



Youth Soccer Coaching Guide

3rd Grade – 6th Grade

Coaching Tips:

There are some important tips that will make your first time as a soccer coach a pleasant one for players, parents, and most of all you.

1. **Have FUN!** Have a good time and make it FUN for the players. A coach's interaction with the players should always be positive and the more the coach engages with the kids, the more they will respond.
2. **Be FAIR.** Being fair is very important too. It is a coach's job to make sure each player has equal playing time, make sure players play each position, and be sure to include everyone.
3. **Be POSITIVE.** Being positive includes every interaction with players, parents, officials, and other coaches. It's always good to set this standard at the beginning of the year so that your parents and players are all on the same wave length.
4. **Ask for Parent Involvement.** At the beginning of the year, ask for parent assistance during practice. This will help get parents involved with their child's play and will help you reduce the player/coach ratio. This is especially helpful in younger players. For young players, try to keep the ratio about 4 kids to each coach. As the kids get older, the ratio can grow as much as 8 kids for each coach. This ratio will depend greatly on your kid's age and skill.
5. **Focus on TEAMWORK.** As a coach, you often will have one or two star players on your team. It is important to grow these players and make them even stronger players; however, it is important to focus on teamwork to get the work done.
6. **Set GROUND RULES.** Before the season starts, meet with the team and parents and establish the ground rules. You will want to cover things such as:
 - i. sideline behavior – make sure they know they are welcome to cheer, but it is up to the coach and the assistant to do the coaching
 - ii. have players arrive to practice and games on time
 - iii. notify the coach if absent or late to game or practice
 - iv. players are to sit with the team while not in the game
7. **Know what to practice.** As a new coach, it is hard to come up with games that are appropriate for that level of player. Make sure you are playing small-sided games with younger kids which will focus on game-like situations. Also, make sure you prepare properly and have everything you need to coach soccer. For example, cones, goals, balls etc.

For more practice ideas, visit <https://www.soccerxpert.com/drills>.



Zig-Zag Dribbling Drill

The Zig-Zag soccer dribbling drill focuses on dribbling with speed with the inside, the outside, and the bottom of the foot.

Drill Setup

Set up cones about 5 yards apart in a zig-zag pattern.

The length of the zig-zag should stretch approximately 20 yards in length.

Players line up at the last cone with a ball each.

Drill Instructions

The first player in line dribbles around the outside of the cones in a zig-zag pattern. When the dribbling player reaches the end, they sprint the zig-zag course's distance and return to the line. Let the players go through the zig-zag obstacle course a few times to get comfortable with their touch. Now, as the players are moving to their right side, they must dribble normally. However, as the players move to the left side, they must roll the ball with the right foot's sole.

Change the pattern to move normally when moving to the left, but roll the ball with their left foot's sole as they move to the right.

Drill Variations

- Additional dribbling skills can be added such as:

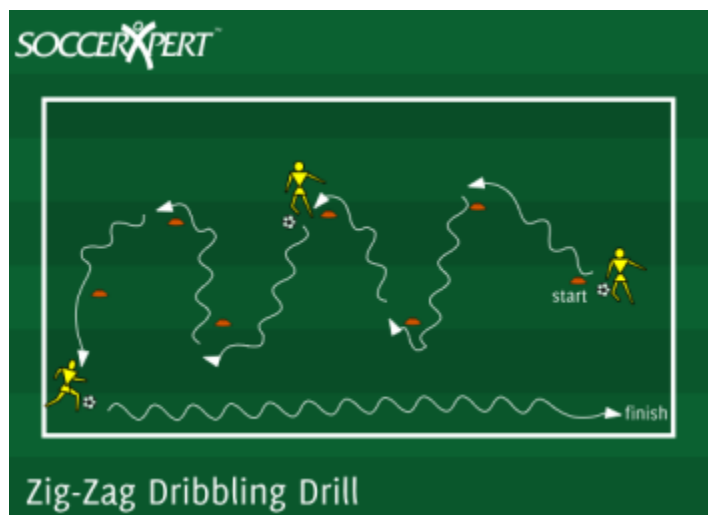
- Dribbling in a complete circle around each cone
- Moving the ball through the pattern with the soul of the foot only.

