

# Six of the Best

## U6-U12

**Safety is of Paramount Importance.**

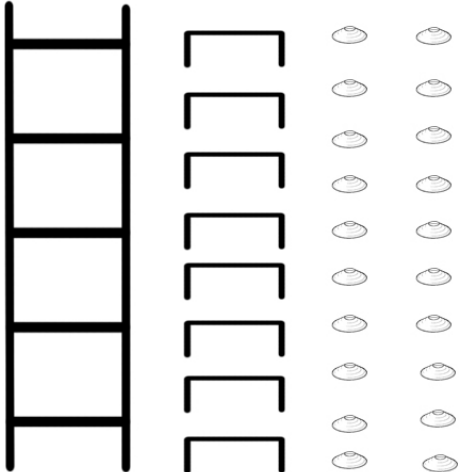
**Try to ensure there are no hazards, particularly in gyms (benches, walls, etc.)**



# 6 Warm-Up Activities

**These Warm-Up activities are meant to provide a base for each practice session. Coaches are encouraged to add some of their own variations and innovations to them. The Warm-Up activities will work and if your own innovations don't quite make it for whatever reason, not to worry! You can always fall back to the base activity.**

# Speed and Agility with Disks/Ladders



**Coach Johnny (Sulentic) will develop the Speed and Agility activities and will demonstrate these for the benefit of the coaches and players.**

# Square Dance Type Activities

## Objective:

- To start practice in a lively way.
- A fun warm-up that introduces and develops the fundamentals of dribbling.



## Organization:

- Mark a square approximately 15 yards by 15 yards, depending on numbers.
- Each player should have a ball.
- If not, use the "Change Soccer" principle: half the players inside the square, each with a ball, the remaining half outside the square, without a ball. Trade places when coach shouts "Change!"
- Players can dribble around anywhere within the square, but should not walk.
- Three instructions are given to the players inside the square:
- "STOP" - Put foot on top of ball quickly and freeze like a statue.
- "GO" - Move right or left with the ball, fast, for three or four yards.
- "TURN" - Quickly turn 180 degrees with the ball, moving three or four yards.

## Teaching:

- Encourage players to keep the ball close to their feet.
- Occasionally insist on using left foot only or right foot only.
- See how many different ways they can turn with the ball.
- To avoid giving players too much information at once, introduce instructions one at a time and incorporate practice time between.
- Later, incorporate your own ideas.

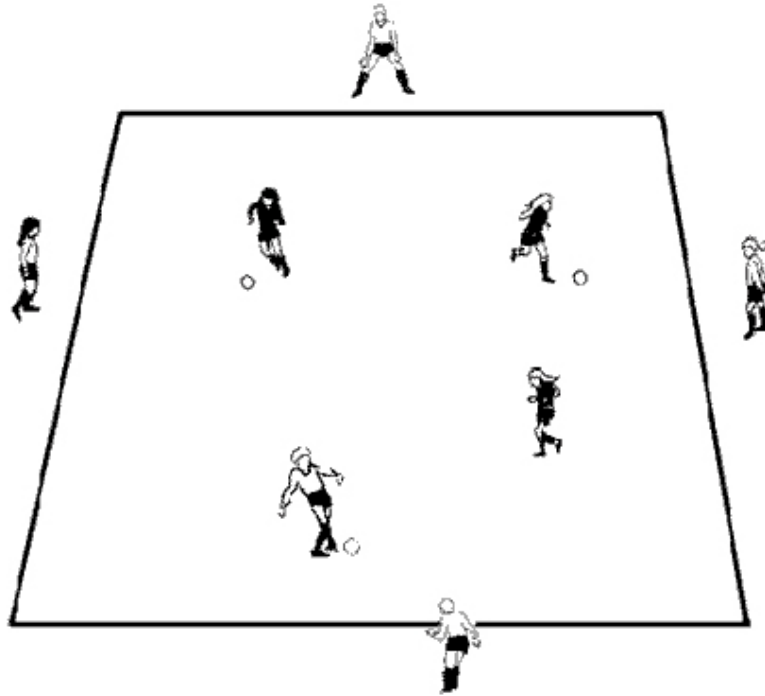
## Target:

- Stay in the area with the ball and make no contact with other players or other balls.

## Inside Out Formula with Less Balls/More Players, etc.

### Objective:

- To develop good passing and receiving skills and to build awareness and vision.



### Organization:

- Depending on numbers mark 25 x 25-yard square (or whatever a gym allows).
- Half of the group in the square; half spread evenly on the outside.
- Use three balls.
- Inside players play a ball an outside player, but then find another outside player to receive a pass from. Inside players cannot pass to a player on the outside they have just received the ball from.
- Inside players cannot pass to one another – must go to an outside player.
- After one minute outside players change with the inside players.

### Teaching:

- Encourage players with the ball to look around to see who is available on the outside.
- Tell players to continually be looking up and around to avoid two players both playing to an outside player at the same time.
- Encourage players on the outside and inside without a ball to call for it with a specific name...”Kenny! Here!”

### Target:

- To pass accurately and incisively.

## Various Relays In & Out of Cones at Slow Pace to Start With

### Objective:

- To set up fun relay activities that develop the skills of dribbling, turning and ball control.
- To develop speed dribbling over short distances.



