

Paris Soccer Club  
Basic Coaching Manual 2008

## **PRACTICE PLAYS AND IDEAS**



## **Practice Sessions – Introduction**

### ***I. Warm-up 10 minutes***

Each practice session should be started with a warm-up. Use the "beehive" grid for this purpose. Dribbling games make the best warm-up. Use your imagination to improvise from the skill games described in another section. Keep it "ball" oriented and fun.

### ***II. Stretching 5 minutes***

Follow the warm-up with a stretching session. It is good to have them do a little stretching even at these early ages to develop the habit. Have the players stretch their calves, thighs, hamstrings, Achilles tendons, and arms. Hold each stretch for the count of ten and do not let the players bounce while they are stretching. This is a good time to tell the players what they will be doing in their practice today.

### ***III. Individual Skill / Games 5- 10 minutes***

Ball control, dribbling, shooting. Demonstrate the skill to the players: break down the skill into 3 areas: what your body looks like before, during and after the skill. Give lots of time to practice in a variety of situations. (self, challenge with partner, time, target)

### ***IV. Team Skill/ Games 10- 15 minutes***

Continue from individual skill to team skill – focus on one or two skill games during each practice. Try and build each of your practices around a particular skill (e.g. passing, throw-ins). First demonstrate the skill to the players before starting and then correct group and individual players' mistakes during the skill games. Try not to be over corrective - remember, let the game be the teacher!

### ***V. Scrimmages 15-30 minutes***

Complete your practice with a small sided game (*i.e.* 3 v 3, 4 v 4). Try to make the skill you practiced earlier a "condition" of the game. For example, in a practice that emphasized passing, the players of a small sided scrimmage must complete 2 or more passes before they can shoot on the goal. Make the scrimmage as much like a competitive game as possible, utilizing the rules of soccer modified for the appropriate age.

## **Fun Games that Teach Skills**

**NOTE:** Several of the games listed are "knock out" games where the losers are knocked out and the last player left is the winner. Since the first ones knocked out are often the ones who need the most practice, those knocked out should be required to do something to either get back into the game or to keep them working on their ball skills until the game is over. One possibility is to set up a parallel game for those knocked out to participate in. Be careful of loose balls that could trip your athletes.

## **Cardiovascular**

### **Hospital Tag**

Lay out appropriate sized grid, with a small square on one side (the hospital). All players are in it and try to tag each other. If tagged on shoulder for instance, player has to hold shoulder with one hand. If tagged a second time hold that spot with the other hand and run into the hospital to free themselves. Game gets amusing if player is tagged twice on the feet!

### **Fetch**

Each player picks up a ball and brings it to the coach. The coach throws it away 10 yards and calls a number (i.e 2). That is the # of body parts the player has to bring the ball back with. The coach can show them a couple of ways to retrieve ball if needed (i.e. holding ball between knee and one hand) then let them be creative! Then the number that the coach calls can represent the number of kicks the child should have to kick it back to the coach. Then the coach can move to a different position after he throws the ball away.

### **Body Part Dribble**

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 coach instead of calling a body part out, simply points 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 when kids get used to looking up. Challenge kids to dribble faster!

### **Minefield**

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, i.e. do a donkey impression.

### **Variations of Minefield**

Dribble round cone in order to pick up

Croquet – same as above only introduce knocking other persons ball away with your ball

### **Line Tag**

Have all players pair up and stand shoulder to shoulder. Break one pair up and give one player a colored vest to hold in hand. They then attempt to tag the other player. If they do they drop the vest and roles change. The runner can escape by joining shoulder to shoulder with one of the other pairs, in which case the player on the far end becomes the runner. Can progress to having 2 taggers and see how it affects the players thinking. Can you see a link to the real game?

## Star Wars or "Running bases" game

This activity works for most U8 through U14 players. Set up 2-4 random bases (a base = 4 cones set as a small square, where a player cannot be tagged)

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X ----- X
| x x |
| x x x x |
| x x |
| x x |
| x x |
X ----- X
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The coach appoints 2 or 3 people as being IT (the taggers then are given a colored training vest to hold in their hand). The objective is for them to get rid of the vest by tagging another player. If a tagger touches another player, he or she drops the vest and the new tagger has to pick it up (no tagbacks). Only 1 allowed on a base at a time. The last one on base is safe (the other player then has to move away). Then play the game with the taggers without a ball, but everyone else with a ball. Later **introduce new rule: tagger has to touch ball, not person!** Then make it more challenging by having the taggers only tag by touching a ball with their foot. Stop. Coach can introduce shielding with hands, then play again. **Coach players in game – point out good things!**

Highlight smart play – ask player why he/she is doing it...

If one player is struggling – the coach can play and bale him out (dribble into him accidentally)  
Can also play with a ball

## Dribbling

### Explode

Every athlete has a ball. You get them all around you dribbling their balls as close as they can get. Make sure they begin their dribbling using the insides of both feet...no toe balls at the first practice! Make them keep control of the ball....always within one step....and do not let them run into one another or dribble their ball into another ball or another player. Keep telling them to get their heads up and see the open spaces. Yell "Explode!" at which point they all run away (dribbling their balls) as fast as they can. First one to get to a boundary or cone "wins".

