiple defenders.

Activity: Players dribble around in the space, avoiding each other and staying in bounds.

They are the minnows. Coaches are the sharks and attempt to dispossess the players, kicking their balls out of the area (coaches can vary how hard they do this by player ability). After a player loses his ball, he becomes a shark until all the minnows have been eliminated (so at the end, there are lots of sharks attacking the final minnow). Last few players remaining are sharks for the next round.

Variation 1-Pirates: Instead of kicking ball away, player without the ball (Pirates) takes the ball and then they becomes dribbler; minnow who's ball was taken is now a pirate and must take someone else's ball. Important rule changes; dribble the ball out not under pressure retain possession, but if forced out by pursuit, the pursuer gets possession; also cannot attack player who stole ball until player has gone for someone else.

Variation 2-Team Sharks & Minnows: Two teams, one team with balls, the other without; the team without the balls tries to kick the other team's balls out of the area, and when they do, the players who lost their balls can now be outlets for their teammates passes (so instead of it eventually being 1 v. the world, it is eventually keep away with one ball).

Variation 3-Cannibals: Everyone has a ball and tries to knock out everyone else's ball while retaining control of their own. Each player can count how many balls they knock out (most wins), or count how many times they are knocked out (fewest wins), or some combination. Can have kids eliminated when they get knocked out, but if this is done, should give them something to do while the rest are still battling (though if it is only done for a short time, can be an entertaining activity, giving those knocked out a rest).

This works better for slightly older kids (not U6).

Variation 4-Crabs: Sharks are in crab position, trying to knock out balls with hands or feet. If they get a ball, they switch with player who they got. Probably need a higher ratio of crabs than you would pirates.

Variation 5-Finders Keepers: Sharks can use their hands to get ball, Must dive on loose ball. If training goalkeepers, keepers remain in position; if not, then once keeper gets a ball, they trade places with dribbler.

F. CONNECT THE DOTS

Participants: 6-15 players, start without a ball, then each with a ball.

Space: Random cones distributed evenly throughout a confined space (micro field for 6-12 players).

Age Groups: U6-U10

Focus: Coordination activity, decision-making, fun.

Activity: Players must try to go to as many different cones (dots) as possible in a specified time (for older kids) or to a specified number of dots (4-6) for younger kids and complete specified activity. First one could be simply running and touching the specified number of cones. Then touch with elbow, or knee, etc.

Variation 1: With a ball. Dribble to 5 cones. Or dribble to a cone, then do 5 quick touches, then to the next cone and repeat. Or dribble to cone, touch ball with knee, then repeat. Etc.

G. STEAL THE BACON

Participants: 4 players at a time (could use 4 teams), each in a corner of the field.

Group of balls in the middle.

Space: Micro field for 6-12 kids.

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling, aggression, fun.

Activity: On coaches' command, players in each corner run to the group of balls in the middle and carry them back to their corner as fast as they can.

Variation 1-Dribbling: Instead of carrying balls back, must dribble them back. Coach can put restrictions on player (must dribble back with the sole of the foot only, e.g.).

H. QUICK DRAW-SIMPLE

Participants: Pairs, each pair with a ball.

Space: Micro field for 6-12 kids.

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Foot speed, aggression, fun.

Activity: Ball is placed just between two players who face the ball. On coach's command, players attempt to pull the ball away from their partner (opponent) using the bottom of their feet.

Variation 1-Which Foot?: Coach calls a specific foot, which the players must use to pull the ball away.

Variation 2-Challenge: Each player starts with one foot on the ball (both must use the same foot, e.g. both use their right feet). On coach's command, try to pull the ball away.

I. QUICK DRAW-ADVANCED

Participants: Pairs, each pair with a ball.

Space: Each pair inside a 10 x 10 (can be smaller) grid.

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Foot speed, aggression, and quickness to the ball, shielding, fun.

Activity: Ball is placed just between two players who face the ball (each with the inside

of their right foot on the ball) in the center of the grid. On coach's command, each player attempts to gain possession and carry the ball under control outside the grid. Be sure to alternate feet.

Variation 1-First to the Ball: Each player starts with a foot on the corner of the grid. On coaches' command, each tries to be first to the ball, gain possession, and get out of the grid. Could also have players start on their backs(stomachs, etc.) outside the grid and force them to get up before getting to the ball (adding an element of fitness).

J. SOCCER TAG

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball. One practice vest (or extra shirt) for every 3-5 players.

Space: Micro field for 6-12 kids.

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling with head up, maintaining ball control, fun.

Activity: All players have a ball, those players who are it (1 for every 3-5 players) hold the extra shirt (they need not put it on). Players who are ³it² must tag another player, while both are maintaining possession of their respective balls.

Variation 1- Conventional Tag: For younger players, can play tag without balls first. Can also have players attempt to tag a specific body part (like the leg below the knee).

Variation 2- Soccer Tag: Player who is it does not have a ball (makes it much easier for player to tag opponent), all others do. When a player is tagged, the person who tagged them gets the ball.

Variation 3- Freeze Tag: Once player is tagged, they remain frozen until set free by teammate. Frozen player must pick up their ball and hold it over their head while they stand with legs apart; to ³unfreeze² them, teammates can either make a pass through their legs (one version) or crawl through their legs (for versions without balls).

Variation 4- Line Tag: Players are in two lines, facing each other 12-15 yds apart. The first player in line tries to run across the space before the first player in the other line can tag him. The idea is to teach players to fake and move to avoid the tackle, and teach defenders to close down the space and attack the guy with the ball (even though there is no ball).

Variation 5- Circle Tag: Players (4-6) link up hands and form a circle. One player is outside the circle. The coach designates a player in the circle the outside player must tag. The circle moves to protect the player the outside player is trying to tag.

Variation 6- Body Tag: Conventional tag, but player who is tagged must hold the body part that was tagged until they tag someone else.

Variation 7- Hand-behind-the-back Tag: Conventional tag, players who are not ³it² must hold a designated hand behind their back. The ³it² players must tag the hand that is held behind the back in order to make another player ³it.² Teaches using the body to protect something (in this case, their hand behind their back). Can also have players not ³it² have a ball.

Variation 8- Fox Tail Tag: Players have practice vest tucked in shorts, hanging out the back (this is the Fox Tail). Players must try to grab other people's tails without losing their own. Winner can be person with most tails or last person still with a tail (or both). First do it without a ball, then use a ball.

Variation 9- Pairs Tag: This is for older players, designed to help them understand man-to-man marking (as well as the use of feints and changes in speed and/or direction to escape. Players in pairs. One player is offense, other is defense. Defense tries to tag

offense, then once successful, reverse rolls (tagged player may need to freeze for 3 seconds to avoid possibility of tagging player being tagged right back).

Variation 10- Elbow Tag: Players are paired up, hooked at their elbows; non-hooked hand is on their hip (offering an unhooked elbow on each side of the pair). Coach breaks up one pair, gives one of the pair a vest to hold; this player is it. This player attempts to tag his former partner. If he does, she becomes it and tries to tag him back. Person who is attempting to avoid being tagged can find a base by hooking onto an open elbow of another pair. Once she does this, the person on the other end of that pair must break free and try to avoid being tagged. Once they get the hang of it, allow more than one pair to be free (those that are it can tag anyone who is free).