### Organization:

- Wherever possible work in teams of two (or three at the most).
- Start in a non-competitive way (not racing) so that the players get warmed-up.
- Once warmed-up it important to keep the activity level high.
- Use cones and lines to set up the different types of relay:
  1. Up to the cone and back again. Point for the first players back.
  2. Up to the cone and do a complete circle and back.
  3. Up to the cone and go round clockwise (left foot).
  4. Do a figure of eight around the two cones.
  5. And so on...
- Pairs and Trios accumulate points as a team, but each race is on an individual basis.
- Ball must be stopped on the line to count as a correct finish.

### Teaching:

- Encourage close control and tight turns.
- Must be alert and alive.

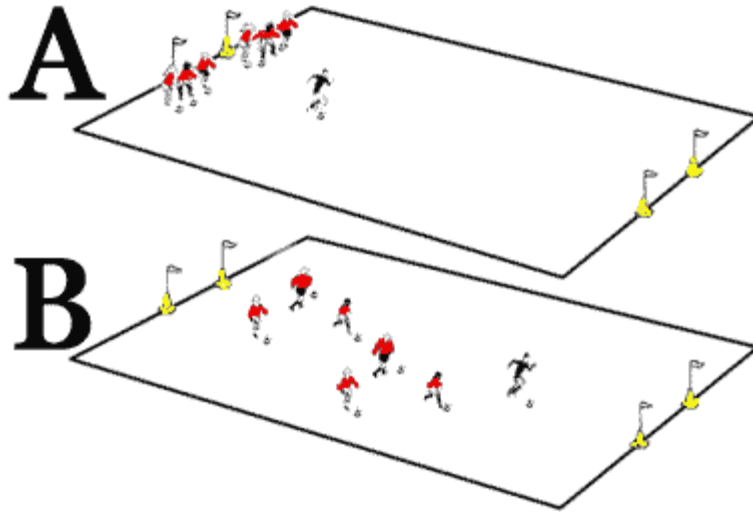
### Target:

- To be the first team to score three (but down play the winning-at-all-costs mentality). Mainly ... have fun!

## Red Light, Green Light – Stop and Go type activities

### Objective:

- A fun warm-up game.
- Teaches ball control, balance and dribbling.



### Organization:

- Players start on end line each with a ball.
- The coach starts five yards in front of them. He turns so now his back is to the players and shouts "Green Light."
- This is the signal for the players and the coach to move forward.
- The coach will then shout "Red Light!" and turn quickly with the ball. If he catches anyone moving they must move back four paces.
- When the coach gets to the end of the field and shouts "Red Light!" and turns, the winner is the player nearest to the end-line who is not moving and has the ball under control.
- Then reverse the direction to start the next phase.

### Teaching:

- Encourage players to make short fast movements, with the ball under close control.
- Advise them to keep an eye on the coach and their ball.
- Encourage them to quickly put their foot on the ball on the "Red Light!" shout.

### Target:

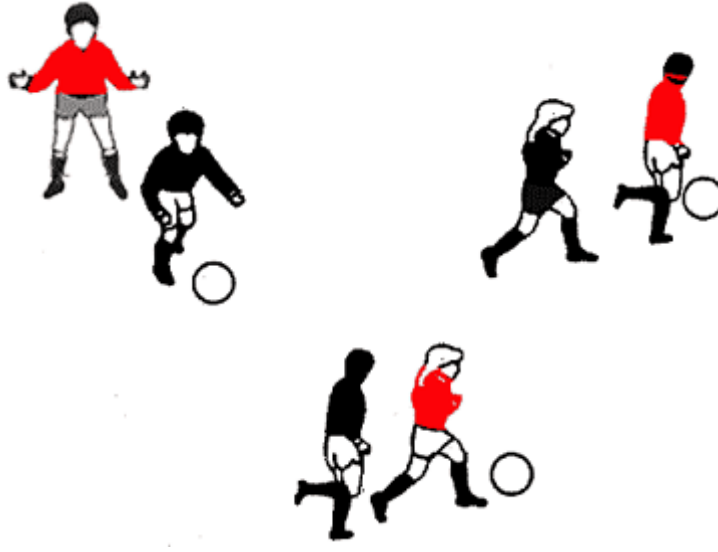
- Not to get caught out on the Red Light, but also to get ahead of team-mates.



# Me And My Shadow

## Objective:

- A fun warm-up that teaches dribbling, change of pace and direction.
- Also encourages disciplined marking.



## Organization:

- In pairs with a ball between two.
- If there is an odd number make one a trio or coach joins in.
- On a signal the player with the ball (the Dribbler) tries to lose his/her Shadow.
- Shadow must be disciplined and persistent.
- After a few seconds the coach shouts "Change!" and the Shadow becomes the Dribbler, and vice-versa.
- Don't go for too long (30 seconds) as the activity is very demanding.
- Introduce other pairs activities in between the runs, e.g., try to head the ball back and forth; play Keep-Up; play Nut Megs (ball is played through the legs of straddling partner).

## Teaching:

- Try to burst away from the Shadow by change of pace and direction.
- Shadow tries to stay "touch tight."
- Don't prolong the activity as players will lose interest after 3- or 4-minutes.

## Target:

- To lose the Shadow; conversely not to lose the Dribbler.