### Flags

Players start with a ball and 2 clothespins (flags). Clothespins are stuck to the side/back of the player at each side. A player is eliminated when he/she loses both clothespins and his/her ball. A ball is lost when it is kicked out of bounds (by another player with a ball) or stolen (by a player with at least one flag but no ball). You can only take someone's clothespin away when you have a ball. The first clothespin usually goes pretty quick. The real fun comes when they learn to protect both the ball and the remaining clothespin by using the clothespinless side to shield

### Dribble Relay

Set up an 'obstacle-course' with cones as 'gates' - and team 'A' races team 'B'-they have to go out and back - if they lose control and miss a gate, they have to regain control and go through the gate. A variation is to have a small 'square' at the end. They have to stop the ball in the square, then sprint back and high-five the next player before he/she can take off. Another variation is to have several parents positioned at different places along the 'course' and have a different one hold up a number of fingers at random times during the race - and award points to the player that sees it and correctly yells out the number first. This gets the players heads up.

### **Pac-Man**

The Coach starts with a ball in the grid. All the others start in the grid without their balls (placed just outside the grid within easy reach). On command the coach with the ball has to dribble the ball under control while attempting to tag others. If he does then they also get their ball and attempt the same.

### **Freeze Tag**

Set up a large rectangle with cones and have the players dribble in the rectangle. After a short time, take the ball away from one or two players who then become "it." Any player whose ball is touched by an "it" player becomes frozen and has to stop dribbling, spread his legs apart, and hold his ball above his head. He is frozen in this position until another player dribbles his ball between the frozen players legs. Switch the "it" players often and make it a contest to see who can freeze the most at one time.

### **Ball Wars**

Everyone has a ball, dribbling in a fairly small grid. Each player can score a point by dribbling around and hitting their ball against somebody else's. This encourages both attacking and defensive play. It is guaranteed that the coach will be asked 'what happens if he kicked his ball against mine as I was kicking towards his?' Give both a point. Points don't matter. Challenge the individual to beat his/her own personal score each time.

### **Everybody's it**

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's ball or in turn shield their own ball from attack!

### **Everybody Tag - similar**

Every player starts with a ball on a small field. On command they can dribble towards each other and if they can lightly tag someone else's arm then they score a point. This teaches them to be creative, fake, turn with their ball, shield and get their head up. Coaches can play and be tagged easily to help all kids be successful and have fun!

### **Red Light/Green Light**

Each player with a ball lines up at one end of the penalty area. A coach stands at the other end and yells, "Green light," and turns his back to the players. The kids race across the penalty area to see who can reach the coach first. After a few seconds, the coach yells, "Red light." At that command, the players must stop and put a foot on top of the ball. The coach turns back around

and looks for players whose ball is still moving. Those players must move a certain distance back to the starting line. Repeat calling red light/green light until someone wins the race. This game encourages fast dribbling while keeping the ball close.

### **Simon Says**

Just like the common children's game, the coach gives instructions like "Simon says dribble with your left foot" or "Simon says switch balls with someone." The players only follow the instructions if they begin with "Simon says..." Anyone following instructions that do not start with "Simon says..." are knocked out. But the knocked out players should be doing something with the ball, not just watching the game continue. Continue the game until one player is left.

### **Follow the leader**

Pick a leader and have him dribble anywhere on the field, encouraging him to make lots of turns, changing speed, etc. All other players have to follow the leader and do whatever that player does. Switch leaders often.

### **Dribbler's Alley**

Four or more players needed. Set up one less pair of cones (gates) than the number of players you have in a line. Each gate should be about 6 feet wide and have about 10 feet between each gate. Every player guards a gate and the remaining player tries to dribble through the gates.

### **Keep away from coach**

Show players how to turn with the ball (as simple as turning in a tight small circle manoeuvring 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).

### **Last Man Out**

Two players or more needed. All players stand at a cone about 20 feet from a group of balls. There is one less ball than the number of players. On the coach's command, the players run to the balls, get one and begin dribbling. The player who didn't get a ball tries to steal one from the others. That player tries to steal the ball from another player. (can continue to eliminate: The coach keeps time and after a preset period has passed, the coach stops the game. The player without a ball at that whistle is out. Remove one ball from the group and repeat until there is only one person with a ball.

### **Tag**

This drill is based on the common kids' game of tag. Mark off a grid or circle. Everybody needs a ball. Whoever is "it" must dribble to another player and tag him. The other player avoids being tagged by dribbling away from "it." If the player being chased loses his ball outside the grid, dribbles out of the grid, or is tagged, he is "it" and the game continues.

## **Ball Tag**

Everyone has a ball and dribbles in a confined area. The player who is "it" must pass his ball so that it hits another player's ball. The player whose ball was hit then becomes "it."

## **Hat Tag**

Bring a half dozen baseball caps to practice. Then, in a slight variation of ball tag, we assigned hats to the "taggers," gave everyone a ball and had them dribble within a grid about the size of the penalty area. Whoever got tagged, got the hat and went off in search of someone else to tag.

## **Bumper car dribble**

The whole team does this in a small grid. Try and match players of similar height. Have one player dribbling while another partner is trying to nudge them off the ball shoulder to shoulder. This teaches them to dribble under physical pressure and teaches the players that contact is a good and fun thing. Before games I have 2 players inside a circle formed by the rest of the team playing for possession of a ball, gets the players in the mode of fighting for the ball on the field (30 sec).

