

Warm-up & Practice Ideas

Body Part Dribble (3-5 minutes): Each player has a ball in a grid and dribbles it around with his/her feet. After 20 seconds or so, the coach calls out a part of their body, i.e. “hand”, and the players have to stop their ball with their hand as quickly as possible. Play a few times, having fun using ideas such as “ear, “nose, “elbow” or “knee”. Then advance the game where the coach instead of calling out a body part, will simply point to it on their body. The kids are therefore taught in a fun way to look up each time they touch the ball. Coach can move around then kids get used to looking up. You can challenge kids to dribble faster!

Red Light Green Light (3-5 minutes): Each player will have a ball and be lined up at a starting point. When you (the coach) calls “green light” the kids make the sound of a car revving up and they move forward dribbling their ball. When you call “red Light” they must stop (making the noise of screeching brakes) while keeping their ball under control. You can add “yellow light” which means they must walk. If you call out “red light” twice in a row – most of your kids will move, you can joke about them crashing!

Blob/Link Tag (3-5 minutes): All the players have a ball in a grid and coach is it. The coach tries to tag – or knock a players ball out of the grid (usually get your best dribbler first) the two will then link arms or hold hands and then try to tag someone else’s ball. The game continues until you have 6 people linked.

Magic Goals (3-5 minutes): each player starts in an area with a ball. The coach and assistant hold up one end each of a bright t-shirt twisted up and ask the kids what it looks like. Hopefully one of the parents will call it a goal and then play with them having to kick their ball through the goal. They cannot run through or under the goal or they will lose a point. The goal can then walk around the area!

Everybody’s it (3 minutes): Every player starts with a ball in a grid. On command they can hunt each other down and if they can touch their ball against somebody else’s then they score a point. This teaches them to be creative, fake to get a view of someone else’s ball or in turn shield their own ball from attack!

Crab Soccer (3-5 minutes): Divide the kids into 2 teams of 3-4 players. Set up a grid with a goal at one end. Have one team (each player with a ball) stand on the opposite end line from the goal and get them to dribble around the other team (who is down on hands and feet like a crab with bottoms of the floor). If a player scores, have them pick the ball up run back to start line and try again switch teams after 1-2 minutes. Each team should be able to score a lot creating a lot of fun and success.

Keep away from Coach (3 minutes): Show players how to turn with the ball (as simple as turning in a tight small circle maneuvering the ball with the inside of the right foot) keeping the ball close to their feet. Coach jogs around and says they will try and tag kids balls (but don’t

really). Concentrate on having kids keeping the ball close to their feet but turning away from the coach (getting their body in between opponent and ball as soon as possible).

Fun Shielding Game – using hands (3-5 minutes): Introduce the concept of shielding the ball using hands first (younger players will comprehend this infinitely quicker as they are more dexterous with their hands than feet). Each player has a partner with one ball between them. (The Coach should give a good picture to start so they do not go straight down and bang heads). One player tries to keep the ball away from coach. The only rules are that the ball has to remain on the ground and that you can only maneuver it with one hand at a time. If a partner (coach) touches the ball with he/her hand possession changes. When coach wins ball, demonstrate that you don't have to run away, just simply place your body frame between the ball and the opponent. Secondly, tell players not to travel, they can stay in one spot and still retain possession. Third, get the shielder to keep hip pointing to partner. Fourth, give everyone a ball in the rectangle, and if coach (without ball) approaches them they are to turn away to shield. Coach can introduce inside and outside of foot turns this way.

Minefield (5 minutes): Put all the cones randomly on the field (half right way up and half upside down). Coach and assistant coach make two teams and join one each. Appoint one team to search out the cones that are right way up and flip them upside down while the other team is doing the opposite. Play for 30 seconds then yell stop and see which team wins! Losing team gets a fun silly exercise.

Most important, have fun with your kids!