Drill Coaching Points

- Controlled touches near the dribbling player.
- Dribbling with the outside of the foot, inside of the foot, and soul of the foot
- Dribbling with speed

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling





Catch Me If You Can

The soccer dribbling drill is a fun and competitive exercise that focuses on dribbling with speed.

Drill Setup

Create a 10 X 10-yard grid.

Start a player on two diagonal corners of the grid.

Each of the two players has a ball.

Drill Instructions

As the coach yells, "GO," players must dribble around the outside of the grid in an attempt to catch their partner. As the coach yells, "STOP," the players must stop the ball. As the coach yells, "TURN," the players must switch the direction around the grid.

Drill Variations

- Add commands such as:

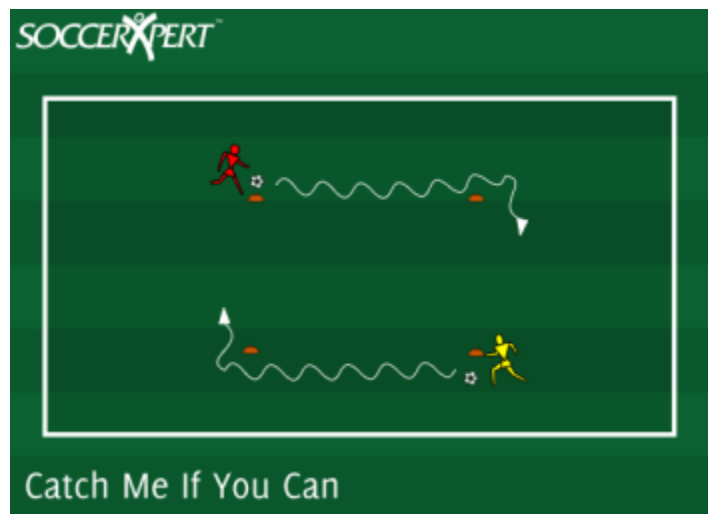
- "LEFT" to use the left foot only
- "RIGHT" to use the right foot only
- "BOTTOM" to use the bottom of the foot only

Drill Coaching Points

- Close Control
- Speed with the ball
- Keep the ball close
- Sharp touches

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling





Traffic Jam Dribbling Game

This game is just out right fun! The kids will have a blast playing this game. This drill is ideal for kids who know how to dribble but just need to learn to get their heads up and dribble under the pressures of mere congestion.

Drill Setup

Create a grid approximately 30X30 yards.

Randomly place tall cones and training sticks (flags will work as well) in the middle of the grid.

Split the group into four even teams.

Each team starts on the corners of the grid with one ball per group.

Drill Instructions

On the coach's command, the first player from each line will race through the "Traffic Jam" (training sticks and cones) in attempt to not hit a stick, cone, or another player. Once the player makes it through the traffic jam, instruct them to dribble with speed to the line they are facing and pass the ball to the first player in line. That player should immediately head towards the traffic jam with speed in an attempt to get through the traffic jam first. At first, don't keep score, merely let the players enjoy the close calls before playing the game. After 8-10 minutes, combine the two teams that are facing each other into one team. Next, have the players race through the traffic jam to the cone on the opposite side of the grid, around that cone and back through the traffic jam.

As each player finishes the race, they must sit down to signify to the group that they have completed the race. The team that has all the players sitting down first wins the game.

Drill Variations

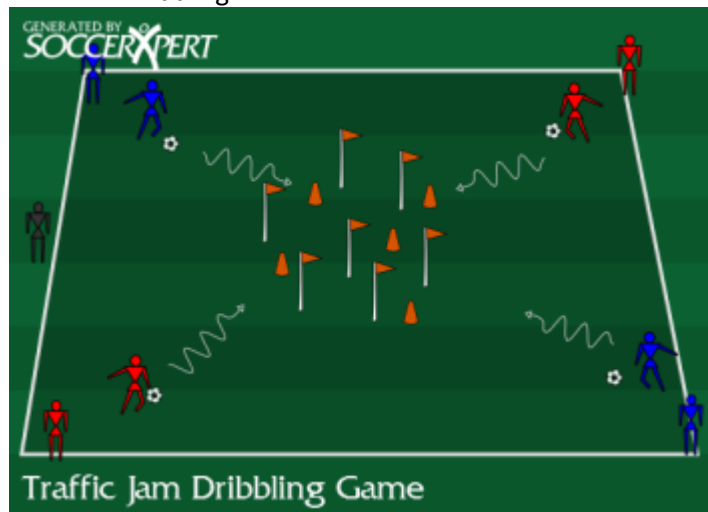
- For younger players it might be best to start with one or two players entering the traffic jam at a time.

