

Soccer Drills Handbook

Warm Ups

Close Control:

Players dribble around a grid using all surfaces of their foot. The ball needs to be kept inside the grid, and players should not bump into any other player. When the coach shouts "Freeze", the players should stop with their foot on the ball. The players should always try to be in an open space away from other players when they freeze. No walking is allowed at any point during the practice. Players should maintain a light jog and take gentle touches on the ball. **Progressions:** As your players get better call out simple instructions for them as they dribble such as: left; right; turn; slow; fast; outside of foot; inside of foot; backwards; sideways etc.

Running with the Ball:

Place an equal number of players at the corners of a 20 yard square. The first person in each line sprints to the middle then grabs a ball and dribbles it back to their corner. The second person then goes, then the third etc. From the second person on the players can take a ball either from the middle or from one of the other corners (opposing players may not shield the ball). Only one person per line can be away from the corner at any one time. Also, a player away from the corner can only have one ball in their possession. The first team to get **THREE** balls in their corner wins. While this might seem like a very simple game, you will see right away that there is a lot of touches on the ball, movement and communication (the players who are not running are telling their teammate where to get the ball from in order not to allow another group to get three balls in their corner).

Progressions: Add restrictions to the practice such as left foot only, outside of the foot only, having to touch the on every step etc.

Passing:

The players spread out in half a field, only half of the group has a ball. The players must keep moving throughout the exercise. The players with the ball dribble and look for a free player to pass to. They must call out the player's name before passing. **Progressions:** Give instructions to vary the length of the pass and the number of touches that a player can use. Give instructions to the receiver - control the ball to one side with the first touch, play return passes first time if the ball is rolling smoothly etc.

Shielding:

The players dribble around a 30 yard square grid. Two players do not have a ball and they try to kick the other player's ball out of the grid. If a player's ball gets kicked out of the grid, they go and fetch it and then re-enter the grid. Change defenders every 30 seconds - see who can kick the most balls out of the grid in the allotted time.

Defending:

In a 25 yard grid, divide the group into ten attacking players and at least two defenders. The two defenders begin by running up to an attacker closing them down and putting them under high pressure for 5 seconds. The goal is to force the attacker to miss control the ball however the defender may not steal the ball at this point. After counting to 5 seconds they head off and find another attacker. **Progressions:** Now the defenders are allowed to win possession of the ball by closing down on the ball carrier. If a player loses the ball they

become a defender and must go in search of another player. Emphasize winning the ball as opposed to kicking the ball out of the grid.

Teamwork: Two equal teams play across the width of the field. The object is to get the ball beyond the opponents' end line. The ball is passed from hand to hand, however players are not allowed to run when they have possession of the ball. Each time a player receives a pass their teammates should move into supporting positions which enable the team to move forward. The defending team is allowed to intercept a pass; however they are not permitted to take the ball away from a stationary player. **Progressions:** Instead of passing a ball across the end line you can say only a one-touch, redirect or a header across the end line counts as a goal.

Communication:

This is a good exercise to get attention of a lively group. All of the players jog around a 30 yard square grid without soccer balls. The coach calls out a number, immediately the players must assemble themselves into groups of that number of players. Players have to respond, communicate and move quickly to avoid being left out.

Possession:

Begin with a simple game of tag. Two players each hold a colored penny. These two players are "it" and attempt to tag the other players who are running around a 30 yard square. If either of the two "it" players tags another player, the player who was tagged becomes it. This should get all the players moving and warmed up. **Progressions:** Next add two balls into the grid. These balls are carried by any two players. The players, who have possession of a ball, can't be tagged. The "it" players can't steal the ball but rather they try to tag a player who doesn't have a ball. This is where the passing, receiving, vision and communication come into play. If a player is being chased and is about to be tagged, a teammate in possession should throw the ball to them in order to give them safety. Now try to have the players dribble the ball and pass with the inside of their feet to players who are being chased.

Skill Station:

Divide the players into four groups and have each group work in the corner of a 30 yard square. The group is assigned a different skill such as: passing, heading, throw ins, dribbling, side volleys, etc. The players in each group pair up, one feeder and one worker. They will work on their specific skill for 30 seconds (time may vary per age level) and then swap roles. At the end of one minute the coach call "change" and the four groups run clockwise to the next station. **Progressions:** Vary both the type of skills and the intensity levels. If competitive teams wish to use this for conditioning, build in 30 second physical activities between the one minute skill stations, such as Sprints around the grid, Jumping Jacks, Bunny Jumps, Sit ups. Etc.

