

Rule No. 1 and one to remember is:
That Football is Played Mainly with the Brain.

Concentration is the key to success - one momentary lapse of concentration can cost you a victory - so remember to switch on at the start of the match and keep it switched on - for the full 90 minutes.

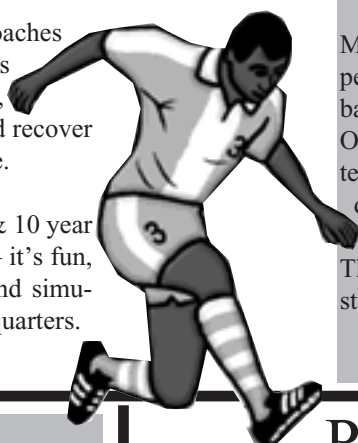
CONTROL

HURDLES

This drill develops ball control and dribbling. You need an even number of pylons and corresponding sticks. Place two pylons a two feet apart and place the stick across the top to create a hurdle. Ensure there is enough room under the stick for the ball to roll. Put at least four hurdles in

a row. Each player approaches the hurdle and must pass the ball under the hurdle, then jump the hurdle and recover the ball on the other side.

I used with a team of 9 & 10 year olds and they loved it — it's fun, develops ball control, and simulates dribbling in close quarters.



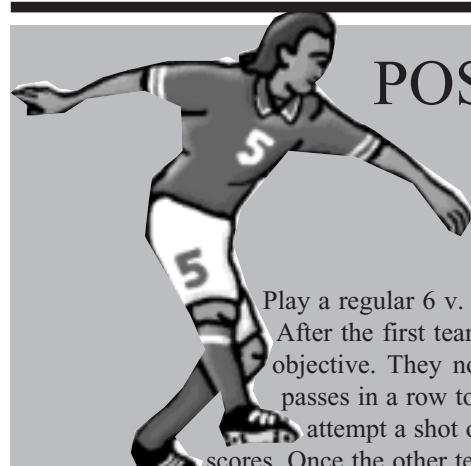
COACH CURLYS CORNER

STEAL THE BONE

Make a box with cones and split the players into two teams of equal numbers (at least 3 per team). You need one ball less than the number on each team (i.e., 3 per team = 2 balls, 4 per team = 3 balls, etc.)

One team starts with the balls. Those who have a ball try to control it while the other team is trying to steal it. When one player loses a ball they try to steal it back. They can dribble or pass to their extra player. When you blow the whistle (usually after one minute), see which team controls the most balls.

This stresses teamwork, decision making, when to pass, when to dribble, and when to steal.



POSSESSION VS. SCORE

Play a regular 6 v. 6 game with one variation. After the first team scores, they change their objective. They now try to string together 7 passes in a row to get a 'goal.' They can not attempt a shot on goal until the other team scores. Once the other team does score a goal, both

teams start the cycle over again from the beginning.

Coach's emphasis points:

-Work on general attacking principles of play: possession, team shape, improvisation, support, etc.

-Make sure that the keeper that was scored on joins the team in attack and defends as a 'field player.' Because the other team now scores with 7 passes, the keeper does not need to worry about defending the goal. This will make the team trying to maintain possession work harder as they will have to deal with the extra defender.

Category: Control

GATES

The Game

* Two players per gate. The gates are approximately two steps apart. One ball per group. First player must play the ball on the ground through the gate to second player. Second player must receive and play back through the gate within two touches. The game continues until players can not get ball back through the gate on the ground within two touches.

Coaching Points

* Player receiving the ball should get in path of ball before it arrives.

* First touch should help player to get a good kick back through the gate.

* Keep score and rotate stations.

* Vary the serve to start the game:

Long balls, short balls, inside of foot, instep, outside of foot, weak foot only, etc.

* Players should receive with one foot, play back with the other.



The Game

Same space as in previous activity. Divide the group into four teams. Each team sets up three or four cones to protect on one side of the space. Each player must have a ball. Group leader can choose a group captain. Captain must organize the group; which players will defend and/or attack. On command, the game begins with players defending their cones or attacking the other team's cones, while controlling their own soccer ball. When your cones are knocked down, your team can no longer attack. The team with the last standing cone is the winner.

PROTECT THE CONE - GROUP

Coaching Points

* Allow players to organize themselves with as little interference from group leader as possible. This will be a valuable experience for when they are playing in an organized soccer game.

* Watch which players have the most success at organizing their group. But make sure all get plenty of opportunities to be the leader.

* Watch the group dynamics and switch players so all get to work together.



BOW-TIE

Even numbers are needed.

Set up the players in couples. Put out 4 cones in a straight line with a normal passing distance between the middle two, and place the other two on either side of the others about 10 feet away. The players stand on the two inside cones and pass the ball to each other. In receiving a pass, the player uses the outside of one foot to direct the ball behind them and they dribble the ball around the outside cone and back to the inside cone, where they pass the ball.

VOLLEYBALL

The Game

* Play starts with an underhanded toss to the opponent. You may not "serve to win". The purpose of the serve is to put the ball in play.

* Once served, the ball is allowed to bounce once on the other side at any time during the series.

* The receiving team is allowed to play the ball up to three times before their return. However, one player may not touch the ball twice in a row. (Just like real volleyball)

* Play continues until the ball lands outside of the grid or it touches the ground more than once.

* The game is scored like volleyball with teams only scoring points on their own serve.

Coaching Points

* Receiving technique volleys, heading.

* Players must work together.

Variations

* For players whose skills are not that developed, allow the ball to bounce once after each touch is made.

* Allow 2 points for a winner made with the head.

* Demand that both players must touch the ball before it goes back over the net.