## **Musical Chairs**

Set up one less ball than the number of players in the drill. Players run around in goal areas in a scramble until whistle is blown. Players race to get ball from center circle and dribble to score on goal. Player without ball help get balls to center, repeating this until only one player left. Make sure to keep things moving along, don't wait very long to blow the whistle. Once players have concept start adding in defenders. One more that may work for you is using a ball as the goal. Have players match up by ability. Throw one ball out as the goal. Throw a second out that the two players will try and possess and score. First player to ball is attacker, second defends goal (ball) and tries to gain possession of ball. If successful, roles reverse. Only run this for 30-45 sec depending on effort of the players. I usually have 2-3 pairs doing this at once each with their own goal (ball) and playing ball.

## **Egg Hunt**

Have more balls than players. Have the players' line-up across one end of the field. Take their balls and spread them out around the field, these are the eggs. (If you have an unusual colored ball --make it the Golden Egg or something special.) At the other end of the field is a goal. I use a portable goal and call it the "basket." Blow the whistle, or whatever, and turn them loose. The object of the game is to get the "eggs" in the basket as quickly as possible. They are all on the **same team**, and aren't allowed to take a ball away from another player. I like to time them to see how fast they can accomplish the task.

## **Snake**

Players are grouped into threes (preferred) or fours. First player is the "head" of the snake, and does not have a ball. She's essentially the leader in a follow-the-leader game. Second player has a ball at her feet, and must follow the head of the snake, dribbling wherever she goes. Third player is the "rattle". This player does not have a ball, just following the other two. Emphasize to

the "heads" to vary their lead -- some fast, some slow, some sideways, some stopping, etc. I let one lead for about 20 seconds or so. Then, on a whistle from a coach, #2 drops the ball to #3 and becomes the head of the snake. The rattle (#3) becomes the dribbler and the former head circles around to become the rattle.

### **Line Soccer**

Start with two lines of players facing one another. Give each player a number and a "matching" player in the other line. Kick the ball between the two lines and call out a number. To prevent a collision always throw the ball closer to one player, this will automatically make one offensive and the other defensive. The two players with the corresponding number will play one on one while trying to kick the ball through the opposing line. This game teaches the players in the line not to chase after the ball since they have to defend their line in a limited area.

### **Circle Game**

Set up a 20x40 yard grid, make a center circle, and split players into two teams that can be identified by a color. Have all the kids dribble their balls in the center circle. Call out a color. That team dribbles toward their goal. The other team leaves their ball and runs to slow the attackers down trying to get them to a sideline and to dribble out-of-bounds, or not get to their goal line before the coach counts to 7 or Award 1 point for each out-of-bounds and 1 point for each player "held" for the coach's count. Attackers get 1 point for each "goal". Play to 10 points.

### **Sharks and Minnows**

Start with a defined area marked, adjusted for size depending on the age of the players. Half the players have balls and are Minnows. The rest do not have balls and are the Sharks. The Minnows start at one end of the area and must dribble across the area and across the opposite goal line without losing possession of their ball. The Sharks defend the area, trying to kick the Minnows' balls out of the defined area. Minnows who retain possession turn around and go back for round two. A Minnow who loses their ball join the Sharks for round two. The last successful Minnow is the Grand Champion.

### **Variations of Sharks and Minnows**

- Sharks steal ball and go to a goal instead of just kicking the ball out.
- Instead of eliminating players until only one is left, give points to the sharks for kicking out balls but let everyone stay in the game. Everyone gets a turn as a shark.
- Sharks who take possession of a ball immediately become Minnows; Minnows who lose the ball become Sharks.
- Players are not knocked out, but must perform some task before getting back into the game. (Such as ball dance.)
- Minnows must control the ball in a goal area to encourage good ball control instead of just kicking the ball over the end line if a Shark gets close.

### **Death Square**

Everyone dribbles around trying to keep their own ball and kick out everyone else's ball. If a player's ball is kicked out, he must retrieve it, then dance on the ball for 10 touches before getting back in. A player gets a point for every ball he kicks out (so if you spend time outside dancing on your ball, you have less time to win points).

### **Under Pressure**

Get all the kids dribbling around in a square area and then remove one, two, or three balls, depending on how much pressure needed. Then announce that whoever has possession of a ball after 1 minute is a winner. If they can chase someone out of bounds they automatically win that ball. Count down the last 10 seconds real loud to increase the activity. Kids without a ball have to do some token penance; a couple of push ups, make a weird face for the others, nothing real negative.

### **1v1 to Goal**

Divide players into two teams of 4 or 5 each + one goal and a supply of balls. Station each team at a corner post of the goal, standing off, but facing the field. Place a GK in goal facing the field. Coach/assistant stands behind the center of the goal with a supply of balls. Coach tosses a ball over the crossbar to about the penalty spot. A player from each team both sprint to the ball and attempt to control it, turn, and get a shot off. The second to the ball defends (if he then wins the ball, then he tries to shoot). When there is a score, save, or ball goes out of play, restart the same way with a different pair of players.

### **Treasure Chest and Trolls**

This is a three-team, three-goal game. Play with 1-3 balls to keep everyone moving and looking up. Three players on each team play, while a sub is kept locked in "troll prison." Each team has three pieces of gold behind the goal they have to defend. Small disc cones, water jugs, etc. can be used. Whenever a team scores in the opponent's goal, they get to claim a piece of treasure for their treasure chest. The trolls, older kids or parents, had their own treasure chest and would occasionally run randomly within the field of play. If you hit the troll with the ball, you could claim a piece of troll treasure OR free a team-mate from troll prison. (decision-making!) The grand finale is the "breakout" from troll prison. Let each of the prisoners escape with a ball and head for the goal while the trolls run wild on the field for a final, furious minute of play.