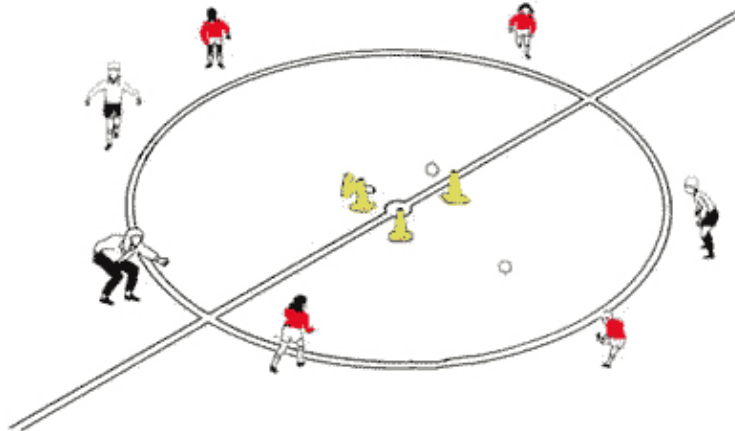
# 6 Technique Developers

**Like the Warm-Up activities these Technique Developers are meant to provide a base for each practice session. Coaches are encouraged to add some of their own variations and innovations to them. The Technique Developers are proven practices, but a little variety will help keep the practices fresh.**

## Circle Game-type Format

### Objective:

- A fun center circle practice.
- Developing accurate kicking.



### Organization:

- Mark a circle having a center mark (line intersection; a coin; a scratched "X").
- A center circle works well, but may be too big for young players.
- 5-yard radius for 6-year olds; 6-yard for 7-year olds, etc.
- Use marker disks to make a circle.
- From center spot pace out the radius by going North, South, East and West. Then fill in the rest of the circle.
- Each player on one side of the circle has a partner directly opposite.
- If there is an odd number the coach joins in.
- Each pair has one ball between them.
- One player passes the ball towards his or her partner, but tries to knock over a cone in the center circle.
- The partner retrieves the ball and returns the pass through the center circle, again trying to kick over a cone.
- The ball must be passed from outside the circle.
- The game is stopped when all cones are knocked down.

### Teaching:

- Encourage the players to use pace as well as accuracy of pass.
- Suggest they continue to kick towards the ball even after they have actually kicked (follow through).
- **Encourage them to approach the ball at a slight angle to the direction they are kicking (45 degrees).**

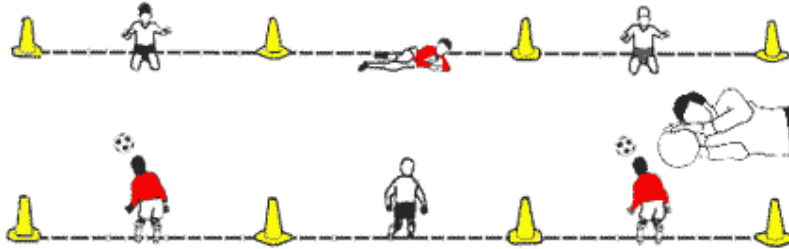
### Target:

- The coach uses a stopwatch to set the "team" record of knocking all cones down. Later, winners are the pair to first knock over the cones 5 (6, 8, 10) times.

## **Kings Court – Knighted** (An Introduction to Goalkeeping-type Activity. Needs soft surface.)

### **Objective:**

- To create a fun, yet challenging environment.
- To teach the correct way of diving on the side for goalkeeping.



### **Organization:**

- Set out as many goals (3-yards apart) as there are players (goalkeepers).
- Two goalkeepers per area, one with a ball, both kneeling up facing one another four yards apart.
- Important that the players kneel in an upright position and not sit back on their heels. Feet/toes should be on the imaginary goal line.
- Balls must be rolled along the ground to the side of each keeper, not straight, but not so far to the side that the receiver cannot roll over and collect the ball.
- After receiving the ball the keeper should roll back to the kneeling position.

### **Teaching:**

- Hands and arms should be pushed reach forward, palms towards ball, to stop ball in front of body.
- Hands and arms should relax into a "crooked" position as the pace is taken off the ball.
- Upper knee should be drawn in comfortably across the body as the ball is received.
- Lower leg should remain loosely trailing.
- Head and upper shoulder should be drawn over and above the height of the ball.
- "W" hand position is employed, but with ball "trapped" by the upper hand on top of the ball and lower hand behind the ball and so use the ground as the so-called "Third Hand." (See graphic above)

### **Target:**

- To start with, everyone is practicing the side dive technique and there is no pressure.
- Then the "battle" begins. The top field is designated the King's Court (coach decides the top and bottom).
- Ball must be rolled, not thrown.
- Goals only count if they are "clean" (must not touch the cone).
- Service must be from a position where the attacker has his/her feet touching the goal line.
- Each "round" goes for 2- to 3-minutes and a winner is declared (coach needs a tie breaking method – "rock, paper, scissors") and the changes are made as follows: The winner in the King's Court retains the

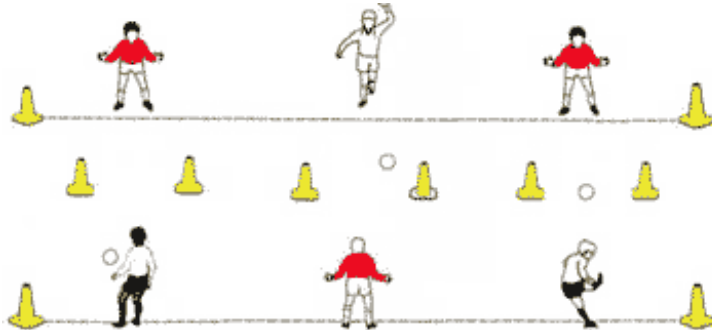
#1 position. The “loser” goes all the way to the bottom court (the dungeon). The other winners move up one place. The other “losers” stay put – many have to change sides. The battle recommences.

- With large groups have two or three King's Courts with 3 or 4 per court.