K. FOLLOW THE LEADER

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball.

Space: Micro field for 6-12 kids (proportionately larger space for more).

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling with head up, maintaining ball control, fun.

Activity: All players have a ball, they dribble around randomly in the area. Coach calls a child's name, that child becomes the leader and all the player's try to follow that child's lead. Children can be allowed off of grid to go around particular objects.

Variation 1- Cloning Exercise (?!): Players must do exactly what lead player does, not just follow where they go. Lead player must shout out requirement (³left foot only², ³stop with the sole², etc.; players should be encouraged to be creative).

Variation 2- Team Challenge: Players are divided into two groups, and every player has a number (so there is a #1 in each group, e.g.). On coaches call (#1!) that player leaves the square and tries to dribble all the way around the square before re-entering.

Teammates follow as quickly as they can. First team to complete circuit gets a point.

L. THE CHAIN GAME

Participants: 6-20 kids, some variations use balls.

Space: Micro field for 6-12 kids (proportionately larger space for more).

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling with head up, working with teammates, fun.

Activity: Two players hold hands to form the chain. The other players can move freely around the field. The chain tries to tag the other players. When a player is tagged, they become part of the chain (so eventually the chain will include all the players). The chain must work as a team; if they break their chain to tag a player, the player tagged remains free.

Variation 1- Dribbling. Same as above, but now the players not in the chain have balls at their feet and must maintain possession while avoiding the chain. If a player dribbles out of bounds, they join the chain (the chain does not have a ball).

Variation 2- Multiple Chains: Same as either game above, but instead of one chain, when the chain becomes 4 people or longer, 2 on the end can break off to form a second chain.

M. SLALOM DRIBBLING

Participants: 4-8 kids per course, each with a ball.

Space: 10 cones set approximately 1 yd apart in a straight line.

Age Groups: U6+

Focus: Dribbling control, speed.

Activity: All players have a ball, they start in a line at the head of a row of cones. The first player dribbles through the cones (going around the right side of the first cone, left of the second, etc.) until they reach the end, then they speed dribble back to the back of the line. May need to put a cone off to the side at the end that they must go around to keep them away from the course. Players could come back on the same course, but then the next player cannot start until the player in the course is completely finished.

Variation 1- Specific feet/surfaces: Players must use only the left foot (inside or outside of the foot), or just the inside (right or left), etc.

Variation 2- Tight Cones: The distance between the cones is shortened to a half yard, which requires more control.

Variation 3- Speed Cones: The distance between the cones is lengthened to 2 yds, which allows more speed. This is only good if players try to maximize speed (can accomplish this by having races on 2 lines next to each other).

N. CROSS THE BRIDGE

Participants: 6-12 players, in two even groups, each player with a ball.

Space: Micro soccer Field

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling under control with speed while avoiding moving obstacles.

Activity: On coaches' command, two groups, which start on opposite ends of the field, try to dribble to the opposite end line as fast as they can (going against each other).

Coach then adds two cones in the middle, at first with a fair amount of space between them. This is the bridge; players must now go between the cones, crossing the bridge.

Coach gradually narrows the bridge. When it becomes tight, coach can add a second bridge (also narrow) to alleviate some crowding.

O. DRIBBLING AGAINST AN OPPONENT-TWO LINES

Participants: 4-7 kids per line, one ball per line (lines are in multiples of 2).

Space: Lines are 10-15 yds apart (depending on age), so each set of lines needs area 5x20 yds

Age Groups: U10-U12

Focus: Practice timing dribbling move to beat defender, warm-up.

Activity: First player in each line has a ball, they face each other, about 15 yds apart (depends on move employed); players dribble at each other, when they get close execute a move (each player must make a move to the same side, e.g., their right side, in order to avoid colliding). Start with cut back, then shoulder feint, step over, etc.)

P. PLAYER WEAVE, STATIONARY

Participants: 3 players per group, one ball.

Space: Players are spaced along a line, 7-10 yds apart (depending on age), so each group needs an area 5x20 yds

Age Groups: U10-U12

Focus: Practice timing dribbling move to beat defender, warm-up.

Activity: Player on one end has the ball, dribbles towards the middle player. Beats that player with a move (middle player plays passive defense), then passes the ball to player

on the other end. Player who just did the move is now in the middle, new end player has ball, dribbles to the middle, beats first player with a move, then passes to the other player on the end.

Variation 1: Have player with ball start stationary, player in middle attacks the ball, and player with ball makes move to beat the attacking player.

Variation 2: Use specific different moves to beat defender.

Variation 3: Can use same set-up as a passing drill. For example, player on end does give and go with player in the middle, then passes to the other end. Player at other end does give and go with player in the middle, etc.

Q. GATES

Participants: 6-20 kids, each with a ball.

Space: Micro field (minimum, half full field for 20 kids). Gates (disc cones, 1 yd apart) spread randomly throughout the area.

Age Groups: U8-U12

Focus: Dribbling technique and speed.

Activity: Gates are spread randomly throughout area. Each child has a ball. Child dribbles through each gate (must be a different gate each time, but can do gates more than once, just not twice in a row). See who can dribble through the most gates in a set time (minute or two).

Variation 1-Pull back: Instead of dribbling through the gates forwards, must dribble through then pull the ball back with the bottom of the foot.

Variation 2-Around the Cone: Dribble around one of the cones in the gate before moving to the next gate.

Variation 3-Token Defense. Some players are given pinnies instead of balls; these players must go stand in one of the gates. Players attempting to go through a gate in which there is a defender, must pull the ball back and try to find a gate without a defender. Defenders should move from gate to gate, ideally getting to a gate just prior to an offensive player (forcing them to pull the ball back instead of just avoiding the gate).

Variation 4-Token Defense plus Real Defense. Like variation 3, but now there are a few players without balls who attempt to steal the ball from players while they are in between gates. If the player steals the ball, they are now a dribbler and the player whose ball was stolen must go steal someone else's ball.

Variation 5-1 v 1: Pairs, one ball per pair. Both players start with a foot on top of the ball. On coach's command, each player tries to get possession. Once possession is won, player with ball tries to dribble through as many gates as possible, while opponent tries to defend. If defender steals the ball, roles are reversed. Essentially 1 v 1 (winner is player who dribbles through more goals). Can also have coach serve balls in the air to start battle for possession.

Variation 6- Pairs Pas sing: Pairs, one ball per pair. Pairs are a team. Try to pass the ball through a gate to their partner on the other side. Each successful pass through the gates is a goal. Can also have the players do 5 passes back and forth at each goal (pass through goal to teammate, he passes it back through same goal, then again until they reach five, then move to another goal).

Variation 7- Team Passing: Players are divided into two teams, players try to pass one ball (can increase to two if necessary) through any of the gates to a teammate (if this is successful, that team scores a goal). Essentially a soccer game with many goals, but to

score, ball must go through goal to a teammate.

Variation 8-Numbers Up Team Passing: Like previous variation, but instead of even numbers, one team (offense) has more players than the other. Numbers up must pass the ball through the gates to a teammate to score, numbers down can dribble.

R . CROSS-FIELD DRIBBLING-SIMPLE

Participants: 4-20+ players, each with a ball.

Space: Short width of micro field (20 yds) for younger kids, can use longer distances for older kids (up to width of full field).