### **1v1 Circle of Fire**

Divide players into 2 team and number each player of each team 1, 2, 3 etc. Put 4 goals out (a goal being 2 cones close to each other) then throw a ball out and call a number. Those 2 players go out and play for 20 seconds. They score points by kicking through the cones, so yes they can challenge each other.

### **Simple Body Fake or Trick**

All kids/players love to learn new tricks! Instructor can use their favorite trick or any Coerver move as long as they break it into very small steps. I prefer to teach tricks without the ball first!

Get all participants to stand 3 steps back from their ball to learn the foot positioning first before complicating things with the ball! Lift the left foot up, take a small diagonal step forward (to the left), bend the left knee and drop the left shoulder down. Then lift the right foot up and take a quick hop diagonally forward to the right. When the ball is involved, on the hop push the ball forward in the same direction with whichever part of the foot is comfortable, preferably the right hand side of the laces of the right shoe. Let them practice on their own for 30 seconds. Do not spend long on this exercise. Some players will understand the concept and this will begin to rub off on the players around. I have had a 3 year old do this fake at camp and remember it the next day! Only spend 3-4 minutes on this then move onto another high intensity activity.

## **American Football**

Create a playing field of 15 x 30 yards, but make the last 5 yards of each end an end zone. A touch down is scored by keeping possession and creating an opportunity to dribble into the end zone. If this is done with the ball under control, then a touch down is scored.

## **Keep-Away**

This is an excellent exercise for warming up. Instead of having players standing around in a line waiting to shoot at goal before a game, have them gently warm up playing 3 v 1, or 5 v 2 keep-away for 15-30 second intervals. This gives players a lot more touches on the ball and produces a good feel for the particular playing surface, while alternating aerobic and anaerobic exercise. When an opposing coach sees this happen, he knows that the other coach knows what he is doing and begins to worry!

## **Play 6 v 1**

Play 6 v 1 with 6 balls. Player without a ball has to try and steal one. Players stay within the grid. After 1 minute or so, the player without the ball gets a quick exercise. Then take one more ball out so it is 5 v 2 with 5 balls. At end of a minute, 2 players will be without a ball and get an exercise. Then take one more ball out so it is 4v3 with 4 balls. At end of a minute, 3 players will be without a ball and get an exercise. This helps players to dribble keeping their the ball within the frame of their body, and to hold off an opponent.

## **Passing**

### **The Name Game**

4 or more players needed. Players stand in a circle and pass the ball to one another, but they must call out the name of the person they are passing to. This is great at the beginning of the season, so they learn everyone's names. If the players are doing well and you have enough players, add additional balls.

### **Battle Field**

Any number of players can be used. All players line up on one end line and try to run to the other end without being hit with a ball kicked by a coach. Those who are hit join the firing squad. The game ends when everyone has been hit.

### **Monkey in the Middle**

The players make a circle with one player (the monkey) in the center. The players try to pass the ball around and the monkey tries to intercept it. When the monkey gets the ball he joins the circle and whoever made the "fatal" pass becomes the monkey. Modify this game by increasing the number of monkeys and/or balls that are used.

### **Marbles**

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines.

Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble. Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts I don't require them to use their own ball. If they lose theirs, they are free to use any other ball they can find.

### **Who's Open**

Four or Five players in circle formation about 15 yards in diameter (adjust for age). All players except one have a ball at feet. Two players inside circle with one designated as attacker and the other defender. To start, attacking player moves and calls name of player he wants to serve him a ball. He must control ball and return to the open player who did not have a ball at start of exercise (you can't give it back to the player who served it). Attacker then asks for another ball (calling name and making appropriate run) and repeats the exchange. Defender tries to dispossess attacker.

### **Soccer Golf**

Place a number of cones around an area. Each players has a ball and tries to strike each cone in turn (varying distances) counting the number of kicks (strokes). The player taking the least strokes wins, rewarding accuracy.

### **Windows'95**

Place a number of windows around an area (2 cones close together). 2 players have to pass through the window to score a point. Only rule is not to pass through same window **twice in a row!** –The Coach must introduce passing and communication at this point. Advance the game by using left foot pass only, outside of foot passes, or play in groups of three to four and introduce the wall pass (see combination below). 2 teams (5 blue, 5 orange). Have to pass through window (gate) to score a point. How many can you score in 30 seconds. If balls collide - deduct 1 point. Keep ball moving. If ball stops deduct 1 point. Same game only partners cannot talk (verbally communicate) Then play Blue v Orange with 3 balls. Other restrictions include limiting touches, ball never stops, left foot passes, etc.

### **Death on the Nile**

20 x 30 grid. 3 teams of 4 players, and 3 balls. Each get one minute in the middle. Count # of interceptions. Other 2 teams have to play the balls across the 'river' back and forth. Introduce calling for the ball, then passing to a teammate on same side to open 'channels'. Techniques being used include-, passing & receiving, chipping, defending etc. We have to challenge our players cognitively. Other changes can include- points for passes, keep ball moving, time limit to play ball.