# Kings Court Passing – with King's Court Formula

## Objective:

- Fun challenge surrounding passing and control.
- To encourage accurate kicking of the ball.



## Organization:

- Set out two lines 8-yards apart.
- Put in cone goals in the middle 2-yards apart.
- All passes must be taken from the line or beyond the line (not inside the line).
- To count the ball must go through the goal gate "clean." Does not count if it hits the cone.
- With shortage of cones use just one where they must hit the single cone to score – one point for a touch, two points for a knock-down.

## Teaching:

- Encourage approaching the ball from a 45-degree angle to open up the hips.
- Use the foot like a hockey stick.
- Toes up and ankles locked on contact.
- Use the inside of the foot as the striking surface.

## Target:

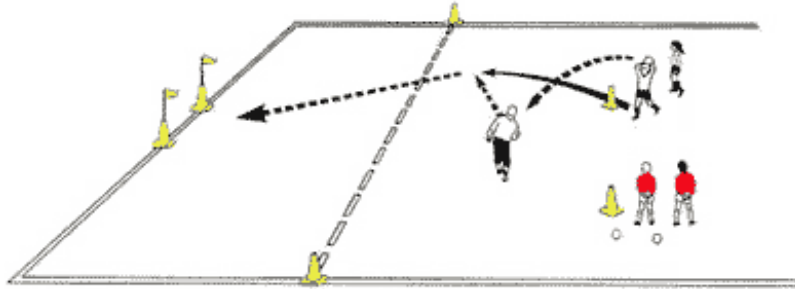
- To start with, everyone is practicing scoring though the gate and there is no pressure.
- Then the "battle" begins. The top field is designated the King's Court (coach decides the top and bottom).
- Goals only count if they are "clean" (must not touch the cone).
- Each "round" goes for 2- to 3-minutes and a winner is declared (coach needs a tie breaking method, e.g., paper, scissors, stone) and the changes are made as follows:
  - The winner in the King's Court retains the #1 position.
  - The loser goes all the way to the bottom court.
  - The other winners move up one place.

- The battle recommences.
- With large groups have two or three King's Courts with 3 or 4 fields per sub-group.
- Keep it fun and therefore downplay the "winning at all costs" attitude.

# Mack 1 Shooting Activity

## Objective:

- To develop passing and shooting skills with both feet.
- To teach the proper techniques for throw-ins.



## Organization:

- Two marker cones placed 5-yards in front of each sideline 15 yards from the goal.
- No goalkeeper and goals 3-yards apart..
- First player on right does a "throw-in" to coach, who rolls ball for a first-time, right-footed shot.
- Player retrieves ball then goes to back of the left line.
- First player at left marker cone does the same exercise, but shooting with left foot, then retrieves ball and goes to back of the right line.
- Or just have one single central line and the coach makes the decision whether to roll the ball left or right.

## Teaching:

- No goalkeeper, so players don't sacrifice accuracy for power and poor technique.
- Encourage careful, accurate shooting.
- For weaker players, roll ball closer to goal.
- As all players improve, roll ball at 90-degree angle or greater, or move cones back to force a more powerful shot without losing accuracy.
- Don't change practice conditions too soon. Each team should try beating its record.

## Target:

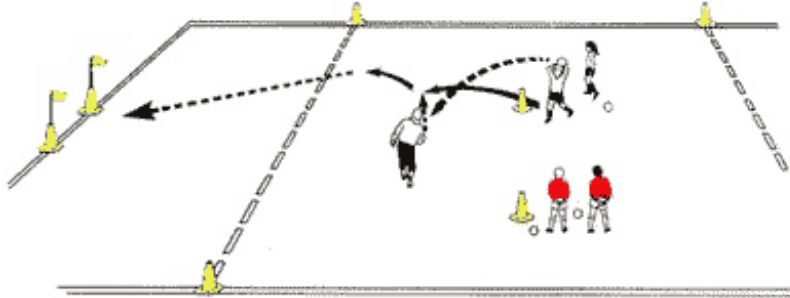
- Record results for future competition.



## Mack 2 – to Work Particularly on the First-Touch (set up for the shot)

### Objective:

- To develop the skills of ball control while practicing the throw-in technique.
- To encourage kicking with both feet.



### Organization:

- Identical practice to Mack I, except every player must first control the ball before shooting. Shot must be left-footed from left, right-footed from right.
- May have just one single central line and the coach makes the decision whether to roll the ball left or right.
- Coach can vary service to encourage different types of controlling touches:
- Initial practices - roll ball for ground control.
- Later, roll ball quickly at the incoming player to force quick decisions regarding the controlling surface.
- Serve ball in the air for control with thigh, chest or foot.

### Teaching:

- The controlling touches can be affected with the most appropriate foot.
- The shot must be with the right from the right, and with the left from the left. Therefore, control ball to the appropriate side to provide the correct angle for shot.
- Encourage "two-touch" play - the first to control, the second to shoot - whenever possible, but don't make it compulsory.
- This is a much more difficult exercise than Mack I, so initially allow players as many touches as they need before shooting with the right or left foot, whichever is required.