Drill Coaching Points

- Since all 4 players should be entering the center area at the same time make sure players are looking ahead of them with their head up.
- Remind players to keep the ball close when entering the traffic area.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling





Dribbling at the Cone

The Dribbling at the Cone youth soccer dribbling drill is a good soccer dribbling drill for young soccer players to learn to dribble without opposition. It is a fabulous drill to introduce different fakes and fakes to gain an edge on the defender.

Drill Setup

Create a grid that is 20X10 yards.

Place a 9" cone in the middle of the grid.

Two players align themselves on one sideline with a ball.

The other player should align themselves on the other sidelines with the cone in the middle.

Drill Instructions

The first person in the group of 2 will start with the ball. This player will dribble at the cone, change the direction of the ball as he/she makes a move (fake) around the cone. After moving past the cone, the player should increase his speed to finish at the other side of the grid. He/she then lays the ball off to the other player who performs the same fake on the cone. Play continues until the coach introduces a new move.

Drill Variations

- Here are some moves to perform are:
 - the scissors
 - the swerve
 - hard step, drop shoulder and change direction

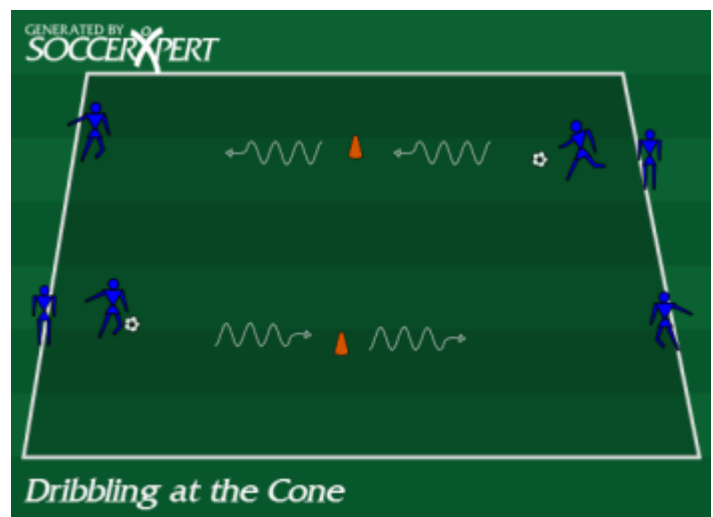
- Replace the cone with a defender.

Drill Coaching Points

- Make sure the players move towards the cone with the ball under total control.
- Make sure there is a good change of direction at the cone.
- Make sure the player sells the move to the cone.
- After passing the cone, make sure the player has a burst of speed.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling
- Attacking





Soccer Pass and Move Drill

This soccer passing drill is a great drill to teach players movement, awareness, accuracy, timing, first touch and passing with all parts of the foot. This exercise is a good passing and moving soccer drill.

Drill Setup

Use the center circle, or create a circle with cones the size of the center circle.

Start with six players in blue and six players in red.

The red players start outside the circle. The blue players start inside the circle with a ball each.

Drill Instructions

The blue players inside the grid pass to an outside player and receive the ball back from the outside player and move across the circle to pass to another outer player. Players must go through the center of the circle but avoid other players. Players should pass and move. Change the groups every 5 minutes.

Drill Variations

- Split into 3 groups of 4 players each with different color bibs.
- The new group will become passive defenders who are responsible for marking the 4 attacking players inside the circle.
- The remaining 4 players spread out on the outer side of the circle.
- The attacking team will only play with 2 balls.
- The ball must be played in by one attacker and received by a different attacker on the same team.