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling technique and speed.

Activity: Walk across the field touching the ball each step (emphasis on touches, not speed; for experienced players, skip this step). Then increase pace to jog, still touching the ball every step. Then speed dribble; no longer need to touch the ball every step, but should be able to have ball under control so that you can stop the ball on the line on the other side.

Variation 1-Jogging: Same as above, but increasing speed to jog (still touching the ball every step).

Variation 2-Sprint: Instead of touching the ball every step, dribble as fast as possible across the space, but stop the ball on the other line (to show that dribbling was under control).

Variation 3-Pull-back: Players face away from the field, one foot on the ball. They then pull ball backwards, on command dribble back where they came from.

Variation 4-Pull-back and go: Same as variation 3, but instead of dribbling back to line they came from, on command turn with the ball and speed dribble to the end.

S. CROSS-FIELD DRIBBLING-ADVANCED

Participants: 4-20+ players, each with a ball.

Space: Short width of micro field (20 yds) for younger kids, can use longer distances for older kids (up to width of full field).

Age Groups: U6-U12

Focus: Dribbling technique and speed.

Activity: Same as simple, but now going across the field using specific surfaces of the foot or executing specific moves.

Variation 1-Inside/Outside of Both Feet: Dribble only using inside of both feet, or outside of both feet (on the next time). Touch the ball each time a foot touches the ground.

Variation 2-Right/Left Foot Only: Dribble using the inside and the outside of one foot only (switch feet on the next time). Each time the foot being used touches the ground, it should touch the ball.

Variation 3-Limited Touches: Use limited number of touches to cross field (3 touches, e.g., to learn how to hit the ball with a controlled pace).

Variation 4-Circles: Players start to dribble, then dribble in a complete circle using the outside of the foot on command (do this a couple of times before getting to the other side). Can do the same using the inside of the foot to dribble the circle.

Variation 5-Moves: Players dribble across the field using a specific dribbling move (cut-back, shoulder feint, step-over, etc.).

T. DEFENSIVE TURNING/OFFENSIVE CHANGE OF SPEED

Participants: Pairs, one ball per pair (don't need ball at first).

Space: Width of field (at least 30 yds, can use more).

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Change of pace (player with ball), defensive stance and speed on the turn (defender). Some fitness.

Activity: Players in each pair are about 5-7 yds apart, facing each other.

Offensive player (who is facing the opposite touchline) starts to jog, defensive player shuffles back in his defensive stance; after about 10 yds or so, offensive player accelerates by the defender and defender turns and chases him to the opposite touch line. Change places and come back. Once players are comfortable (or with more skilled players), offensive player has a ball, so burst of speed is combined with dribbling move (defender makes only a token attempt to get the ball, but tries hard not to let offensive player get past him-once turned, the defensive player tries to beat the offensive player across the field, but does not really contest for the ball).

U. RACE TRACK

Participants: 6-12 players, each with a ball.

Space: Micro soccer field and a few yards around it (defined by cones).

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling speed and control, fun.

Activity: Players line up in alley surrounding the field. Players must stay in alley to stay on track. Dribble with speed, if you go out of the alley, you have to do 5 pull back moves before you get back on (e.g.). Have kids dribble slowly, then speed, then stop, change directions, etc.

V. CATS & DOGS

Participants: 6-20 players, each with a ball (dogs will not use ball).

Space: Micro soccer field (width) is ideal for 8-12 kids.

Age Groups: U6-U10

Focus: Dribbling past an opponent, fun.

Activity: Similar in concept to sharks and minnows, but instead of staying in a confined space (as the minnows do), the cats (like the minnows, are the players with the ball) are now trying to cross a space to get to the other side (so instead of emphasizing shielding and ball possession, it focuses on covering ground and moving past defenders). Cats line up with a ball on one side of micro soccer field; dogs (start with one or two)

in the middle. On the command of the dogs, cats attempt to dribble to the other side. Dogs attempt to knock the ball out (any direction). Cats must have control of the ball when they cross the line, otherwise they are eliminated (so players cannot just kick the ball out of trouble when they confront a defender). Cats that lose their balls are dogs on the next crossing (so again, at the end, there are lots of dogs chasing few cats).

To make the challenge possible, at the end it is sometimes appropriate to make the dogs face the other direction (or lie down and face the other direction), let the cats start across and have the dogs turn and challenge on command (so they can't all focus on one player at the beginning).

Variation-Crabs: Cats still try to get across, but the dogs are now crabs; must crab walk to try to get ball (probably need to start with more crabs than you would dogs). Crabs can use hands or feet to get ball.

W. NUMBERS GAME

Participants: 6-12 players split into two teams, each player with a number (3-6 players/team). Coach has supply of balls.

Space: Micro soccer field.

Age Groups: U8-U12

Focus: Getting to the ball quickly, judging whether to go to ball or play defense, dribbling past an opponent, fun.

Activity: Players on each team stand in their goal and lock arms. Coach puts a ball in the middle of the field and calls out a number. Player from each team with that number runs to get the ball and attempts to score.

The other team can defend the goal as a group (with arms locked, they try to move to block the shot). When a player has shot or the players are tired, coach calls another number, original players get back in goal with the rest of their team, and two new players go 1 v 1. Coach keeps feeding balls into the middle to keep the game moving. Variation: coach calls 2 numbers and players play 2 v 2. This game is a relatively fun way to play 1 v 1 or 2 v 2. It's important to match players of relatively equal ability with the same number. Also good to allow players to understand when they should challenge for the ball and when they should simply stay in front of attacker; for example, if one player realizes that their opponent will reach the ball first, then the player should not ³dive in² for the ball (because this would allow the opponent to beat them with one touch) but rather maintain space between them and force their opponent to beat them with the ball.

Variation-Line Soccer: Instead of trying to score on goal, only try to dribble into zone (or across line, like line soccer).

X. 1 V 1 (3 PAIRS)

Participants: Groups of 6 (3 pairs). 2 players are the goals, about 15 yds apart.

Space: Each group needs space 10 x 20 yds.

Groups of 6 (3 pairs).

Age Groups: U8-U12

Focus: Dribbling past an opponent, fitness.

Activity: 2 players play 1 v 1 between them. As soon as a goal is scored (or the ball goes past the goal) the remaining players (one behind each goal with a ball) feed a new ball in to the player who was defending who now tries to score. This is very intense, players should be as evenly matched as possible, and each session should only last 45 seconds - 1 minute.

Y. 1 V 1 TO GOAL (TURNING)

Participants: Pairs, one ball per pair.

Space: Half field, and full sized goal. (Younger kids can use micro field and small goals).

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Dribbling at speed under pressure from behind, speed of turn on defense, shooting.

Activity: Players in each pair face each other about 2 yds apart at midfield. Defensive player spreads legs apart; offensive player passes the ball through the defenders legs and goes to goal. Once offensive player has hit the ball through defenders legs, defender turns and gives chase. If the defensive player successfully steals the ball, he can take a shot on goal.

Z. 1 V 1 V 1 TO SHOT

Participants: Groups of 3, one ball per group.

Space: 40 x 40 yd space, and 2 full sized goals (with keepers).

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Getting to the ball quickly, dribbling against superior numbers, getting off a quick shot.