### **3v3 or 4v4 'American Football**

Play 4v4 but instead of making goals for the teams to score in, create an end zone at either end of the small field. A team can score a 'touch-down' (6 points) if they pass the ball to a teammate standing in the end zone. Think up any number of variations for an extra point! Then restrict a player waiting in the end zone to staying in there a maximum of three seconds and then has to get out similar to basketball. Advance the game by not allowing any player to stand still in the end-zone, or then limit access to the zone to 3 seconds at a time for any player.

### **Chip Pass to Target**

Create three 10 x 10 yard adjacent grids, and three teams of 4 players. Place one team in each square. The team in the middle (team B) have to sit down in their grid, but can move about. The object is for team A to chip the ball to team C over the heads of team B. For team C to score a point, the ball has to be brought down under control (remaining in the grid or at the coach's discretion). Team C then has '3 touches, one to control, one to lay off a short pass and one to chip the ball back to team A. Whichever team is the first to play the ball out of the playing area, or allows team B to make a contact, switches position into the middle.

### **Juggling**

#### **P-E-L-E**

Play with two players. First player juggles one, second player has to match. First player then juggles two and second player matches. First player then juggles three and so on. When a player misses, the other player gets a letter - first P then E then L then E. After awarding a letter, the players start out at one again. The first player to spell PELE is the winner. This can be played thighs only, feet only, head only or any combination.

#### **Black Jack (21)**

Play with two or more players. First player juggles as many touches as they can and keeps track of count. Second player goes after first misses. After second player misses, first player goes again starting count where they missed in first turn. For example if player got five touches in first turn, they would start second turn at six. First player to Black Jack (21) wins. This game can also be made more challenging by restricting it to certain body parts.

#### **Combinations**

Work to get "called" combinations. For example "Around the World" would be left foot, left thigh, head, right thigh, right foot.

## **Juggling with Movement**

Start at one spot and walk/jog/run while juggling the ball. See how far you can go without dropping the ball. One variation of this is to start at the outside of the penalty area on the field, juggle up to the goal area and shoot/volley the ball into the net without letting it hit the ground.

## **Timed Juggles**

See how many touches the player can get in a certain amount of time. We do a three minute timed contest. They don't have to be consecutive without a miss. This works great for getting the players focused and working hard for a certain time period and is great for aerobic fitness.

## **Team Juggling Contest**

Have each player juggle and see how many touches they can get. Add the total touches for the whole team and create a team record. If they beat their team record, the coaches run a lap around the field. If they don't beat their record, the players run a lap around the field. When the kids are not very good jugglers, it doesn't take very long. I have seen huge improvements in my teams' juggling skills by doing nothing more than this in practice. It's just enough focus to get them working on their own.

## **Goal Keeping**

### **Keeper Wars**

Using four cones create two goal about 5-10 yards apart (depending on age, ability, etc). The width of the goals should be just beyond the armspan of the keepers. The keepers sit just in front of the cones facing each other. Each attempt to score goals on the other by throwing the ball through the goal. The ball must be kept below their shoulders.

## **Kicking**

### **Kick to the edge of the world**

Have all the players stand at one edge of your grid with their ball and then tell them that they all have 3 kicks to get it as close to the other side (edge of the world) without going over as they will lose their ball. Coach should demonstrate! For fun ask they how far away the other line is! This gives the kids the idea of putting the correct weight behind a pass or when they are kicking the ball.

## **Coerver feints/moves**

For the coaches who have not seen or heard of Wiel Coerver, he is an ex-professional player and coach from the Netherlands who introduced a program emphasizing 1 v 1 moves to beat an opponent. His videos and books break down each move and explain it in simple terms.

## **The Scissors**

Standing behind the ball, swing your left foot around the front of the ball from left to right, put toes on ground, bend the left knee, drop the left shoulder, then quickly move the right foot to the left side of the ball and push it forward diagonally to the right with the laces of the right shoe. Remember that the first 3 steps after a move have got to be at pace so the defender does not catch you! Repeat, increasing speed and agility, and practice move with both feet.

### **The Roll-Over**

Standing behind the ball, roll the ball across the body (left to right) with the sole (cleats) of the right foot so ball is moving, then swing the right leg back around the front of the ball from left to right, bending right knee and dropping shoulder, then take ball away with the outside of the left foot. Again, remember that after the move, the player on the ball has got to get away quickly. The great thing about these moves is that you can practice them inside on a rainy day, because you don't need a ball to quicken foot speed. Try faking the dog or cat out!

### **Keeper's Nest**

One player (keeper) guards, but cannot touch the ball. The keeper may stand over the ball. The objective is for the other three players to get to the ball away from the keeper (using hands, feet or either), without being tagged and frozen by the keeper. The keeper's goal is to freeze the other

three players. Once a player is frozen, he can remain frozen until all players are frozen, or until the ball is snatched away by the other players, or until the player counts to 10.

## **COMBINATION/TRANSITION**

### **Possession/Transition Game (4 v 2)**

Set up 2 adjacent squares of 15 x 15 yards and pick two teams of four players. Start with 4 v 2 in one of the squares, with the other 2 staying in the adjacent square. The 4 try to keep possession in their area. If one of the 2 wins the ball they play the ball into the adjacent square to their teammates and then join them in the square to keep possession. When the transition takes place, the nearest two opposing players also move across the center line to become the 2 trying to win the ball back from the 4. Play continues.