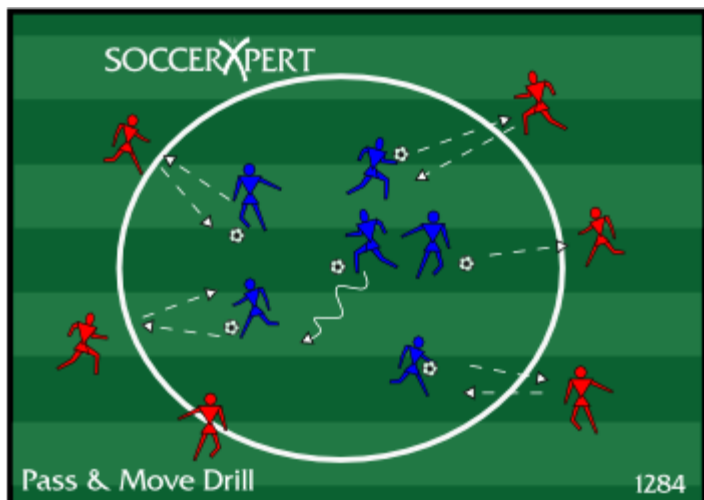
- Remind players to accelerate with power after receiving the pass.
- Players should be aware of their surroundings and continue to communicate with their teammates.
- Pass and move

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Passing
- Receiving

Drill Coaching Points

- Make sure the players put the proper weight, accuracy, and timing of each pass.
- Players should control the ball into space with their first touch.
- Players should use all foot surfaces.
- Players should be reminded to keep the ball moving at all times.





Combination Play

This soccer passing drill focuses on improving 1-2 combination play. This passing combination drill encourages good movement off the ball.

Drill Setup

Create a grid that is approximately 20 X 25 yards.

Set one player on three of the corner cones (B, C, and D).

The remaining players create a small line on the 4th cone (A).

The player at the beginning of the line starts with the ball.

Start with one ball in the beginning.

Drill Instructions

Player A playing a long ball into Player B and follows his pass. Player B lays the ball off back to player A and player B sprints around his cone towards player C. Player A plays a ball to player C who plays the ball into the run of player B and C sprints around the cone. Player B plays a long ball to player D, player D plays a ball into the run of player C, and the movement continues.

Drill Variations

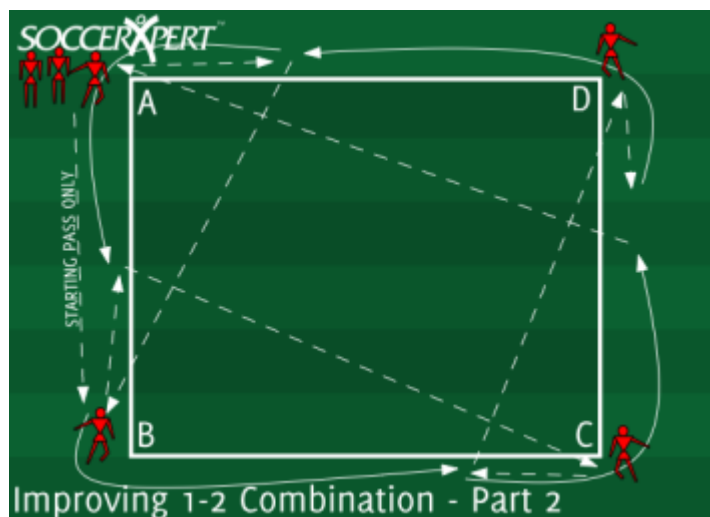
- Add a second ball. Start with a ball at two opposite corners of the grid (A and C).
- Change the direction of the play.

Drill Coaching Points

- Focus on accurate passing with good pace on the ball.
- Focus on good communication among players.
- Focus on good movement before and after the pass.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Passing
- Receiving





The Passing Name Game

The objective of this soccer drill is to help young players improve the speed of play by thinking a step-ahead of the play.

Drill Setup

Form a circle with each of the players on your team.

Start with one ball.

Drill Instructions

To play the name game, the player with the ball passes to a player. Before the receiving player receives the pass, they must yell the name of the next player in which they are going to pass. Upon the next player receiving the ball, they must yell the name of the next player in which they are going to pass.

This is designed to make the players think a step ahead of the play.

Make sure that each player has at least two touches on the ball; one touch to receive the pass, and the other touch to make the pass.

Encourage players not to make a pass back to the player they received the pass from, and to pass to different people each time.

Drill Variations

- Create a grid and play the same game as above except players are free to move about the grid.

- Add a second ball.

Drill Coaching Points

- Remind players to be thinking ahead to determine who they want to pass.

- Good first touch

- Quality passes

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Passing -Receiving





Circle Keep-Away Passing Game

This keep-away game is a fun passing exercise for younger players that focuses on the passing game while playing keep away.