Passing & Control

Pivot Passing:

Players are divided into two circles, with one player positioned in the middle of each circle. The players on the outside pass to the middleman, who must redirect the pass with the first touch and pass to an open player with the second. Each player works for 30 seconds before rotating with a teammate.

Target Passing:

Set up a 30 yard square grid with a number of 2 yard wide gates marked out with cones. Divide the players into groups of two with one ball per pair. Each pair scores a goal by

passing the ball to each other through a gate. The object of the exercise is to see how many goals the players can score during a specific time period. The players may not score through the same gate twice in succession. **Progressions:** Make the players control to one side using their first touch. Add conditions on the players to make the exercise more challenging. For example, restrict the players to using only their left foot.

Triangle Turning:

The group works in a circle 20 yards in diameter. Three players have soccer balls and begin by dribbling towards the three cones in the center of the circle. The dribblers must exit the triangle through a different side to the one they came in through. Once they exit the triangle they look up and make a pass to a teammate on the perimeter.

Teach Players to Spread Out & Not Bunch Up Soccer Drill

Purpose:

Teaches players how to spread out from a pack after gaining control of the ball in a Game Realistic situation. The purpose is to stop players from Bunching Up when a teammate has the ball and spread out to Create Width and Space so they can attack. This starts to teach Movement off the Ball and **Team Attacking**.

Teaches:

1. Your players to Spread Out instead of bunching up when they attack, which will develop “width” and create space. By teaching this, you are starting to teach “**Movement off the Ball**” and **Team Attacking**.
2. “Second Attackers” (those who aren’t “onball”) should stay a short pass away (about 5 to 10 of your steps, depending on the age of your players) and if they are on a breakaway the “Second Attackers” should stay 3 steps behind the First Attacker (the onball attacker) so they aren’t called offside.

Things Needed:

1. Several Balls
2. A goal or cones to make a goal (or goals if you teach more than one group at once).
3. For young ages, some sort of “Treasure” makes it more fun. This can be a patch or something else.
4. For efficiency, teach 2 or 3 groups at once. You will need a coach or parent for each group. Depending on how many players you have, some might have to wait their turn.

Summary:

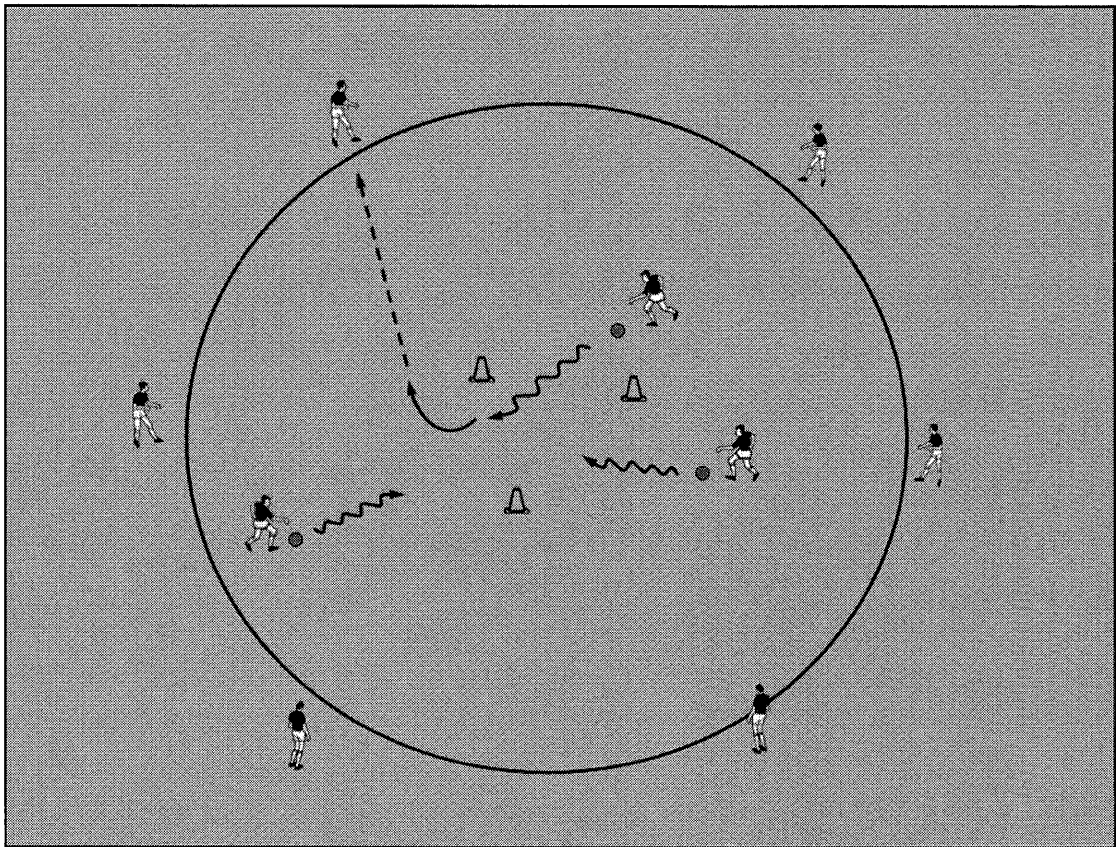
- Ages 7-12
 - 3 or 4 players will be on “Offense” and attack a “Goal”
 - One coach will chase the offense
1. Have a “Chaser” (the Coach or an assistant) who chases the group of attackers to create some pressure and watches to be sure they aren’t Bunching Up.
 2. The Coach gives each player a “treasure”. This can be anything they can carry in their hand (like a patch) or something they tuck in their shorts. The Treasure is something they can keep if they do good, but they lose it if they Bunch Up. They might have to do this game without Bunching Up 3 times to earn the Treasure.