Activity: Coach serves ball into area, players fight for ball, then play 1 v 2 to try to score at either goal.

AA. 15 YARD SQUARE DRILLS-DRIBBLING

Participants: 6-8 players per square. For first drill, all players need a ball.

Variations (passing drills) require fewer.

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Dribbling technique, control and speed (variation: cutting ball back).

Space: Square approximately 15 yds on each side.

Activity: First player dribbles around square (second player leave after first player passes 1st cone). Focus on speed (while still remaining close to grid). Drill should move quickly, with 4 players on the grid constantly.

Variation-Around the Cones: Player must dribble completely around each cone before moving on to next on (use inside of foot only one direction, then switch directions; then use outside of foot only, then switch directions). This helps kids learn to cut the ball with the outside of their foot.

BB. MIRROR

Participants: 6-20 players in pairs (no balls).

Space: Each pair has a pair of cones 5-10 yds apart.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Teaches defensive marking, importance of varying speed and direction on offense.

Activity: One player in each pair is offense, one is defense. Players face each other between cones (imaginary line between cones separates the players). Offensive player tries to touch one of the cones before defense can. Offensive player should try to fake one way, then go the other. May be necessary to require offensive player to commit to a cone if he has taken more than a step towards it.

Variation-Mirror Ball: Offensive player now has a ball. Must get the ball to one of the cones (by dribbling) before defensive player touches cone with his foot.

III. PASSING

A. DEERHUNTER

Participants: 8+ players, 10-12 ideal. Hunters have a ball each, deer without balls.

Space: Micro Field (20 x 30 yds, confined space)

Age Groups: U6-U10

Focus: Dribbling with the head up, accurate passing/shooting, fun.

Activity: Players, each with a ball (hunters) all dribble and try to kick ball at coach (or other players who take turns being the deer) as he moves

around. Should have 3 or 4 hunters per deer. Change deer every minute or so (depending on fatigue). Emphasis is on dribbling with your head up (to see the deer) and accurate passes to a moving target.

Variation-Zen Deerhunter (Hunter becomes the deer): Instead of changing every minute, when hunter hits deer, they switch places.

Variation-Defrost Tag: Once a player is hit by a ball, the player must stand frozen with their legs apart until a teammate crawls through their legs to unfreeze them. While a player is being unfrozen, both players involved cannot be hit by a ball.

B. MARBLES

Participants: 6+ players, 10-12 ideal. In pairs, each player with a ball.

Space: Micro Field (20 x 30 yds, confined space)

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling with the head up, accurate passing/shooting, fun.

Activity: Players, each with a ball take turns trying to hit their partner's ball with their ball. Should start with the target ball stopped.

Variation-Moving Ball: May be able to have players attempting to hit partner's moving ball (though may be necessary to handicap partner in order to give shooter a chance; e.g. target ball can only be dribbled with left foot, or only sole of the foot, or only in a straight line, etc.

Variation-Multiple Targets (aka Bumper Cars): Every player has a ball in a confined space. Players dribble and try to strike other players' balls with their own.

C. PAIRS PASSING-FIXED POSITION (PUSH PASS)

Participants: Pairs, one ball per pair

Space: 5-10 yds apart

Age Groups: U6+

Focus : Passing accuracy and speed.

Activity: First do simple passes back and forth (cannot do this for very long or they will lose interest; after a couple of minutes, see which pair can be the first to complete 10-20 passes (depending on ability and age); emphasis is on accuracy and speed of pass; point out that if pass goes by their partner, they will lose a lot of time because partner must retrieve ball. For younger age groups, do not teach technique, but make sure they both stop the ball and kick the ball with the foot the ball is on (should not move over to use favored foot).

Variation 1: Passing Technique (U-10 and up):

Push passes, left foot only, right foot only, either, 2 touch (standard), 1-

touch.

Variation 2: Advanced Technique (Dummying ball, turning ball)

Can also use this set-up to practice letting the ball run through, then practice a turn with the ball (step over move, pull-back, etc.) and pass back to partner (who does the same).

Variation 3: Passing technique with Fitness

If some fitness is desired (or are already in groups of 3), and have 2 players on one side (5 yds apart, each with a ball), one player on the other; one of the two passes the ball directly in front him, the lone player on the opposite side moves over and passes it right back; the other player then does the same, so the lone player has to move laterally 5 yds and pass that ball back. Work for about a minute or 2, then switch position.

D. BOWLING

Participants: Pairs, one ball per pair.

Space: Pair of cones (goal), 2-3 yards apart, players start on each side of the goal 2-3 yards from the cones (to start). May need as much as 15-20 yds on front and back of the cones.

Age Groups: U6-8.

Focus: Passing accuracy and fun.

Activity: P layers pass the ball to each other between the cones. Each time a player successfully gets the ball between the cones, that player takes a step back. If the player does not pass between the cones, that player goes back to the beginning (1 yd in front of the cones).

Variation 1-Pairs: Instead of moving up and back as individuals, move up and back as a pair (so if a pass is not between the cones, both players go back to start; if the pass is between the cones, both players take a step back).

E. PAIRS PASSING-MOVING; PASS AND MOVE

Participants: Pairs, one ball per pair, 10-12 kids ideal.

Space: Micro soccer field (for 4-5 pairs).

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Dynamic passing, moving to get open.

Activity: Pairs pass back and forth to each other in an enclosed space; hit the pass and run (about the same distance as the pass, but in a different direction, giving the partner about the same distance to make their pass).

Partner receiving the pass should stop the ball (younger players), see where their partner is running, pass it back to them, then move to get

open (as partner just did). Emphasis is on movement off the ball; pass and move, pass and move, etc.

Variation 1: More experienced players should be able to do 2-touch, then 1-touch.

Variation 2: Provide defensive pressure. Coach (or player) can be a defender and wander around the space picking off errant passes (or pressuring players and forcing their partner to get open).

Variation 3: Groups of 3, but instead of coach providing pressure (as in previous variation), the additional player is the one who provides pressure. They try to get the ball; when they get the ball, they trade places with either the passer (in the event of a bad pass) or the dribbler (in the event of them not successfully shielding the ball). Additional player can provide pressure on different pairs, but they should not gang up (so only one defender per pair).

F. 4 PLAYER PASSING

Participants: Groups of 4 (2 pairs), each pair with a ball.

Space: 10 x 10 yd grid.

Age Groups: U8

Focus: Timing a pass to avoid moving obstacles. Slightly more challenging and fun version of pairs passing.

Activity: One player on each side of the grid (players opposite are partners, each pair with one ball). Pairs try to pass the ball to each other without hitting the other pairs' ball (who are doing the same thing).

Variation-Side Passing: Variation is to have the players pass the ball to the person on their right (2 touch), try to keep two balls moving.

G. 2 V 2 W/4 CORNERS

Participants: Groups of 8 (2 sets of 2 pairs), 1 ball.

Space: Micro field.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Pairs passing, especially a wall pass.

Activity: Players play 2 v 2 inside the area, other 4 players are on each corner. Team with the ball tries to get the ball to person on any corner, but must complete 2 passes before doing so. Each time corner player is reached, it is a goal (1 point). If players get a wall pass (1-touch) their team gets 10 points.