### **Wall Pass (2 v 1)**

In a 20 x 15 yard grid play 2 v 0 to get the feel of a one-touch wall pass. Then add one defender into the grid, and make the offensive pair play 2 v 1 and produce a wall pass to beat the defender and score by stopping the ball on the end line under control. The players with the ball turn round and repeat the exercise, trying to score as many times as possible by utilizing the wall pass. Get player A with the ball to dribble at speed at the defender to start the move. Player B then must read the visual cue and create an appropriate angle to either side of the defender in order to allow the opportunity for the wall pass. As the players get better technically, and more accustomed to the players around them, the coach should point out further visual cues. For example, if Player A wants to play a wall pass to the left, then he may want to run to the right of the defender (as he faces him). This will not only open up space on that side by drawing the defender away, but it can also be read as a cue for a teammate to create an angle for a wall pass on that side. Add deception by having the initial pass made with the outside of the foot.

## **FINISHING**

### **Get out of here**

Play "Get out of here" (works for 8-14 year olds) - Two teams in a line stand either side of the coach (standing on the half way line with all the balls). Name them team France and team Brazil Play 2v2 in a 15 x 20 area (or 3v3 in 20x30) grid to 2 yard goals, with the first 2 from each side coming out as soon as the coach puts a ball on the field. The coach is boss of the balls!

Introduce

penalty for encroaching! When a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, the coach shouts 'Get

out of here!' and the players have to go to the back of their line. As soon as the coach yells, he can put another ball on the field for the next two players from each team to play. The game is continuous till the coach has no balls left. He can then ask the players what they can do to rectify

the situation... They will soon collect all the balls back!

### **4 goal open/close game 25 seconds (3 teams of 3)**

Then introduce four small goals, one each on the mid-lines of the grid described above. Have 3 teams of 3 players. Four goal game with gates. One team is assigned to be gatekeepers, one player standing in each goal and the coach goes in the fourth. They are to act as a gate, designed to close or open the goal (step to the side) when directed by the coach pointing. The other players (each team with a ball) play to score on any open goal by passing through it. Then try game with only one ball on the field. Then develop to...

### **Finish with 2 fields of 4v4, with a different method of scoring on each field.**

Field 1: Head to score.

Field 2: All 4 have to be in opponents half of field for their goal to count!

Option: Have to go around the back of goal and dribble/pass through cones the opposite way.

***The Coach can use any number of different options!***

### **Jurassic Park**

30 x 20 or 30 x 30 yard grid, with 6 mini goals around border. Start with 5 orange inside grid with 5 balls, blues are outside. On command they have to come in and steal the balls to score. When scored the ball is dead. Time how long it takes to kill all 5 balls. Swap roles.

### **Numbers Up**

Going to one goal. Add pressure - (i.e. 2v 1, v2). Provide target for defender if they win the ball. Looking to shoot as quickly as possible, by having body in correct position, showing good 1st touch when receiving ball. 1st touch should be away from pressure. Disguise your shots.

### **Quick Fire**

Pull one goal all the way up the field to the outer edge of the 18 yard box. Play 5v2 in an area 18x36 yards with two full size goals 18 yards apart. Play for 1 minute at a time, with the 5 having to make 5 passes before shooting. If the defenders steal the ball they go for goal also. You can add goalkeepers at any time.

## **Cooler Ball**

Can play 4v4v4. Put large cooler / trash can (or similar) in middle of field and have 1 ball and the three teams play against each other! To score a team simply has to hit the target. Kids will play this game forever!

## **Triangular Goals**

Create Triangular goals (3 flags 2 yards apart in a triangle shape) in the middle of the penalty area. Play 4v4 in penalty box. One team has 4 attackers, the other 3 keepers and 1 defender. If ball goes out of box, or keepers/defender makes a save, switch. Let each team captain keep scores. Then go to larger area - 6v6 or 8v8 in between halfway line and edge of 18 yard box. Open goals up to 6 yards wide. Advance the activity appropriately by asking players to play 3 passes before shooting or chip over goals to teammate! Have to score with a volley or half volley, etc.

### **"The Game" 8v8, 9v9 to goals with one ball!**

A coach should always try to let the players scrimmage for a third or so of practice in the format that they will play in season. For the U10-12 age group this will be any number from 8v8 to 11 v 11.

### **Objectives of soccer activities**

- 1. Get players to solve problems**
- 2. Foster cooperation and teamwork**
- 3. When does the coach control the game as opposed to the players?**
- 4. Use games that bring out an aspect of the real game**
- 5. Excitement - get kids 'juiced up!'**
- 6. Create environments to bring ideas out. Show kids how to survive!**

### **Scrimmage with conditions:**

- Maximum 5 touches: to encourage passing.
- Minimum 2 touches: to encourage control (no one-touch "passes").
- Minimum 5 touches: to encourage dribbling.
- Must pass 3 times before allowed to shoot: rewards passing and good spacing.

### **Uneven scrimmage:**

- 5 v 2 or 4 v 2 with no goals: forces passing. (The larger team counts passes.)

### **Offense vs. Defense:**

- Good to practice action at the mouth of the goal.
- Good to work on set plays (goal kicks, corner kicks, free kicks).
- Have 2 or 3 extra players on offense to keep the action around the goal.
- Give defenders two small goals near the touchline at midfield.