Drill Setup

With cones, mark off a circle with a 10-yard diameter.

Designate two defenders in the middle of the circle holding a yellow pinny in their hands.

Have the remaining players position themselves just inside the circle with one ball.

Drill Instructions

The two players in the middle will act as defenders while the rest of the circle will play keep away from these defenders. Start with the first pass being free. The attacking players can move about the circle in an attempt to maintain possession and string together passes. As a defender win the ball, they switch places with the offensive player that lost the ball to the defender. In this case, the defender drops the yellow pinny and join the attackers. The new defender grabs the yellow pinny and holds it in their hand.

If the pass goes outside of the circle, the player that made the bad pass, or the player that did not properly trap the ball will take the place of the defender that has been in the middle the longest.

If the attacking players put together ten passes, the defenders do a quick lap around the circle. The lap of shame, as we call it.

Drill Variations

- Change the size of the circle to fit your player's age and skill level. Make the grid smaller to make the game harder for the attackers to keep possession, or make the grid larger to make the game a bit easier for the passers.

- Limit the number of touches.

Drill Coaching Points

- Clean, crisp passes.
- Good first-touch into space or towards the next pass.
- Good communication.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Passing
- Receiving
- Possession
- Defending





The Numbers Game - 1v1 Competition

This 1v1 soccer drill focuses on 1v1 situations for younger players and works dribbling, shooting, shielding, turning and beating an opponent.

Drill Setup

Create a small 1v1 field approximately 15X20 with two small goals on each end line.

Split the group into two even teams and assign a number to each player in each team. For instance, if you have 5 players in each team, number off 1-5 in each team.

One group wears an alternate jersey.

Drill Instructions

The coach plays a ball into the area and calls out a number. Those players assigned to that number sprint onto the field and play a 1v1. The game continues until a team scores a goal or the ball goes out of bounds.

Drill Variations

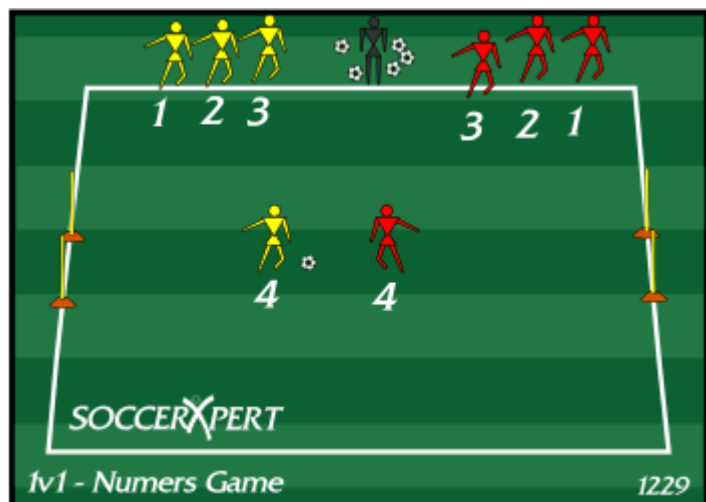
- Have more than one 1v1 going at the same time.
- Call out two or more numbers to create a 2v2 or 3v3.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling
- Receiving
- Defending
- Attacking
- Shooting

Drill Coaching Points

- Encourage players to take on their opponent.
- Encourage players to shoot when they have a chance of a goal.
- Instruct the players to protect the ball when necessary.





2v2 or 1v1 - Get Outta Here

This drill is a very fast paced 1v1 or 2v2 game that focuses on aspects of the small sided game such as dribbling, passing, and scoring.

Drill Setup

Set up a 25 x 15-yard grid. You can adjust the size of the field based on the skill level of the players.

Place training sticks or a small goal at each end.

Drill Instructions

Players line up on each side. The coach stands on the other sidelines with a supply of ball. The coach plays a ball in the grid, and the first person from each line plays 1v1.

If a player scores, they stay on, and the other person leaves.

If the ball goes out of bounds, both players are "outta there," and a player from each team quickly enters the grid.

A ball is immediately played back into the game.

This is a very fast-paced game.

Drill Variations

- Increase the field and progressing to the 2v2 then a 3v3.

- Limit touches during the 2v2 or 3v3 game to encourage passing.

