

Match Related Footskill Games

The next four games are appropriate for the younger ages in the match related phase of the practice

Bulldog

For Under 8 teams, and even up to the Under 10 age groups, the game of **Bulldog** and **Shark** are long time favorites.

Set up a rectangular grid with cones. It is helpful if you have sidelines. One player is in the center and is the bulldog. Everyone else is along an end line with a ball. The object is to get to the other end, in control of the ball. Don't let them just kick it and run after it. The bulldog has to knock the ball out of bounds. Whoever's ball goes out becomes a bulldog puppy and assists the bulldog in getting the remainder of the players. The last player in becomes the next bulldog.

Shark

Shark is played in a rectangular grid. In version one everyone has a ball and is a shark. In version two one particular person is a shark and doesn't have a ball while everyone else does.

The object in both games is to dribble in a confined area, keep the head up, be aware of other players, and shield the ball from pressure. Of course you don't have to tell them all that, they'll just think it is fun.

The object in version one is to knock everyone else's ball out of the grid. (Players who are knocked out should do a particular skill on the sideline, such as "foundation" or tap-tap-brush instead of just sitting and watching). Last player in wins.

In version two, one player is the shark and goes after every other player until only one person with a ball remains.

Freeze Tag

Freeze tag is played in a rectangular grid. One person (or two if you like) is (are) IT. All players must dribble and stay in control of their ball. If they lose it out of bounds they must freeze in place. If the IT player tags them with their ball they are also frozen.

Teammates of the freezees can unfreeze them by passing their ball between legs and picking it up on the other side.

Change the IT often.

Four Corners

Set up a grid field with a square in each corner. This square is the goal.

Have players aligned along the sideline with a ball at their feet.

Call out two names and throw a ball into the field. Players have to dribble the ball into any one of the four goals, under control, and stop the ball within the square with the sole of their foot. Let the players play for 60 seconds at a time.

If the ball goes out of bounds call a player quickly to put their ball into play. Encourage quick changes of direction and make them aware that there are goals at both ends of the field. This should encourage them to pull the ball back out of trouble and head in a different direction rather than just hammering the ball one way.