3. Ideally, split into 2 or 3 groups so lines are minimized and 2 or 3 attacks are occurring at the same time (you will need an Assistant or parent to coach each group, and a "Goal" or a cone goal for each group).

How the Game is Played:

1. Put a ball about 20 steps out from the "Goal" and spread 3 or 4 players around the ball so each one is 4 or 5 steps from the ball. The Coach explains the "Rules" to the players and gives them each a "Treasure". The Coach explains that he will yell "Go" and they will all run to the ball, but the one who gets there first should get the ball and dribble toward the goal, and the others should Spread Out and be "helpers" for the player with the ball, and NOT try to steal the ball from their teammate who has the ball (if your players are young, try to use words they will understand). If the players without the ball get too close to the player with the ball (the Dribbler) when they are running toward the goal, the Coach will call the names of the players who are too close to the player with the ball and they will lose their Treasure (they have to give it back to the Coach). The player with the ball is called the "First Attacker" and the other players should run with the First Attacker and be "Second Attackers" and in position for a pass or a rebound.
2. The Coach is behind the players (the players are between the Coach and the Goal) and yells "Go Go Go" to create some pressure and so the players who are circled around the ball know when to run to the ball.
3. The players must decide quickly who will get the ball. They will then have to spread out and run toward the "Goal" (a real goal or cones). A passive "defender" who is either a parent, an assistant or a Cone is in front of the "Goal". The onball player has a choice to either pass or dribble around the Defender directly to the goal and when close can shoot.
4. The Coach chases the players to create pressure and to watch them to be sure they aren't Bunching Up.
5. If the players get too close to the Dribbler, the Chasing Coach will yell the names of the player or players who need to Spread Out. For example, if "John and Sam" are Bunching Up too close to the Dribbler, he will yell "John and Sam, Spread Out". If John and /or Sam spread out, they get to keep their Treasure, but if they don't, they have to give their Treasure back to the Coach and the Coach explains why they lost their Treasure. (For older ages you might not need a Treasure).

Dribbling & Turning



Triangle Turning

Organization:

The group works in a circle 20 yards in diameter. Three players have soccer balls and begin by dribbling towards the three cones in the center of the circle. The dribblers must exit the triangle through a different side to the one that they came in through. Once they exit the triangle they look up and make a pass to a teammate on the perimeter.

Progressions:

- Add further restrictions so that the players are forced to experiment with their own ideas:
- Players must enter the triangle forwards but leave backwards
- Players must enter dribbling with their right foot and exit using their left
- Players must dribble completely around two cones

Coaching Points:

- Use gentle touches with the inside, outside and top of the foot
- Keep the knees slightly bent
- Get your head up to look for other players dribbling close to you