H. LINES PASSING (FOLLOW YOUR PASS)

Participants: Players in pairs of lines. Need at least 4 players per line,

should not have more than 6 per line. Need an even number of lines (since each line faces another). One ball per pair of lines.

Space: Each pair of lines needs a space about 20 yds long and 5-10 yds wide.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Moving after making a pass, passing technique, warm-up.

Activity: Players at the head of each pair of lines face each other, about 10-15 yds apart. First player with the ball passes to player at the head of the opposite line, then follows his pass and runs to the back of that line. The player who receives the ball traps it, then passes it back to the line from whence it came. He then follows his pass to the back of the other line and it continues. Normally done two touch, can make it one touch.

Variation 1: Trap halfway across. Player receiving the ball traps it back to the middle, then passes from there. This teaches the players that controlling the ball doesn't mean it has to be at your feet; trapping the ball into space instead of at your feet allows you to elude the defense bearing down on you. Teaches proper weighting of trap (or pass).

Variation 2: Outside of the foot, diagonal pass. Same set-up as original drill, except that lines facing each other are offset by about 5 yds, and probably need to be moved back (so they are 15 yds apart). If facing line is offset to the left, then first player dribbles a few steps, then makes a diagonal pass with the outside of the left foot to the opposite line. That player traps the ball, dribbles straight a few steps, then makes a diagonal pass with the outside of his foot back to the original line. After a few minutes, offset lines the opposite way and use the right foot.

Variation 3: With four lines (2 on each side facing each other), you make a modified X pattern; 1 passes straight to 2 (and follows his pass, going to the back of line 2; all players follow their pass), 2 goes diagonally to 3, 3 goes straight to 4, 4 goes diagonally back to 1. If players are skilled, should be able to do this with 2 balls. Good warm-up drill.

I. RETURN TO SENDER (GIVE AND GO)

Participants: 4-8 players per team, 2 teams. 1 ball for every two players; everyone on one team has a ball, the other team has none.

Space: Confined space (Micro field works well for 8-10 players).

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Tactical passing (give and go).

Activity: Players with the ball seek out someone on the other team who does not have a ball and does a give and go. Players without balls seek

out players who have them to make a wall pass. Can initially do this with the ball in hands (to make it easier). Should find a different player each time (so players should not pair up and make consecutive passes). All players should be active. Can keep track of how many passes they make (to provide incentive to be active). After a few minutes, switch ball possession to other team.

J. 4 V 1

Participants: Groups of 5, 1 ball each group.

Space: Each group needs a 10 x 10 yd grid.

Age Groups: U8

Focus: Tactical passing (providing two outlets for player with ball, wide and back support). Focus is support, quick, clean control of the ball, accurate passes. This is a simpler version of 3 v 1 (once 3 v 1 is mastered, unnecessary to do 4 v 1).

Activity: One player in each corner of the grid, one of these players has the ball. Fifth player is in the middle. Players on outside try to pass the ball around the perimeter of the square. Player in the middle attempts to get the ball. Initially this is hard for the players with the ball, so sometimes defender needs to not play his hardest.

K. 3 V 1

Participants: Groups of 4, 1 ball each group.

Space: Each group needs a 10 x 10 yd grid.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Tactical passing (providing two outlets for player with ball, wide and back support), moving to get open.

Activity: Three players in three corners, one of these players has the ball. Fourth player is in the middle. Players on outside need to run to support the ball; the player with the ball should have two options to pass along the edge of the square (to players in the two closest corners). So when a pass is made, one player must move to the open corner (supporting the new player in possession of the ball). Player in the middle attempts to get the ball. Initially this is hard for the players with the ball, so sometimes defender needs to not play his hardest. Focus is support, moving to get open, quick, clean control of the ball, accurate passes.

Encourage passes to space (instead of to players) when necessary (so player receiving ball from his right will pass the ball to the corner on his left, even if player moving to that corner is not there yet; but player making the pass must weight the pass so that it arrives at the corner at

the same time the player does. Passes should all be to the corners of the grid (even if the player is not yet there; if a pass is made to the middle of the side, then it is unclear where supporting players should be).

Variation-Large Area: Instead of confining players to 10 x 10 yd grid, allow them to use 1/2 a micro field and move all over the field (as well as dribble). Easier than activity above so is more appropriate for less advanced players.

L. 15 YARD SQUARE DRILLS-PASSING

Participants: 6-8 players per square

Space: Square approximately 15 yds on each side.

Age Groups: U10 (advanced)+

Focus: Passing tactics (follow pass, give and go, 3rd man running).

Activity: One player begins stationed outside each cone (this is to facilitate having the passes stay outside the grid). Player on the first cone has a ball and passes to player by 2nd cone and then follows his pass; player 2 receives ball and then passes to player 3 (player 1 takes player 2's place) and follows pass, etc.

Variation 1: Then same thing, but with give and go past cone (player 1 passes to player 2 as before, but player 2 passes back to approaching player 1, player 2 starts to run and player 1 passes ball to player 2 on other side of cone (beating cone with a wall pass). More distance between cones can be helpful here.

Variation 2: Same thing, but this time pass is for 3rd man running (though in this case, he's standing). Player 1 gives ball to player 2 who passes back to player 1, but instead of passing to player 2, player 1 now passes to player 3, who drops it back to approaching player 2, who passes to player 4, who drops it back to 3, etc.

M. DIAGONAL PASSING DRILL

Participants: 3 players, one ball per grid.

Space: 10 x 10 yd grid.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Passing technique.

Activity: 3 players on the corners, one with the ball. Player with the ball dribbles along the line to the open corner, then makes a diagonal pass to the next player who does the same.

N. KICKING GAME

Participants: 8-20 players, each with a ball.

Space: 8-10 fit well on Micro field; bigger kids need more space (can use full soccer field for full sized team of U-14 and up).

Age Groups: U6+

Focus: Kicking with both feet, moving to the ball, defensive clearances, kicking technique (long kicks), fun.

Activity: Field is divided in half, half kids on each side, everyone with a ball; on coaches command, everyone tries to get the ball out of their area into the other teams-emphasis is on getting to the ball quickly and kicking it with some accuracy and power to the other side. Coaches should be on sidelines to keep balls on field. More skilled players can have requirement that if ball they kicked goes out side of field (instead of over the end), they must retrieve ball and kick it again. Focus on kicking quickly with either foot. More skillful players should also focus on kicking the ball away from the opposite team (while still keeping it in bounds).

O. PASSING WARS

Participants: 10-20 players, each with a ball.

Space: 20 x 20 yd grid (can make it wider for more players).

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Passing accuracy and speed.

Activity: Half the players line up on 2 opposite sides of grid (facing each other). Every other player has a ball. Players are only allowed to move laterally. Each player tries to kick their ball past the other team's players while not allowing the other team to kick any balls past them. Balls must be kicked along the ground. Team with the most balls behind their opponents wins (should play about 60 seconds).

Variation 1-with Defenders: Have players on opposite sides be partners, trying to pass to each other. Other players (or coaches) are in the middle; at first (or for less skilled players), pairs just try to avoid hitting coaches in the middle. For better players, coaches (or other players in the middle) can play more active defense.

Variation 2-Knock down cones: All the balls on one side, tall cones lined up in the middle. One team tries to knock down the cones; coach resets cones while opposite team collects the balls. Then they get a turn. This variation is more appropriate for younger players.