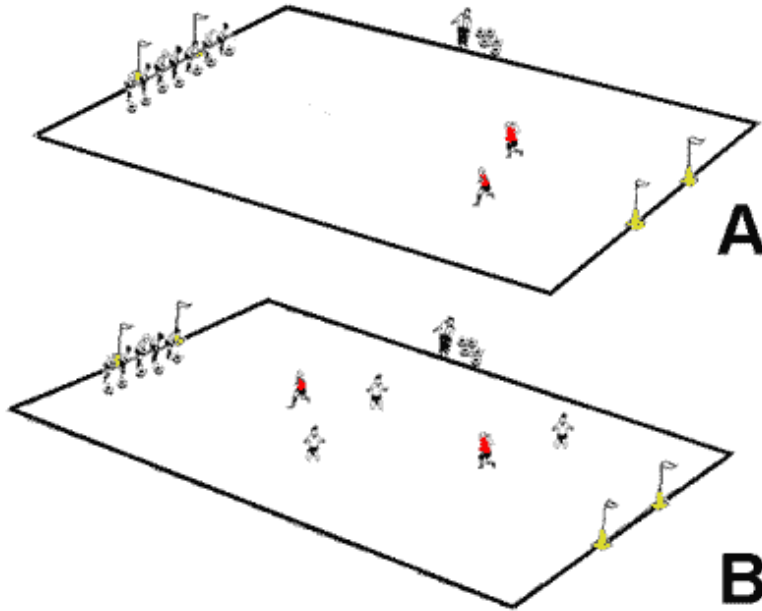
### Target:

- To control the ball and to score; keeping results is optional.

# Cow Dogs/Crabs & Lobsters – Dribbling Activity

## Objective:

- To produce a fun, dribbling and 1 v 1 defending game.



## Organization:

- Mark an area 30 yards by 20 yards (or whatever space a gym allows).
- Players at one end with the ball must try to dribble to the other end without their ball being kicked out of the area by the Cow Dogs in the middle (Graphic A).
- If a player's ball is kicked out they become a "Cow Patty" and have to sit or kneel in the area (Graphic A).
- The "Cow Patties" can also kick the balls out, but only from a kneeling or better still, a "crab" position (Graphic B).
- The one or two "winners" have the choice of whether they become a Cow Dog or not. The previous Cow Dogs become dribblers.

## Teaching:

- Dribblers must pick their time to make their runs forward and must use fakes, changes of pace and screening to retain possession.
- Cow Dogs should "hunt" in pairs.

## Target:

- Not to be caught by the Cow Dogs.

# 6 Skill Developers

## **Normally with the Presence of Opposition**

**As with the Warm-Up activities and the Technique Developers the Skill Developers are meant to provide a base for each practice session. Coaches are encouraged to add some of their own variations and innovations to them. The Skill Developers have opposition (those people who spoil the game of soccer!). While young players often have enough to contend with without another player trying to stop them being successful, opponents are a necessary part of the game. However, do not make it too difficult. Increasing the space, or reducing the number of opponents, will likely produce success. If they are having consistent success go the other way by making it a little harder – smaller space, another opponent, etc. Do not be afraid of adjusting the practice if things are not going the way you want them to, i.e., not working or working too well.**

## 5 v 1 (6 v 1, 6 v 2, 4 v 1, etc.) Introduction to Passing and Support and combining

### Objective:

- To encourage players from an early age to appreciate the benefits of passing the ball to a teammate.  
Developing passing and receiving and an appreciation of space.



### Organization:

- Mark a grid 15 x 15 yards depending on numbers.
- If possible split group in half, say two groups of 5 or 6. Use pinnies to distinguish the two groups.
- One group of 5 or 6 goes into the square and just one of the other group also goes into the square. The rest wait in line for their turn.
- The 5 or 6 players try to keep the ball away from the one defender.
- When the defender wins the ball or forces the ball to be played out of the area he/she changes with next defender. This goes on until every defender has been through and they then change with the other team.
- The team that keeps the ball for the longest time (stop watch out) is the winner.
- If the defender cannot get the ball after 30 seconds shout, "Change!" and the next defender replaces the one in the middle. However, the game continues until 5 (6) interceptions or errors have taken place.
- The coach keeps a supply of balls handy so after an interception or a ball is kicked out of play he/she kicks or rolls another ball in.

### Teaching:

- Coach must assess whether the playing area is too big or too small and make adjustments if necessary.
- For the first few minutes allow the players to play in a non-competitive way so that when a mistake is made, the coach can recreate the situation and then ask the player who made the mistake what the alternatives are. Praise him or her for coming up with the answers (as they surely will). If they can see what should be done they will learn more quickly to do it when the ball is in play.
- Then go into the stopwatch competition described above without any interventions by the coach other than putting the ball back in play.
- This practice should be used on a regular basis and progressed when the children are ready. Such as...

- Make the space smaller. Reduce the numbers attackers, e.g., 5 vs. 1, 4 vs. 1, etc. Or increase the number of defenders, e.g., 6 vs. 2. Condition the attackers, e.g., no more than two touches, etc.

**Target:** To keep the ball for the longest time; for the defender to win the ball or force an error.

# Numbers Game – 1 on 1 attacking and defending

## Objective:

- To develop good attacking and defending skills in a "fun game" situation. To use 1 vs. 1 (later 2 vs. 2) as the learning process.



## Organization:

- 30 yard by 20 yard field or space allowed by a small gym.
- Make the goals 5-yards wide.
- All players start on goal line.
- Each player on each team is given a number (or name – cougars, bears, etc.).
- Coach calls out number or name (e.g., "Three!") and rolls the ball into play.
- The two opposing number "Three" players leave the goal line immediately and compete for possession for a maximum of 20 seconds.
- Coach keeps some balls by him and so can roll another ball into play if one is kicked out.
- Call two numbers – "One!" and "Three!" – to create 2 vs. 2.
- Remaining players defend goal without using hands and they must stay within one yard of goal line. Goals only count below knee height.
- If one player fails to respond to the number, a penalty may be called – a free shot at open goal from half-way line – just to keep players on their toes and make it fun.

