

U5-U6

Number of Active Players: 3v3. Number of Total Players : 10. Number of Fields: 2

Formation Suggestion: Have 2 players play offense and 1 player play defense in a triangular formation. Triangles are a very important shape for soccer, so it is good to introduce this concept early. Then every few minutes rotate the defender to the right forward position, the right forward to left forward and then the left forward to the bench, and a bench player to defender. There should not be a focus on a player only playing one position.

Areas of Focus: Dribbling and Simple Passing. At this age, they should be passing the ball into the net, rather than focusing on a specific shooting technique.

Practice Drills: Try to make the drills feel more like games while focusing the drills on a specific skill and then try to have a fun simple way for the kids to remember the point of the drill. Very important goal is to minimize your setup time between drills and to limit lines. Try not to have drills where 1 or 2 players are participating and the rest are watching.

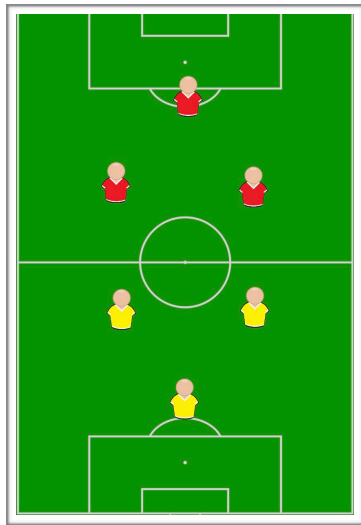
Hit The Cone: Have 2 players line up with a cone in between them. They pass to each other and every time someone hits the cone between them, that player takes a step back. Focus on proper passing form, having the players use the inside of their foot, swing their leg through the ball and have their leg pointing towards where they are aiming the ball. Sometimes it helps to have them pass and freeze at the end to have them see where their leg is pointing.

Helpful Hint: Say No To The Toe! This is what I say to my players if they are using their toe when they pass.

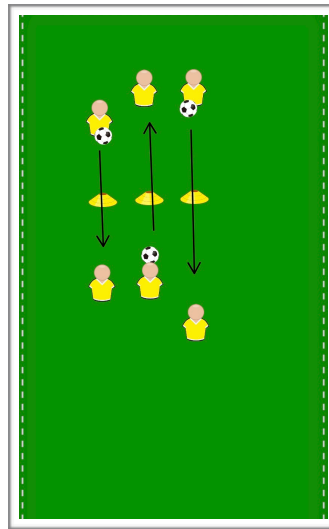
Red Light Green Light: The classic game from childhood is great for young soccer players. Set up 2 lines of cones about 30 yards apart. Players all start on one end. When you say green light, the players all dribble the ball with an emphasis on keeping the ball close to their foot. Then when you say red light, they all have to stop and place their foot on top of the ball to stop it. You can also add in yellow light to have them dribble slow.

Helpful Hint: I tell the kids to imagine the ball was their puppy dog they are taking on a walk. They don't want their puppy dog to get too far away and escape. So I constantly remind them to keep their puppy dog close, and even have them name their puppy dog (soccer ball).

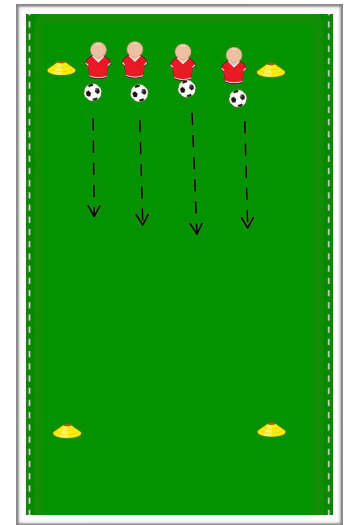
Helpful Hint: A great way to encourage players is to have a player of the game award at the end of each game. The player of the game should not just be the player that scored the most goals. They should be the ones giving the most effort, having good sportsmanship, and cheering on their teammates. This helps create a positive environment for all the kids. You can give away a hot wheels car, candy, soccer trading cards, or Kinder Joy eggs as an example. At the end of the game ask for players to name something one of their teammates did well during the game. After practices ask for players to name something they did well or improved at during that practice.



Formation



Hit the Cone



Red Light Green Light

“Coach the heart before the player. Look through this lens: Are we as coaches and parents making each kid a better person, while making them wanna come back tomorrow? Build a culture of great character and fun.”
-Coach Ballgame

U7-U8

Number of Active Players: 4v4. Number of Total Players : 12 Number of Fields: 2

Formation Suggestion: Have 2 players play offense and 2 player play defense. Every few minutes rotate the 2 defenders to the 2 forwards position, the 2 forwards to the bench, and bench players to defenders. There should not be a focus on a player only playing one position.

Areas of Focus: Dribbling, Simple Passing, and Defense. At this age, they should be passing the ball into the net, rather than focusing on a specific shooting technique.