P. CHANNEL GAME

Participants: 12 players, in teams of 3, one ball.

Space: 20 x 15 yd grid, broken into four, 5 yd wide zones, with one team of 3 in each zone.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Passing accuracy and speed.

Activity: Players in zone 1 try to hit teammates in zone 3 with pass; players in team 2 try to intercept; if they do, they try to hit teammates in zone 4 while zone 3 intercepts, etc.

Q. SHADOW GAME

Participants: 6-20 players in pairs, one ball per pair (eventually).

Space: Micro Field for up to 12 players.

Age Groups: U8-U12

Focus: Teaches defensive marking, importance of varying speed and direction on offense.

Activity: One player in each pair is offense, one is defense. For first round, offense jogs at consistent speed and in same direction (until player comes to boundary, then changes direction). Defensive player tries to stay within a yard of offensive player (should be able to reach out and touch player). For 2nd round, offensive player tries to vary speed and direction to throw off marking player, maker tries to stay close. If players are capable, allow offensive player to have a ball to do this activity.

Either on coaches command (or allow offensive player to dictate timing), offensive player tries to escape marking while defensive player tries to tag; see who is first defender to tag offense, or last offensive player untagged.

R. GOA L-SIDE GAME

Participants: 6-20 players on two teams. Players need to know which goal they are defending, though they don't need actual goals.

Space: Micro Field for 6 players, larger field for more.

Age Groups: U8-U10

Focus: Opportunity to teach getting goal side of offensive player, marking most dangerous player first..

Activity: Players jog randomly around on the field, on coaches' command, one team freezes and the other team must get goal side of every player. The check on whether a player is goal side is if the offensive player has a direct shot on goal without the defensive player in the way, the defense is not goal side. This game should only be played 5-10 minutes at the most, and is best done just prior to a scrimmage. Can also point out the importance of getting goal side of the most dangerous attacker first (can be emphasized by having one player always be offense (unbalancing the teams) and making sure the unmarked player is the least dangerous one.

IV. SHOOTING

A. 1-TOUCH SHOOTING DRILL (SIMPLE)

Participants: 3-8 in group (more and the lines start to get too long), one ball per player.

Space: Half a micro field (one end), cones as goals (using cones prevents kids from having to fish the ball out of the net while others are shooting).

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Throw-in technique, 1-touch shooting, shooting accuracy, shooting with proper foot (players should shoot with foot the ball is on, rather than running around the ball to shoot with preferred foot); if the ball is served to players right side, they should shoot with their right foot (and vice-versa). Coach can force players to shoot with a particular foot (giving the weak foot more practice, e.g.) . Emphasis is on good throw (to coaches' hands), no dribble, then quick accurate shot (shot should be 1-touch).

Activity: Players throw ball in to coach who lays the ball off for players to take a one-time shot. Players get their own balls and dribble to back to the line.

Variation 1 (Flat run): Instead of running directly onto goal, players run around a cone near the corner and come across the goal; coach plays a ball on the ground parallel to the goal line as player comes at the coach for player to kick accurately into goal (this shot is more naturally an inside of the foot shot, but don't worry about technique unless it's been taught already). Generally you want them to take a shot with the foot that is farthest away from the goal (shooting across the body), but if you put the ball too close to the goal, they can open their foot and shoot with the near foot.

Variation 2 (Coach Service): Coach serves a ball from end line behind goal, player runs toward rolling ball to take 1-touch shot on goal

Variation 3 (Player Service, 1 v 1): Like previous variation, but instead of coach serving ball, teammate serves ball. After serving the ball, the server chases the ball and becomes a defender, so player receiving the ball must now beat defender in order to shoot (server must make a pass that is strong enough to allow dribbler to get possession before facing the defender).

B. 1-TOUCH SHOOTING DRILL (ADVANCED)

Participants: 5-10 in group, one ball per player.

Space: 20-25 yd area in front of full-sized goal; one cone is placed about a yard inside each post (target area is between the post on the cone inside each side of the goal).

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: 1-touch shooting, shooting accuracy, shooting with proper foot.

Activity: Players are lined up behind a cone 20-25 yds in front of one goal post. Server (usually coach, but can use players) has all the balls on one side of the goal (same side as players). Coach serves a ball on the ground so that the first player can run onto it and strike it between 12 and 18 yards out. Shooter should try to hit the ball between the cone and the post (either side). Emphasis is on accuracy, not power. If a keeper is used, should only run this drill on one side at a time; without a keeper, 2 coaches can use 2 groups on the same goal. This drill should be done at a high pace (as soon as one player shoots, the next ball is served).

Variation 1 (thru pass, straight pass, diagonal run): Players are in same position as previous exercise, but server now has all the balls in front of the goal, about as far out as players are. Player makes a diagonal run towards the far post, server plays a weighted thru pass so that player can strike the ball in the same area as before (though now they are moving with the ball instead of coming at it). Again, the emphasis is on 1-touch shooting and accuracy. It is also important that the player initiate the exercise with the run (as players should indicate they want a pass in a game by making a run to get open). This should be done from both sides of the goal (to practice shooting with each foot).

Variation 2 (diagonal pass, straight run): Similar to variation 1, but now positions of server and players are reversed. Thru pass is now a diagonal pass initiated when the player makes a thru run.

C. DRIBBLE TO SHOT ON GOAL

Participants: 6-12 in group (need six to use both goals, fewer and this can be done half field), one ball per player.

Space: Micro field, cones as goals (using cones prevents kids from having to fish the ball out of the net while others are shooting).

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling control and speed, shooting accuracy, shooting with proper foot.

Activity: Split team into two lines (no more than 6 per line, 4 works well). Each line off the field (over the end line) a bit to the right of goals on

either side of the Micro field. First player in each line dribbles as fast as they can across the field to the opposite goal and takes a shot. (Players need to keep their heads up to avoid hitting player coming the other way). Players should dribble with sufficient control that they never cross an imaginary midline drawn from the center of one goal to the center of the other (a coach standing in the middle of the field can facilitate this).

As soon as one player passes midfield, next player in line should start (they do not need to wait for player in front of them to finish shooting). Players should be in constant motion (very active drill), not standing in line. More skillful players should focus on dribbling at higher speed.

After a few minutes, move both lines to the left side of their respective goals and repeat (changes the angle and should change the foot they shoot with).

Variation 1: Same as original exercise, but add a cone (or a passive defender) around midfield and have player make a move to beat them (move must be done to the outside to avoid interfering with players coming the other way).

Variation 2: Second player (chaser) is added to pressure the player with the ball; if the defender catches the dribbler, the defender can take the shot. This is good to use when players seem to be taking too much time to dribble and shoot (should probably just use one goal because this uses 2x as many players). For younger players, hold defense back so that there are not many challenges for the ball, just the feeling of needing to hurry.

Variation 3-Flat Run: Two lines are on opposite sides of a Micro field, but instead of behind each goal, they are in diagonally opposite corners, facing down opposite touchlines. The first person in each line is about 5 yds down the touchline, in the middle of a cone goal (goal is on the touchline, one post is the corner, the other is 5-10 yds down the touchline), which faces the field. The goals may not be necessary (but could add interest for younger kids). First player in each line has a ball.

