

Fundamental Footskill Games

Lets look at other dribbling skills that can be incorporated into the **fundamental phase** of your practice session. (Fundamental because although they work the skill, there is no game-like pressure involved)

Red Light – Green Light

For the very young Under 6 the game of Red Light – Green Light is an easy game to learn and teaches the children to keep the ball close and under control. As in the game we played in our youth, one player is “IT”. He stands at one end of the field with his/her back to the others and calls out red light, green light one , two, three and then turns around. The players meanwhile have been dribbling toward him/her and must stop, with their foot on top of the ball, when the player turns around. Anyone moving must go back to the beginning to try again.

North –South – East and West

Players dribble where the coach tells them to, i.e. a direction as suggested in the title or you can make it a color or an animal, whatever. This again teaches the children to keep the ball close and , hopefully, shows them how to change a direction.

Draw

This is a very popular game with the younger crowd. Place players in 2 lines facing each other. Place one soccer ball in the middle of the each two players . The object of the game is to **draw** the ball back using the sole of the foot. The command to “Draw” is given by the coach. The fun part is that the coach has to tell a story in which he uses the word “draw” to signal the players.

For example: Willy and his sister were working on cleaning their rooms. Willy said “where should I put these socks? And his sister replied , “In your **Drawer.**” Make up really silly stories.

You can add progression to this drill by having the players jog in place, have the players only use the non-dominant foot, have the players move up a ladder if they win and down if they lose the round and see who can get to the top first.

"GET EM"

Here is a game which involves both passing and dribbling that is fun and engages players quickly. Also, although primarily an individual exercise that allows for differences in ability level, if the players are ready, it can quickly become a cooperative game where players work together to solve a challenge.

The Game

Each player will need a ball. Player 'A' is "It" and is the only player to start with a ball. All the other players around the outside of the grided space.

Player 'A' dribbles and tries to hit the other players below the waist with the ball. When hit, that player gets a ball and joins player 'A'.

The game is over when all of the players have been caught.

The last player caught is "It" and starts with the ball for the next game.

If you think the task will be too difficult for the one player to get another at the start of the game, start with 2 players being "It".

Coaching Points of Get-Em

- Encourage quick movements and sudden changes of direction to catch players off guard.
- Players not caught should run, jump, and use zig-zag movements.
- ◆ A variation can be added by having all players play with a ball

RUNNING BASES

Here is another game that emphasizes dribbling that is fun and challenging for players. Again, primarily it is an individual game that could lend itself to small group cooperation if the players are ready.

The Game

Each player will need a ball, except those that have been designated as "It".

Players that are "It" need to carry a colored pennie or flag in their hand.

Players with a ball try to dribble without being tagged. If they are, they exchange places with the "tagger" (The "tagger" hands the pennie to the dribbler and takes their ball).

Dribblers are safe in one of the designated bases. Only one player is allowed in a base at a time. if a new player enters a base, the old player must leave the base.

Add "taggers" when the players find the game to be easy.

It seems about right to have one base for every 3 players, but, this number can be adjusted either way to make the game constantly interesting.

This game can also be played by only allowing the "tagger" to "get" someone by kicking their ball away, not just "tagging" the person. (a variation on Shark)

Experiment with different combinations of "taggers" and bases to keep the players engaged.

Basic Passing Game U7: Trick or Treat

This is a drill suggested by Ivan Mann, a coaching colleague from the soccer-coach-I mailing list.

Set Up and Execution

Make a square with pretty small sides - players line up on each side. Put an adult in the middle of each side (that means four adults) holding a dozen or so flat cones (you could use anything else similar size and shape). 50 cones or 50 slips of construction paper will do.

On a go signal, players dribble across the square, stop the ball with a foot on it, say "**Trick or Treat**", take a cone from an adult, turn the ball, dribble back across, take a cone, etc. When all the cones are gone, who has the most? This requires dribbling at speed, avoiding the clump in the middle, controlling the ball around an opponent, but minimal coordination holding the cones.

After a few rounds dribble across the square, dribble around the coach, and then stop the ball, say "Trick or treat," etc. Or place the adults randomly in the square, moving at a walking pace. This makes them keep their heads up and look for the target (i.e. the adult)