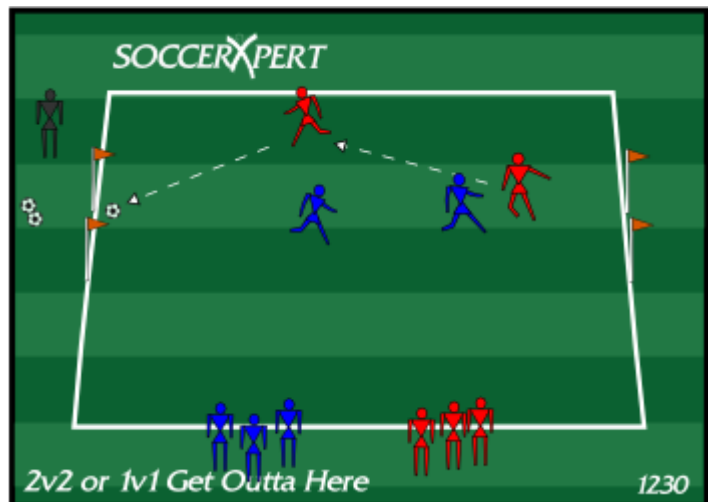
- Enforce limitations such as beating a player before passing to encourage players taking on defenders.

Drill Coaching Points

- Promote good small group passing, early support, good skills to beat defenders and taking shots.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling
- Possession
- Attacking
- Receiving
- Defending





Soccer End Zone Game

The soccer end zone game is a great soccer drill that will help coaches focus on all aspects of attacking and defending in soccer. With incorporating end zones into the game, it gives players a chance to learn to attack space behind the defense and allows defenders to learn how to deny space behind them.

Drill Setup

Create a 50X30 yard grid.

Create a 5-yard end zones on each end of the field.

Split the team into 2 evenly matched teams

Drill Instructions

A team scores a goal by getting the ball from one end zone (by passing or dribbling into the zone) and immediately attacking the end zone and gaining possession in the end zone on the opposite end. If the opposing team wins the ball before successfully gaining possession in both end zones, no point should be awarded.

Drill Variations

- Limit the number of touches.

Drill Coaching Points

- Focus on fundamental passing, moving, support.
- Focus on basic defending and attacking skills.
- Focus on quick counter-attacks.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling
- Receiving
- Defending
- Passing
- Possession
- Attacking





World Cup Soccer Drill

The World Cup Soccer Drill is a great shooting game for kids of all ages. The World Cup Soccer game is a great drill to work on game-like situations while numbers down.

Drill Setup

Inside the penalty box, set up four groups of three players in pennies.

Set your goalkeeper in a full-size goal.

The coach should have a supply of soccer balls nearby.

Drill Instructions

The World Cup game starts when the coach serves a ball into the area. Each team plays at the same time against the other groups. The team to score sits out for the remainder of that round and advances to the next round. The last team to score in each round is out of the World Cup tournament.

- World Cup Round 1:
 - 3v9
 - 3v6
 - 3v3
 - The last team to score is out.
- World Cup Round 2:
 - 3v6
 - 3v3
 - The last team to score is out.
- World Cup Final:
 - 3v3

The first team to score two goals wins the World Cup.

Drill Coaching Points

- Good teamwork
- Quick passes
- Take shots/chances

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- Dribbling
- Receiving
- Possession
- Attacking
- Passing
- Crossing
- Defending
- Shooting





7v7 Scrimmage

A 7v7 scrimmage is a great way to end most of your training sessions. The 7 vs 7 allows players to focus on team tactics in realistic training situations and respond to problems presented in the full-sided game.

Drill Setup

Create a field approximately 60 X 40 yards.

Two full-size goals on each end-line.

Split the teams evenly into 7 vs 7. Six field players per team and a goalkeeper in each goal.

For younger players with fewer field players, reduce the size of the field and number of players.

Drill Instructions

Play a small sided game with match conditions. All game rules apply. Throw ins, corner kicks, goal kicks, etc.

Drill Variations

- Add minor restrictions to focus on a specific topic.

Drill Coaching Points

- Let the game be the teacher.
- Correct team shape.
- Speed of play.

Soccer Drill Skill Focus

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| - Dribbling | - Passing |
| - Receiving | - Crossing |
| - Possession | - Defending |
| - Attacking | - Shooting |