## Teaching:

- If organization is working, let them play, enjoy the game and learn by trial and error.
- Encourage attackers to take on opponents and Go for the Goal!
- Defenders should stay on their feet as long as possible, rather than slide-tackling.
- Defenders must try to run back and recover even when beaten.

## Target:

- To outscore opposing team.

## Noah's Lark – cooperative attacking & defending

### Objective:

- To combine the attack and defense in a challenging game.
- To begin to understand the cooperation required in 2 vs. 2 play.



### Organization:

- Area 30 x 20 yards (or whatever a gym allows) with goals 8-yards wide.
- 6 vs. 6 (or whatever numbers), with partners assigned on each team: each partner given a number from 1 to 3. May have to juggle the numbers. If you had 5, one player can be given two numbers.
- Coach shouts number (1-3) and rolls ball into play.
- The two pairs with that number come out of goal to compete against each other.
- Remaining players must stay on goal line and defend goal without using hands.
- Goal can only be scored below knee height.
- When ball goes out of play, coach can immediately serve in another to same pairs – or allow pairs to go back to goal line.
- Ball can be played back to "goalkeepers," who must play ball back with no more than two touches.
- Do not let "goalkeepers" move out off goal line. Half-way line penalty shot no goalkeepers if they do.

### Teaching:

- When defending, one player should go to player with ball.
- Supporting player must watch other attacker, mark the dangerous space and cover partner all at the same time.
- Coach should encourage dribbling, passing and shooting to the "team" in possession.
- Encourage "goalkeepers" to defend as a wall together, and to move as a unit to block shooting angle.

### Target:

- One team vs. the other, also pairs to keep a count of goals scored and conceded.

## Co-op Recovery.

### *Team work and Decision Making*



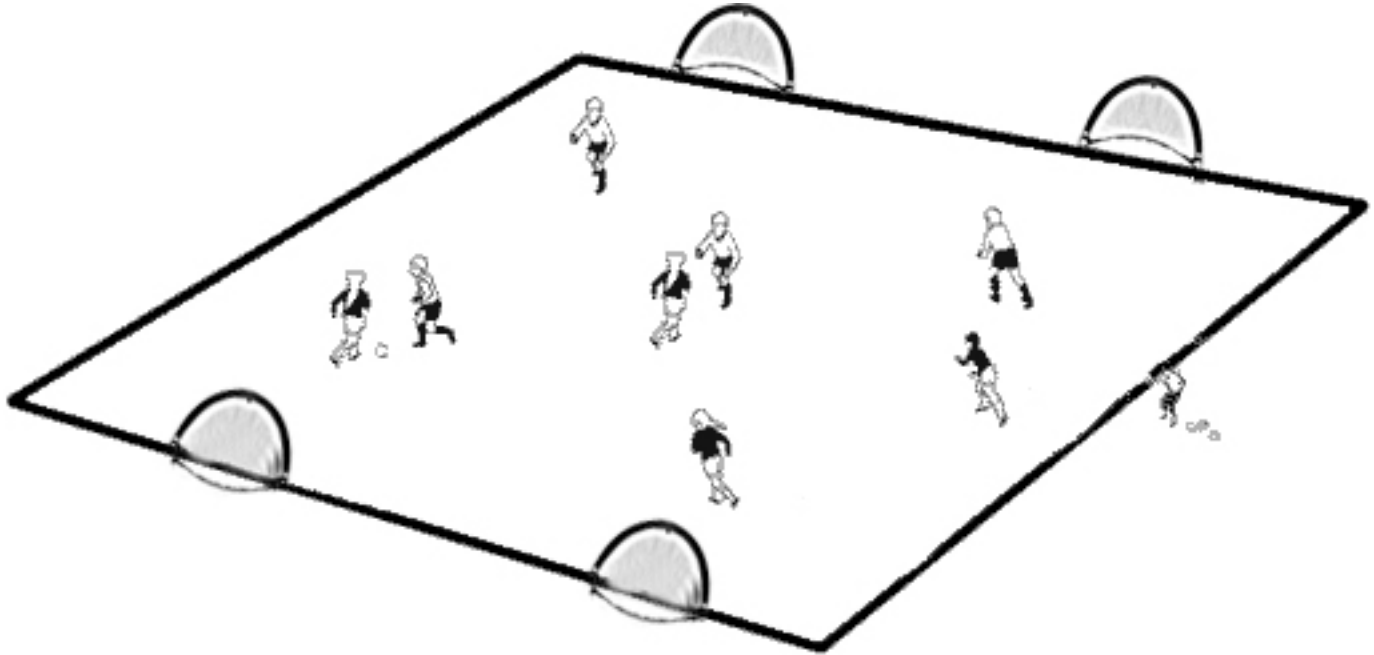
- Two teams of three start off from each angle of the 6-yard box.
- Two balls are placed behind the goal.
- If there is no net on the goal, cannot play the ball through the goal from the back, nor can players run through the goal forwards or backwards.
- At coach's signal the three players from each team combine to retrieve the ball and score. First team to score wins.
- Players are given a little time to plan their strategy.
- Variations to the challenges are many – must go for the ball furthest away from starting position; must go around the far post to retrieve the ball, etc., etc.
- If more than 6 have two teams of 4, 5 or 6, but only three used at any time (equal time for each player).
- Methods can vary – chip over the bar for a header (older players); driven pass to team-mate just inside the 6-yard box for a shot or low ball across the goal for the 3<sup>rd</sup> player, etc.
- Coach can change the conditions, e.g., hands can be used for only one part of the action; every player of the three must touch the ball before scoring, etc.



