

U8 --- Week One

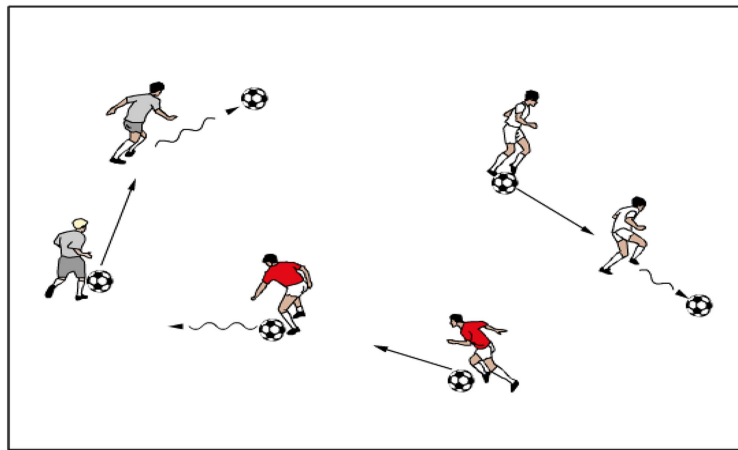
OBJECTIVE: To create an atmosphere that is SAFE and FUN and to maximize ball touches for every player. Therefore, almost all the activities will require one ball per player. During the “practice” portion, our aim is to tap on the child’s imagination and play age appropriate games that help them make a connection between the brain and nervous system to create muscle memory. During the “games” portion our aim is to let them play and gain “soccer/game smartness”. Each session should be 60 minutes. 30 minutes of “practice” and 30 minutes of “games”.

Today’s phrase: “Do not kick the ball, push it”. This will help them control the ball better by keeping it closer

1) Free Dribble--- (10 minutes): Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot), and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session; kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction.

Coaching Points: **1.** Practice grid cannot be too big or too small. The size on itself must create a little traffic that it’s forcing players to change direction and look up to avoid bumping into each other. **2.** Be demanding. No walking. Practices have to done at game speed. If we are expecting players to play fast at games, than we have to prepare them for this at practices. **3.** “Push the ball; don’t kick it”. This way we are conditioning them to keep the ball close.

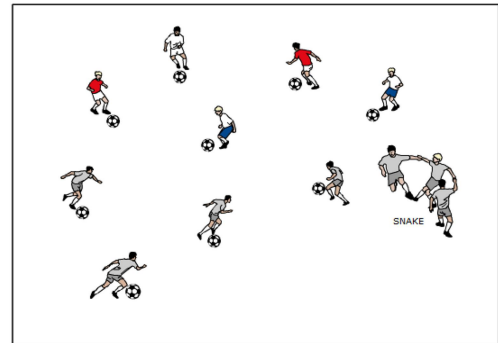
2) Shadow Dribble--- (10 minutes): One player with a ball and another player behind them with a ball as well. The player in front can go anywhere in a defined space (appropriate to the number of players) and the player behind must try to keep as close to them as possible and follow where they are going and what they are doing. The leader determines where they are going and the player who is the shadow tries to keep up with them. Then have roles reversed. Can use both feet to start, then can choose to use one foot, then the other. *Version 2:* Now the leader adds in moves while they are dribbling in the space and the player being the shadow must do the same. Rotate players to new pairs every minute or two.



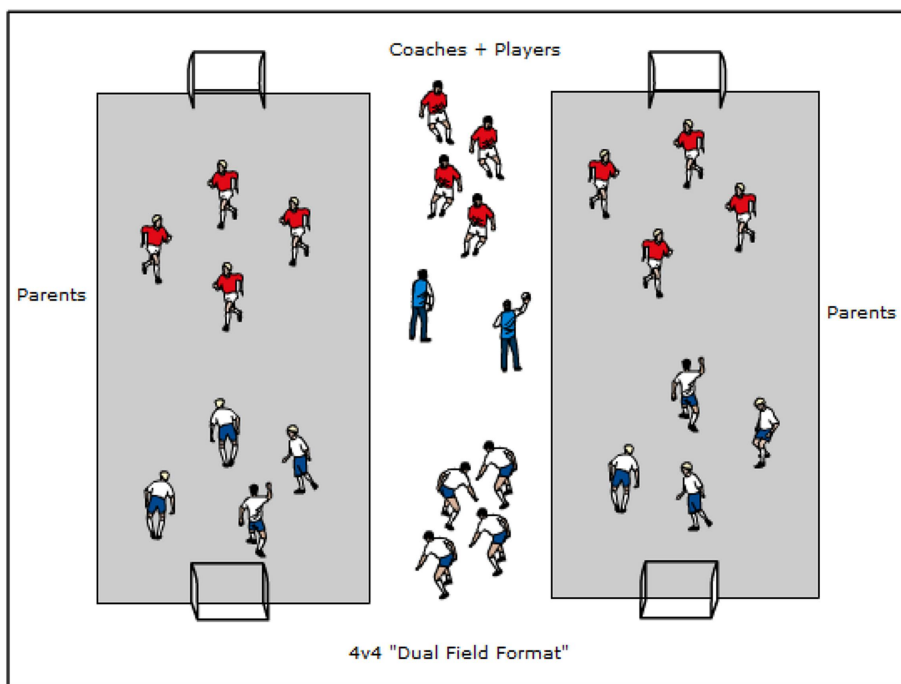
3) Paired Tag--- (10 minutes): Pair players up, each pair have 2 balls. One players starts and is given a 2 second lead to get away from his/her partner. The chaser (“it”) dribbles after the first player and tries to tag him/her with his/her hand. If tagged, the roles reverse and the player who was previously “it” has two seconds to get away before their partner tries to tag them. Players must always dribble their soccer ball during this activity. Rotate players to new pairs every minute or two.

If you go too fast in the first 3 activities then you can play the next one. We’ll start with Game #4 next week.

4) Snake--- (10 minutes): In an appropriate space for the numbers you have, all players dribbling soccer balls except for 2 players to start. These players hold hands and work together as one snake to tag the other players. The players with balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands with players making up the snake. The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must stay together as one animal and not break off into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss.



5) Games---“dual field format” 4v4 NO GK’s (30 minutes):



NO instruction. NO intrusion. This is their world, their game in their terms. We are simply going to let them play and figure out things on their own.

What can we do? You Ask?

- Make sure they know which direction they are going
- Do not let them play outside the lines (they must learn to play within boundaries)
- There are no corner kicks, goal kicks,
- kick-offs or throw-ins. When the ball goes out of bounds the team that did not kick it out re-starts by placing the ball on the line and they can pass it in or dribble it in
- Coach by positive reinforcement: “great goal,

great move” or “that was a good try; next time you’ll get it”

- Celebrate not only the “successes” but also all the “attempts”.
- Let’s encourage them: “What can you do with the ball? Don’t just kick it”, “Where can you go to help out?”, “What do you see? Can you play fast?”, “NO goalies!”

Review: Before dismissing the players, ask them. “How do you control the ball better, by kicking it or pushing it”?

Remember- Youth Games are a “participant’s” sport and NOT a “spectator’s” sport. It will never resemble the real game.