They each dribble along the touchline of the micro field until they get almost opposite the other line, then they shoot (pass if not using a goal, but kick is the same) the ball to that other line (and then they go to the back of it). Both lines are doing this at the same time, so it is similar to the simple shooting drills (dribble to shot) but the shot is made perpendicular to the dribble (shooting across the body) instead of straight on.

Variation 4-Ball Exchange (Advanced)(New): Same set-up as dribble to shot (might shorten field to half of micro field), but instead of dribbling

across the field, first player in each line passes the ball to the other line, they trap the ball they receive, dribble it a bit and then exchange balls for a first time (?) shot (1st time shot may be too difficult).

D. TARGET HUNT

Participants: 6-12 players, each with a ball.

Space: No boundaries, micro field works well.

Age Groups: U6-U8

Focus: Dribbling with head up, passing/shooting accuracy.

Activity: Players with ball try to hit moving goal (coaches or players hold a rope or stick between them to make a 6 yd goal and move around the field). This is for younger players, essentially an easier variation of deerhunter.

E. TOP GUN (NEW)

Participants: 8-14 players, one ball per player.

Space: 15 yd x 30 yd field.

Age Groups: U6-U10.

Focus: Shooting accuracy.

Activity: Most players are at one end of the area, 2-4 players with balls line up on either long side of area. Players without balls try to run the length of the area while the players with the balls try to hit them below the waist. If a player is hit, she goes to the side and becomes a shooter.

Variation: Coaches (or players) stand at either end of shooting alley; pass a ball back and forth between them, while players (who are along the sides) try to hit the moving ball with their balls.

F. PLAYER SHOOTING (1 GOAL)

Participants: Groups of 3, one ball per group.

Space: Goal is set up with cones (width depending on player age/size) in space 10 x 25 yds (for each group). ;

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Shooting accuracy, goalkeeping.

Activity: One player in goal, the other players are on in front and in back of the goal. One player takes a shot on the goal from 10-12 yards out (emphasis on accuracy of shot), keeper tries to save it. Player on back side of goal is there to retrieve ball and take next shot (so keeper keeps turning around to face new player). Make sure players shoot from far enough away, or if they get in close (on a rebound, e. g.) they place the ball rather than hitting with power in order to avoid injuring keeper.

Variation 1: Player holds the ball in hand and volleys the ball to goal. Player must be sure to let the ball drop sufficiently to keep the shot low. EMPHASIZE ACCURACY & TECHNIQUE so that keepers' aren't injured. Can also do this exercise with the half-volley.

Variation 2: Player behind goal serves ball in the air to player in front; player in front either volleys, or traps and volleys the ball. Shooting player must be careful not to hit too powerful a shot because shooting is close range. Hit 5-10 shots, then switch roles.

Variation 3: Shorten distance to the goal, have players head to goal. Same set-up as variation 1, with players taking turns.

G. SHOOTING WARS, 4 V 2

Participants: 12 players (on 2 teams) plus 2 keepers. One ball in play, other balls in support.

Space: 30 x 40 yd area, 2 full goals (30 yds apart), keeper in each goal. Need line dividing space in half.

Age Groups: U12+

Focus: Shooting accuracy, getting open for shot, shooting quickly, goalkeeping.

Activity: 4 v 2 in each half of the field. The 4 players are shooting on the goal in the opposite field (which is always at least 15 yds away). The 2 are trying to pressure the 4 shooters. Once the shot is taken, the two can finish any rebounds, but they cannot shoot themselves (though you might try this). The emphasis here is frequent shots, especially back passes to the 4 supporting shooters.

H. BERMUDA TRIANGLE (NEW)

Participants: 9-15 players (on 3 teams) plus 2 keepers. One ball in play, other balls in support (may be able to use more than one ball at a time).

Space: 30 x 40 yd area, triangle of cones (10 yd sides) in the middle; 2 keepers to defend 3 sides of the triangle

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Shooting accuracy, getting open for shot, shooting quickly, goalkeeping.

Activity: The teams try to work to get open for a shot on the goal. The emphasis here is frequent shots. Goalkeepers must shift to cover open sides of triangle. Field players are not allowed to enter triangle.

I. RAPID FIRE (NEW)

Participants: 6-15 players, plus 2 keepers. Each player with a ball.

Space: Half field, full goals at each end.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Dribbling with head up, tactical passing, getting open for shot, goalkeeping.

Activity: Everybody has ball except coach; coach stands in the middle, players dribble around, make eye contact then do a wall pass with the coach to a one time shot (could have 2 coaches or use players in this role).

J. HOT SHOTS (NEW)

Participants: Pairs, one ball per pair.

Space: Players are about 25-30 yds apart, 3-4 yd wide goal (cones or flags) between them.

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Shooting accuracy, trapping.

Activity: Players are on opposite sides of the goal, one ball; try to score by knocking the ball through the goal; opponent must trap it and shoot it back through; failing to do so in 2 touches awards a goal to the opponent (so missing the goal is a point for the opponent, being unable to trap ball shot through goal is point for opponent).

K. INTENSIVE SHOOTING DRILL

Participants: One player at a time, best in groups of 3-5 players (10 balls).

Space: 12 to 18 yds in front of full sized goal (kickboard would be good).

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Shooting technique (shot quickness and repetition).

Activity: Balls are lined up about a yard apart. Player approaches line from left to shoot with right foot (and vice versa), and shoots each ball as quickly as possible. Player should take one step and shoot, next step and shoot, etc.

Variation- Fitness: Instead of shooting the balls that are next to each other, shoot one from one side, then run around cone (placed behind the line of balls) to other extreme and shoot that one, then run back. In this case, balls from the right are shot with the right foot, then the left foot is used to shoot the balls on the left (so the shooter alternates feet).

L. 7 V 7 CENTER GOAL

Participants: 2 teams of 7 players each, 1 goalkeeper, supply of balls.

Space: 40 x 30 yd field, divided in half (20 yd widths), line down the middle, full sized cone/flag goal w/keeper.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Shooting technique (shot quickness and repetition).

Activity: 4 v 3 (in each half of the field), can shoot on either side of cone goal. Ball can be passed to opposite side, but players cannot; no players can go in front of 6 yd box on each side of goal.

M. WEMBLEY

Participants: 3 teams of 3 people, 1 goalkeeper, supply of balls.

Space: 12 to 18 yds in front of full sized goal.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Shooting technique (shot quickness and repetition).

Activity: Teams try to score (so it is 3 v 6, everyone shooting on same goal).

N. WORLD CUP

Participants: Can be done as individuals or w/pairs, up to 10 players and 1 goalkeeper, supply of balls.

Space: 12 to 18 yds in front of full sized goal.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Shooting technique (shot quickness and repetition), fun/entertainment.

Activity: Individuals (or pairs) try to score (1 v 9, or 2 v 8, etc; everyone shooting on same goal). Once someone scores, they (or their team) make it to the next round and come off the field. Can start with more than one ball (though not too many in order to protect the keeper). Winner is the person (or team) in final round that scores first.

V. SCRIMMAGES

A. HOSTAGES

Participants: 10-20 players split into two teams, one ball for every 8-10 players (can vary this). Balls must be distinguishable from balls that are goals (see below).