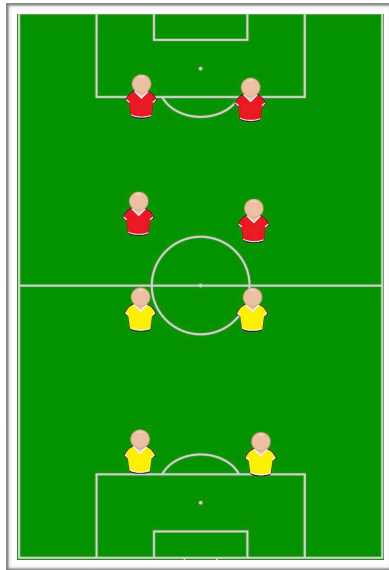
Practice Drills: Try to make the drills feel more like games while focusing the drills on a specific skill and then try to have a fun simple way for the kids to remember the point of the drill. Very important goal is to minimize your setup time between drills and to limit lines. Try not to have drills where 1 or 2 players are participating and the rest are watching.

Traffic Dribbling: Set up 4 square areas about 15 feet by 15 feet each in a diamond shaped pattern. Split up your players evenly in each square. Each player has to dribble in their square. As they are dribbling give them different ways to dribble (left foot only, outside of your foot only, inside of your foot only, ball rolls, etc). When you say “traffic” the players have to dribble their ball to the square opposite of them. This means all of the players will be crossing each other in the middle. The goal here is for them to build awareness of their surroundings and start learning to dribble with their head up.

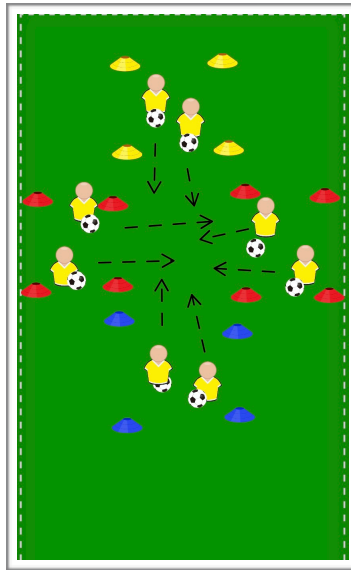
Traffic Passing: Using the same setup as traffic, pair the players up. This time instead of dribbling in their square, they are passing to their partner. When you say “traffic” their partner goes to the square opposite of them and their partner has to pass to them from their original square. After they pass the ball, they join their partner in the new square and the game resumes.

1v1: Pair up your players. Set up multiple 10 ft by 10 ft squares. Put each pair in their own square. Start off by having one player shadow the other player. You can make it fun by having them jump on one foot or turn in a circle. Once they understand this, add a ball. Each pair has their own square and one ball. One player starts with the ball and tries to dribble it around the square. The other player tries to steal it from them. Once they steal it, they try to dribble it around the square and the other player tries to steal it. Area of focus is using your body to shield the ball and for the defender to be aggressive and steal the ball. Teach the defender to “shadow” the player.

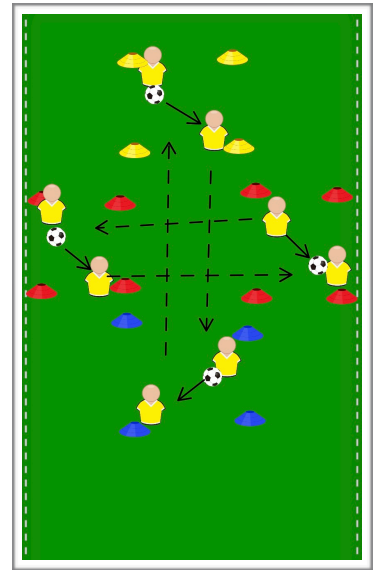
Helpful Hint: A great way to encourage players is to have a player of the game award at the end of each game. The player of the game should not just be the player that scored the most goals. They should be the ones giving the most effort, having good sportsmanship, and cheering on their teammates. This helps create a positive environment for all the kids. You can give away a hot wheels car, candy, soccer trading cards, or Kinder Joy eggs as an example. At the end of the game ask for players to name something one of their teammates did well during the game. After practices ask for players to name something they did well or improved at during that practice.



Formation



Traffic



Traffic Passing

“Coach the heart before the player. Look through this lens: Are we as coaches and parents making each kid a better person, while making them wanna come back tomorrow? Build a culture of great character and fun.”