## 4-Goal Games

### Objective:

- To get young players thinking about changing the direction of play when attacking (maybe when one goal is marked up).
- To get defending teams working together to defend two goals (defensive support/cover).



### Organization:

- Field size 25 x 25 yards or smaller if small gym.
- Goal cones 3-yards wide or Pugg nets. No goalkeepers.
- With cones goals only count below knee height.
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
- Sideline – throw-in (or pass-in – opponents must be 5-yards away).
- Endline – goal kick or corner kick (5-yard rule), depending on which player last touched ball.
- After a goal, re-start with goal kick – first kick is free (i.e., no interceptions or tackles by opposition).
- In practice with numbers greater than 8 use “windows” (see Games section for “4 vs. 4 Windows”).

### Teaching:

- Encourage attacking teams to always have a rear-supporting player.
- Encourage players to pass, dribble and communicate with each other.
- Encourage attackers to switch to the other goal if one is sealed up.
- Defenders must work quickly together to cover two goals.

### Target:

- To outscore opposing team.

## GK Ball

### Objective:

- Fun game that gives good practice in throwing and catching for goalkeeping..
- Develops supporting play and appreciation of space.



### Organization:

- Work in an area 30 x 20 yards approx. (or in gym) or five cones spaced 2-feet apart on the goal line.
- If using cones, the team gets one goal for getting ball through the cones or 2 goals if they knock a cone over.
- Ball can only be moved by throwing to team-mate. Players cannot run with the ball. All passes must be caught before touching the ground.
- Opposition gets possession if ball hits ground from a misplaced throw or a mishandled catch.
- Interceptions can be made by opposition; everyone can use their hands.
- Partial interceptions can be disputed and claimed by either side by diving on the ball.
- No tackling allowed – only screening.
- 3-second rule. If one player is holding on to the ball the coach begins the count: "One, Two..." if the ball is not thrown before "Three" it is turned-over to the opposition.

### Teaching:

- Team in possession must support well.
- All players should recover to own goal quickly after team loses possession.
- Ball will need to be passed around in front of the "goals" to make an opening for the shot if the defending team has recovered well.

### Target:

- To outscore the opposition.

# 6 Games

**(End of Practice Scrimmage)**

**In a small gymnasium with limited space and fairly big numbers, the organization of games may have to be such that things like Change Soccer and side line “windows” keep everyone in the game (see 4 vs. 4 Windows).**

## **Change Soccer**

**Objective:**

- To involve every player in a fun 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 game.
- To emphasize co-operation and skill development.

**Organization:**

- Group is split into two; if odd number, coach joins in or plays the strongest squad a player short.
- In the example shown, three players from each team play a normal on-the-field game.
- Also there are three players on each team as collective goalkeepers; positioned no more than two yards off each goal line and not allowed to handle ball.
- Goals are 5-yards wide and goals only count if scored below knee height.
- Coach shouts "Change!" and on-field teams run back to goal line, without touching the ball again, to become the goalkeepers.
- Goalkeeping teams become the on-field teams and move quickly to win possession.
- Coach shouts "Change!" at any time.
- Make goals wide enough so that it's not too difficult to score.
- Any major infraction means a free shot from the half-way line, with no goalkeepers.

**Teaching:**

- Encourage players to pass frequently in order to create scoring chances.
- Encourage goalkeeping team to move sideways together, as a wall.
- Defenders should help each other and stay on their feet as much as possible.

**Target:**

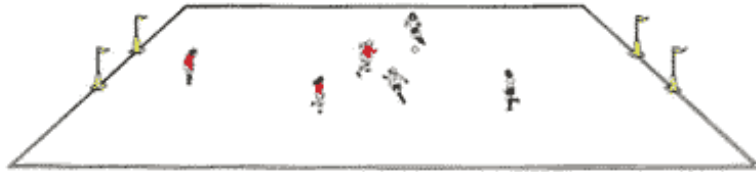
- To outscore the opposition.



## 3 v 3

### Objective:

- To give each player plenty of opportunity to kick the ball in a 3 vs. 3 game.
- To gain a fundamental understanding of the game of soccer.



### Organization:

- Field size 20 x 30 yards (or whatever the gym allows).
- Goals are 3-yards wide.
- No goalkeepers.
- Goals only count below knee height.
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
  - Sideline - throw-in (or pass-in - opponents must be 5-yards away).
  - Endline - goal kick or corner kick (5-yard rule), depending on which player last touched ball.
- After a goal, re-start with center kick (opponents must retreat within two paces of own goal).
- In practice with numbers of 9 or more 3 teams and rotate teams in and out of the 3 vs. 3 game every 2- or 3-minutes.

### Teaching:

- Encourage one player to go fully wide on goal kicks.
- Encourage attacking teams to always have a rear-supporting player.
- Encourage players to pass, dribble and communicate with each other.
- On throw-ins, encourage one of the non-throwing attackers to look for a forward shooting chance – and not to go too close to thrower.

### Target:

- To outscore opposing team.

## 4 v 4

### Objective:

- To give each player many opportunities to kick the ball in a 4 vs. 4 game.
- To gain a further understanding about combined play with the addition of another player (as compared to 3 vs. 3).