### **Freeze!**

- Blow the whistle and call "freeze".
- All players must stop where they are.
- Coach makes observation, e.g. players open on right flank.
- Excellent teaching tool (if not used too often).

### **Open scrimmage:**

- Full game simulation.
- All players, one game.

- Enforce rules more strictly to encourage fair play; it also gives players free kick practices.
- Play another team occasionally, if possible; practice subs and positions.

## Ball Control

***Practice all foot skills with both right and left feet.***

### ***Inside of the foot pass***

1. Ankle locked
2. Foot slightly up at the toe
3. Thigh turned outward
4. Look up to establish eye contact with teammates
5. Connect with the middle of the ball just before the instep
6. Follow through (contributes to direction and pace of the pass)

### *Outside of the foot pass*

1. Ankle locked
2. Foot pointing slightly downward at the toe
3. Leg swings across the ball
4. Ball should spin when kicked

### *Receiving a pass*

1. Move toward the ball (don't wait for it to come to you)
2. Inside or outside of the foot used most often
3. Foot surface first touching the ball should be withdrawn slightly on contact to take the momentum out of the ball ("cushioning")
4. Ball should not be stopped completely, but under close control
5. Redirect ball in front or to the side in anticipation of moving in that direction to pass or dribble

### *Dribbling*

1. Small controlled steps ... ball should be kept approximately 2-3 feet in front of you
2. Strike the ball with either the inside or outside of the foot (softly and not with the toe)
3. Look up frequently to see defenders and establish eye contact with teammates
4. Change speed and direction

### *Ball juggling*

Continuous bouncing of ball off head, shoulders, thigh, foot, *etc.* without the ball touching the ground . This will develop ball control asinities.

### *Shielding*

1. Legs bent
2. Shoulders down

### 3. Arms at the sides

Used as a means of keeping an opponent away from the ball, or to stall for time waiting for a teammate to get open for a pass.

#### *Heading*

1. Lean back at the waist
2. Lunge into the ball with neck stiff
3. Strike the ball with the middle of the forehead, below the hairline

### **Shooting**

1. Head down
2. Let the ball come under the body (allows the shot to stay low)
3. Ankle locked with foot pointing downward at the toe
4. Strike the ball with the laces of the shoe
5. Accuracy before power (avoid shooting directly at the goalkeeper)

#### *Throw-ins*

1. Ball **MUST** pass directly over the head
2. Both hands must remain on the ball (R and L thumbs meet behind the ball; thumbs and fingers of both hands form a W)
3. Both feet must be on the ground (not necessarily flat; it is permissible to drag the toe of the trailing foot)
4. As soon as ball is released, player should get back onto the field (often to receive a return pass)

### **“Trapping” (Settling or Controlling)**

1. Controlling the ball using any legal part of the body (NO HANDS unless you are the goalie)
2. The controlling surface must “give” on contact to cushion the ball
3. Ball should stay close to the player (not bounce away)
4. If using a chest trap, bend the body backward slightly so the ball rolls down onto the ground at the feet
5. Important when controlling the ball from the air to the ground, that it settle at your feet. Keep the ball under the frame of the body.

## **Simple Soccer Tactics**

Remember, tactics are not important for the U6-U8 player and should not be stressed. As the players mature, and the concept of team play begins to develop, the tactical elements can be introduced. Listed below are some basic guidelines for the coach, which fall into the realm of tactics.

#### *General*

- Play positions (the various roles can be understood even as players rotate positions).

- Get open and call for the ball.
- Look and listen for passing opportunities.
- Pass and move to space and/or to a support position.
- Work to build and maintain triangles - the basic structure for passing and support.
- Always support the player with the ball (forward and rear support within passing distance).

#### *Team Offense*

- Maintain possession of the ball.
- Keep the offense wide in order to spread (and weaken) the opponents' defense, and to create space for scoring opportunities.
- Penetrate as deeply as possible with every pass, without unduly risking loss of possession.
- Finish attacks with shots on goal.

#### *Team Defense*

- Support and communication are critical.
- Pressure opponents to decrease their "comfort zone".
- Delay opponents' attack when your team first loses possession of the ball, to permit defense to regroup.
- Mark "goal-side" to defend against shots on goal.
- Mark "ball-side" to defend against easy passes.
- Maintain defensive balance on the field; guard against reversing the ball (crossing passes to opposite side of field).
- Mark opponent tighter as you get closer to your goal.
- Concentrate defense in front of the goal as the ball approaches your goal, limiting space available for shots on goal, and direct ball away from goal.

#### *Kick off*

- Short pass and dribble.
- Short pass and pass back (triangle).
- The ball must move forward on a kick-off.
- (Note that the "long boot" is not encouraged!)

#### *Throw-in*

- Throw to an open teammate if possible (first look for the farthest unmarked player).
- Throw toward the other team's goal.
- Throw down the touchline.
- Throw to your goalkeeper (this is not considered an illegal pass back), but your keeper cannot pick the ball up.
- Take throw-ins quickly (before the defense can set up) but always be under control.
- Throw the ball so that it can be controlled in the air.
- Thrower should re-enter the field quickly to be open for a return pass.

#### *Goal kick*

- Big kick up the side of the field.
- Avoid kicking the ball across the front of your goal.

- Consider having a defender take goal kicks while the goalkeeper maintains position to guard goal (frequently used for younger players)

#### *Free kick*

- Close to goal, direct free kick- shoot at the goal, away from the keeper.
- Close to goal, indirect - short pass to teammate, and shoot at goal.
- Far from goal - big kick toward the front of the opponents' goal.