-Coach Ballgame

U9-U10

Number of Active Players: 7v7. Number of Total Players : 12

Formation Suggestions: 2-3-1. In this formation you have a goalie, 2 defenders, 3 midfielders and 1 forward. This formation allows you to have natural triangles for passing. Your midfielders are responsible for offense and defense. Your forward never comes back on defense. They need to be available as an outlet once your team wins the ball back. The first practice you should setup cones showing them where their position is. Once they understand that, divide the field in half with cones from goal to goal. Now have them scrimmage. Emphasize that the right mid needs to stay on the right side of the field and the left midfielder on the left side of the field. Same thing for your defenders. Your forward and center midfielder should stay around the center cones. This helps them understand where they should be on the field.

Helpful Hints: Emphasize to your players to not kick the ball in the center of the field when on defense. Also when the goalie makes the save, have them pick it up, run to the edge of their box and throw it to their player. This helps alleviate the constant pressure if your goalie kicks it and the opposition steals it back right away.

Areas of Focus: Spacing, Shooting, Movement, Long Passing. At this age, they should have the correct technique for basic passing. You can start teaching them how to make longer passes and different shooting techniques.

Practice drills: Very important goal is to minimize your setup time between drills and to limit lines. Try not to have drills where 1 or 2 players are participating and the rest are watching.

Gate Dribbling/Passing: Set up a square about 25 feet by 25 feet. Then place 20 or so “gates” which are 2 cones spaced about 2 feet apart inside of that square. Have all of your players inside of the box. Goal is to see how many gates they can dribble through in 2 minutes. They can not do the same gate over and over again. Have them do at least 2 rounds. Next progression is passing. Have them pair up. This time they have to pass through the gate. Set the timer for 2 minutes again. Goal is to find open space and play with your head up.

Rondo: Create 2 circles with cones about 12 feet in diameter. Split your team in half with each group spaced around the cones. The players need to pass to each other while staying outside of the cones. Start off with 2 touch passing. Receive the ball with the first touch and pass with the second. Once they get the hang of this, add a defender in the middle. The players on the outside try to pass the ball through the circle to any player not next to them. If the defender intercepts the ball (without going outside the circle), they switch places with the player that passed the ball. The defender is trying to cut off the passing lane.

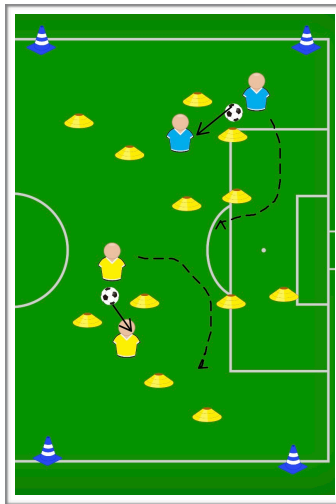
Positional Rondo: Setup the players in their 2-3-1 formation. Goalie starts with the ball. Players pass the ball around to the other players in their positions. Once everyone touches the ball they get a chance to score on the goalie. Once the players get comfortable, add opposition. Let the other team make 2-3 passes, then add one opposition player each time a successful pass is made. If the opposition steals the ball, they get to score on goal.

Double Trouble: Set up 2 goals at least 10 feet apart per side of the field and have a scrimmage. With 2 goals the emphasis is on finding open space and for defense to cover the whole field. If everyone bunches together, it will leave one of the goals wide open.

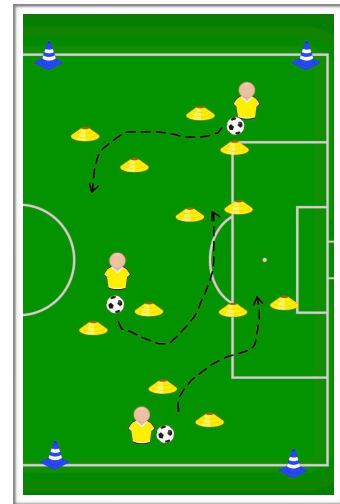
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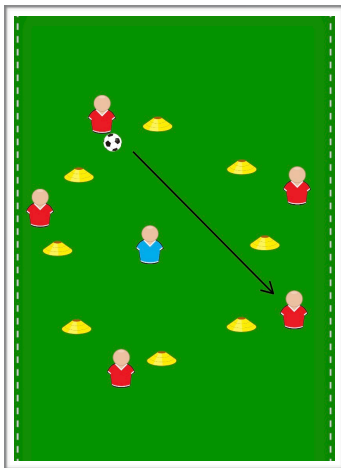
Formation



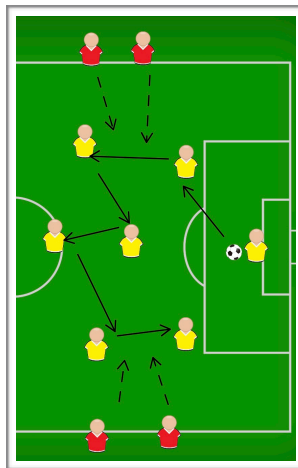
Gate Dribbling



Gate Passing



Rondo



Positional Rondo



Double Trouble

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