### Organization:

- Field size 35 x 25 yards (or whatever the gym allows).
- Goal is 3-yards wide.
- No goalkeepers.
- Goals only count below knee height.
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
  - Sideline - throw-in (or pass-in)
  - Endline - goal kick or corner kick, depending on which player last touched ball.
- After a goal, re-start with goal kick.
- Rotate players in and out on an equal-time basis.

### Teaching:

- On goal kicks encourage two go fully wide, left and right, and one player to go forward centrally giving a diamond shape.
- Encourage attacking teams to always have a rear-supporting player (and this player might and should change if they see an opportunity to go forward).
- Think about the diamond shape in fluid play.
- Try to get players in the habit of immediately recovering back into good defensive positions as soon as they lose the ball.

### Target:

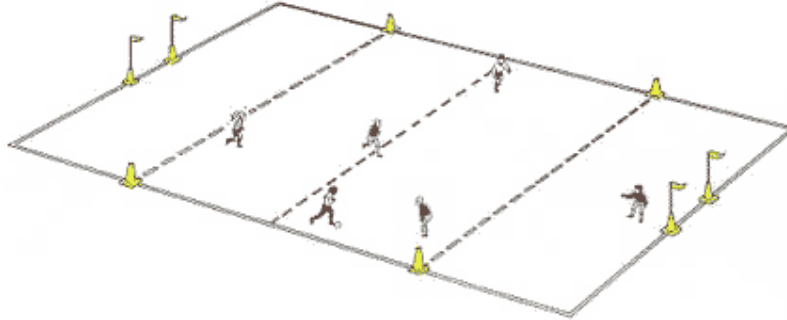
- To outscore opposition.



## • **Micro Soccer**

### **Objective:**

- To give each player plenty of opportunity to kick the ball in a 3 vs. 3 game.
- To gain a fundamental understanding of the game of soccer.
- To introduce and give everyone an understanding of the role of the goalkeeper



### **Organization:**

- Field size 20 x 30 yards.
- Six-yard "boxes," marked by cones or lines, within which each designated goalkeeper may handle.
- Center line marked by cones/lines.
- Each player takes a turn in goal for two to three minutes (equal-time basis).
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
- Sideline - throw-in (or pass-in - opponents must stay 5-yards away.)
- Endline - goal kick or corner kick (5-yard rule) depending on which player last touched ball.
- After a goal, re-start with either goal kick or center kick (if center, opponents must retreat to own six-yard line).
- If a goal kick, condition the players that the first kick by the goalkeeper is "free", i.e., no opponent can intercept the ball and must wait until a field player has touched the ball (encourages and appreciation of space and accurate goal kicks).
- In practice with numbers greater than six rotate players in and out on an equal time basis.

### **Teaching:**

- Encourage at least one player to go fully wide on goal kicks or when goalkeeper has ball in hands.
- Encourage goalkeeper to move off line to support attacks or to intercept through balls (this will take time).
- Encourage players to pass, dribble and communicate with each other.
- On throw-ins or pass-ins encourage the other attacker to look for a forward shooting chance – and not to go too close to thrower/kicker.

### **Target:**

- To outscore opposition.

## Fab Four

### Objective:

- A four-a-side game to practice combination play.
- Introducing the Diamond Shape of soccer.



### Organization:

- Game is played in area 25 x 35 yards (or whatever a gym allows).
- Goals are 4 yards wide and 5 feet high (corner flag height).
- Halfway line and six-yard lines are marked; cones or markers define lines.
- Eight players maximum per team (better with six); four players within the area and four resting.
- Goalkeeper designated by each team may use hands only within six-yard area.
- Duration of each period is two to three minutes; after each period all substitutes come on.
- The objective is to have equal time on the field and in goal.
- Game has corner kicks and throw-ins. Goal kicks should be taken from the 6-yard line. Opponents must retire at least 5-yards away from the goal kick and the corner kick.
- After a goal, the team who did not score kicks off from center spot; scoring team retires to 6-yard line.
- The number of periods for the game is decided by coach (try to work it to an "equal time" formula).

### Teaching:

- Be aware of the diamond shape (two wide players, a forward player and the rear-supporting goalkeeper).
- Must all be making eye contact to combine successfully and score goals.
- Defenders must try to get goal side of the ball after possession is lost.
- Set up a concentrated defence in front of the goal.

### Target:

- To outscore the opponent.

## 4 v 4 with Windows

### Objective:

- To give each player many opportunities to kick the ball in a 4 vs. 4 game.
- To gain a further understanding about combined play with the addition of another player (as compared to 3 vs. 3).
- To have “windows” as an outlet for a “free” pass while keeping the outside team in the game.



### Organization:

- Field size 35 x 25 yards or gym size. Goal is 3-yards wide.
- No goalkeepers. Goals only count below knee height.
- 3 teams of 4 – depending on numbers.
- “Black shirted” team is on the outside side-line or one at each end.
- The “Black Shirted ” team always plays with the team in possession on a pass or at a restart.
- It is in the best interests of the black team to help score a goal as that gets them back of the field.
- Team losing a goal become the “windows.”
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by one of the “windows”
- After a goal, re-start with goal kick for new team coming on the field.

### Teaching:

- Attacking team should always consider using the unmarked “windows.”
- When a “window” gets the ball the attacking team should try to find attacking space. On goal kicks encourage two to go fully wide, left and right, and one player to go forward centrally giving a diamond shape.
- Encourage attacking teams to always have a rear-supporting player (and this player might and should change if they see an opportunity to go forward).
- Think about the diamond shape in fluid play.
- Try to get players in the habit of immediately recovering back into good defensive positions as soon as they lose the ball.

### Target:

- To outscore opposition.