#### *Corner kick*

- Bend the ball, as a goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- Big kick into the opponents' goal area.
- Short pass and dribble or cross ball to far side of goal.

## **COACHING POINTS**

## **TEACHING THE TECHNIQUES**

### **DRIBBLING**

#### **Coaching Points**

1. Manipulating the ball from side to side (Movement of the ball).
2. Moving the ball past opponents (Movement of the body).
  - a. Pure speed
  - b. Change of pace
  - c. Change of direction
3. Running with the ball a feet.
  - a. Ball comfortable at feet
  - b. Ball not too far ahead
4. Individual possession (shielding).
  - a. Body shape
  - b. Position of ball
  - c. Change of direction (transfer of ball)

### **PASSING**

#### **Coaching Points**

Keep on toes all the time (be ready), look up and take 'snapshot', make decision who to pass to, then head down and keep eye on ball, ankle locked with toe up, swing leg in straight plane, follow through center of ball.

1. Weight or Pace of Pass—The pass should be played with the right amount of weight to feet or into space so that the receiver is able to either control the ball easily or play the ball comfortably with one touch.
2. Accuracy—Naturally, it is important that all passes are accurate.

3. Time of the Pass—The player in possession of the ball should not pass the ball if the intended receiver is not in a position to receive it comfortably. A poorly timed pass could result in a loss of possession.
4. Time of the Run—The player making a run to receive a pass should ensure that the player in possession of the ball has the ball under good control and is ready to make the pass. Not only is a poorly timed run a waste of energy, but also it could result in a loss of possession.
5. Support—It is vital that the player in possession of the ball has immediate help from his team mates. The more options a player has to pass the ball, the easier it is for him to keep possession. (Angle & Distance)
6. Passing Angle—Is the receiver of the ball in a good position to receive the ball.

## **RECEIVING**

### **Coaching Points**

Keep on toes all the time (be ready), get body behind line of ball, look up take 'snapshot', make decision where to turn when ball is controlled (away from pressure), then keep eye on ball, offer largest area of contact to ball, cushion ball by giving slightly on contact, trap towards the ground, push ball out to side 1/2- 1 yard (away from pressure) to enable to take in stride.

1. Make an early selection in method of control.
2. Get in line with the line of the flight of the ball.
3. Keep your eye on the ball.
  - a. Relax the controlling surface for certain methods of control.
  - b. Wedge the ball between the foot and the ground.
4. Receiving touch should be in preparation (away from pressure) to either pass, dribble or shoot.

## **HEADING**

### **Coaching Points in Attack**

1. The position of the feet and being light on the feet is very important in order to jump for the ball.
2. Get in line with the flight of the ball.
3. Keep your eye on the ball at all times.
4. Time the run and jump to head the ball at your highest point.
5. Use the forehead at all times to head the ball.
6. Direct the ball down toward the target—i. e. goal, teammate, path of teammate.

### **Coaching Points in Defense: In order of priority a defender is looking for**

1. Height
2. Distance—WITH POWER
3. Accuracy
4. Principles 1-5 in attack also apply to defenders. Principle 6 does not apply because defenders generally are looking to head the ball up and not down.

### **Coaching Points—in Midfield or Attack:**

1. Principles 1-3 in attack apply to deflection heading.
2. Run towards flight of ball and glance the ball off either side or the middle of the forehead, depending on which direction the ball is to be deflected.

### **SHOOTING/FINISHING**

#### **Coaching Points**

1. The same principles apply to shooting as to the individual passing techniques of the above.
2. It is important that players look at the ball during the whole process of striking the ball.
3. Players should ensure that their ankles are tight (locked) as they are about to strike the ball.
4. Consideration should be given to placement versus power in certain situations in and around the penalty area.

### **CROSSING**

#### **Coaching Points**

1. The same principles apply to crossing as to lofted, driven and bending balls.
2. It is important to emphasize the angle of approach to the ball.
3. Players should be aware of their body shape in relationship to the quality of the cross.
4. Consideration should be given to placement of the ball into the attacking spaces in and around the six yard box

### **In this period there has been no official instruction on how to defend the ball!**

#### **Fundamental - Tackling**

Coach may want to introduce the block tackle at this point, for timing, rhythm etc. Coaching points

include-. Low center of balance, knees bent. May want to start with players with a hand on their partner's shoulder. Develop rhythm, 3, 2, 1 go. Then develop to take a step **in**.

**Restricted Tackling** - In a rectangle of 15 x 25 yards, play 4 v 4 and create a small goal on each end line. Number each team 1, 2, 3 and 4. Each number can only tackle his opposing number. This allows plenty of, chances to dribble, as rarely are similar numbers close to each other, at least at the beginning!

### **Match Related**

In same 20 x 15 grid area, play 1 v 1 to small goals (same as 'Get out of here' game above). The Coach has the supply of balls on the mid-line and plays the ball in. Let players go through once each without any instruction. Then introduce the Coaching points:

- Curve defensiverun to get between ball and goal (so they can't shoot on empty net!)
- Defender must pressure ball quickly, but then 2-3 yards away slow down and get under control.
- Get correct stance, (one foot in front of other) not square like basketball! Tell kids why!
- Do not have to win ball, just keep between the attacker, ball and goal block shot on goal.