Space: 30 x 30 yd grid (width can vary, depending on players). 3 balls are set on top of disc cones, about 5 yds apart one each end line (end lines are 30 yds apart; 6 balls on cones total)

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Passing accuracy and speed.

Activity: Each team tries to use one of the game balls to knock the balls

off of the other teams' cones (when they do this, they take the ball and the cone and put it in their line of cones). Players pass, dribble, shoot and defend (no out of bounds, but also no need to go too wide or too deep). Having two balls in play keeps things interesting. Very demanding form of a small-sided game.

B. MICRO SOCCER (3 V 3 OR 4 V 4)

Participants: 6-10 players, 1 ball.

Space: Micro field, small goals at each end.

Age Groups: U6-U10

Focus: Ball control, team play (for older kids), team shape (staying spread out).

Activity: No kick-offs (goal kicks with non-kicking team behind midfield until first pass). Emphasis on team play, accuracy with shots, doing something constructive with ball.

C. SHOOTING SCRIMMAGE 25X30

Participants: 2 teams, 4- 7 players/team, + one goalie per team, one ball.

Space: Small field (30 x 40), full sized goals.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Shooting (getting open, shooting quickly and accurately).

Activity: Conventional scrimmage, except that large goals and short field should encourage shooting often.

D. LINE SOCCER

Participants: 2 teams, 4-7 players/team, 1 ball.

Space: Small field or Micro field, no goals.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Team shape (staying spread out), passing, ball control.

Activity: Player must dribble the ball (under control) over the end line to score a goal. Focus is on passing, spreading out, keeping the ball under control.

E. FOUR GOALS, 2 TEAMS

Participants: 2 teams, 4-8 player s/team, 1 ball.

Age Groups: U12+

Focus: Team shape (staying wide).

Space: Small field, 4 goals (two one each end line, spread as far apart as possible).

Activity: Each team tries to score in two opposite goals. Goal placement

near sidelines encourages players to spread out.

Variation 1-4 Goals/team: Either team can score at any goal.

Variation 2- Corner Goals: Teams defend a goal on each of two adjacent sides (similar to main activity but instead of defending goals along the same line, each team is defending goals that are on sides at a 90° angle from each other; should reward teams for playing the ball wide).

F. FOUR GOALS, 4 TEAMS

Participants: 4 teams, 4-6 players/team, 2 ball. Must have 4 different colored shirts to distinguish the teams.

Space: Small field (30-40 x 30-40 yds), 4 goals (one in each corner of field).

Age Groups: U10-U12

Focus: Dribbling and passing with head up (to avoid non-team mates), fun.

Activity: Teams play diagonally across the field against each other (so there are really 2 games going on simultaneously). Players must avoid the other teams (though only one of the other teams is playing active defense against them).

G. CONVENTIONAL SCRIMMAGE

Participants: 5-11 players/team, 1 ball.

Space: Field size depends on number of players (5 v 5 on small field, 11 v 11 on full-sized field). Either small goals no keepers or larger goals and keepers. To use full-sized goal with no keeper, place cones 1 yd in from posts; to count, ball must pass between cone and post.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Putting it all together. Variations emphasize specific tactics.

Activity: Conventional soccer game (variations show restrictions).

Variation 1-2 Touch: Players are limited to 2-touch (not counting a block, so player has 2 touches to control and pass or shoot). Can limit specific players or entire team.

Variation 2-1 Touch: Same as above, but only 1-touch.

Variation 3- Back passes: Must play every 3rd pass back. Or you must play a back pass before moving across midfield or shooting.

Variation 4- Beat an opponent: Must dribble past one opponent before passing (probably better to give this restriction to specific players).

Variation 5-Wide Channel: Ball must be played wide into channel by touchline (usually 5-10 yds wide) before crossing midfield and/or before shooting. Can have a player in channel (neutral) and not allow anyone

else in channel.

Variation 6-Chip to Hands: Ball can be thrown but cannot pick the ball up off the ground, it must be chipped. Goals can only be scored off of head or volley (or at least cannot be scored by the hands).

H. KEEP AWAY

Participants: 2 teams, 3-11 per team.

Space: Field size depends on number of players, Micro field to full field, no goals.

Age Groups: U8+

Focus: Offense works on getting open, using the whole field, passing the ball quickly (1 or 2 touch). On defense, marking is the main objective but also attacking the ball, anticipating the pass.

Activity: Team scores a goal if they get 5 consecutive passes without other team touching the ball (can raise this number if achieved too easily).

Variation 1-Handball: Players (especially younger ones) may improve positioning play if they are allowed to use their hands to catch and throw the ball (instead of dribbling it and kicking it). Players should have a time limit for holding the ball (if person covering them counts to 3 and they have not released the ball, possession changes hands).

Variation 2-Limited Touch: Limit teams (or individuals on teams) to one or two touches.

I. NUMBERS UP SCRIMMAGE

Participants: 2 Uneven teams, slightly higher than 2:1 ratio, 7 v 3, 9 v 4, etc. 1 ball.

Space: Field size depends on number of players, no goals.

Age Groups: U10+

Focus: Team with numbers up works on team shape, ball control, moving to get open and attacking ball when lost. Team with numbers down works on tactical defense and dribbling against superior numbers when they have the ball.

Activity: Players on numbers up team scores if they get 7 consecutive passes without other team touching the ball. The numbers down team tries to win the ball, and get the ball across an end line (either one) under control (like line soccer). Numbers up team has limited touches (2 or 1-touch, depending on skill levels) while numbers down team has unlimited touches. Numbers up team should focus on staying spread out, moving the ball quickly on offense and attacking quickly and aggressively on

defense. Numbers down team should focus on playing smart defense, anticipating the passes and challenging where possible (but not blindly); on offense, numbers down players should be encouraged to dribble as much as possible (to give them the opportunity to beat multiple opponents).

VI. HEADING

A. BASIC HEADING TECHNIQUE

Participants: Pairs, each pair with a ball.

Space: Each pair needs an area 2 yds x 4 yds.

Age Groups: U10+**Focus:** Learning proper heading technique, attacking the ball, using the forehead and keeping the eyes open and mouth closed.

Activity: One player holds a ball in their hands about one foot in front of their forehead. Through a combination of moving their head forward (mostly) and the ball back towards them, they should strike the ball out of their hands into the hands of their partner. The partner catches it and does the same back.

Variation 1-Sitting: Player sits facing her partner, who has the ball and is standing about a yard in front of sitting player. Partner tosses the ball gently towards sitting partner, who heads the ball back to the standing partner's hands.

Variation 2-Sit-up: Like variation above, but instead of starting in the sitting position, player who will head the ball begins by lying down. Player on the ground does a sit-up, while partner tosses gentle ball for them to sit through (they use the power of their sit-up to drive the ball forward).

This requires a good toss from the partner, but clearly demonstrates how a player can achieve power on the header by moving from the abdomen.

Variation 3-Kneeling/Launch: Heading player starts on her knees, heads tossed ball back. As players progress, player on her knees should be served a lower ball and should launch herself at it (diving header from the kneeling position).

Variation 4-Standing: Heading player stands with one foot in front of the other, facing the server. Server tosses ball that header attacks and drives back to the server's hands. This should be a strong, accurate header, with emphasis on using the upper body as a lever arm with the pivot point being the waist (not the neck or shoulders).